



THE BIBLE AND



OUR TIMES



To the uttermost corners of the earth the Gospel of Christ has won its way.

© Three Lions

Why I Am a Christian

By E. W. H. Vick

SOME people have the idea that to be a Christian involves taking a course of action that cannot be reasonably or satisfactorily justified by the laws of the mind. In other words, that on becoming a Christian one has to lay aside the dictates of reason and with pious prejudice accept things which one could not ordinarily believe.

This, however, is the very opposite of the truth.

"Come now, and let us reason together" is God's own invitation. (Isa. 1:18.) The act of accepting the basic facts of Christianity is entirely reasonable. God does not ask for blind acceptance, but gives ample evidence to aid in establishing the confidence of the believer.

The appeal of Christianity is two-fold. It appeals to the mind and to the heart. Jesus

said: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself." John 7:17.

Our plea is that we re-examine the ground on which our Christianity rests, so as to be sure that we know why we believe as we do. The key-text of the Christian apologist recommends such an exercise: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." 1 Peter 3:15.

It Satisfies the Heart

The greatest evidence of the truth of Christianity is found in the personal experience. In the light of that, other reasons seem weak. Therefore that shall be first.

1. Christianity satisfies the heart: this per-

sonal experience is the greatest evidence of its truth.

You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.

There is a point beyond which argument is totally unavailing. The effectiveness of a preacher is proportionate to his appeal to the mind through logic and to the heart through his own experience and emotions. One cannot describe in words the taste of luscious fruit. One must taste to know. "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." Psa. 34:8.

One can be assured that the experience of the Christian is not superfluous because of the basis on which it rests. An emotional experience without reason is contemptible. The basic Gospel facts mentioned above are the grounds for the Christian's experience. While the depth of a believer's contact with Jesus is not determined by the extent of his knowledge, nevertheless that experience depends on knowing those simple facts. One does not have to know history or Greek to have this experience: but one does have to know Jesus.

2. The basis of Christianity is in a Person who still lives.

Abu Bekr, the first Caliph, successor to Mohammed, spoke these very noble words upon the death of his revered leader. He stooped down and having kissed the cold face said: "Dear to me as my father wert thou. Sweet wert thou in life and sweet art thou in death." Then he strode out to the excited crowd saying: "Whoso worshippeth Mohammed, let him know that Mohammed is dead. But whoso worshippeth God, let him know that God liveth and dieth not."

Christianity is an historical religion; in this way it is different from all other religions, because it is based on historical facts concerning the person of its Founder. By saying this we affirm that its Teacher is both its moral example and also an energizing power in men's hearts enabling them to follow that example. This is a strong line of proof that Christianity is superior to other religions. Christianity is based on facts which can be proved—other religions are based on moral teaching.

Take away the Christ from Christianity and it falls. There is no Christianity without Christ because He is a present power as well as a figure in history. Likewise, there is no

true Christian without both the knowledge of what Christ taught and also the power by which He lived. Unbiased inquiry and resolute practice are both necessary.

It Satisfies the Mind

3. Christianity satisfies the mind, thus providing the foundation for its satisfying the heart.

By believing, I have a full and satisfying explanation of life. Christianity enables me to see life and to see it wholly. It explains the world to me. More than that it directs life, being both chart and rudder, explanation and guide.

We are not asked, however, to accept the facts without evidence. There is the witness of prophecy, of which history is but the unrolled scroll; the witness of nature to the existence of a God such as the Christian describes; the modern science of archæology provides confirmatory evidence of the fundamentalist's attitude to the Bible; and the crowning evidence is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The teachings of Christianity are consistent one with the other, connected to form a master-structure of impregnable truth. This consistency is an astonishing evidence.

A Faith that Works

4. Its influence in the world.

If "by their fruits ye shall know them" is a valid test, Christianity is true. Converted infidels have spent lives of service in missionary work, drunkards have become sober; the profligate pure; hard natures have become kind; nations practising its principles have experienced greatness.

5. Under opposition it has flourished.

Sceptics have attempted by argument and ridicule to undermine the influence of the Bible. The shifting sands of destructive criticism have done nought but demonstrate their fallibility and inconsistency. Persecution has purified Christianity. The wicked injustice of papal Rome during the Dark Ages brought into relief the virility of apostolic Christianity.

What Is the Alternative?

G. K. Chesterton said: "The way to appreciate a thing is to realize that it may be lost." Without our faith there are three alternatives:

1. Accept one of the other world religions.

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The Finished WORK OF CHRIST

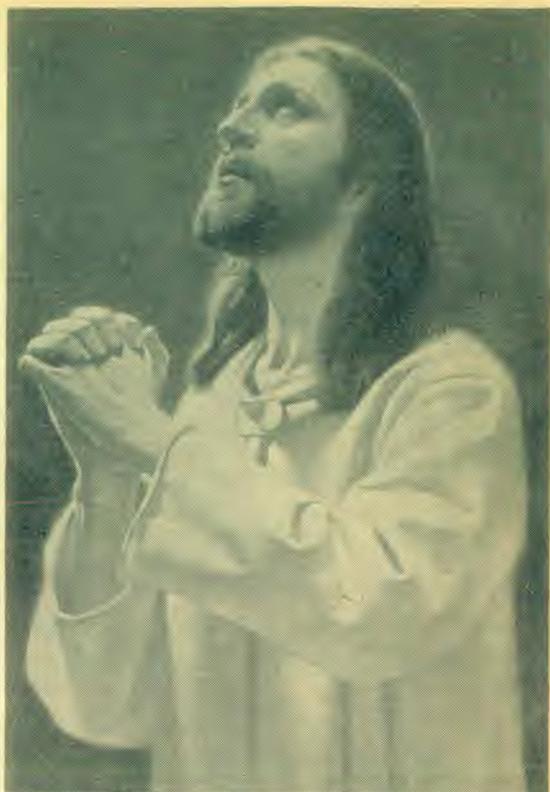
By J. A. McMillan

I KNOW that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before Him." Eccles. 3:14.

There are three great undertakings that display the perfection of God in Christ. These are creation, redemption, and glorification. The finished work of Christ in each of these great events reveals His oneness with the Father and inspires our complete confidence in Him as the Saviour of the world.

The Finished Work of Creation

Nothing is more clearly taught in the New Testament than the fact that Jesus was united with the Father in creation. John testifies that "all things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." John 1:3. He adds: "The world was made by Him." Verse 10. Paul corroborates this in writing that "by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Col. 1:16, 17. The pre-eminence of Christ is thus clearly established in the New Testament church. His name is to be seen on all created things. He is worthy of all adoration, testify the angelic hosts, being worthy "to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy



By L. Heupel

"Thy will be done."

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pleasure they are and were created." Rev. 4:11.

We read of creation's beauty and splendour in the earliest inspired records. "And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." Gen. 1:31. Fenton translates this text: "And God gazed upon all that He had made, and it was very beautiful."

And in this physical and biological expression of God's love and grace Jesus shared, for "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." Heb. 1:1, 2.

The Scriptures are explicit that this combined operation on the part of the Godhead was finished in six days. There is no ambiguity on this point in the Bible. If we find it credible to believe in creation at all, if we assume that God is able to create—then we must accept it as axiomatic that He could create in six days as easily as in six millenniums.

Creation then is a finished work of Christ, and to commemorate this wondrous fact, the Lord gave man the Sabbath day. This day

was made by Christ of the very same elements as the other days of creation week. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made." Gen. 2:1, 2. The New Testament calls our attention to this fact that "the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works." Heb. 4:5, 4. And the lesson is drawn from this truth that "there is a Sabbath-Rest, then, reserved still for the people of God (for once a man enters His rest, he rests from work just as God did.)" Heb. 4:9 (Moffatt).

This is the reason given by God that we should "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. . . . For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exod. 20:8-11. This is also the reason underlying the claim made by Jesus. "And He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark 2:27, 28. As Christian believers we should cherish the Sabbath as a memorial of Christ's finished work of creation.

The Finished Work of Redemption

Because of sin it became necessary for the Son of God to come to earth. He came to share our nature, to enter into our trials and temptations, to bring God nigh to our comprehension, but above all, to die in our stead. And the efficacy of atoning sacrifices was consummated on the cross. As Jesus yielded up His soul, a sacrifice for sin, He cried out: "It is finished; and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." John 19:30. Thus was brought to a glorious fulfilment the sacrifices and oblations that had been offered by penitent sinners for generations. (Dan. 9:27.) It is the priceless privilege of every sinner "to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." Heb. 10:19, 20. Accepting His sacrifice as the fulfilment of all the typical offerings of the Levitical system, we may "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 2:5. This work of redemption cannot be added to, nor taken from, without marring its divine perfection.

"I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all, and frees me
From the accursed load."

"'Lifted up' was He to die,
'It is finished!' was His cry;
Now in heaven exalted high:
Hallelujah! What a Saviour."

The Finished Work of Glorification

The love of God has been displayed in creation, and demonstrated on the cross, but it will reach its consummation at the second coming of Christ. The book of Revelation—concerned with the working out of God's purposes with the church and the world consequent upon the redemptive work of Christ on Calvary—declared that "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets." Rev. 10:7.

The Gospel of God's grace is sounding to the uttermost parts of the earth. In every generation it has been preached to "the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name." Acts 15:14. When the number of the redeemed has been fully made up, the divine decree will announce, "It is done." Rev. 16:17. Fenton renders it, "All is over." Jesus will come to claim His own—all who have accepted Him as Saviour and Lord—and they will dwell with Him in the everlasting habitations.

Dear reader, consider the love of Him to whom you owe your creation, redemption, and preservation. To you He says, "My son, give Me thine heart." Will you not now surrender your will to do His will, that you may be numbered among the redeemed, and owned and glorified by Jesus when He comes as King of kings and Lord of lords? By the teaching of His Word, by the appeal of His Spirit, by the atoning sacrifice of His Son, God predestines you to salvation. "Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." Rom. 8:30. You can give Him your heart and life "being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will finish it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:6 (margin).

GOD'S "TEN WORDS"

By Kenneth A. Elias

IN all the ages of mankind, one document written by the hand of the Infinite God, and one document only, has come into human hands. If for this reason alone, then, the Ten Commandments are worthy of our earnest consideration.

There on Mount Sinai, God handed to Moses a transcript of His divine character. He handed to men, not a museum piece, unique as indeed the engraving was, but rather a vital challenge. "Keep these precepts," He said in effect, "and thou shalt live happily and eternally. Break them, and thou shalt die."

It is by no means surprising then, to find that faithfulness to these commandments is one of the three characteristics demanded of aspirants to the kingdom of God. "Here is the patience of the saints:" declared the Revelator, "here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12.

Now, the last part of this statement has received considerable attention from Christian expositors, and rightly so. The truth is found in the faith, or teachings, of Jesus, and only by following the truth can men be transformed into saints of God and fitted for life everlasting.

Search out the faith of Jesus, however, and the importance of commandment-keeping will be immediately apparent, for Jesus taught and kept these divine precepts. It is surely right then, that we who seek for the kingdom of God, should duly consider these vital principles delivered to man on Sinai. This we propose to do in the next few issues of this journal.

A Comprehensive Code

By way of introduction, notice the all-inclusive coverage of the ten precepts. To imagine that they merely point out, and condemn, ten of the most heinous sins common to man, is to belittle them indeed. In actuality they condemn every form of sin to which humanity is heir. There is no sin, no matter what its nature, but does not violate one or more of the Ten Commandments. What a model of conciseness the moral code is!

Clearly the complete abandonment of sin is vital to man's salvation. Sin is like twitch-

grass—leave one tiny bit in the garden of the soul, and it will grow and multiply until, inevitably, all fruitful growth is ruined.

This danger was recognized, and provided for, in the Passover supper of the Old Testament. The instruction to Israel was clear and definite. "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread . . . shall be cut off from Israel," Exod. 12:15. Leaven, of course, represents sin, and in this way the people of God were taught how all-important it was to sweep evil completely from their lives as they set out on their journey to the promised land.

Another recurring illustration was woven into the ritual of the priesthood as they ministered in the sanctuary. Before coming on duty they had bathed themselves completely according to instruction, but nevertheless, before entering into the holy place they were required to wash their feet once more. Thus was emphasized the absolute cleanliness of body and spirit required of those who would enter into the presence of God. The New Testament counterpart of this interesting symbolism, is found in the feet washing with which Jesus introduced the communion service. In all ages then, before the cross or after it, complete victory over sin has been necessary for salvation.

Obviously it is impracticable to list every sin to which man is subject. God therefore has given us a skeleton framework into which each transgression fits. The Ten Commandments are a summary of the divine principles which govern life and happiness. Our task is to examine each one that an idea of their breadth of coverage can be seen.

Divine Propitiation for Sin

It really does surprise many in this "dispensation of grace," to see how the Bible underlines the importance of the law. The wise man declares: "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Further, he gives the reason for his counsel: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, . . . whether it be good or whether it be

evil." Eccles. 12:13, 14. It is by the standard of the law of God that man's actions will be judged. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." James 2:12.

Knowing the hopeless position of man in that judgment, God has provided him with an Advocate and a Substitute. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins: and . . . of the whole world." 1 John 2:1, 2.

This redeeming work of Christ takes two forms, both connected with the law. First, He died to atone for our sins of the past, the sins that we are powerless to do anything about; and secondly, He arose to give us power to overcome the temptations that beset us from day to day. Calvary, surely, is the strongest proof possible of the enduring nature of the law. Had it been possible for that law to have been done away with, Christ need never have died. It was to maintain the all-important rule of law, and yet grant salvation to the repentant sinner, that Jesus our Saviour went to the cross.

Again, His very name reveals our Saviour's mission. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Matt. 1:21. But "sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. That is, Jesus came primarily to this earth to stop people transgressing the law. How foolish it is then to claim that Jesus did away with the law. His whole mission was to make man "at one" with the commandments, for thus only could he be restored to the image of God. Clearly then, the Gospel is the law made possible through Jesus Christ.

Lastly, the importance of the Ten Commandments was by no means undermined after the resurrection. From "the right hand of His Father" Jesus sent a "revelation" to the apostle John. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, . . ." that is, those who break God's commandments. (Rev. 22:14, 15.)

"Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

(To be continued.)

Why I Am a Christian

(Continued from page 3.)

2. Be willfully and woefully indifferent.
3. Think we can know nothing.

Without the hope that Christianity brings, life would be a measureless ocean, uncharted, insecure.

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." John 14:6. Jesus' character is the criterion for the truth of these words. Because I accept them as true, because my Christian faith does not conflict with the claims of my mind, because, on the contrary, it brings wealth free and satisfaction unlimited; security on a solid basis, I am a Christian.



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Moses receives the tables of the divine law on Sinai's mount.

CROSSING the Jordan by the Allenby Bridge we set foot for the first time in what was then the Mandated Territory of Transjordan. In 1946 this region was given its independence and became the Kingdom of Transjordan under the recently-assassinated Emir Abdullah. As a result of the Arab-Jewish war, however, the Emir's authority was pushed across the Jordan and the Kingdom of the Jordan now extends right up to and including the old city of Jerusalem.

Here on the "other side" of Jordan we found ourselves on an undulating green plain some ten miles long from the Wady Nimrah in the north to the north-eastern shores of the Dead Sea in the south and reaching some five miles back to the foothills of the mountains of Moab. Now called Seisaban, this was the ancient plain of Abel-shittim or the plain of Moab where the Israelites made their final camp before crossing over the river to Gilgal.

Besides bringing that momentous occasion back to mind, my setting foot upon this plain recalled a question which has long puzzled Bible students, namely the location of the "cities of the plain" where Lot foolishly settled and from which he was only saved alive by a merciful divine intervention.

Location South of the Dead Sea Unlikely

The archaeologists have produced two attempted solutions to the problem. One is that the "plain" with its "cities" lay to the south of the Dead Sea and that their ruins are now covered by the shallow reed-covered waters there.

In favour of this view was the existence in Roman times at that end of the lake of a city called Segor, which sounds something like the biblical Zoar (Gen. 19:22, 25, 30), and that a mountain to the south-west is called Jebel Usdum (or Sodom).

Topographical surveys further indicated that a Roman road ran down from Moab to the shore of the peninsula of Lisan which protrudes into the lake, presupposing shallow water and a ford in earlier days. Periodic soundings of the lake likewise seemed to



The city of Jericho was no doubt typical of the

Where

"CITIES OF

By W. L.

suggest that the lake had, during historic times, become progressively deeper.

Finally, an R.A.F. pilot during World War I actually claimed to have glimpsed through the usually scum-covered waters at the southern end the ruins of a town beneath the surface.

More recent investigations, however, by an American expedition under Dr. Albright have cast grave doubts upon all this seemingly good evidence. In the first place the town of Segor proved to be no older than Roman times; certainly it did not go back to the days of Abraham. The name Jebel Usdum was found to



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ities of the Plain" on the other side of the Jordan.

Were the

THE PLAIN"?

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have been applied to that particular mountain only in comparatively recent times. And the geologists have agreed that while the size of the Dead Sea has in the past been enlarged by natural catastrophes, these were much earlier than the days of Abraham and that its area has probably not changed in historic times.

"The [Southern] basin," stated P. Koepfel, following an examination in the spring of 1951, "could not have been formed by the action of the water during the 2,000 years which separate Abraham from the Christian era. Although less deep than that of the Northern, the basin

of the Southern dates from prehistoric times."

"This conclusion," comments Père Mallon, "has been adopted by M. Picard, geologist of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and by the German geologist Blankenhorn," who stated in a letter to Père Mallon: "I completely agree with you that this part of the lake, with the terraces and deltas of the Eastern shore, goes back more than 4,000 years." —Quoted in the "Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement," January, 1952.

Were They at the Northern End?

For these reasons opinion has since reverted to what was actually the ancient belief, that the plain where the cities lay was at the northern end of the Dead Sea, that it was in fact none other than the one later known as the plain of Abel-shittim or the plain of Moab.

Naturally, therefore, as I found myself crossing this historic plain, I could not fail to review the evidence for this more probable view.

That this whole valley of Jordan north of the Dead Sea was a populous region in the second millennium B.C. has been fully established by the discoveries of recent years. Dr. Albright, Père Mallon, Professor Melvin Grove Kyle, and latest of all, Dr. Nelson Glueck, have shown that this period was actually the hey-day of a highly developed civilization in the Jordan Valley, and one of the richest that Palestine ever saw.

Along the east side of the valley, Dr. Glueck found no fewer than seventy ancient sites, while the fertility of the valley in that early day must indeed have made it a veritable "garden of the Lord." Gen. 13:10.

These city sites, Dr. Glueck noted, while common north of the Dead Sea, are practically absent along the shores of the lake where, by reason of the mountains dropping precipitately down to the water's edge, there never was much fertile land. He likewise found the evidence of ancient civilization around the south end of the sea quite insignificant and indicative of no such large settlements as the Bible record requires.

This then would suggest that the cities are to be looked for north and not south of the Dead Sea.

Again, in the Bible story we find that Abraham and Lot were camped between Bethel and Ai when, looking down into the valley, they saw the fertile "plain of Jordan" extending

until "thou comest unto Zoar," Gen. 13:10.

From this viewpoint on the Judean hills, Abraham and Lot would be able to see as far as the northern end of the Dead Sea with its encircling mountains, but their gaze could not have extended to the southern end, which would be obscured by the peninsula of Lisan which divides the lake into two. Moreover, the "plain of Jordan" could hardly be applied to the region south of the point where the river flowed into the Dead Sea.

The Raid of the Four Kings

Besides all this, it will be remembered that when the four kings from Mesopotamia swept up from the south against the cities of the plain, they came to Engedi on the west side of the Dead Sea first. Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities must, therefore, have lain to the north of Engedi; that is, in the vicinity of the Jericho and Abel-shittim plains.

Standing there on the undulating plain, with the hills of Moab on one side, the Judean plateau filling the western horizon, and the Dead Sea behind me, it all seemed very clear. Surely not far from where I was the "cities of the plain" were destroyed by the outpouring of the wrath of God.

Pin-Pointing the Ill-Fated Cities

But was it possible to pin-point the cities of the plain even more closely? I wondered.

On the plain of Moab there are actually quite a number of tells betokening ancient city sites, while in the lower foothills others mark the position of fortress towns guarding the plain against marauders descending the wadies from the plateau above. We passed close by the most northerly of these latter as we followed the modern road toward the hills.

This was Tell Nimrim, the site of ancient Beth-Nimrah, the stream flowing near by being, no doubt, the "waters of Nimrim," which Jeremiah mentions as near to Zoar. (Jer. 48:34.)

Further to the south Tell Hamman (Abel-shittim) guards the way down the Wady Kefrein, Tell Iktanu (Beth-haran) the descent from Wady er Rameh, and Tell Azeimeh (Beth-jeshimoth) the Wady Azeimeh.

Location of Zoar

Merrill, the American traveller, years ago, suggested that Tell Iktanu may derive its name

from *katan*, meaning "little one." This connected it in his mind with Zoar, which was spared by God because of Lot's plea that it was but a "little one." Gen. 19:20.

Birch and Conder, on the other hand, have pointed out the similarity of the name Zoar with Tell Shagur, which also means "the little."

Whether either of these identifications is correct or no, it is a fact that a number of medieval as well as Bible writers associate Zoar with this district. Ibn Hakel, for example, speaks of the Ghor of Jordan ending at Zoar and Jericho and he also refers to the "Ghor of Zoar" as being at the foot of the Heshbon Valley.

Two Sister-Towns Excavated

Down on the plain itself few of the tells have been examined more than superficially, but "two sister towns" were discovered on the mound of Teleilat Ghassul by Alexis Mallon and Robert Koeppl in 1929. There they found four levels of occupation one on top of another. The earliest was a primitive Neolithic settlement, but the second, which began its history in the fourth millennium B.C. revealed a high degree of civilization.

These cities, the excavators found, had been desolated by a violent conflagration, leaving layers of ashes succeeded by mud and other debris, leading them to suggest that they may have found the ill-fated cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

It is impossible to be certain about this, of course, as the destruction may have been the work of intruders from the east, like the kings of Genesis fourteen. At least, however, the excavation of these cities enables us to picture the kind of cities Sodom and Gomorrah were before their tragic eclipse.

Evidences of Conflagration

As to the actual cause of the biblical disaster the whole district leaves us in no doubt.

All round the Dead Sea there are extensive bitumen beds and gypsum-bearing marls impregnated with sulphur, as well as massive deposits of rock salt.

The thermal springs of Callirhoe on the east side of the Dead Sea, where Herod vainly sought restoration of health, originate in these volcanic deposits.

It thus becomes clear that God made use of

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Our Lord's Return

By T. S. Walker

It was a momentous day when the Creator of the Universe became the "Man Christ Jesus" and made Himself of "no reputation" in order that the salvation of mankind might be effected. By becoming "man" for us, He became also "Our Lord" — yours and mine. And "Our Lord" is coming back to earth one day. This He promised when one day, toward the close of His earthly ministry, He expressed Himself thus: "Let not your heart be troubled: . . . In My Father's house are many mansions: . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again. . . ." John 14:1-3.

This was a divine promise, very simply but confidently expressed. And divine promises are never broken, so that this particular promise: "I will come again" will, one day, be fulfilled. It is true that the great doctrine of the second advent—one of the major doctrines of the Bible—has been twisted and torn until its obvious intent has been well-nigh lost in a maze of man-made obscurity. Nothing has been so discredited and derided as the truth of the Lord's return. The reason for this is partly because of:

1. The pretended claims of false religionists to know the time of the return.
2. The appearance, at intervals, of spurious Christs.

But instead of discrediting the doctrine, these very falsities should but have verified it, seeing that both were referred to by the Lord Himself when He said:

1. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man." Matt. 24:36.



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2. "There shall arise false Christs." Matt. 24:24.

Yet, one must admit, that the greater part of the Christian world has long since discarded the advent truth and no longer believes in the explicit promise of the One by whose name they are called and to whom they aver allegiance. Comparatively few to-day believe implicitly in their Lord. The validity of His promise and of the factual data He gave so purposely, are now seriously questioned if not openly denied.

God's Promise Cannot Fail

When the fortunes of war in the Far East were at a low ebb and the forces of General McArthur were being overwhelmed by the Japanese, the Allied High Command decided to withdraw the general until he could recruit and train forces superior to those of the enemy. So one night, McArthur boarded a submarine

and left the Philippines, eventually arriving in Melbourne, Australia. But before he left, he revealed the plan to his men giving them the parting assurance "I will come back again." In this promise his sorely-trying men relied, as month succeeded month and one year was followed by the second, and a third year began. But sure enough, after two and a half years, a great armada arrived, under General McArthur, to relieve the besieged and clear the land of a sinister foe.

If the promise to return was honoured by McArthur, should we not expect the promise of our Lord, who has gone to prepare a great liberating movement, to be equally honoured? Surely we cannot believe that the promise of men, subject as they are to forces beyond their control, are more reliable than the promise of Him who declared: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth!"

The same indifference to the promise of the second advent by the present generation, was shown to the promise of the first advent, by the generation of that day. The promise to send a Deliverer was made to the parents of the human race in Eden and continuously reiterated by the prophetic message and priestly service throughout the days of the old dispensation. Yet, when the promise was fulfilled at Bethlehem, few were "in expectation" of His coming—a few shepherds and a few "wise men" among them. Certainly to-day, few are "in expectation" of His second coming, even though the fact and circumstances surrounding His coming are so graphically and clearly revealed in the "sure Word of prophecy."

But Our Lord *will* come, whether men look for Him or not. In fact, He *must* come, for the great and gracious work which was begun at Calvary, remains for ever incomplete, until He returns. For Christ came to restore all things, "to seek and to save that which was lost," and that included not only man himself but his lost possession.

The world too, must see Him in all His regal glory, and not as He was last seen—"brought as a lamb to the slaughter . . . oppressed . . . afflicted," and opening not His mouth. (Isa. 53.) The world must know that the plan of redemption centred in the cross was no ghastly failure. Then there was every appearance of defeat. But when He comes "the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28), it will be as "King of kings and Lord of

lords" and He will lead the armies of heaven in overwhelming power and glory to remove from the universe "root and branch," all that which is alien to the love and righteousness of the God who "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Said the prophet, in days of old: "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." To-day, Jesus is "on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him." 1 Peter 3:22. The time of waiting is God's gracious time of grace, of glorious opportunity for "whosoever will" to choose alliance with Him and be transformed and fitted for the great day of Christ's manifestation. Calvary remains to this day as a pledge to win back a lost world and save eternally, all willing peoples. The pledge remains unredeemed—until our Lord returns. Then "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord" (Rev. 11:15), and the prophet Daniel's prophecy be fulfilled: "The God of heaven [will] set up a kingdom, . . . which shall never be destroyed." Dan. 2:44.

A Real Literal Event

Our Lord loved to talk of His second advent and He always gave the impression that it would be a real, literal event, and not, as many would have us think to-day, a figurative advent. He said the world would "see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" for with Him would be "all the holy angels." Matt. 24:30; 25:31. In case this truth of a literal, personal return should be glossed over, an angel messenger was sent to re-affirm the fact on the day of our Lord's ascension. Said the angel to the disciples: "This *same* Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:11. This was the faith held by men of faith even in the dim past. The great patriarch Job, in the midst of his affliction found solace in the fact of a literal return of the Son of God when he cried: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." Job 19:25.

Already, the world has suffered far more than any dreamed possible. And if the nations are not able to compose their differences (and the most optimistic are not over-sanguine that they

will) then future trials will be almost unbearable, and the Lord's return would be a welcome event. Jesus did say that the condition of the world just before His advent would be similar to conditions already experienced—"great earthquakes . . . famines . . . pestilences . . . fearful sights; . . . men's hearts failing them for fear . . . upon the earth distress of nations *with perplexity*. . . ." (See Luke 21:10, 11, 25-28.) "When ye shall see all these things, . . . know that it [He] is near, even at the doors." Matt. 24:35.

Can we not re-echo the words of the Revelator: "Come, Lord Jesus"? For His coming will provide—on a grander and more glorious scale—what the allied armies provided for the oppressed nations of earth—liberation and freedom from the thralldom of sin and all its baneful harvest. Then there will be no more of all those things which have plagued mankind and robbed him of peace and security—no more divided loyalties, no more rivalries, no more factional strivings, but just one Government and one King and one people, all sharing the principles of righteousness. Every individual will be a saint in that kingdom, immortal and incorruptible so that righteousness will "cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

You, my friend, may be a member of that glorious inheritance, if you so desire. You may even join it to-day, while we wait for our returning Lord. May God help you so to do, is my sincere prayer.

Then O my Lord, prepare
My soul against that day,
Oh, wash me in Thy precious blood
And take my sins away.

Where Were the "Cities of the Plain"?

(Continued from page 10.)

the natural combustible materials of the Dead Sea region to bring destruction upon the wicked cities of the plain.

Perhaps we may never know just what means divine wrath took to start the conflagra-

tion, but all around are evidences that the catastrophe did occur, oil, bitumen, sulphur, and salt.

No wonder, therefore, as our car bumped over the rough road across the plain of Abelsittim, past the stony tells marking the sites of ancient towns, the early tragic history of this plain came vividly to mind.

We pictured Lot with his servants and flocks coming down from the Judean plateau, crossing the Jordan ford, and making his home first on the outskirts of Sodom and then in the city itself.

The scene changed and we saw the alarm in the valley as news of the predatory kings from the east struck terror to the hearts of the easy-going inhabitants of the plain. Over Jordan from Engedi came Chedorlaomer and his confederates, looting the cities of the plain and carrying away spoil and captives, including Lot and his family.

Hard on the heels of the retreating bands we seemed to see the followers of Abraham, catching them up on the heights of Gilead and returning the captives and their goods back to their homes on the plain.

But they soon forgot the God of Abraham, and disaster fell upon them again, from which this time there was to be no deliverance save for "righteous Lot" and his children who found temporary lodgement in Zoar — perhaps Tell Ikantu or Tell Shagur — before they moved up into the hills to become the progenitors of the Moabite nation.

To-day irrigated wheat fields extend over the once desolated plain and all there is to remind one of the ancient tragedy are the so-called apple trees of Sodom scattered among the fields with their yellow cork-like bark and brittle wood, symbols indeed of the great destruction.

With these memories of that great tragedy of long ago, we sped toward the hills on the trail of the Moabites, the Edomites—and Israel.

(Next Time: "With Moses on Nebo.")

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THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

A Good Friend Understands

By Florence D. Long

It was almost time for the last bell to ring. Nancy lagged along as if she had plenty of time, although she knew she would be late if she did not hurry. She was wearing her new blue dress and red jumper, which had been birthday gifts the week before. Even they did not make her happy.

"I don't want to go to school to-day," she grumbled to herself. "I don't want to see June. If I get there as the last bell rings, I'll not need to speak to her."

Nancy and June were chums. Usually they walked to school together. They shared their toys and special secrets, and they often played

together after school finished.

At playtime the day before, Nancy and June were skipping. June said: "My cousin Lucy is coming to my house after school. You come, too, and we can all play with our dolls."

"I'm sure Mother will let me," Nancy answered. "Mother gave me the scraps left over from this dress. I'm making a dress for my new doll, Lula Belle. I'll give you some for a dress for your doll, too."

Nancy hurried home after school and told Mother of their plans. Mother said it would be all right. Nancy picked up Lula Belle, the blue scraps, and her sewing basket.

As she ran out of the back door, she called, "Good-bye, Mother. I'll be home at five o'clock, as you told me to."

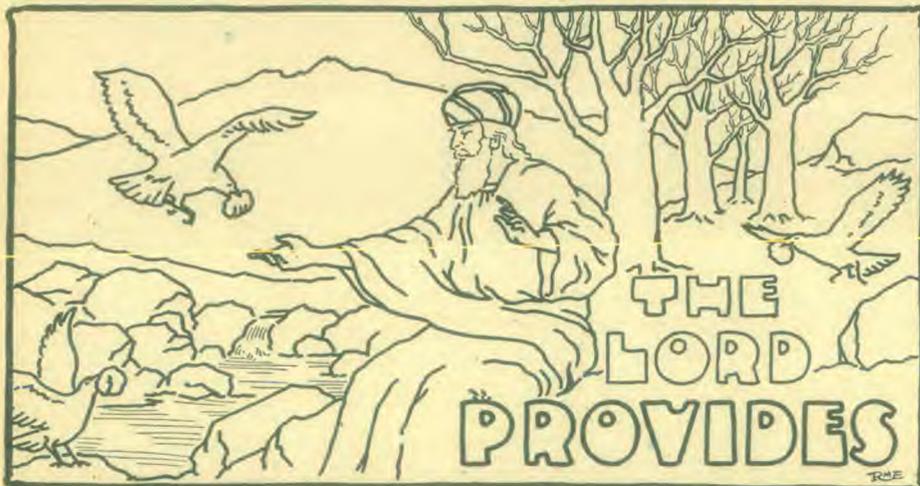
She ran to June's home and was soon ringing the door-bell, but there was no answer. She went to the back door and knocked. Still there was no answer. She called, "June, where are you?" No answer!

A disappointed and cross girl walked slowly home, holding Lula Belle in one arm and the sewing basket in the other. Her mother looked up from her sewing and said, "Nancy, dear, you did not stay long. What happened?"

"When I got to June's house, no one was there," said Nancy tearfully. "I'm cross with her, and I'll never make up."

"Think twice before you say that, dear," answered Mother. "Remember, June is your best friend. There may be a good reason why she was not at home. Wait until you find out, at least."

"I'm not going to play with her any more," pouted Nancy. What a dismal afternoon she had! She tried to sew the dress for Lula Belle, but the sleeves wouldn't go in right. She rumbled the pieces up, and put them in her sewing basket. She got her new book



See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Auntie Margaret, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than February 7th.

and tried to read; but there were too many hard words, and Mother was too busy getting supper to help her.

At bedtime when she knelt to say her prayers, her mother said, "Why not ask God to help you to be forgiving?" Nancy did not answer. That night it was not easy to talk to God.

She was still cross and unhappy the next morning. She poked a long gloomily to school. As she walked into the schoolroom, the last bell was ringing. June was in her seat, and Nancy did not look in her direction.

At play-time she hurried out into the yard without waiting for June. Soon she and Julie, another schoolmate, were playing together. As June walked toward them, Nancy looked the other way. June seemed not to notice.

She sat down beside Nancy, and said in a friendly voice: "Nancy, I am sorry about last night. When I got home from school Aunt Mary and Lucy were there. And what do you think? We had a telegram from Uncle Jim, saying he was coming from London to visit us. We had barely enough time to get to the station to meet him. His train was due in fifteen minutes.

"I knew you would come after we were gone. I wanted to telephone you, but did not have time. I told Mother you were my best friend, though; and I knew that when I explained it to you, you would understand, and not be cross with me."

Nancy turned around with a surprised look on her face. "That's all right, June," she said; "want to play with us?"

She found June waiting for her when school was over. As they walked home together, June said: "That's the nice thing about having good friends. They understand

when things go wrong, and they don't get cross."

Nancy was ashamed. She said: "I must tell you, June, I didn't understand. When I went to your house, and you were gone, I was unhappy and cross with you. I had a miserable afternoon. I'm sorry now, and after this, I'll try not to blame anyone until I know what happened. Ask your mother if you can come over to my house to-day."

"All right, I'll be there," said June. "I'm glad we're good friends."

Nancy went skipping cheerfully into the house.

"I'm glad I have a happy little girl to-day," said her mother.

"June could not help it that she was not at home when I went to her house," explained Nancy. "She had to go to the station to meet her uncle. She said she was sure I would not be cross, because good friends always understand. I was ashamed of the way I had

If! If!

If every boy and every girl,
Arising with the sun,
Should plan this year to do alone
The good deeds to be done—

Should scatter smiles and kindly
words,

Strong, helpful hands should
lend,

And to each other's wants and
cries

Attentive ears should bend—

If every man, and woman, too,
Should join these workers
small—

Oh, what a flood of happiness
Upon our earth would fall!

How many homes would sunny
be,

Which now are filled with care!
And joyous, smiling faces, too,
Would greet us everywhere.

But we, instead, oft watch to see
If other folk are true,
And thus neglect so much that
God

Intends for us to do.

—Selected.

acted. I'm going to try to be a better friend from now on."

Results of Competition No. 24

Prize-winners.—Miriam Davies, Bryn-
tet, G. Marli, Abergele, North Wales.
Age 8; Arnold Boyle, 50 Wellesley
Road, Walthamstow, London, E.17. Age
5.

Honourable Mention.—Pearl Rich
(Launceston); David Balderstone (Wat-
ford); Brenda Plant (Stoke-on-Trent);
Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Gillian
Bennett (Oldbury); Maureen Walsh
(Haywards Heath); Eleonora Baron
(Church); Kenneth Flowers (Norwich);
Ellen Heppell (Honiton Clyst); Ruth
Campion (Torquay); Gail Hilton (Ash-
ton-under-Lyne); Patricia Neal (Nor-
wich); John Rich (Launceston); Molly
Rich (Launceston); Paul Coupland
(Birmingham); Nigel Payne (Bishops
Cleeve); Richard Payne (Bishops
Cleeve); Gillian Ball (Bere Ferrers);
Richard Briffett (?).

Those who tried hard.—Vanessa Jez-
zard (Dover); Gillian Jones (Mountain
Ash); Margaret Cutler (Oldbury);
Deane Gable (London); Brenda Her-
ridge (Rickmansworth); Evelyn Sanders
(St. Austell); Albert Wagstaff (Rick-
mansworth); Peter Carter (Liverpool);
Garth Anthony (Darley Abbey); Kay
Arnold (New Addington); Barry
Castle (Bradford); John Tosh (Der-
voek); Ann Pullen (Arundel); Mar-
garet Polley (Stapleford); Andrea
Lewis (Hengoed); Brian Critcher
(Portslade); Mary Playford (Norwich);
Jennifer Stowell (London); Robin
James (New Addington); Jennifer
Harvey (Charlton Kings); Trevor
Kerry (Norwich); Christine Wilson
(Bedford); Roger Smith (Southamp-
ton); Tony Barton (Birdlip); John
Williams (Newcastle); Robert Smith
(Bishops Cleeve); Ruth Balderstone
(Watford); Pauline Chappell (Bristol);
Margaret Johnson (Rochester); Jean
Platt (Huddersfield); Ron Burton (Nor-
wich); Pearl Smith (Raynes Park);
Patricia Brown (York); Pauline Waters
(St. Leonards); Peter Harvey (Nor-
wich); Amy Randlesome (Beccles);
Gordon Hulley (Ashton-under-Lyne);
Winifred Herbert (Manchester); Keith
Rant (Norwich); Barbara Ferguson
(Blackburn); Peter Scott (Norwich);
Marion Steele (Stockport); Margaret
Forrester (Hereford); Colin Glenister
(Leicester); Jeanette Duffill (Birming-
ham); Christine Langmead (Hayes);
Paul Martine (Beccles); Siegfried
Baron (Church); Ronald Dickinson
(Middlesbrough); Shirley James (New
Addington); Christine Stockable (Lon-
don); Sheila Scragg (Bristol); Maureen
Woodman (Southampton); David
Greenwood (Rochdale); Virginia Howes
(Norwich); Jack Rand (Norwich);
Gillian Boot (Birmingham); Michael
Wright (Cheltenham).

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Straws in the Wind

REPLACING PERSIAN OIL

So rapid has been the speed-up of oil production in Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar that by 1952 supplies from the Arab side of the Persian Gulf will have completely made up the loss of production at Abadan. More than half the Persian refinery output has also been covered by other plants.

FOOD WANTED

ACCORDING to Norris E. Dodd, director-general of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, world food production will have to increase from three to four per cent every year for the next ten years if the food supply is to catch up on world needs.

FRANCE'S ILLEGITIMATES

THE French Bureau of Statistics reports that seventeen per cent of French children under fifteen years of age are illegitimate.

"KILLER" SUBS

THE first "killer" submarine to be built for the detection and sinking of enemy undersea craft has just been put into operation by the U.S. Navy.

ROME'S AIM

DR. DOWNEY, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, made the papal aim transparently clear when he

A LITTLE WHILE

Look up, ye saints of God,
For soon the Lord will come
With all the shining angel host
To take His people home.

Soon shall the trumpet sound,
The dead in Christ shall rise;
And we, if faithful, shall ascend
To meet Him in the skies.

In but a little while
All things will be fulfilled;
Then shall we see the One who is
Our Comforter and Shield.

Soon shall His kingdom come,
And sin will be no more;
Then we shall taste of joys untold
On that eternal shore.

So, let our lamps be bright,
As we with patience wait;
Then shall we ready be, at last
To enter heaven's gate.

E. E. Pratt.

said relative to the present equal division of political powers: "I hope it will [continue], because the longer it

goes on, the stronger will be our influence as a Catholic body, and I think we may yet get the balance of power."

DEAD SEA SALTS

As soon as the new road from Sodom to Beersheba is completed the Israeli government intends to resume the recovery of potash and other salts from the waters of the Dead Sea. There are salts enough in solution to supply the world's needs for centuries.

SATANISM IN LONDON

In an article in the *Empire News*, Mr. Robert Fabian, former detective superintendent of Scotland Yard, asserted: "I know that Black Magic exists because I have seen it. The practice of diabolical sacrilegious rites in the heart of London is undoubtedly on the increase."

WORLD'S HOMELESS

A Y.M.C.A. map issued in Geneva, reveals the fact that there are twelve million homeless Germans, one and a quarter million other Europeans, 850,000 Arabs, ten millions in India, five million Koreans, and unnumbered millions of Chinese.

