

The Bible and
OUR TIMES



How God Deals With SIN

By Victor H. Hall

of affection stronger than those which human parents experience for their children. How then is He to deal with us who, by sin, have forfeited His love and stand self-condemned?

He Could not Deny Himself

God could excuse sin by removing or altering the law which makes man morally guilty. (Exod. 20:1-17.) But this law was "designed to give me life." Rom. 7:10 (Weymouth). Human experience proves that disobedience to these great precepts brings suffering, misery, disease, and death, quite apart from God's moral judgment on man's guilt. It is not sufficient, therefore, for God merely to excuse man's sinfulness. To alter or remove the law would be a confession on God's part that it was imperfect, unnecessary, arbitrary; whereas Paul assures us that it is "holy, . . . just and good," a reflection of its Maker's character, which is likewise holy, just and good. (Rom. 7:12; Isa. 6:5; Deut. 32:4; Psa. 86:5.) It cannot be destroyed or changed any more than God Himself can be destroyed or changed. (Rom. 7:12; Matt. 5:17-19.)

The Way God Chose

The other method of dealing with our sin is the one which God has used. Somebody must be found who will take your place and mine and pay the penalty for our sin. In this way the guilty one can go free, legally acquitted from his guilt, and the perfection and justice of the law is upheld. In addition there must also be provided for man some great inner help to give him back his power to obey, so that sin shall not continually overcome him and separate him from his Father—God.



By J. Aubert © Braun et Cie
The parable of the prodigal son reveals God's readiness to forgive.

★ SIN is like alcohol. It first makes a man feel better than he is and then gradually makes him insensible to the reality of his surroundings. He cannot rightly interpret life. Sin makes God seem far away. Sin makes us unable to analyse the real cause of suffering, misery, and death.

Sin is disobedience to the perfect principles ordained for the conduct of happy, healthy, full lives. And the penalty for sin is separation from God and ultimate death: "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you that He will not hear." Isa. 59:2. "The wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23.

To narrow the problem, let us imagine the dilemma that God faces in dealing with our sins, not the sins of the world, not the sins of other ages, but yours and mine, here today. We know that God is love, bound to His creatures with ties

Whom should God send? Who would be willing to go? Who would love sinful man, you and me, sufficiently to sacrifice his life for us? An angel? Some other created being? Shall God bring into being a special agent of redemption, created, ordained, destined to this work without any personal choice on his part?

This great lover of the human race cannot be a created being, for nobody can give a life that is given to him and sustained continually by God. It is not his to give.

The only Person who could give His life is One in whom there is life, "original, unborrowed, underived."

A Profound Mystery

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." John 3:16. The Father was willing to give all He had. And the Son was as willing to be given. From the mind "which was . . . in Christ Jesus," came the decision to make "Himself of no reputation," to be "made in the likeness of men," to become "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. 2:5-8.

Here we enter the profoundest mystery of the ages. "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim. 3:16. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth." John 1:1, 14. The evident intent of such language is that a divine Person left behind His heavenly nature and privileges to establish a new relationship with mankind; He "pitched His tent by the side of the tents of men."

Unto Us a Son is Born

Isaiah tells us how He would come among men. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Isa. 7:14; 9:6, 7. Matthew records how the prophecy was fulfilled; how Joseph, betrothed to Mary, found that she was already with child, and was told in a dream of the divine origin of that life. The beloved physician Luke tells how an angel appeared to Mary with the solemn announcement: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35. "And they shall call His name Emmanuel, . . . God with us." Matt. 1:23.

How low the Son of God stooped when He was

made "in the likeness of sinful flesh"! In all things, He was "made like unto His brethren." As Son of man He was truly human; as Son of God, truly divine.

As He walked among us, our senses, sin-befogged, discerned the truth that God loves us. He was the proof of that love. Looking upon His life there stirs within us a desire to live that life.

As He is lifted up to die in our place, we sense anew the hatefulness of the sins that enslave and condemn us. We grasp, feebly, then with growing faith, the truth that on the cross as Son of God, Jesus has reached out to the Father's hand, and as Son of man He takes our hand and bridges in His own body the gulf that our sin has made, providing in His death a complete payment for sin.

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The way of redemption leads to Calvary and the Cross.



What the Bible Teaches About HELL

★ PEOPLE hold many different views concerning the character of God. Some believe that He is a strict, overbearing Master. Others say that He is so loving that He will pass over any sins that man may commit. To the one, hell means a real and terrible place of everlasting punishment, where God exacts an intense price for sin committed on earth. To the other it is largely without meaning. Important as it is to know the truth about the way God will treat the wicked, it is more important to know the truth about the character of God. Understanding this we shall understand the way He deals with the wicked.

First of all then, let us notice one vitally important truth that the Bible so plainly teaches. This life is the only span of time that God gives us on probation. We shall not have a chance to repent after we have departed this life. That is why the apostles stress the importance of making the great decision now! What would be the need for making that decision now if we could do it after death? Notice how plainly this is stated: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. 9:27.

"After this [death] the judgment"! Now I want to pose a question. Do you think that if God is a God of love, He would torment any creature He has made for ever? Do you think that for even the longest life of sin, God would make anyone suffer without end? Is that justice? Is that love?

It is said that Robert Ingersoll, after listening as a boy to a sermon on an everlasting hell-fire, and the terrible judgment God would mete out to sinners, exclaimed: "If that is God, I hate Him."



Ah, no! We cannot harmonize this horrible teaching with God's character. The two do not fit together. No other doctrine has ever brought such reproach upon the name of God and of Christianity as has this one. It is based on the fallacy that the soul of man is

naturally immortal. For if this is so, it obviously follows that there will be no end to the punishment of the wicked. But never in the Bible is the word "immortal" linked with the word "soul." On the contrary, the Scriptures plainly state that God "only hath immortality." 1 Tim. 6:16. Because man's soul is not inherently immortal God cannot punish the wicked consciously for ever.

In his book *After Death*, Leslie Weatherhead shyly faces the possibility of a soul so depraved that no efforts made by God can mend him, and then admits that he cannot conceive anything except that soul losing its existence. In a frank moment he admits he needs the possibility of annihilation to fit together all the facts. He admits that we must dispense with the theory of the immortality of the soul.

"But we must face the possibility. What would be the ultimate destiny of such? The answer probably is that such a soul would cease to be a personality. 'We keep open,' says a modern theologian, 'the solemn possibility that final dissolution will be the ultimate end for such souls as have completely lost the power to recognize and desire goodness and respond to the love of God.' . . . 'Men who have continued in sin so long that the soul lives in a darkness of its own creation, which it has even learned to love, and which passing into the next life, still hates the light, and delights in its own blindness, cannot be

regarded as necessarily immortal!"—*After Death*, pages 103, 104—quoting C. W. Emmet, in *Immortality*, page 216.

Then he continues:

"The burning of the tares and the burning of the unfruitful vine seem to indicate the possibility of a final dissolution of individuality."—*Ibid.*, page 104.

Eternal Death not Eternal Torment

Paul states plainly in that classic passage: "The wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23. Death is the opposite of life; the absence of what makes life. That is the punishment of the sinner. The prophet Ezekiel says in the same way: "Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the the soul of the son is Mine; the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezek. 18:4.

That last clause, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," is repeated again in the opening of verse twenty. Eternal death, not eternal punishment, is the penalty for sin. The punishment itself comes to an end, but its effects are everlasting. In this sense it is everlasting punishment.

Notice these two passages from the book of Hebrews: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain

By E. W. H. Vick

fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Heb. 10:26, 27. "Our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12:29.

The words "devour," and "consume" suggest just the opposite of endless existence. If I consume a meal, there is none of it left when I have finished. When God "consumes" the wicked they cease to exist.

In harmony with this conclusion, many figures of speech are given in the Scriptures to illustrate the punishment of the wicked. We shall notice a few examples:

a. "He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matt. 3:12. The fire will burn up. What it burns will have no power to quench it. Sinners will have no means of putting out the fires of God.

b. "As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melteth before the fire, so let the

wicked perish at the presence of God." Psalms 68:2.

c. "But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume, into smoke shall they consume away." Psalms 37:20.

"But," you say, "I am sure that the New Testament speaks of everlasting punishment, and everlasting fire." Yes, it certainly does. Jesus Himself, at the conclusion of the parable of the sheep and the goats says: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. 25:46.

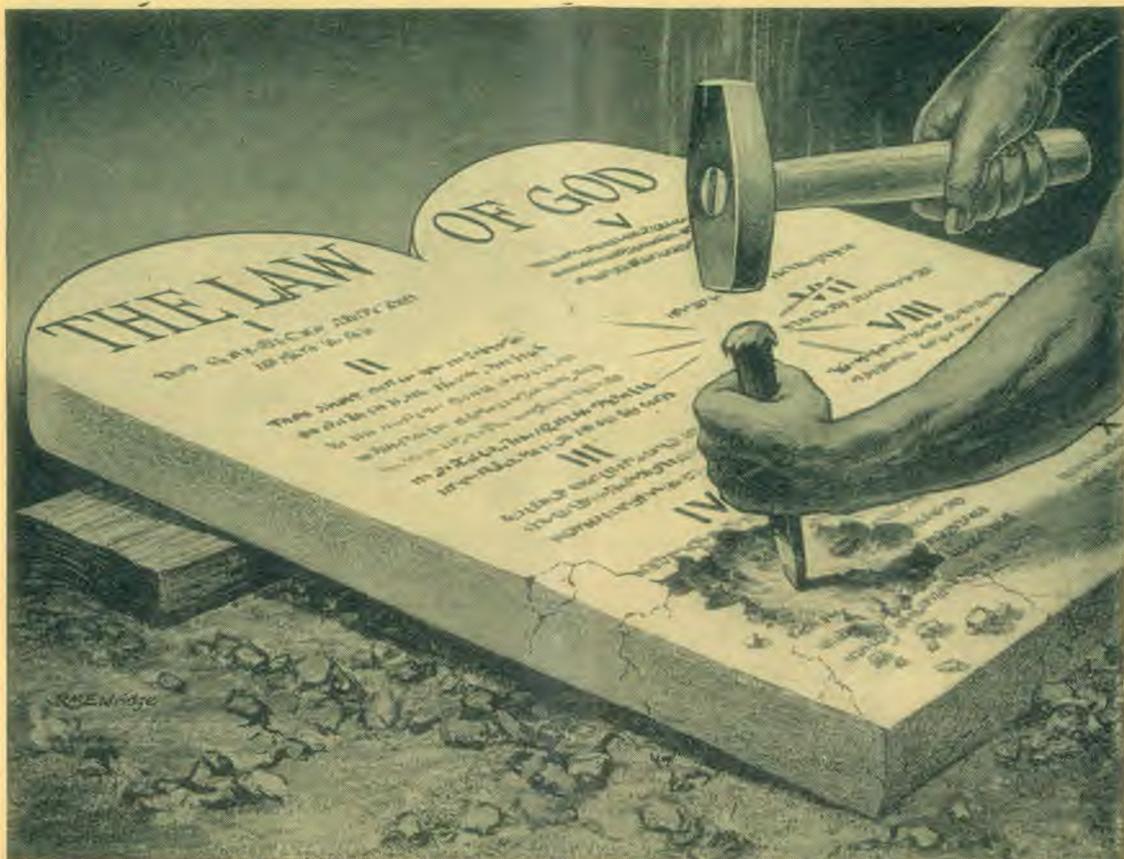
Examples of Eternal Punishment

And there are other passages. The word "everlasting" is often used in a unique sense in the Bible. Sodom and Gomorrah were two of the cities, you will remember, that were destroyed by fire at the time of Abraham and Lot. In the seventh verse of the little book of Jude, there is a reference to these cities: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

There was a rather unique law concerning the Hebrew servant who came to his master as a single man and married and had a family while in his service. If he did not wish to leave his master after six years of service, a mark was made in his ear as a sign of his affection for his master and family, and then the verse concludes, "He shall serve him for ever." Exod. 21:6. He could only serve him as long as he lived, but that is called "for ever." So Sodom and Gomorrah's fires that burned until everything had been destroyed were said to burn "for ever." So the word "everlasting," and the phrase "for ever," is often used to signify something other than without end. It often signifies limited duration of time. Hell fire is limited in duration, but eternal in its results. Sin and sinners, angels or men, alike are destroyed. They will be no more. The flames will not torment for ever. They will consume quickly.

God does not perform such an act with cruel joy. A father is pained when his child does wrong and must be punished. If our human sensibilities are pained at the thought of final punishment, how much more must God's be—for He created us and He loves us. That is why He pleads so tenderly and so passionately with man

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The mutilation of the divine law is the work of an enemy.

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Implications of Sunday Observance

By A. Cheesbrough

★ MOST of us have at some time accepted our theology and current religious beliefs from the teaching we had in Sunday school, from church catechisms, from our parents and their teaching in the home, or from the preaching of the church where our fathers and mothers attended. As we grew older we naturally expected that such beliefs would be fully supported by the Holy Scriptures. We are therefore somewhat surprised and shocked when our position is challenged and we find that such is not always the case.

Especially is this true when we consider the national custom of the observance of Sunday as a Sabbath of rest and worship. Is it not remarkable that those who criticize people for playing games and engaging in other secular activities on Sunday,

invoking the fourth commandment, are not themselves observing the day God commanded? That commandment enjoins us to remember a specified day for a specified purpose and for a special reason. Sunday is universally acknowledged to be the first day of the week and we are therefore compelled to ask ourselves the question: How comes it that the majority of Christians maintain the observance of Sunday instead of the day our Saviour Himself kept holy according to the commandment, namely the seventh and not the first day of the week?

The Law of God Perfect

The Psalmist says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; . . . the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Psa.

19:7, 8. If I take the unwarranted step of tampering with any one of God's commandments, is it not tantamount to asserting that His law is *not* perfect? In the case of the fourth, by observing the first day, I am not only refusing to obey it as it is written, but I am setting up my opinion against the declared will of God. I also nullify the reason He gives for asking me to "remember" to keep holy the seventh day, which He says He sanctified and blessed because that was the day upon which He rested from all His creative works.

Perfection was stamped upon everything. It was a perfect world. Man was created in God's own image (Gen. 1:27), and in commemoration He instituted a perfect Sabbath. As Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man," and who should know better than He, for "without Him was not any thing made that was made." John 1:3.

"For man," means for all mankind, Jews and Gentiles alike. For man's physical, mental, and spiritual health the Sabbath is a precious gift from God. No substitute, no counterfeit can ever be acceptable to God. The times of ignorance God indeed winked at, but now He commands men everywhere to repent. And everywhere includes "every nation and kindred and tongue and people." Rev. 14:6. To all must the everlasting Gospel be preached, which says: "Worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" Rev. 14:7.

An Unchangeable God

Again, if I observe a day other than the one God has appointed, I not only imply that God's law is imperfect, but I defame the unchangeableness of His character. We are told that "with Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17. In Malachi 3:6 we read: "I am the Lord, I change not." Jesus said: Not "one jot or one tittle shall . . . pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." But Sunday observance denies the truth of all these statements.

What inconsistency! Who am I that I should take up this attitude toward the Redeemer and His Word?—aye, that precious Word which Jesus said could not be broken. (John 10:35.) You may disobey it, you may pour scorn upon it, but it will abide for ever. "All His commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever." Psa. 111:7, 8.

There is a divine principle which every Christian should seek to uphold. Referring to the great mercy of God and His continued loving-kindness in spite of man's waywardness, God says:

"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips." Psa. 89:34. It is bad enough when man breaks the commandments by sin, but what shall we say about those who attempt to alter and change the holy law of God? If God will not alter that which has gone forth from His lips, who are we that we should in any way make terms with any power that claims to do this?

The Roman Catholic Position

I have before me the Roman Catholic *New Explanatory Catechism of Christian Doctrine*, published by Burns, Oates, Washbourne, Ltd., and quote from Questions 172 and 174.

"Q. How many commandments are there?"

"A. There are *ten commandments*. We call God's written law the "Ten Commandments."

"Q. Who gave the Ten Commandments?"

"A. God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses in the old law and Christ confirmed them in the New. . . .

"*Confirmed them*. Our Lord did not come to put an end to the law given to Moses, but to strengthen it. (Matt. 5:17.) All His sacred teaching was directed to the end of making us observe well the *Ten Commandments*." (Italics theirs.)

One would naturally expect after affirming that the Ten Commandments are God's written law and that Jesus confirmed them, that they would quote them as found in Exodus, chapter twenty, but what do we find? They combine the first and second commandments and make the Sabbath commandment the third instead of the fourth which they reduce to: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day." The last they divide, in order to make up the ten. Then we read in Question 193:

"Q. What are we commanded by the Third Commandment?"

"A. By the Third Commandment we are commanded to keep the Sunday holy."

Here is a church which says our Lord came to strengthen and confirm the law, and then proceeds to weaken it by serious omissions and alterations. By what process of reasoning does she do this? She says she is apostolic because she holds the doctrines and traditions of the apostles. A tradition, she says, is a teaching not written in the New Testament though coming from the apostles. "To keep Sunday holy instead of Saturday is a tradition of this kind," and "the church cannot

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Beneath the mosque of Hebron is the Cave of Machpelah where Abraham buried his wife.

★ IN the Bible account of Abraham's journey from Ur of the Chaldees to Canaan and the subsequent story of Israel in Egypt and Palestine, there are many references to contemporary nations and civilizations in Syria, Transjordan, and Palestine which have been the object of doubt and even ridicule by the Bible critics of earlier days.

Their successors of today are much more careful in their comments on Bible history, for archæology is steadily building up an historical and cultural background which is substantiating at every point of test the wonderful accuracy of the sacred Record.

Abraham's First Halt

When Abraham left Ur with his father Terah,

he settled for a while at Haran, and there Terah died. (Gen. 11:31, 32.) The Bible tells us nothing about the country in which Haran was situated nor did any other ancient histories know anything of it.

The archæological curtain was lifted during the latter part of the nineteenth century by the discovery of a number of Assyrian inscriptions mentioning the city by name and indicating its situation in a northern province of the empire. It was then a centre of the worship of the moon-god,

New Light on the PATRIARCHS

[By W. L.]

Sin, which explains why Terah, who worshipped Sin at Ur, persuaded Abraham to stop there.

In recent times archæology has taken us back before Babylonian Haran, or Harran, and before the Assyrian Harran to the Haran of Abraham's day, when we find that it belonged to the Mitannian kingdom. Tushratta, king of the Mitanni, we know from the Tell el Amarna tablets, was in regular correspondence with the pharaoh of Egypt in the days of the Exodus, begging gold from his "rich uncle" in return for the hand of one of the Mitannian princesses!

Thus the route of Abraham from southern Babylonia to Haran and then down into Palestine and Egypt is proved not to be the path of a lonely exile from his homeland, but along one of the great trade routes of the ancient world.

Thus the land and city of Abraham's temporary sojourn begins to take form and colour through the findings of the excavator's spade.

Revelations of the Ras Shamra Tablets

After Terah's death, Abraham moved southward from Haran and began to make contact with the peoples who dwelt along the Mesopotamian

seaboard. Among them were the Canaanites (Gen. 12:6), the Amorites (Gen. 14:3), the Hittites (Gen. 23:10), and others (Gen. 15:19-21). To earlier Bible students these were mere names and by the critics most were regarded as mythical and legendary. Today, however, nearly every Bible reference can be checked against the findings of archaeological research in this region.

In 1929 an ancient settlement was discovered at a place called Ras Shamra just north of Latakia, on the Syrian coast, and since that year thorough

through, and when Laban and Jacob lived in Syria, but about the period contemporary with the return of Israel from Egypt, there was found the great library of Ugarit in which were gathered vast quantities of Sumerian, Babylonian, and Canaanite documents, the last-mentioned written in a twenty-nine letter alphabetic script, the earliest true alphabetic language to be found outside the Bible.

This proto-Phoenician script gave the final blow to the once widely-accepted critical dictum that Moses could not possibly have written so extensive a document as the five Bible books of the Pentateuch credited to him.

This theory was first called into question when the hieroglyphic and cuneiform scripts were shown to be far older than Moses' day. It was further undermined when scattered examples of letters akin to early Hebrew were found in Sinai and Southern Palestine dating from the thirteenth to the twentieth century B.C. And now the last crushing blow has been dealt by the Ras Shamra tablets which prove that alphabetic writing, similar to early Hebrew, was in common use at this early date.

The Corruption of Canaanite Religion

The Ras Shamra tablets, however, reveal a great deal more than the antiquity of writing. Among the many religious texts deciphered by the French scholars, E. Dhorme and C. Virolleaud, appeared the names El and Elohim, which are used of God



excavations have been conducted with spectacular success by the French archaeologist, M. Claude Schaeffer.

He revealed that some time before Abraham came through the land it had been occupied by an Amorite-Canaanite people who gave it the name of Ugarit. The excavators did not find much remaining of the period when Abraham was passing

Photos by the Author

One of the "high places" where the idolatrous Canaanites worshipped before the coming of Israel.



A Hittite lion in the Azm Museum, Damascus.



in the Bible. In the Ras Shamra tablets, El is not the One God, but the supreme God who reigned over all the other gods and whose word none could change. He is portrayed as the husband of Asherah and the father of Baal, both of which names are prominent in the Bible as deities worshipped by the Canaanites.

Here we can see the same sort of corruption of the worship of the one true God that we find when the Bible stories of the Creation and the Flood are compared with their Sumerian and Babylonian counterparts. When men departed from the worship of the true God they first pushed Him into the background and made other gods and goddesses to themselves, whom they claimed to be descendants of the supreme God. Ultimately, the true God was forgotten and the invented gods alone were worshipped.

In the Ras Shamra tablets we see the pagan deities coming into prominence while the true God, El, is still to be seen vaguely in the background. In the later Bible story, we find the Canaanite god Baal and his mother Asherah in active opposition to the true God, El-Jehovah, of the Hebrews.

Lot and "The Cities of the Plain"

When Lot parted from his uncle Abraham he went to dwell, the Bible tells us, in the cities of the plain. Some little time later the Jordan Valley was invaded by Semitic bands from across the Syrian desert, and Lot and his family might have ended their lives in captivity but for the prompt action of Abraham. (Gen. 13, 14.)

This whole story was once regarded by the Wellhausen school of critics as pure fiction. Now, however, we recognize that it fits perfectly into the archaeological background provided by recent researches in Transjordan.

Chiefly as a result of the work of Dr. W. F. Albright, Père Mallon, and Dr. Nelson Glueck, it has been fully established that at least as early as the third millennium B.C. the Jordan Valley and the highlands to the east were occupied by a large settled population, with numerous fortified cities, and that one of the great trade routes of the ancient world, named in Scripture "the king's high way" (Num. 20:17), ran right through this region from Babylonia in the north to Arabia and Egypt in the south.

In the 1924 *Annual Volume of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, Dr. W. F. Albright says:

"The number of tells, great and small, and the enormous size of some of them, makes it plain that the population of the Jordan Valley in the third millennium B.C., was not only greater than it is now, but greater than it has ever been from that day to this, not excepting even the commercial centre of population around the Lake of Galilee in the days of our Lord."—Pages 12, 14.

In the 1926 volume he further asserts "that the most prosperous period of the history of this valley was in the Early Bronze Age (2500-2000 B.C.)."

It was without doubt the flourishing cities in this "garden of the Lord," (Gen. 13:10) which tempted the Semitic kings from across the desert to send out a large raiding party.

Furthermore, the route they followed, as described in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, exactly followed the line of the "king's high way."

"Formerly," says Dr. Albright, "the writer considered this extraordinary line of march as being the best proof of the essentially legendary character of the narrative. In 1929, however, he discovered a line of Early and Middle Bronze Age mounds (2500-1600 B.C.), some of great size, running down along the eastern edge of Gilead between the desert and the forests of Gilead. Moreover, the cities of Hauran (Bashan), with which the account of the campaign opens, Asheroth and Karnaim, were both occupied in this period as shown by archaeological excavation of their sites."

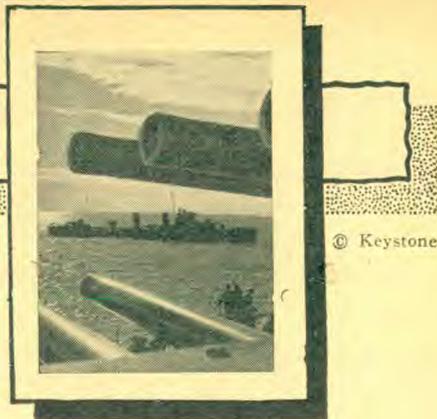
Locating Sodom and Gomorrah

It was at one time believed that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah lay to the south of the Dead Sea and had perhaps been covered by the waters at its shallow southern end. Now we know how populous was the Jordan Valley immediately to the north of the Dead Sea, it seems much more likely that these two outstanding "cities of the plain" were actually in the plain of Moab opposite the Jericho ford. This fits in with the latter part of the route of the raiding kings of Genesis fourteen, who, after coming down the east side of the Dead Sea, returned up the west side before reaching Sodom. It is also in accord with the fact that Abraham and Lot first saw the cities from between Bethel and Ai, which would be understandable if they were north of the Dead Sea, but quite impossible if they lay far to the south. (Gen. 13:10.)

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Know Your Bible

IS CHRIST'S COMING NEAR? (Continued)



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By J. A. McMillan

What international signs would herald the approaching advent?

"And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Luke 21:25, 26.

Note the three words so characteristic of our generation—"distress," "perplexity," and "fear." Never has mankind been so distressed and so perplexed as during the past forty years. The word translated "with perplexity" suggests in the Greek "there is no way out." Fear haunts the abodes of mankind; it broods over the councils of the nations; it drives the frenzied gallop in armaments. Dr. Urey was confessing for many when he said: "We are all frightened men—all the scientists I know are frightened men."

What additional features are portrayed by Paul?

"This know also, that in the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, beady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Tim. 3:1-5, R.V.

It is amazing to recall that this passage was written 1,900 years ago. It is so similar to what our daily newspapers record of the daily goings-on in our modern society.

What two modern characteristics are predicted by Daniel?

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Dan 12:4.

Two factors of our modern age are here prophesied. We live in an age of travel. The world is on whirling wheels. Ours is the atomic age, the jet-propulsion age. Men are rushing to and fro at an ever-increasing tempo. And ours is an age of increasing knowledge. The radio, television, radar, nuclear fission, are but a few of the startling discoveries and products of our scientific progress. Also implied in this scripture is the increased knowledge of the contents and meaning of Daniel's prophecies. As Sir Isaac Newton commented: "Tis therefore a part of this prophecy, that it should not be understood before the last age of the world; and therefore it makes for the credit of the prophecy that it is not yet understood." These words were written in the early part of the eighteenth century in *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse*, part 2, chapter 1.

What industrial tensions does James predict?

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. . . . Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: . . . ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton." James 5:1-5.

What incentive to patience does he cite?

"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand."
James 5:8. (See also verse 17.)

Because of the certainty of His coming and the uncertainty of the hour, what are we exhorted to do?

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24:44.

What final benediction does Jesus utter?

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments."
Rev. 16:15.

What garments is Jesus referring to?

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Isa. 61:10.

New Light on the Patriarchal Age

(Continued from page 10.)

When Sarah died the Bible records that Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite (Gen. 23:10) and there laid her remains to rest.

This is one of a number of references to this nation at which the critics once looked askance, as they had found no evidence outside the Scriptures of any such people. If they existed at all, they said, they must have been some very minor tribe of the Canaanite group.

In 1870, however, two American travellers came back from Hamath in Syria with drawings of some strangely inscribed stones. Further independent investigations by William Wright, a missionary in Damascus, and Professor A. H. Sayce, of Oxford University, connected these inscriptions with other similar ones as far apart as Djerabis (Carchemish), in eastern Asia Minor, Boghaz-keui, not far from Ankara, and Karabel, near Smyrna, on the west coast. Both came to the conclusion, which has since been abundantly substantiated, that these were remains of a Hittite Empire, which at its zenith occupied the greater part of Asia Minor, northern Mesopotamia, and Syria.

"Five years ago," wrote Sayce in his *Fresh Light*

from the Ancient Monuments, "there was no-one who suspected that a great empire had once existed in Western Asia and contended on equal terms with both Egypt and Assyria, the founders of which were the little-noticed Hittites of the Old Testament."—Page 92.

Much more could be said of the way in which archæology has substantiated and illuminated the story of the patriarchs, but space will not permit. We must, therefore, conclude with a remarkably comprehensive statement of W. F. Albright, whose views on Genesis have been completely revolutionized by his personal studies in Syria and Transjordan:

"Eminent names among scholars can be cited for regarding every item in Genesis 11-50 as reflecting late invention, or at least retrojection of events and conditions under the Monarchy into the remote past, about which nothing was thought to have been really known to the writers of later days. The archæological discoveries of the past generation have changed all this. Aside from a few die-hards among older scholars, there is scarcely a single biblical historian who has not been impressed by the rapid accumulation of data supporting the substantial historicity of patriarchal tradition."—*The Biblical Period*, page 3.

(Next Time: "Excavations in the Land of the Pharaohs.")

Implications of Sunday Observance

(Continued from page 7.)

err in what she teaches as to faith and morals for she is our infallible guide in both."—*Quoted from pages 27, 28, Questions 99 and 100.*

What then does all this imply? Is it not setting up a church in place of Christ? The church is the body of which Christ is the head. (Col. 1:18.) But here is a body claiming to do what Christ their head said He would not think of doing. (Matt. 5:17.)

Then she turns to Protestants and taunts them with the fact that in spite of themselves they are paying homage to her. Here is the self-confessed culprit. Like the sparrow in answer to the question, Who killed cock robin? she declares she killed God's Sabbath. But the Scriptures say she would only "think to change times and the law." Dan. 7:25, R.V. You can't kill truth. It may fall in the street (Isa. 59:14), it may be

cast down to the ground (Dan. 8:12), but you can't kill it. The Jews thought to kill Jesus who said He was the truth, but God raised Him from the dead. So, too, God's downtrodden Sabbath, a foundation of many generations, is being restored in the lives of many. The breach of God's law is being repaired. (Isa. 58:12, 14.)

Is this a small matter or is it in the eyes of God fraught with serious consequences? "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" Rom. 6:16. Where will the Christian find truth if God's law is to be used like a battledore and shuttlecock at the whims of Roman Catholicism? He is required to "prove all things" and to go "to the law and the testimony" in order to know what is right and wrong.

Jesus said that He was Lord of the Sabbath and He was as our Example, observing it from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. (Lev. 23:32; Luke 23:54.) Does not the Sunday observer imply that He is no longer Lord of the day He made and gave? Where is the authority for keeping it unless you acquiesce in the Romanist claims for calling Sunday "the Lord's Day"? Certainly not in Scrip-

ture! Christ knew which was the seventh day and no-one questioned it. The early Christian church followed His example. (Acts 13:42, 47.) The apostle Paul didn't go to the Gentiles preaching a Sunday Sabbath. Hadn't Jesus, when foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, told His disciples to pray that their flight might not be on the Sabbath day? Is this not evidence that no change could be lawful, and of His regard for it?

Those who attend church and hear the Ten Commandments read out respond to the fourth as well as to the others, "Lord, have mercy upon me, and incline our hearts to keep this law." God's Spirit is at work inclining men's hearts to obey Him in this matter. (Ezek. 36:26, 27; Rev. 22:14.) Will you not then, dear reader, begin to obey God rather than men? "Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Matt. 15:13. The genuine Sabbath was planted by God in Eden. (Gen. 2:1, 2.) The counterfeit is a weed that grew up after the death of the apostles, as men fell away from apostolic truth. (Acts 20:30.) "But in vain they do worship Me," said Christ, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matt. 15:9.



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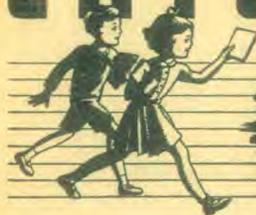
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THE CHILDREN'S Pages



Why Mr. Jordan Wouldn't Sit Down

By Maryane G. Myers

IT WAS an awful thing to do. Joe knew it even before he did it. But the Steaton boys were so insistent that he couldn't say No.

"You know I don't eat fish," he protested weakly.

"Nobody's asking you to. But it won't hurt you to help us to get them for Mum. We promised to bring back fish for supper tonight."

Joe didn't know what to say. For a long time he had wanted to be friends with the Steaton brothers, and he was happy when they had invited him to go fishing with them, because it was the first time they had seemed to notice him.

"Well——." His voice seemed to twist into a question mark.

"Sure you will." George, the elder of the two brothers, placed a hand on Joe's shoulder. "There are a lot of fish tied to a string near the bank. Someone else caught them, but if we hurry we can get them before he comes back. All you have to do is walk to the edge of the bank and pull them out of the water—real fast. Since Phil and I are taller than you, we'll stand close beside you, as if we were talking. That way nobody will see you."

Phil joined in the scheme.

"Then we'll act as if nothing happened, and go home."

Joe looked at the boys, then back to the basket on his arm, and thought about the teachings of his Christian home. "It would be stealing, and I can't do that."

George laughed. "Such a silly idea. Look, we want you to be our friend, but we like pals who aren't scared of their shadow."

Joe felt like protesting again, but he didn't.

"All right," he said, "let's get it over with."

"Sure!" the brothers exclaimed, and together the three boys walked to the edge of the lake, where a string of fine fish dangled in the water.

The plan worked out the way George had said it would, and it wasn't long before the boys were standing in the Steaton's kitchen.

Their mother seemed delighted with the gift. "So many fish in such a short time," she said, pride in her voice. "You're good fishermen. In fact, you've brought in such a good catch that I'll have to invite our neighbours to share our dinner."

Joe didn't sleep well that night. It seemed as if a heavy



blanket of guilt covered him, and he could not shake it off. He awoke the next morning with the same uncomfortable sensation. Nothing he could think of to defend himself was able to ease his conscience. He didn't feel like eating, playing, or doing anything else.

At the close of a miserable day he had just settled down with a book when his father called him. "Mr. Jordan wants to see you, son."

Joe wondered why the visitor wouldn't accept his parent's invitation to come into the house. "No thanks, I haven't time," Mr. Jordan had said. "I just want to talk to Joe for a moment. I thought he might be interested in a job."

Mr. Jordan owned a shop, and Joe ran out feeling very pleased at the prospect of work.

It was a beautiful night outside. The sky was like a blue enamelled bucket overflowing with silver fish. Joe wished he would stop thinking about fish—everywhere he looked, it seemed, he saw them.

"Won't you sit down?" He offered Mr. Jordan a porch chair.

"No thank you. What I have

to say I can say as well standing. This isn't a social call, Joe."

The man's voice was sharp, and the boy was glad his father wasn't present.

"I don't understand what you're talking about, Mr. Jordan."

"Apparently there are quite a few things you don't understand, otherwise you wouldn't have taken my fish."

"I always thought you were a good youngster until yesterday, when I saw you steal the fish."

Joe hung his head. "I've never taken anything before. It was an awful thing to do, and I'll never do it again."

There seemed a small change in the man's attitude. "I'm glad you feel that way about it. A boy who steals, cheats, and lies grows into a man whom no-one can trust. You don't want to be that kind of man, do you?"

"No, sir."

"An honest boy or man believes in paying for what he gets in life. Would you like an

opportunity to pay for the fish?"

"Yes, sir," said Joe, looking up.

"You may work in my garden every afternoon after school until you have put in enough hours to pay for the fish. I usually pay a boy your age a shilling an hour."

"I'll be glad to do it."

"See you tomorrow."

The next afternoon after school Joe walked up Maple Street until he came to the large house belonging to Mr. Jordan. In the back garden he was met by the Jordans' cook, who gave him instructions. With hoe and grass shears in hand, he walked into the garden. To his surprise he found George and Phil there. George looked up from the shovel of dirt he had just deposited near a flower bed.

"Greetings!" he exclaimed bitterly.

Phil stopped mowing the lawn. "Huh, you too?"

Joe felt like saying, "Yes, me too, thanks to you." But sud-

denly he realized that it was through his own weakness, not theirs, that he had so easily yielded to temptation. One time their friendship had meant everything, but now he didn't value it so highly.

Joe set to work, carefully hoeing around the roses.

"Aren't you going to talk to us?" Phil said, leaving his work and standing beside him.

"Of course. But I've been doing a lot of thinking."

"About what?"

"The wonderful opportunity Mr. Jordan gave us to right a wrong. We need this work to pay a debt. He's giving us a chance to make a clean start—and I appreciate it. I'm not going to be dishonest again."

Results of Competition No. 11

Prize-winners.—Margaret Timms, 79 Crest Road, Reading, Berks. Age 14; Richard Holt, 9 Grosvenor Road, Highfield, Southampton. Age 9.

Honourable Mention.—Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Siegfried Baron (Accrington); Amy Randlesome (Suffolk); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Greta Crocker (Binfield); Elaine Bunker (Devon); Irene Randall (East Dulwich); Pearl Rich (Camelford); Elizabeth Bunker (Devon); Keith Medicott (Coventry); Patricia Wetton (Watford); Rita Moss (Southampton); Rosemary Dymond (Bodmin); Miriam Davies (Abergele); Alan Bowns (Stroud); Antony Peart (Cheltenham); Sally Davis (Reading); Margaret Peart (Cheltenham); Maurice Peters (Bristol); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Michael Parrish (Norwich); Susan Wilcox (Wakefield); Marion Paget (Wokingham); Pamela Jones (Barnes).

Those who tried hard.—Eileen Maunder (Bodmin); Hazel Foster (Kent); Gillian Hughes (Hereford); Michael Metcalfe (London); John Barley (Dagenham); Anne Miles (Kent); Jennifer Cumings (Billericay); Yvonne Meekoms (Dorchester); Gerald Bennett (Oldbury); Andrea Watson (Middlesbrough); Roderick Jones (Eltham Park); Barbara Ainsworth (Meriton Park); Irene Bowker (Ashton-under-Lyne); Carole Bodycombe (West Ham); Hazel Smith (Neasden); Patricia Weavers (Suffolk).

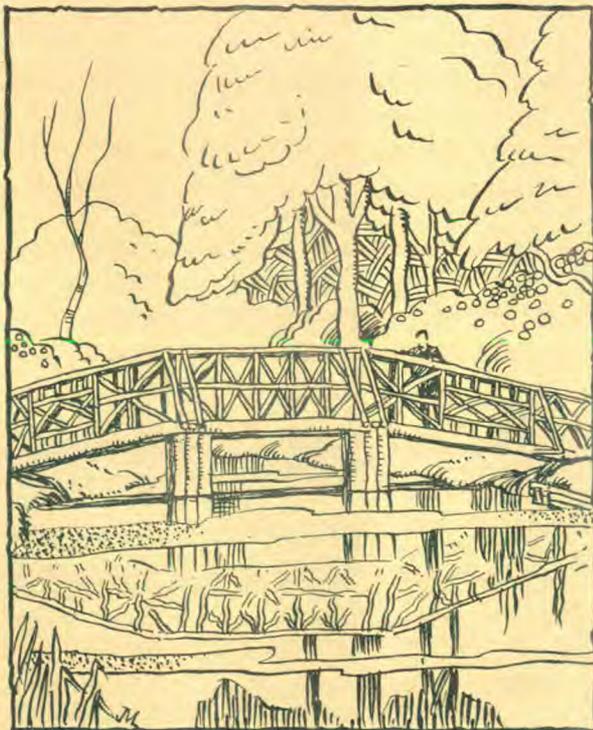
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STRAWS IN THE WIND

Return to Ten Commandments

⊕ "As we look out upon the state of Christendom today, we are convinced that the disparagement of the Ten Commandments has grievously weakened the church's witness," says the *English Churchman*. "There is a great need today for a return to the Ten Commandments as the regulating principles for human life."

Youth and Drinking

⊕ The Economic Research Council reports that convictions of girls under twenty-one for drunkenness have increased eighty per cent in the past four years, while those of young men have increased 102 per cent. "Mass Observation" reports that twenty-seven per cent of young people begin to drink at parties and twenty-five per cent at Christmas festivities.

Australia and the Antarctic

⊕ The first permanent settlement in Antarctica has been established by Australia in MacRobertson Land. New Zealand, the United States, Norway, France, Chile, and Argentina also claim parts of Antarctica but there are no rigid lines of demarcation in its vast snowy wastes.

Israel's Population

⊕ A Zionist official estimates, according to the *Jewish Chronicle*, that by 1960 the population of the Israeli State will have reached 2,000,000.

Thirty-Nine Articles

⊕ Years ago the staunchly Protestant Bishop Ryle declared that the "Thirty-Nine Articles" are "the Church of England's confession of faith." Recently, the Anglo-Catholic Church Union, which is anxious to get round them, declared the articles to be "a document of secondary importance, concerned with local controversies of the sixteenth century."

Nuclear Giants and Ethical Infants

⊕ In a recent speech in Washington, U.S. Admiral Radford warned against a "world of nuclear giants and ethical infants in which we know more about war than we know about peace; more about killing than we know about living."

Solar Energy Generators

⊕ Two practical generators of electricity from solar energy have recently been put into operation in the United States, one using silicon transistors and the other crystalline cadmium sulphide.

How God Deals with Sin

(Continued from page 3.)

is it hard to believe? It was to the apostle Thomas. He thought Jesus was dead. But when the risen Saviour invited him, "Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand and place it in My side," Thomas was convinced. "My Lord and my God," he cried. Jesus' resurrected presence was proof of divine power over death. His wounds were proof of divine love and of the way He had provided back again into the kingdom of light and life.

What the Bible Teaches about Hell

(Continued from page 5.)

to turn to Him before the opportunity is gone for ever. Why will we die, when there is life available for us?

Soon the days of harvest will come. What will we have to offer in that time? Your security and mine is in God's love and His promises to save us from death. Life's most important moment is when we accept those promises for ourselves and pass from death to life.

