

*The Bible and*

# OUR TIMES



# Discerning The Times

## CHOOSE NOW!

With the international situation becoming daily more menacing, the great groupings in East and West are assiduously rallying their supporters, and more than one nation is making the great choice as to its alignment in the approaching crisis.

These choices are significant not merely politically and militarily but also prophetically, for in each decision and trend can be seen the sharpening or crystallization of the pattern of last-day orientations shown to Daniel and John millenniums ago.

Take first the re-establishment of relations with Spain. Five years ago the United Nations decided to ostracize Spain for her help to Hitler in World War II, and all the diplomatic representatives of the nations were withdrawn.

Since then, however, the East-West tension has grown and it has come to be realized that strategically, as well as economically, the help of Spain is essential to the consolidation of Western Europe in the face of the Eastern peril.

In consequence, although less than three months ago President Truman asserted that it would be "a long, long time" before the United States sent an ambassador to Spain, his government has already resumed diplomatic relations, and other governments, including our own, are following suit.

Thus is the prophecy being borne out that as the final crisis nears, all the nations of the Roman earth will come to "agree" as they have never done since the break-up of the ancient Roman Empire. (Rev. 17:13.)

The acceptance of Spain again into the Western family will inevitably have profound



© Keystone

religious consequences, for Spain is a solidly Roman Catholic country and will naturally add its weight to the pro-Catholic Christian Democratic parties which are in power or near to power in most of the Western countries, thus bringing nearer the day when the "agreeing" nations of the Roman earth will "give their power and strength" into the hands of the papal "beast" in return for her spiritual reinforcement against Communist encroachment. (Rev. 17:15, last part.)

Next, there is the case of Tito. A few years ago Yugoslavia was behind the Iron Curtain and seemingly inseparably linked to Soviet power. But the time came when Tito quarrelled with Stalin, and began to cultivate commercial relations with the West.

To these approaches the statesmen of the West responded at first hesitatingly and then with increasing cordiality. To-day they are eager to assure themselves of the help of the largest military force this side of Russia to block the approaches to Italy and Greece.

This reversal of orientation, too, is significant, for Yugoslavia occupies the territory of ancient Illyria, the first home of the Ostrogoths, the most easterly of the barbarian tribes which penetrated into the ancient Roman Empire and

established the "ten horns" or powers in succession to Imperial Rome.

It remains to be seen whether Yugoslavia will become one of the "ten kings" which will gather around the banner of Rome in the final crusade which will carry it to its final peak of power.

Finally, there is Western Germany. When the invitation came to Dr. Adenauer from the premier of the Eastern Zone to discuss the unification of Germany, there was some concern lest negotiations might be set on foot which would take all Germany behind the curtain.

So decisive was the moment that Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, the British High Commissioner, felt impelled to tell the Western Germans very plainly: "Germany must decide whether she wishes to be associated with the Western nations. If she decides affirmatively, she must do so without equivocation."

Dr. Adenauer's decision was quickly announced. The German people, he said, had "taken their stand with complete conviction in the camp of freedom, which is the camp of the West."

Again the decision is significant, for it finally establishes the line between East and West in latter-day Europe almost exactly along the Imperial frontier just before the ten kingdoms of the West first took shape.

As we have reiterated so many times before in these columns, the Word of prophecy was not given to the people of God to enable them to predict the course of events. Rather, it was given them, in the words of Jesus Himself, to the end that "when ye see these things come to pass, ye may believe."

That being so, it surely cannot be denied that there are a multitude of evidences for those who have "eyes to see" confirming belief in the hand of God in history and the certainty of His final triumph.

## HAVE WE EVOLVED OR FALLEN?

A NEW spate of discussion on the subject of evolution and the Christian faith has been aroused by the publication of Vera Barclay's *Darwin Not for Children*.

Naturally, the materialistic evolutionists have been quick to spring into action to assert that nature is perfectly explainable without the intrusion of any transcendent Creator.

With this contention we, of course, completely disagree, but it must be said in favour of those who press it that they are quite open and honest in their recognition of the incompatibility of materialistic evolution and the Christian faith.

Far less harm is done to the Christian faith by this honest, if misguided, thinking, than by those who profess to accept the main tenets of evolutionary philosophy and at the same time try to reconcile it with the Bible account of origins in the early chapters of Genesis.

For example, in a recent leading article in the *Guardian* on Vera Barclay's book, the writer, after recognizing the merit of much of what she says, goes on:

"Even if there were no evidence whatsoever—not a single fossil—to record an evolutionary descent, we should find it incredible that a particular species or even class of being was suddenly created *ex nihilo*."

Then a little further on the reviewer, realizing the logical end of this kind of reasoning, stops in his tracks, as it were, and says:

"The irrational animals, whatever they may

(Continued on back page.)

© Keystone

A striking photograph of the new U.N. secretariat building against the night skyline of Manhattan, New York.

FEBRUARY 22, 1951





The return of the "Saviour-King."

IN an earlier issue reference was made to Dr. Dodds' four broadcast sermons on the Coming of Christ. Admittedly the doctor brought much learning to his subject, and it should be acknowledged that he said many wise things which every thoughtful Christian must have appreciated. However, we feel constrained once again to comment upon his most regrettable statement that the idea that Christ would come again to this earth literally "in power and great glory" was *intolerable*.

In order to grasp the full implications of this statement, we need to remember that the words in quotes are the reported words of Jesus Himself. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24:30.

#### Figurative or Literal?

Either these words are to be understood literally or they are figurative or symbolic. The doctor says that it would be intolerable to understand them literally. But if not literal,

# Should Such a Faith Offend?

By J. A. McMillan

what is their figurative meaning? And why should Jesus speak in symbolic language about such a vital subject to His own disciples privately? It is true that He spoke in parables to the public, but when His "disciples came, and said unto Him, Why speakest Thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." Matt. 13:10, 11.

We would expect Jesus, then, to speak plainly to the disciples about a subject on which He specifically warned them to be careful. "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man lead you astray." Matt. 24:4, R.V. (See also verses 5, 11.) "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; *believe it not*. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; *go not forth*: behold, He is in the secret chambers; *believe it not*. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. 24:23-27.

We have quoted this lengthy passage for two reasons. First of all, because we believe that Jesus is the greatest authority on the question of His own personal return to this earth. Who else could know as much about it as the Master Himself? Secondly, we quote this passage because it deals specifically and precisely with the point in question. How will our Lord re-

turn? In what manner or experience will His coming be realized?

Jesus disposes of two common errors in this prophetic declaration. He denies that His coming will be *local* (verses 25, 26), and He denies that it will be invisible or secret (verse 26). He declares that it will be personal, universal, and as spectacular as the outshining of the lightning. (Verses 27, 30.)

But it may be argued that this is only our interpretation of the text. That may be so, but is there any other reasonable and fair meaning to be attached to the language? Jesus most decisively promised to return personally. "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2, 3.

#### First Coming Literally Fulfilled

There is a simple way by which we may decide the proper method of interpreting these scriptures. Let us examine a few of the many predictions scattered through the Old Testament regarding the first coming of our Lord. We can compare these with the actual events as recorded in the New Testament, in order to establish whether the Scriptures are to be understood literally or in some figurative manner.

The Scriptures foretold that He would be born in Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2.) This was fulfilled in the most literal way, and the Roman Emperor was used by God to bring about the circumstances of its fulfilment. (Luke 2:1-7.) The Scriptures foretold that He would be betrayed by a close associate and that the price of the betrayal would be thirty pieces of silver. (Psa. 41:9; Zech. 11:12.) In both these particulars, Judas fulfilled the prediction and several others besides. (Luke 6:16; Matt. 26:14, 15.)

The Scriptures foretold

that Jesus would ride into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass. (Zech. 9:9.) This was literally fulfilled. (Matt. 21:3.) Dr. Davidson of Edinburgh has aptly remarked:

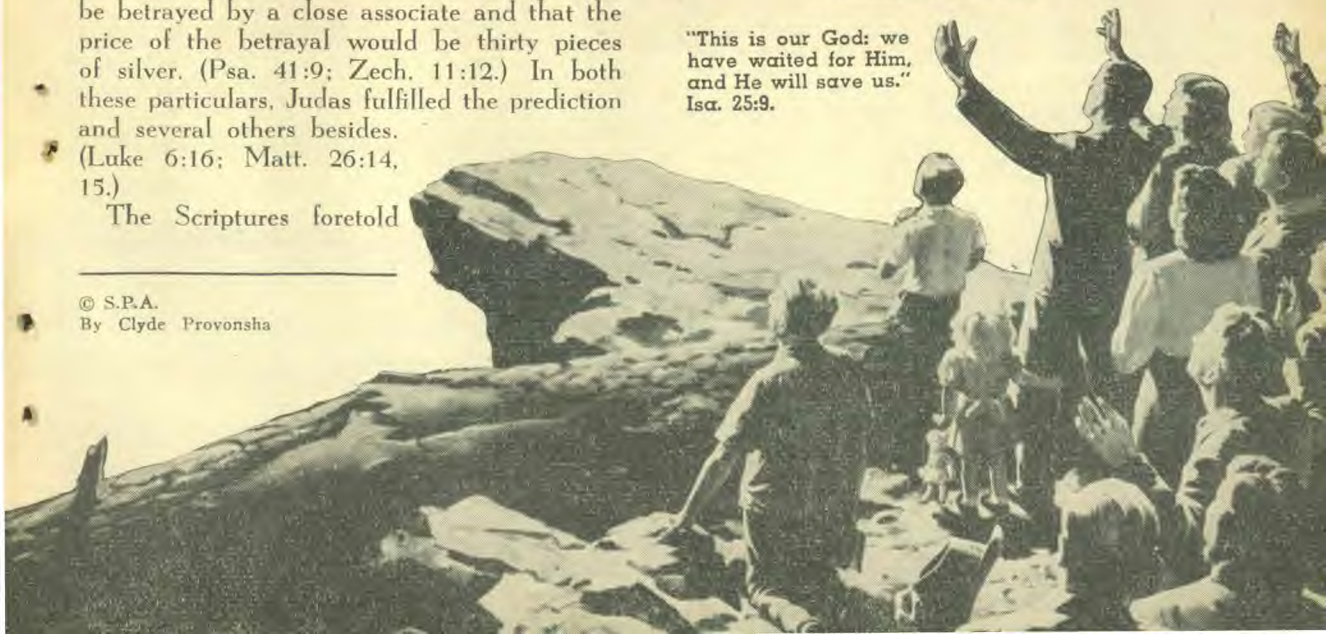
"Perhaps we should hold that, if any prediction has been found to have been fulfilled in the precise, concrete way predicted, as for example when Christ did enter Jerusalem, riding upon an ass, exactly as Zechariah had foretold, this precise detail ought to be considered of the essence of the prediction. This seems more reasonable than to say that Zechariah's prediction meant no more than that the Messiah should be lowly and peaceful, and that the symbolic act of riding upon an ass was merely the form in which the prophet embodied the idea of his prediction, which would have been fulfilled in the character of the Messiah quite absolutely, although this act of entering Jerusalem had never taken place in His history."

This is valuable evidence on the question as to how we should interpret the Scriptures. The literal and obvious meaning should be accepted unless there are strong grounds for believing that a figure of speech or a symbolic meaning has been used.

Dean Alford rightly remarks: "A canon of interpretation which should be constantly borne in mind is that a figurative sense of words is never admissible except when required by the context." (*Comment on Acts 10:42.*) And Luther held: "The Christian should direct his first efforts toward understanding the literal sense (as it is called) of Scripture, which alone

(Continued on page 12.)

"This is our God: we have waited for Him, and He will save us." Isa. 25:9.





By F. Shields

Jesus said nothing about any change of the Sabbath when He met with the disciples after His resurrection.

# HOW IT HAPPENED

By W. L. EMMERSON

WHEN the attention of many good Christian people is drawn to the fact that their life-long observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, as a day of worship and rest, is quite devoid of Scriptural authority and that the Bible distinctly states, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God," the question invariably springs to their lips, "How did it happen? Where and when and why did the change from the seventh to the first day take place?" Let us see if we can find out.

Suppose we go back to begin with to the time immediately after the death of Christ. If we can find any reference to the disciples' observing a day of rest round about this time we may be able to determine whether Jesus had given any instructions about a change during His lifetime.

Yes, here is one in Luke 23:55, 56. The

body of Jesus had just been placed in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa and the women who followed after the disciples "beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid." Then the record goes on: "And they returned, and prepared spices and ointment; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment."

## The Disciples Knew Nothing of It

From this, one thing becomes very certain. Jesus had said nothing about any change of rest day from the seventh day to the first day of the week before His crucifixion, or His disciples would not have so scrupulously observed the seventh-day Sabbath when they were anxious to embalm the body of their beloved Master.

Someone may say: Admittedly Jesus did not

mention any change in Sabbath observance before His death, but after His resurrection He must have instructed the disciples to keep the first day instead of the seventh in memory of the great fact of the resurrection. Again let us see.

We follow the story of these eventful days in the gospels and note that on the resurrection day, that is the first day of the week, "at evening" the disciples were gathered together and Jesus came "and stood in the midst." John 20:19. Had Jesus told them to come together? He certainly had not, for the Scripture explains that they were assembled not for worship but "for fear of the Jews." And actually, until Jesus showed Himself to them, the disciples "believed not" those who claimed to have "seen Him after He was risen." Mark 16:14.

#### Did They Observe Subsequent First Days?

Well, perhaps when Jesus met them on that "first day" on which He rose, He instructed them thereafter to keep the day in honour of His resurrection. If this had been the case we would have read of their meeting for worship on subsequent first days according to His instructions. But the fact is, we do not.

Leaving out the six references to the activities of the disciples on the day of the resurrection, we find only two other places in the whole of the Acts and the epistles where the "first day" is referred to, and in neither of them is there any hint of Sunday observance.

In Acts 20:7, Paul met with the believers at Troas on the "first day of the week" and "continued his speech until midnight." The next day he left them and walked across country to Assos, where he took ship to Mitylene.

Now we know that it was customary in those days to reckon time "from even to even," so if the believers at Troas gathered for an evening meeting which went on till midnight on the "first day" it must have been on a Saturday night and not on Sunday at all.

There are many references in the Acts of the Apostles to Paul meeting with believers, both Jew and Gentile, on the seventh-day Sabbath (Acts 15:14; 16:13; 17:1, 2; 18:4, 7, 11) and on this occasion it is clear that he supplemented the usual Sabbath services by a final Saturday evening meeting so that he could get away early on Sunday morning on his journey.

In the remaining reference to the first day of the week in 1 Corinthians 16:2, Paul makes

the interesting suggestion that on the "first day of the week" the believers should do their accounts and set on one side gifts, as the Lord had blessed them, for the benefit of their poorer brethren. He would hardly have given this counsel had Sunday become the Christians' day of worship.

Thus it is clear that many years after the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples were still keeping the seventh-day Sabbath "according to the commandment," while Sunday, as it had always been, was a day for work, travel, reckoning of accounts, or any occupation appropriate to the "working days" of the week.

#### A Purely Human Invention

If then, Jesus said nothing about any change from the seventh to the first day, and if the disciples themselves knew nothing of it, we must come to the conclusion that the change was the result not of a divine ordinance, but some unauthorized human intervention. And that is precisely what we discover as we continue our search.

Sunday sacredness began as a result of compromise on the part of a decadent church with the paganism by which it was surrounded.

The Roman world, in the early centuries of the Christian era, was accustomed to observing the first day of the week as a day of festivity in honour of the sun-god Mithra. "Dies Solis—the day of the sun," it was called. When, therefore, a pagan Roman or Greek became a Christian he had, of necessity, to withdraw himself from the riotous pleasures of "sun-day," and also to abstain from his accustomed work on the seventh day. This meant considerable adjustment of his life and it also placed a stigma upon him in the eyes of his pagan neighbours, who assumed that he had become a hated "Jew."

In the early days of the church the believers were prepared to suffer anything for their faith, and in accepting the Gospel they joyfully put up with any inconvenience, hardship, or even persecution which it entailed. But when, with the passing of the years, the fervency of the church declined, the Christians began to feel that it was a burden to be so "different" from the rest of the community. In consequence, one of the first things that occurred to them was that they might change over their day of worship from the seventh to the first day so that

*(Continued on page 12.)*

# The Firebrand

By R.



Photo by R.D.V.

At the entrance of St. Mark's church, Florence, which is attached to the convent where Savonarola was a monk.

As we surveyed the mighty ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, it was not without considerable desire to indulge in one of the pleasures which were anciently offered by the place, and which, according to Gibbon, led to Rome's decline and fall. So unrelenting was that summer sun, that we would cheerfully have surrendered a handful of lire for a plunge in the cool waters of the Frigidarium.

These baths completely dwarf their modern counterparts, for they were capable of catering for three or four thousand patrons at a time. The daily programme was an appealing one to lovers of ease and luxury. Not only were there waters of varying temperatures to suit the desires of the bathers, but there was offered every entertainment for mind and body.

There were gymnasiums, libraries, Barnum-like shows, theatres, women, gardens, and, of course, ample provision for feasting and revelry. No means of gratifying the senses was omitted.

The luxury and idleness of the dissolute crowds were doubtless regarded by them as the rightful fruitage of the great military victories of the past. There has always seemed to be a constant failure to realize that just as surely as "righteousness exalteth a nation," vice and moral decline such as was stimulated by these Cyclopean centres of pleasure, lead to national degradation.

## Relieving Boredom

The trouble with those Romans, as with the Sodomites, and, in fact, with many to-day, was that they had too much time on their hands. In the case of Rome it was the luxurious but demoralizing pleasures of such places as these colossal Baths of Caracalla and the equally great Baths of Diocletian, which were provided to relieve the prevalent boredom. In the case of Sodom, whose characteristic was "fullness of bread and abundance of idleness" (Ezek. 16:49) they did not hesitate to relieve their boredom in the most degrading ways.

It is said that because of the demoralizing effect which these baths had on the majority of the patrons, many monastic orders of the Catholic church regarded—and still do regard—uncleanliness as a virtue. Like one very well known "saint" who boasted to her son that no water had been permitted to touch her body for twenty years.

One of the last things in Rome we saw, was an impressive display of hundreds of white stone plaques adhering to part of the ancient Roman wall flanking one of the main roads. All were briefly inscribed with the records of "miracle" healings. Located in the centre of this motley but impressive display was an illuminated picture of Mary, and a pavement shrine surrounded with burning candles. By the shrine were numerous spikes upon which, on pay-



## VINE

ment of an appropriate amount, folk could stick their candles.

### The Papal Goddess

We discovered that Mary is regarded as solely responsible for all the healings recorded. She had no lack of devotees while we stood there, for many passers-by—chiefly women—stopped, bowed before the shrine, and passed on their way. Our hearts were deeply stirred by this idolatry, yet we felt not a little sorry for these misguided, but no doubt very sincere, Catholics whose teachings completely belie Peter's statement that apart from Jesus Christ "there is none other name . . . given among men, whereby we must be saved." Nowhere in Rome did we see any endeavour by Catholics to uplift Christ as the only Saviour of men. Such is the effect of their teaching, that far greater love is lavished on the papal goddess, Mary, and far more prayers are offered to her, than Christ. She is represented as a mediator whose ministry, sympathy, and understanding, are far superior to that of Christ's. Yet the Bible states that the dead, including Mary the mother of Jesus, are inactive, unconscious, inanimate, and that they silently await the awakening call of the great Life-giver at His second advent. (Eccles. 9:5, 6; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.)

### "Burnt Siena"

Proceeding along the ancient Via Flaminia, we headed north toward Viterbo. Three miles out we saw a sign pointing to Nero's tomb, but we felt we'd seen enough of tombs and relics to pass this one by. A few more miles and

Photo by R.D.V.  
Savonarola's cell seen from  
the cloisters of St. Mark's  
convent.

we passed two cyclists heading for Rome, and peddling laboriously in the overpowering heat. Their task would have been much lightened were it not for the weighty cross which they were struggling to carry between them.

Passing Radicofani with its lofty tower perched perilously high up on a rock overlooking the Tuscan plain, we made for Siena. Many places bore scars received during the fierce fighting of the recent war. I'd heard of "burnt Siena," and one look at those scorched, forbidding hills in the vicinity of that town, explained the term. Not a bit of green anywhere, but hills and valleys burnt brown by the blistering heat of the summer sun. We sweltered in the shade of the car; and even the occasional gusts of wind were hot—just like the first rush of heat which emerges from the opened doors of a burning oven. Yet the vines and olives—as well as the omnipresent crickets—were obviously thriving in the heat.

We were glad at last to get to Florence where we took up quarters in an Adventist college beautifully located on the outskirts. A cold showerbath and a refreshing meal of iced melon and cool salad soon restored our spirits and—to some extent—our vigour.

Florence has enjoyed a unique and honourable history, especially as a centre and promoter of art and learning. But possibly none of her "products" have resulted in more blessing and good to mankind than that dazzling firebrand



of the fifteenth century, Girolamo Savonarola.

We visited the convent of St. Mark which he entered as a Dominican monk; we visited the cell where he prepared his soul-stirring sermons; we saw, within a glass case, his Bible and sermon note-book. We visited the magnificent cathedral where he preached, and we tried—unsuccessfully—to take a photograph of the elevated rostrum from which he would deliver his incomparable sermons to great surging crowds as early as four-thirty in the morning. We saw the lofty tower of the Palazzo Vecchio where he was at last imprisoned by his enemies, and we saw the spot in the square outside, where, in 1498, he was hanged and burned—one of Christendom's noblest martyrs.

The bronze plaque marking the spot, and which was placed there as recently as 1902, frankly declares he met his end "by unrighteous sentence." Finally, we saw the river Arno from the only bridge which the retreating Germans failed to blow up during the recent war—the Ponte Vecchio, where Savonarola's ashes were cast.

Though a "son of the church" Savonarola was a true reformer, whose great concern was to purge the church of its errors and to urge upon all, both leaders and laity, the need of personal holiness.

Condemning the work of the dissolute prelates and preachers, he declared them to be "chained to the earth by love of earthly things." Their preaching, he said, was merely for "the pleasures of princes." The church which had resulted from their ministry he declared to be "built of sticks, namely, Christians dry as tinder for the fires of hell."

"Go to Rome," he declared, "and throughout Christendom; in the mansions of the great prelates . . . there is no concern save for poetry and the oratorical art. . . . In the primitive church the chalices were of wood, and the prelates of gold; in these days the church hath chalices of gold and prelates of wood."—*Sermon XXIII.*

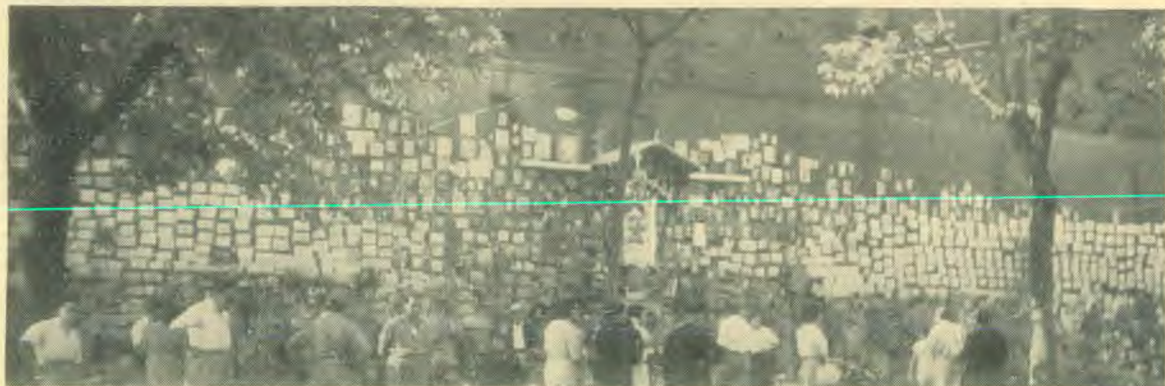
His ministry stirred the whole city of Florence and the people renounced the follies of the world.

During the later part of his life the monstrous Pope Alexander VI assumed leadership of the church. The record of his intrigues, extortions, immorality, bribes, and murders, constitutes a black page in Catholic history. Savonarola did not hesitate to rebuke this godless leader, and delivered sermon after sermon on the need for God's servants to be clean and holy. The Pope's first effort to silence and appease Savonarola was by way of offering him a cardinal's red hat. This was promptly spurned. Excommunication speedily followed, but to the end the intrepid monk fearlessly proclaimed the will of God to the crowds which never failed to hear him.

Finally the government of Florence, yielding to papal pressure, took action against him, and he was condemned to be hanged and burned as a heretic. While awaiting death high in the cell of the Palace Tower, he wrote a commentary on the Psalms.

Here, indeed, was a valiant forerunner of the great reformers of the following century. Dominican monk though he was, he preached salvation by faith in Christ, declaring all papal pardons and indulgences to be worthless.

*(Continued on back page.)*



Stone plaques recording "miracle healings" at a Marian shrine in Rome.

Photo by R.D.V.

# THE MESSAGE

## OF THE

# STARS



By A. S. Maxwell

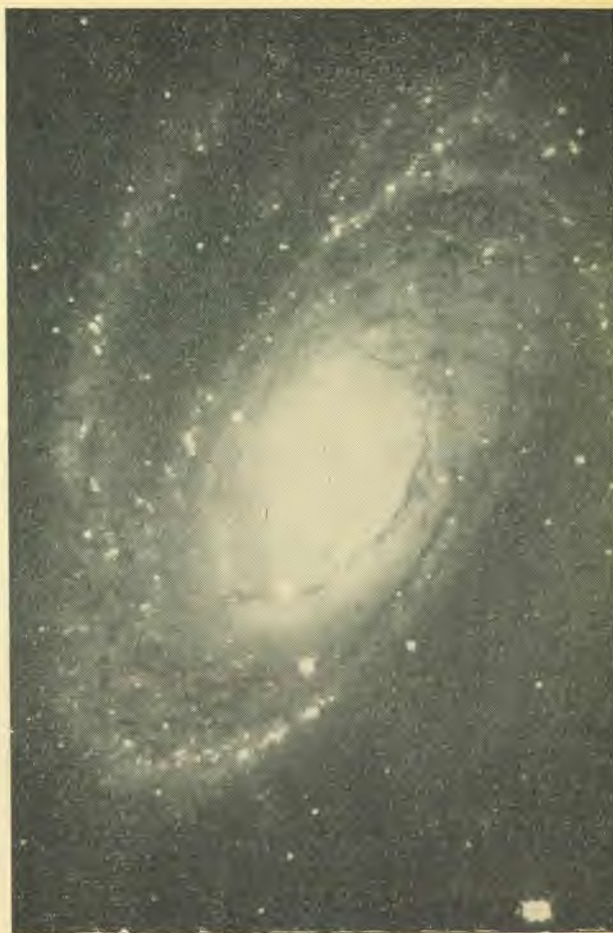
OWNERS of highly sensitive radio sets have often noticed a strange and hitherto inexplicable hissing sound coming from their sets. Some scientists have suggested that it might originate in the Milky Way; others, that it might come from even more distant regions in space. Whatever the correct explanation, it has fascinated listeners for a long time and many efforts have been made to track it down.

Recently, two British scientists, R. Hanbury-Brown and C. Hazard, built a "radio-telescope" to explore the sounds rather than the sights of the universe. The instrument—a development of radar—resembles a huge inverted umbrella, with a vertical aerial 126 feet high. Already it has "brought in" pulsations from bodies so distant that they are invisible either to the naked or the telescopic eye.

It has now been demonstrated by these two scientists that these pulsations, originating up to 750,000 light years away, combine to make the mysterious hissing sound in certain receivers.

Thus among all the amazing discoveries of the twentieth century we learn that the "silent spheres" are not so silent after all; that throughout the infinite heavens, wherever there is created matter, there is not only light and radioactivity, but sound. It is too soon, perhaps, to say we have heard the music of the spheres, but it could be so. And it could be that the sound identifies the orb! Perhaps, when we discover the code, if we ever do, we shall understand how God "telleteth the number of the stars" and "calleteth them all by names." Psa. 147:4; Isa. 40:26.

Overwhelming is the new concept which these experiments bring us of the vastness of the universe. Years ago some thought its limits were reached when the 36-inch Lick



© Fox Photos  
The spectacular spiral nebula in the constellation, Ursa Major.

telescope first swept the skies. Then the 60-inch lens on Mount Wilson brought in more stars and nebulae. Crowning all was the mighty 200-inch instrument on Mount Palomar, searching out seemingly the final fastnesses of space. But now we learn that, beyond anything that Palomar can see, indeed beyond all human vision, there are universes after universes, stars beyond stars. Their light will never reach us; only their sound tells us they are there.

Contemplating this latest revelation of the majesty of creation, one is led to cry out with the apostle Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Rom. 11:33. For, as one writer says, this "hissing of the skies" spells activity; and activity means life, and life means God.

Coming at such a time as this, when all signs point to the imminent end of the world and the second advent of Christ, this truly great discovery lends mighty emphasis to Heaven's last call to the children of men: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev. 14:7.

"Worship Him that made heaven, and earth"! Here is the world's great need to-day: for it has rejected its Creator. How we all need to think again of God, to repudiate our self-sufficiency and self-centredness and turn to Him in reverence and adoration! Surely the time has come when, once more, we should approach Him as did the psalmist of old, humbly and penitently, saying, "The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. . . . O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Psa. 95:5, 6.

Let us not delay our repentance nor our return. "Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling." He who created the universe and studded the sky with stars, who came from heaven to earth for our redemption, is eagerly awaiting our response to His final pleading. Even as the voice of the stars comes across the infinite reaches of space into our little earth-bound homes, so the voice of the Spirit comes from the heart of God into your heart and mine, whispering, "Come, . . . come, . . . whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17.

### Should Such a Faith Offend ?

*(Continued from page 5.)*

is the substance of faith and of theology."

Then in connection with our Lord's atoning sacrifice on the cross, there are over a score of predictions that were fulfilled in every meticulous detail.

#### "Intolerable" or "Blessed Hope"?

We may dismiss, then, the assumption that our Lord's return in power and glory is intolerable. It is not intolerable to the meaning of our Lord's own words. It is not intolerable to the statements of prophets and apostles regarding the splendour and majesty that will attend His coming. It is not intolerable to the power and love of God, that His Son—whom

the world last saw hanging on a cross between two thieves—should be seen by all the tribes of mankind "coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24:30.

It may be intolerable to modern scholarship to believe in such a coming. It may be intolerable to unbelief and materialism to accept such a termination to this world's affairs; but to the recipient of God's grace, it is both reasonable and desirable, that we look "for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13.

The Hebrew church committed a fatal error in the closing days of its dispensation by confusing the prophecies of our Lord's first advent and those of His second coming. The leaders preferred to fix their attention on the glories of the coming King, and ignored the predictions of the suffering Servant of Jehovah, who would be despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. They failed to see that He would come to teach spiritual principles and suffer and be crucified. Because of this refusal to see the prophetic picture in focus, they rejected the Messiah. Jesus said: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes . . . because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Luke 19:41-44.

Will the leaders of the Christian church make a similar mistake in connection with our Lord's second coming? He came to suffer and sacrifice Himself, but His second coming is as "King of kings and Lord of lords." "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28.

May we be given grace and wisdom from above to know the time of our visitation and the things that belong unto our peace, that we may "abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." 1 John. 2:28.

### How It Happened

*(Continued from page 7.)*

they would come into line with the rest of the Græco-Roman world.

This would have many advantages. It would make the Christians less "different" from their neighbours, it would be easier for pagans to become Christians, and it would eliminate the idea that Christians were a sect of Jews and thus save them from the opprobrium of this mistaken association.

It occurred to them, too, that they could put up a good "theological" case for the change, for the first day was the resurrection day and it was surely more important to give emphasis to the truth of the resurrection by the weekly observance of the first day than merely to celebrate the creative work of God by keeping the seventh day?

These ideas appealed to many to whom sacrifice was beginning to become irksome and, as a result, the observance of Sunday, which the church historian Neander has called "only a human ordinance," established itself in the church.

#### Resultant Diversity of Practice

There was, of course, reticence on the part of many to make so revolutionary a change and history reveals a variety of practices in different Christian communities. Some regarded the change as unjustifiable and contrary to Scripture—which it certainly was—and continued to observe the seventh day "according to the commandment." Others kept both Sabbath and Sunday, while still others gave up Sabbath observance altogether and kept only Sunday.

As the centuries passed, and the church became more worldly and compromising, Sunday-keeping became more prevalent and Sabbath observance became a real test of loyalty to the true faith.

When the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great became a Christian and in A.D. 321 decreed Sunday observance upon all his subjects, Christian and pagan, the scales were further weighted against the true Sabbath.

#### Rome Settles the Issue

Finally, in the fourth century, the church of Rome began to assert itself and to claim headship over the whole Christian church. Among the multiplicity of acts by which that apostate church began to lord it over the other churches was a series of edicts at the Councils of Sardica (A.D. 345), Laodicea (about A.D. 364), Carthage (A.D. 401), and elsewhere, expressly forbidding, under dire penalties, the observance of the seventh day as the seventh-day Sabbath, and commanding the observance of Sunday. In this way the apostate church of Rome clearly revealed itself as the antichristian power which would arise, as Daniel prophetically declared, and seek "to change times and the law." Dan. 7:25, R.V.

#### The Light That Never Went Out

Despite the dastardly ways by which Rome enforced her ecclesiastical decrees, the light of the Sabbath truth, as also of other cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, never went out completely, and in the Reformation movement which resulted in the great break-away from Rome in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it began gradually to emerge again out of obscurity.

Luther is remembered for his rediscovery of "justification by faith."

The reformers who followed emphasized the perpetuity of the divine law as the basis of Christian conduct, and righteousness by faith as the criterion of Christian living.

Finally, a restudy of the great Ten Commandment code led to the exposure of the blasphemous "change" of the fourth commandment and the recovery of the true seventh-day Sabbath of God. And to-day hundreds of thousands of Christian Sabbath-keepers in many lands are "remembering" their Creator and Redeemer on the day of His appointing, and receiving the spiritual blessing which God graciously promised in its hallowed hours.

*Listen to*

## VOICE OF PROPHECY PROGRAMME

RADIO LUXEMBOURG (1,293 metres)

Every Tuesday at 4.15 p.m. (G.M.T.), and Friday at 11 p.m.

# THE CHILDREN'S Pages



## The Blind Pony That Was Healed

By Mrs. Ray Vinnard

FLOYD had wanted a pony for a long time. One day he said to his mother: "Mother, although I have asked Jesus so many times, I never get a pony. Why doesn't He send me one?"

His mother told him that Jesus had many ways of answering our prayers. She told him to be patient, and to keep on praying. In the meantime he was to save his threepences and sixpences for a pony. His father would give him money each week for milking two cows every evening. That would help a lot.

Floyd paid tithe (that is, he gave a tenth of all the money he received for his tasks to God), and his savings seemed to increase the faster. He was very happy when he had his first pound saved. He kept right on working and putting his money away. Then one day he heard of a pony a man was going to sell for three pounds. Floyd had now saved just this amount, so he took the money, and with his father, mother, and three sisters, went to see the pony.

When they reached the place where the pony was, the man who owned it said: "Oh, you will not want this pony

for the children. It is going blind. That is why I'm selling it so cheap."

Floyd rode the pony. After his parents had talked with the owner, they thought maybe if they had the growth cut off the pony's eye, it could see better.

Floyd didn't have money enough to buy a higher-priced pony, and he wanted this one so badly that they decided to take it home with them, and see if they could cure its eyes. They felt that Jesus was able to help them, and they prayed and asked Him to do so.

They put castor oil on the pony's eyes, and one week later it was able to see. They were very thankful to Jesus, for He helped them to find a pony, and then healed its eyes.

The man who sold the pony was much surprised to hear that the pony could see, and that one could not notice that anything had been wrong with the eyes.

Now other people want to buy Floyd's pony; but he won't sell it, for he loves it very much. He and his sisters have a great deal of fun riding the pony. Floyd knows that Jesus really answered his prayers.

## Tommy's Tithe

TOMMY, the little five-year-old grandson of Mrs. Brooks, was busy in his play one afternoon while Mrs. Collins was giving a Bible study to his grandmother. In the course of the study, Mrs. Collins told about a little box in which she kept her tithe money. And Tommy heard her.

### Sunbeams All!

By Stanley Combridge

Silently the dewdrops glisten  
When the day has just begun.  
Until all the grass, like silver,  
Sparkles in the rising sun;  
Not until the sun is hidden,  
Do they cease to brightly shine,  
But sometimes a cloud arises,  
Then their sparkles soon decline.  
Every child should be a "Sunbeam"  
Shining out both near and far,  
Always gleaming like the dew-drop  
Bright and glist'ning as a star;  
Making sunshine all around them,  
Even in the darkest place,  
Shedding joy and love and laughter  
Never with a clouded face!  
Always let these thoughts remind you,  
As along life's road you stray;  
Live for others—lift their burdens,  
Do a kindly act each day,  
Living not for self, but others,  
Is the "Sunbeam's" only way.

That evening when Tommy's daddy came home from work, the little fellow ran to him and said, "Daddy, I want you to make me a box."  
"What sort of box do you want, son?" asked Daddy.  
"I'll show you, Daddy," came the solemn reply.

When the box was finished, he asked for his bank, and took out all his pennies. He couldn't

count to one hundred, but he could count to ten. Then he took the top penny from each pile and put it in the box his daddy had made for him. The box had a tight cover on it, and Tommy had his daddy write on that cover, "This is Jesus' money; do not steal." —Selected.

## Your Letter

My dear Sunbeams,

Now I must keep my promise to you all to mention some of the many interesting letters I have received. At the time my letter goes to the press, thirty Sunbeams have written this year. Thank you to the loyal members of our band. Where are all the others?

My first letter for the New Year was from Rita Moss of Southampton. Thank you, Rita, for your good wishes and I am sure you will be a very bright Sunbeam every day.

A very well written letter came from Margaret Moden of Whitechurch, near Bristol. I am so glad you had such a lovely time during the holidays. Christmas seems a long way behind now. I am sure all will be happy to accept Margaret's good wishes.

Now I must thank Valerie Watson of Thornton Heath for the very nice photo she sent to me. Yes, Valerie, I too am very glad that spring is on the way.

My congratulations go to Olwen Ashman of Bath, for her success at school. Your report was excellent, Olwen. Well done! It was very nice to hear from you again and to know you are enjoying the Bible studies. We can never know too much about God's Word, can we?

A good letter came one day from Stirling where Barbara Drummond was staying for the holidays. It was very nice of you to write to me while away from home, Barbara, I do hope your little sister is quite better. I expect you had some lovely times at all those parties! I hope you didn't eat too much!

I was very glad to hear that Elizabeth Ball of Bere Ferrers had received her prize. I was happy to know that you

liked my choice for you. Thank you for your good wishes.

Have any of the Sunbeams seen a bird which has lost a leg? Pauline Seward of Feltham has written saying that she has a chaffinch with only one leg which visits her bird table regularly. I am sure you will look after it well, Pauline. I wonder how long it has been lame?

Now I wonder if you could tell me where to find a verse in the Bible in which God has left on record His wish for you and me to pay a tithe (or a tenth) of all we receive?

I will tell you where to look! In the third book of the Bible called Leviticus, read from chapter 27, verse

## Things I Want To Do

I want to do the things  
That God would have me do.  
Not just for days or weeks,  
But all my whole life through.

I want to speak the words  
That He would have me say.  
And to be sweet and kind,  
At school, at work, or play.

Each day I ask that God  
Will guide my feet aright,  
And always keep my soul  
Clean and pure and white.

—Selected.

30. There it is written that the "tithe . . . is holy unto the Lord." Then you could find the last book of the Old Testament called Malachi. There in chapter 3, verse 10, you will read: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, . . . and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

You know, Sunbeams, God never breaks a promise, and I hope that as you paint or crayon our picture you will remember that Jesus wants you to be loyal and true, because He wants to bless you ALWAYS.

Yours affectionately,

AUNTIE EVA.

## Welcome to Our New Sunbeams!

4919 Gloria J. Snowden, 4920 Valerie M. Hastings, 4921 Doris Baker, 4922 Jeffery Heath, 4923 Roger M. Smith, 4924 John Parker, 4925 Joan Sanderson, 4926 Shirley Stocking, 4927 Evelyn H. Potter.

## Results of Competition No. 26

*Prize-winners.*—Caroline Catto, 17 Fuller Way, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, Herts, Age 10; Veronica Law, 26 Denholm Street, Greenock, Scotland, Age 8.

*Honourable Mention.*—David Shooter (Colne); Heather McMillan (Watford); Roger Smith (Southampton); Howard J. Tilly (Bournemouth); Kenneth Williams (Newcastle); Barbara Manison (Erdington); Valerie Freeman (Sutton); Joy Humphries (Ledbury); Siegfried Baron (Church); Pearl Rich (Launceston); Richard Lloyd (Woodmansterne); Jelda Sleeman (Torquay).

*Those who tried hard.*—Gloria Snowden (Beccles); Derek Kerr (Edinburgh, 9.); Maureen Smith (Coventry); Patricia Swinhoe (Billingham); Olive King (Chelmsford); Janet Beard (Chelmsford); Annie Wood (Orkney); Brenda Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Jeanette Sayers (Sompting); Kenneth Sweeting (Rickmansworth); Barbara Digings (London, S.E.12.); Ronald Wick (Sandwick); Maureen Woodman (Southampton); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Susan Lloyd (Woodmansterne); David Baker (Spilsby); Molly Rich (Launceston); John Rich (Launceston); Ann Cable (Beccles); Doreen Evans (Enfield Wash); Eleonore Baron (Church); Patricia Tyrrell (Manchester, 15.); Hazel Harris (Cambridge).

## The Bible and OUR TIMES

(Formerly "Present Truth")

Vol. 67, No. 4. Price 3d.  
Printed and published in Great Britain fortnightly on Thursday by

THE STANBOROUGH PRESS LTD.,  
WATFORD, HERTS.

EDITOR: W. L. EMMERSON  
Six months ..... 5/6 post free  
(Outside U.K. 6/- post free)  
Twelve months ..... 8/6 post free  
(Outside U.K. 9/6 post free)



See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Auntie Eva, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than March 8th.

# STRAWS IN THE WIND

## APOCALYPTIC FIRES

PREACHING at the Baptist World Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, Dr. Culbert G. Rutenber said of the present world: "World disaster is cast in a setting of Wagnerian proportions. Apocalyptic fires light the horizon and thunder and lightning tear the heavens. We are spectators of catastrophe on a global scale."

## WORLD STRENGTH OF PROTESTANTS

In a recent issue of the *British Weekly* the world strength of various Protestant denominations was given as follows: "The Anglicans claim 9,000,000, Methodists 30,000,000, Baptists 13,000,000 (communicants only), the Reformed Churches (Presbyterian) 60,000,000, and Lutherans 70,000,000."

## Have We Evolved or Fallen?

(Continued from page 3.)

have been which were the parents of the first man, could not have produced his rational, immortal soul. . . . The false philosophy which regards the phenomenon of evolution as a sufficient explanation of the creative process which has produced the hierarchy of life and intelligence as we know it, is as irrational as it is incompatible with Christianity."

What muddled thinking is this! This "Christian evolutionist" is prepared to accept the word of certain scientists, actually without evidence, against the Bible on the question of the origin of species, while at the same time he is ready to take the word of the Bible, which a moment before he rejected as unworthy of acceptance, against the further conclusions of

the scientists whose word he earlier was prepared to receive in perfect trust!

Now obviously you can't have it both ways. If the Bible is right that there is a transcendent God who gave life and mind and intelligence to all creatures upon earth, including man, it is not unreasonable to accept the Bible statement that He also created all the major forms of life "after their kind," especially as the evolutionists have been able to produce no more tangible evidence for the transmutation of species than they have for the origin of life or mind.

## The Firebrand of Florence

(Continued from page 10.)

He denied the Pope's supremacy, and declared him to be the Antichrist of Bible prophecy. He denied too, that Peter was given the keys of the kingdom, proving from the Bible that they were given to the universal church. His preaching on the great prophecies and doctrines was almost identical with the positions held by Adventists to-day.

The merciless bishop who stood by as the death sentence was declared, said; "I separate thee from the church militant and the church triumphant." "Not from the church triumphant," replied the martyr; "that is not thine to do."

Standing by that bronze plaque I felt I was on hallowed ground. I somehow felt that my own desire to triumph ultimately with God's true church, had been strengthened and stimulated by the brave example of this mighty firebrand of Florence.

(Concluding Article: "After Darkness—Light.")

