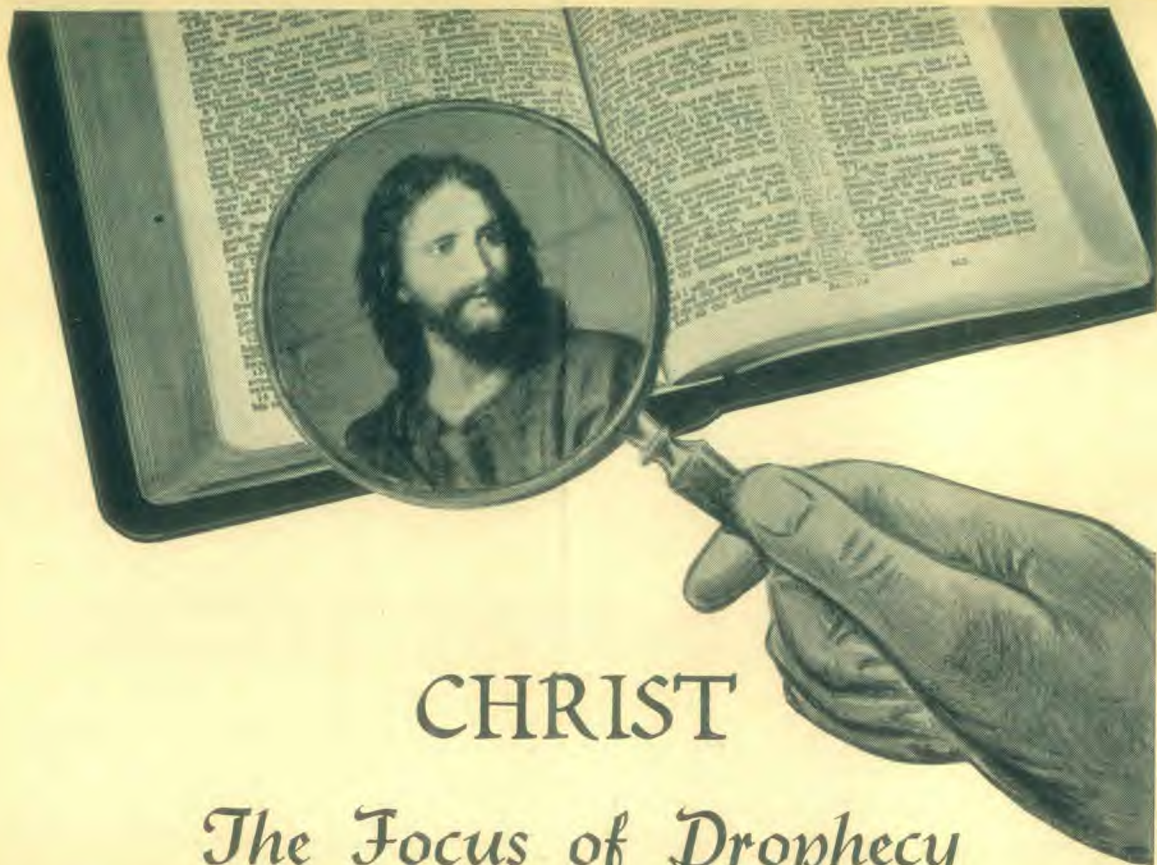


The Bible and
OUR TIMES





CHRIST

The Focus of Prophecy

★ IN BOTH secular history and divine prophecy Jesus Christ occupies the supreme place. He was born of peasant parentage in the humblest of circumstances. Yet the hurrying centuries carry His signature. Every new year is baptized with His name; and each morning all the newspapers of the civilized world readjust their dates to His cradle.

By universal consent all letters, cheques, and business transactions are dated and designated by "the year of our Lord." He came to shape the world's destiny to a new pattern; and how appropriate that the passing years, months, and days should all pay their silent homage to the Babe of Bethlehem!

In like manner the main theme of the Bible is Jesus Christ and His ministry for lost, helpless men and women. He is the divine personality of Scripture from whom all Gospel light radiates, and to whom hundreds of inspired prophecies undeviatingly point. This marvellous chain of Bible predictions runs throughout the volume from cover to cover and bears the seal of absolute authenticity.

As soon as our first parents sinned and fell

from their virtuous estate, they were given the divine promise that Christ, the seed of the woman, would bruise the serpent's head. (Gen. 3:15; Rom. 16:20; Gal. 3:16, 29.) This prophecy also foreshadowed the final doom of Satan, the banishment of sin from the universe, and the ultimate triumph of good.

By R. F. Cottrell

From the days of Adam and Abraham, Christ was esteemed as the hope of the world (John 8:56); and when the spirit of prophecy rested upon the dying Jacob, and visions of the future passed before him, he declared, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." Gen. 49:10.

True to this prediction, Judah became the father of the royal family of David and Solomon; and when at length the sceptre finally departed from Judah, and Herod the Great, a full-blooded Edomite, sat upon the throne in Palestine, the time was fulfilled, and Jesus was born in Bethle-

hem. The prophet Daniel was even more explicit, stating that the Messiah would appear at the end of the sixty-ninth prophetic week, or in A.D. 27; and in that very year Jesus was baptized and entered upon His public ministry.

In the prophecy of Micah, Christ's birthplace in Bethlehem was announced. (Micah 5:2.) Isaiah predicted His virgin birth and gave a remarkable outline of His anointing, the nature of His work, and His betrayal by His own people. (Isa. 40:3-5; 7:14; 61:1-3; 53:3-9.)

In the events surrounding our Lord's trial and crucifixion, more than twenty prophecies, uttered by various inspired voices at different times during the preceding centuries, were all fulfilled within the short space of twenty-four hours. Among these were His betrayal by a friend (Psa. 41:9), His crucifixion with criminals (Isa. 53:12), His hands, feet, and side pierced (Psa. 22:16; Zech. 12:10), His bones not broken (Psa. 34:20), and His burial in the tomb of a rich man (Isa. 53:9). Jesus also declared that, following His death, He would rise again on the third day (Matt. 16:21); while a thousand years previously the Psalmist had foretold His miraculous resurrection and ascension to the gates of glory (Psa. 16:10; 24:7-10).

With such a galaxy of Old Testament prophecies, all converging and fulfilled in the life of the Man of Galilee, and with such an array of "infallible proofs," it is no wonder that the erstwhile timid disciples were inspired with holy boldness to witness and die, if necessary, for the risen Christ. Indeed, if these Messianic prophecies were studied with an open mind, there could be no doubting disciple or honest infidel. Said the beloved apostle, "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." John 20:31.

Coming a Second Time

Another imposing series of Bible prophecies, equally definite and explicit, points with unerring accuracy to Christ's second personal appearing: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28.

On the eve of His crucifixion, when the divine heart of the Master was "sorrowful, even unto death," He directed the minds of His troubled disciples to the future joyous gathering in His Father's house, saying: "In My Father's house are

many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2, 3.

Wonderful assurance! The hope of our Lord's return is not a vain expectation, for it rests upon the certified promise of God's own Son, "I will come again." And while none may know the precise year, day, or hour of His coming, Christ Himself disclosed definite waymarks, or signs, by which people may be alert to the approach of that notable event.

In what has been termed, "Our Lord's Great Prophecy," He first foretold the complete and tragic destruction of Jerusalem, which later occurred in A.D. 70. He predicted the long centuries of papal ascendancy and persecution that terminated with the imprisonment of the pope of Rome in 1798. He then stated:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days [or, 'in those days, after that tribulation.' Mark 13:24] shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24:29, 30.

The first of these great signs occurred on May 19, 1780, *within* that period of tribulation, yet *after* the rigours of relentless persecution had ceased. Many of the early histories describe the unprecedented darkness of that day that baffled astronomers and terrorized the multitudes. In successive editions of Webster's unabridged *Dictionary*, under article entitled, "Dark Day," it is stated: "The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known."

On the following night the moon, though approximately at her full, apparently gave no light. The universe seemed "shrouded in impenetrable shades," while the animal creation, as well as man, was gripped with a nameless terror.

God's spectacular sky writing continued, and on November 13, 1833, the world witnessed the greatest "display of celestial fireworks" ever seen by man, or recorded on the pages of history. This astonishing exhibition of shooting stars covered large areas of the sky, and astronomers estimated

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The Promise of the Spirit

By E. W. H. Vick

★ THERE were many things that Jesus wished to reveal to His disciples before His passion. But they were not ready to receive what He had in mind to tell them. He had to withhold some of the most important revelations that He wanted the disciples to understand. They did not comprehend the significance of the primary truths; how then could He give them more? Why talk to them about His kingdom, His sufferings, His priesthood, if they had not understood His purpose in becoming a man? Sadly Jesus said to them: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." John 16:12.

What was the Saviour to do? He realized that events would happen so quickly in the next few hours and days, and that the disciples would have their faith shaken to its foundations. He could only assure them that what He could not reveal to them now would, in His wonderful provision for His church, be made known in another way.

His announcement that He was to leave the disciples filled them with sorrow. His promise to return should have filled them with hope. "But why," He says explicitly, "do not some of you ask Me about the time between My going away and My coming again?" (John 16:5.) Perhaps a dim realization that the Saviour, who had made every provision for their spiritual need while on the earth, would provide for them while He was away, stirred the fires in their heart. For Jesus then revealed His great gift. He would send the Comforter. The forgotten truths would return in vivid clarity; what was yet unknown would be made plain. Jesus' mission would become clear.

That this promise was no ordinary one is evident from the fact that Jesus promised extraordinary power to His disciples as a result of its fulfilment: "Greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father," John 14:12. If Jesus remained, the Holy Spirit could not bring the power needed for the task committed to the

disciples. So Jesus said it was "expedient" for Him to go away. Then the great gift would be given. (John 16:7.)

The Three Ages

We may think of the story of the Bible, for our present purpose, under three great eras; first, the era of the working of God the Father and His dealings with the chosen nation. Secondly, the era of God the Son, as His life and influence is recorded in the gospels. Thirdly, the era of God, the Holy Spirit, given to the church at Pentecost and to be the permanent gift until Jesus shall return.

There is a definite time-mission for the Holy Spirit. Pentecost has no meaning apart from Calvary. The great gift to the church could only be given as the Saviour should present His sacrifice before the Father's throne, and begin His work at the Father's right hand as our intercessor. In the Old Testament, we read of the work of the Holy Spirit upon particular individuals, or for a particular purpose; but after Pentecost, He became available for all, at all times as the heritage of the church. Notice the revealing words of John 7:39: "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." A. G. Gordon, writer of the well-known hymn, "My Jesus, I love Thee," comments on this truth:

"Without the expiatory work of Christ Jesus for us the sanctifying work of the Spirit in us were impossible; and on the other hand, without the work of the Spirit within us, the work of Christ for us were without avail."—*The Ministry of the Spirit*, page 31.

Power for Witness

The birthday of the Spirit was the birthday of evangelistic preaching. Following Jesus' command to wait in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4), a hundred and twenty disciples prayed and confessed their faults

and sins. Finally, the signs of the gift were given—a noise like that of a tempestuous gale; and appearances like that of flames, settling upon each disciple. Jesus had now been glorified, the waiting was finished, the witnessing could now begin. Peter, fearless and bold, preached a convicting sermon that was made intelligible to those from foreign countries who could not understand Peter's Galilean Aramaic. The effect of Peter's words was immediate. "What shall we do?" his hearers cried.

Let us pause and ask what it was that brought conviction and a desire for repentance to the three thousand. It was not the marvellous gifts. Some of them had seen Lazarus raised from the dead and had not believed. It was the sermon; the striking accusation in the final appeal was pressed home to the conscience by the Holy Spirit. Peter witnessed, the Holy Spirit convicted. That is His work.

While external wonders, striking as they may be, can bring no remorse for sin, no sense of guilt, the Holy Spirit's application of a simple witness can. The Holy Spirit is God's supreme gift. With Him all the others follow, but He is primary. Let us not seek first for the extraordinary and ecstatic; rather let us humbly open our hearts for the reception of the greatest gift—the Holy Spirit Himself. He will bring conviction; ecstasy if it comes is incidental.

We are naturally led to ask concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit. With Paul we have to admit the mystery of godliness. It is a mystery too deep for full human understanding, but we should certainly understand all that God has revealed to us about it.

Second Person of the Godhead

The significant example of Ananias and Sapphira reveals that the Holy Spirit is divine. Peter asks why Ananias should have lied to the Holy Ghost. (Acts 5:3.) Then in the following verse he declares: "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God," thus equating these two persons of the Godhead. A further significant fact is revealed in Hebrews 9:14 where the Holy Spirit is called "eternal." So, from these and other facts, we are led to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is a divine person. No wonder, then, that such great power attended the early church as He was within them. No wonder, either, that the great promises of personal power can be fulfilled in the person who is possessed by the Holy Spirit.

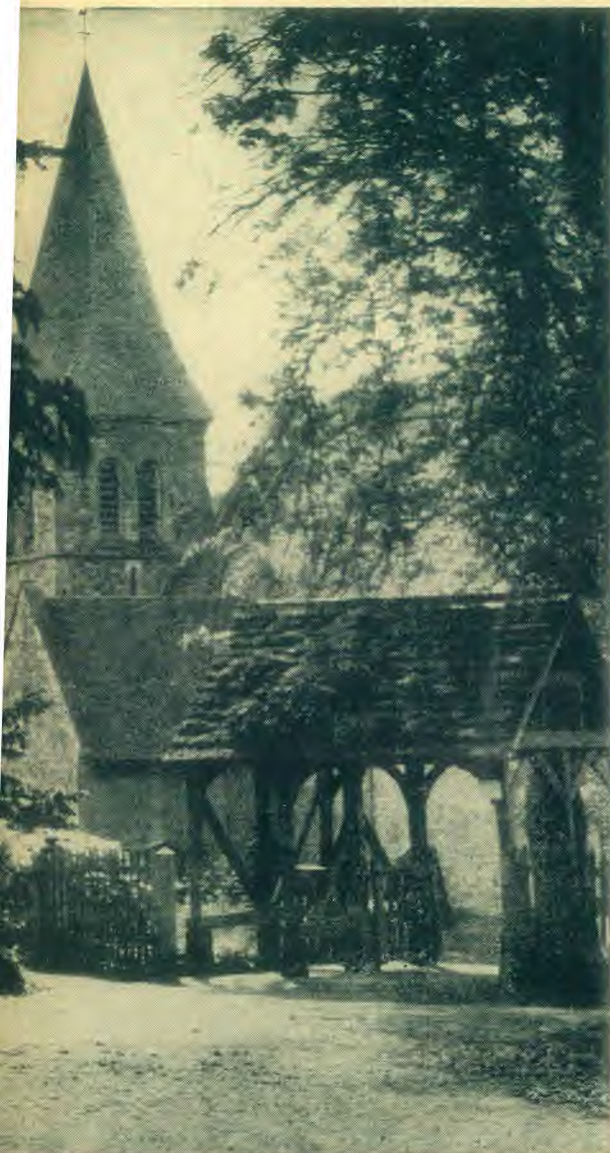
The essential mark of personality is the possession of the ability to love. From it springs every other personal quality. We should perhaps not understand the deeper things concerning the Godhead but when we are told that the Holy Spirit loves men (Rom. 15:30) we can appreciate that, for we are persons who can love. Love brings the possibility of grief and pain. So the Holy Spirit is pained and grieved when turned away. (Eph. 4:30; Heb. 10:29.) Knowledge and will are also predicated of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 2:11; 12:11.) We may be guided, therefore, by the Holy Spirit, because He not only knows our best pathway, but wills that we should go along it. Knowledge and will is implied in Jesus' promise: "Howbeit when He the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." John 16:13.

The Spirit in the Last Days

It may seem almost foolish that God should have given to the church the commission: "Take the news of a crucified Saviour to every man in the world. Tell them that this is the answer to all their problems. Tell them to believe that the Saviour will come again and that they must prepare to meet Him." It seemed foolish after Calvary. But Rome has crumbled. The glory of the cross, never! What God did at Pentecost He means to do again. The divine power mediated through the Holy Spirit will enable God's church to complete its task. The prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 which Peter quoted in his sermon at Pentecost was by no means exhausted by that great initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The closing of the work of the preaching of the Gospel is to be attended with greater power than marked its opening. Five expressions in those five verses from Joel indicate that this is a prophecy for the last days: "Afterward" (verse 28), "in those days" (verse 29), "wonders in the heavens and in the earth" (verse 30), "the great and terrible day of the Lord" (verse 31), "the remnant" (verse 32).

It has been the purpose of this journal throughout the years to give indications of the signs that show Christ's coming near. Never before have such ominous portents declared, "Jesus is coming soon!" In these last days a tragic situation exists. God is pouring out His Spirit upon His people on the earth, and will continue to do so without measure. At the same time, He is withdrawing His Spirit from the impenitent. To one, He fulfils

(Continued on page 13.)



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★ A RECENT "Wayside Pulpit" message sets forth the claim that: "A Nation Which Loses Its Sunday, Loses Its Soul."

Though somewhat unfortunately expressed, the principle behind it is true, basic, and especially applicable to us today.

Of course, as we have pointed out so often in OUR TIMES, the Bible throughout designates the seventh day, not Sunday, as the weekly Sabbath of the Lord—a day which is urged upon us all as one to be cherished, revered, and utilized for our mental and spiritual advantage. The "Wayside

You Need The SABBATH REST

Pulpit" message, however, rightly implies the vital connection between Sabbath observance and a healthy soul. Desecrate the Sabbath, despise it, or ignore it, and the general trend is bound to be loss of moral power, and of that love and conception of true righteousness without which men and nations become base, unreliable, and even treacherous.

Sabbath Rest Essential

Why is the weekly Sabbath rest essential?

First, because God commanded us to observe it. (Exod. 20:8-11.) This command has never been changed or abrogated. If no other reason than this could be assigned for Sabbath observance, it would amply suffice.

Sabbath rest is essential because it provides the physical and mental refreshing so vital for healthy living, and for efficient, successful application to our secular tasks. A seven-day weekly programme of energetic activity such as so many observe, provides an undue drain on nerve and muscle forces, which leads to below-par existence and eventual breakdown.

Dr. William Blaikie rightly declared the Sabbath rest to be "God's special present to the working man; and one of its chief objects is to prolong his life and preserve his working tone. In the vital system, it acts like a compensation pond: it replenishes the spirits, the elasticity and vigour, which the last six days have drained away, and supplies the force which is to supply the six succeeding; and, in the economy of existence, it answers the same purpose as, in the economy of income, is answered by a savings bank."

Effective Answer to Modern Malady

Nervous debility is the characteristic disease of our modern age. Sabbath rest is the ideal answer, because it presents itself as a moral duty—a fact which frees us from the stigma of idleness which the more energetic might otherwise sense—and

lifts our meditations clear away from the morbid realm of self with its infirmities, to God and His love. Normal rest is good, of course, but, by means of radio, television, modern literature, or self-centred thoughts, the mind can so easily be caught up in a feverish whirl which leaves us none the better for our session of so-called rest.

The effect of Sabbath rest as planned by God, is refreshing in every way, because it connects us with the great Life-giver who said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28.

Sabbath Rest and the Nation's Heart

Sabbath rest provides domestic stability. The need for this is clear in the light of the ugly fact that here in Britain, one home in five is legally dissolved, while conditions in countless others fall far short of anything even approaching the ideal. Unhappiness at home is a major cause of juvenile delinquency, therefore anything that can restore to our homes the cohesive spirit of goodwill and tender regard for each other, becomes urgent and vital.

God ordained Sabbath rest for this very purpose. It was planned so as to release us from the insistent claims of our normal workaday programme, to give us time to relax at home with our families, and unitedly enjoy the privilege and pleasure of church worship.

By R. D. Vine

The home is the heart of any nation. True national greatness is in direct proportion to home health. Hence the supreme importance of Sabbath rest, which brings unity, love, and spiritual strength to families which would otherwise drift toward dissolution. The family that spends Sabbath time aright, by worshipping in church together, discussing and reading the timely messages of the Bible at home, praying together, and enjoying relaxful Sabbath excursions into the country, is unlikely to disintegrate.

Spiritual Health Assured

More important than any distinctively physical or domestic advantage which Sabbath rest provides, is the means it gives us of getting acquainted with God. Our present age is materially rich but spiritually moribund, because it knows not God.

Whatever inclination there may be—and there is precious little—to keep the second of the great commandments which tells us to love our neighbours as ourselves, there is virtually no knowledge of, or respect for, that which Jesus declared to be the greatest commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Matt. 22:36-40.

The weekly rest day which demands a halt to all things secular and unessential, is the greatest means of enabling God to possess our minds, our hearts, our very bodies. Love cannot possibly exist or develop for someone whom we never spend time with, never talk to, never communicate with, never think about, never do anything for. For these very reasons many have little or no love for God. He has been crowded out by a seven-day-a-week round of secular pursuits. In consequence, though purses may be enriched, souls are impoverished.

Sabbath rest corrects this. It provides time to commune with God and to contemplate His love and goodness as revealed in His Word and by nature, unhampered by the nagging demands of secular tasks that insist on being done.

Of all ten of God's great commandments, the fourth which bids us: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" is best suited to keep us mindful of God. This is important, for unless God has first place in our minds and hearts, we must abandon all hope of a better world here or hereafter.

If Sabbath Rest Were World Wide

"But what if everybody kept the Sabbath?" some ask. "It just couldn't be done." The simple answer is that a Sabbath-keeping world would be like heaven on earth. It would be a warless world, freed from strife and every form of inhumanity; for men and women who spend one whole day in seven contemplating God's goodness, and seeking a better acquaintance with Him, would be naturally benevolent toward their fellow creatures. Violence would vanish from the earth. Freedom and security would be here to stay.

French statesman and historian Charles Montalembert truly remarked: "Without a Sabbath, no worship; without worship, no religion; and without religion, no permanent freedom."

Inner Experience Essential

We should remember, of course, that Sabbath rest is not just an outward practice. It is primarily

(Continued on page 13.)



Photo by the Author

In the temple of the Sphinx is a remarkable confirmation of the tenth plague.

★ It was in the famous Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, opposite modern Luxor, that the great pharaohs of the eighteenth dynasty were buried, and in the neighbouring hills are to be found the tombs of the chief officers of their courts.

Here, therefore, we might expect to find records which would corroborate the Bible account of the rigours of Israel's servitude and their eventual escape into the desert. Nor are we disappointed.

Among the tombs of Abd-el-qurna, near the entrance to the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, are several belonging to officers of Thutmose III,

in whose reign, and that of his son, Amenhotep II, the bondage of Israel reached its culmination.

Intef, the "herald" of Thutmose III, tells us that he was the one "who conducts the people to that which they do, who says, 'Let it be done,' and it is done on the instant."

Rekhmere, Vizier of Thutmose III, remarks ominously in his tomb record that his royal master

ARCHAEOLOGY

and the Bible

By W. L. GARDNER

told him to be "bitter" and not "sweet" in the execution of his duties. "Let one be afraid of thee," Thutmose told him, for "a prince is a prince of whom one is afraid." That these high officials literally followed this policy is clear enough from the Bible account of Israel's bondage.

Rekhmere goes on to mention some of his special responsibilities. Among them he had the appointing of "the overseers of hundreds," or the "taskmasters" who exacted grievous toil from the Israelite and other slave labour gangs in Egypt.

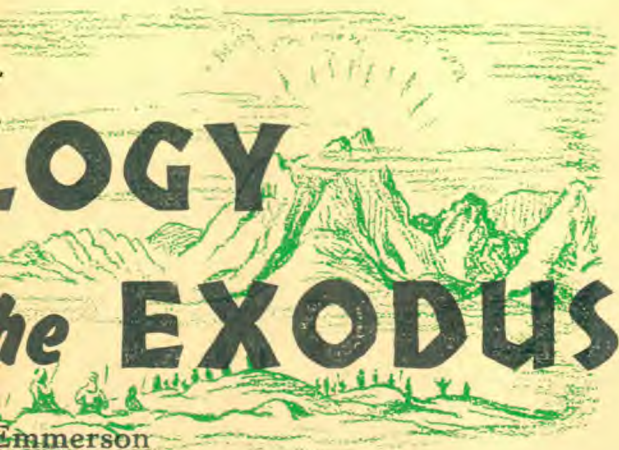
Elsewhere Rekhmere actually has a picture of Semitic captives at work, fetching clay, moulding bricks, and erecting walls "in order to build" a certain "storehouse anew." Watching over them, just as in the Bible story, are "taskmasters" with canes or whips upraised. One is saying, "The rod is in my hand; be not idle." Others are seen measuring the "tale" of bricks made by the slaves.

All this fits perfectly into the Bible declaration that the Egyptians "set over" the poor Israelite slaves "taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens," and to make "their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick." Exod. 1:11, 14.

Even the request of Moses for permission for the Israelites to sacrifice to Jehovah is paralleled by the records of one labour overseer who itemizes reasons why workmen absented themselves from

work. Chief among these was a desire to sacrifice to their gods. Evidently this request was often used only as a pretext to alleviate their misery. This explains Pharaoh's peremptory refusal on the grounds that Moses was seeking to make the Israelite slaves to "rest [or be idle] from their burdens." Exod. 5:5.

When one studies the plagues of Egypt which



Men Who Proved the Bible True.—6

waters of the Nile was intended to show that Jehovah was infinitely more powerful than the great god Hapi, who, the Egyptians believed, gave them the waters of the Nile. (Exod. 7:19-21.)

That her life-giving stream should be turned to stinking blood bringing death to all living creatures in it was an insult indeed!

The frog-goddess of childbirth, Heket, was also sacred to the Egyptians. When, therefore, the river frogs were miraculously multiplied in the second plague, her powerlessness was revealed, while at the same time, the Egyptians dared not rid themselves of the pests for fear of her future retaliation upon their unborn children.

The plague of "lice," or more probably of some stinging insects, revealed that all creatures, great and small, were at the command of Jehovah for the outworking of His sovereign designs.

The fourth plague of flies was, no doubt, a

resulted eventually in Pharaoh's release of the Israelites, one realizes that they were by no means just arbitrary judgments, but that each one was peculiarly adapted to strike at vulnerable spots in the life and beliefs of the idolatrous Egyptians. Every detail of Moses' approach was likewise calculated to impress Pharaoh that he was the representative of a God who was seriously to be reckoned with.

When Moses appeared before Pharaoh to demand the release of Israel he had with him Aaron, his "mouth." Exod. 4:16. This was a well understood office in Egypt, for many nobles record their appointed as "mouth" to Pharaoh.

Ahmoose, Thutmose III's commander-in-chief, claims that he was "mouth of the king" and "chief mouth of his house."

Moses carried in his hand the "rod of God" (Exod. 4:20) and Pharaoh soon learned its power when it was pitted against the "holy rod of Amon," the "rod of Hathor," the "rod of Horus," and the rest carried by the priest-magicians.

Moses' first use of the "rod of God" upon the



Photo by the Author

Houses of the Jericho of Joshua's day.

plague of flying scarab beetles, one of the most sacred of insects, representing Khepri, the god of life, virility, and resurrection. The scarab, in fact, was the form used for the royal seals and its outline constituted the cartouche in which the royal name was invariably enclosed on the monuments. What a shock it must have been to the Egyptians

that this sacred insect was turned by Jehovah from a symbol of blessing to a curse upon all the land.

The grievous murrain which came upon the cattle of Egypt was a terrible insult to the sacred cow-goddess Hathor, to whom Amenhotep II was particularly devoted, and when this affliction was passed on by the cattle to the bodies of the Egyptians themselves, the rout of Hathor, as well as Amon and Khnum, protectors of the herds of Egypt, was completed.

As the plague of hail lashed the land, the thunders of Jehovah drowned even the great "Voice of Amon." And the plague of locusts covered not only the "face" but the "eye of the earth," that is, the sun, which was completely obscured in the ninth plague, the darkness must have struck terror to the priests of the sun-god, Ra.

The last plague provided the final blow, for in it not only the firstborn of the humblest of the Egyptians was struck down, but also the firstborn son of Pharaoh, a "son of god."

No wonder this final, fearful judgment completely broke down Pharaoh's obstinate resistance and caused him tremblingly to plead with Moses to take his people away.

Tenth Plague Corroborated in Sphinx Temple

A remarkable confirmation of the devastating literalness of the tenth plague was found many years ago upon a large stele or monumental tablet which stands in a little temple between the mighty paws of the Sphinx of Gizeh.

On this stele, Thutmose IV, the successor of Amenhotep II, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, relates a dream given to him by the god of the Sphinx, Harmakhis, while he lay sleeping beneath it after an arduous day's hunting. Harmakhis told him, what he evidently was not at the time anticipating, that he was to wear "the White crown and the Red crown upon the throne."

This dream would suggest that Thutmose IV was a younger son not expecting to accede to the throne, but that this exaltation came to him as a result of the slaying of Amenhotep's firstborn in the tenth plague.

Egypt Abandons Province of Canaan

In the past Bible students have often wondered why, if the Egyptian empire in the days of Moses extended from the Nile to the Euphrates, the Israelites were able to settle in the province of Canaan without any protest from Pharaoh. The

monuments and archives of the later kings of the eighteenth dynasty supply us with a complete answer.

It is evident from the vast building projects of Amenhotep III, successor of Thutmose IV, like the majestic temple of Luxor, and his additions to the great temple of Karnak, besides buildings elsewhere throughout Egypt, that this pharaoh was a stay-at-home monarch, whose interest in the far-flung empire was very much less than that of the empire-builder, Thutmose III.

And when we examine the text of the Tell el Amarna tablets from the archives of his successor, the religious mystic, Akhnaton, we discover that the Syrian provinces were practically abandoned by these pharaohs, thus providentially opening the way for the settlement of Israel in the land long promised to them by God.

These Tell el Amarna tablets, came to light in 1887, when an Egyptian woman, burrowing among the ruins of the ancient city of Akhetaton, in Middle Egypt, accidentally found the Records Office of Akhnaton's capital. When deciphered, they proved to be letters written in Babylonian cuneiform from vassal chieftains of Palestine and Syria to their Egyptian over-lords, Amenhotep III and Akhnaton (Amenhotep IV). In them the chieftains warned of dangerous incursions from the north and from the eastern desert, the latter invaders being designated Habiru, which one immediately connects with the biblical Hebrews.

Some of the letters definitely recall incidents in the Bible account, especially those from Abdi-Khiba of Urusalima, whom Lt.-Col. Conder identified with Adonizedek of Jerusalem. Abdi-Khiba first reports that "the country of the king is being destroyed, all of it" by Habiru from the "mountains of Seir" or Edom, and warns that "if no troops came this year, all the countries of the King my Lord will be utterly destroyed."

No help being forthcoming, he is soon writing again saying, "Let me fly to the king." Still later he reports the abandonment of Jerusalem, a further defeat at Ajalon, and his intention of endeavouring to reach Egypt.

Where this correspondence ends the Bible takes up the story and tells how the king of Jerusalem and four other chiefs were caught in a cave at Makkedah and put to death. (Joshua 10:15-20.)

Well might Conder in his translation of the letters declare: "These letters are the most impor-

(Continued on back page.)

Know Your Bible

THE MILLENNIUM

Is the word "millennium" found in the Bible?

No. The word is a compound of two Latin words meaning "a thousand years" and it applies particularly to the "thousand years" of the twentieth chapter of Revelation.

What is the first event connected with the thousand years?

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit [abyss, R.V.], and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." Rev. 20:1, 2.

From this it is clear that Satan, the instigator of evil and the tempter of mankind, is to be bound or restricted in some way during the millennial period. What kind of chain does God use to bind a spirit being? What kind of life goes on in the earth during this time? What and where is this bottomless pit or abyss? And when does the millennium actually begin? These are some of the questions this Bible study must try to answer.

What great event really opens the millennium?

"And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. . . . This is the first resurrection." Rev. 20:4, 5.

Here is a definite marking point for the beginning of the thousand-year period. It is marked by the resurrection of the saints.

How do the modern translations render this scripture?

SEPTEMBER 2, 1954



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"And they came to life and were kings with Christ for a thousand years. . . . This is the first resurrection." (Weymouth.) "They came to life and reigned along with the Christ for a thousand years. . . . This is the first resurrection." (Moffatt.)

What event closes the millennium?

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Rev. 20:5. Other versions render this verse: "No one else who was dead rose to life until the thousand years were at an end." (Weymouth.) "As for the rest of the dead, they

By J. A. McMillan

did not come to life until the thousand years were completed." (Moffatt.)

These statements supply us with the facts that enable us to define the millennium. It is a period of a thousand years bounded by two resurrections. It begins with the first resurrection and closes with the resurrection of the unsaved.

Does Jesus mention these two resurrections?

"The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." John 5:28, 29, R.V.

What benediction applies to this resurrected group?

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the

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first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Rev. 20:6.

What happy state will the saints enjoy?

"And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Rev. 20:4.

Jesus does not come to be with His saints where they are—namely, on this earth; but to take them to be with Him, namely, in heaven, in His "Father's house [where there] are many mansions." John 14:2.

What happens to the living wicked at Christ's coming?

"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints." 2 Thess. 1:7-10.

What will happen to this earth at Christ's coming?

"Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. . . . The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word." Isa. 24:1, 3.

What did Jeremiah see in vision of this calamity?

"I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved to and fro. (R.V.) I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled." Jer. 4:23-25.

This scripture draws a consistent picture. The bottomless pit or abyss is this planet, depopulated and desolated. This becomes the prison of Satan and his angels. Satan is thus "bound" not by a literal chain of steel or metal, but by circumstances forged by the events connected with the second advent, the resurrection, and translation of the saints, the destruction of the unsaved, and the depopulation of the earth.

How will the saints be occupied during the millennium?

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them." Rev. 20:4.

Whom will they associate in judging?

"Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life." 1 Cor. 6:3. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" Verse 2.

The great controversy between Christ and Satan will thus end with the triumph of love over hate, light over darkness, life over death. "In the presence of the assembled inhabitants of earth and heaven the final coronation of the Son of God takes place."

At the end of the millennium what will happen?

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." Rev. 20:7. "And after many days shall they be visited." Isa. 24:22.

The resurrection of the wicked dead restores Satan to his dominion.

What does Satan then do?

"And shall go out to deceive the nations . . . to gather them together to battle. . . . And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city." Rev. 20:8, 9.

Where had this holy city come from?

"And he . . . showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Rev. 21:10.

What fiery curtain falls on the wicked?

"And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Rev. 20:9.

What dread word of Jesus is thus fulfilled?

"Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. 25:41, 46.

"As there is a second and higher life, so there is also a second and deeper death. And as after that life there is no more death, so after that death there is no more life."—Dean Henry Alford.

The Promise of the Spirit

(Continued from page 5.)

His word, "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28), to another He gives His warning, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Gen. 6:3. The time will come when the process in both cases will reach its climax. Then the end will come; Jesus will appear.

Friend, wherever you are, stop right now and ask yourself these questions: "Have I felt the pleadings of the Holy Spirit?" "Could I honestly say, 'Lord, I have followed You thus far, grant me now the fulfilment of Thy promise to pour out Thy Holy Spirit upon me?'"

This year, this week, today a process has been going on in your life. God has either been withholding His Holy Spirit from you or He has been giving it in rich measure. Preparation for Jesus' coming can only be made as you follow His guidance. Make sure that in your case it is the right process.

You Need the Sabbath Rest

(Continued from page 7.)

an inner experience. Hearts heavily burdened with sin cannot enter into the rest of God's weekly Sabbath. Their burden must be lifted by the Saviour Jesus Christ. Sins must be acknowledged, confessed, and repented of. Where necessary, restitution must be made. Above all, there must be faith in Christ's power and willingness to free us from sin's guilt and power. "If we confess our sins, He [Jesus Christ] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

To those thus freed from sin comes God's promise of Sabbath rest to the soul: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Exod. 33:14. While unsaved sinners can never enjoy real inner peace of heart (Isa. 48:22), those who truly seek God's ways are promised "rest unto their souls." Jer. 6:16.

May our testimony concerning God's rest day be like that of the Psalmist: "This is the day which

the Lord hath made; we will be glad and rejoice in it." Psa. 118:24. God's Sabbath is one of the great links between the paradise which was, and the paradise which is yet to come. Mercifully planned by our Creator in the very beginning (Gen. 2:2, 3), it is destined to serve redeemed humanity for all eternity. (Isa. 66:23.)

Christ the Focus of Prophecy

(Continued from page 3.)

that the meteors fell at the rate of more than 34,000 per hour.

After designating these sky wonders as heralds of His return to our world, the Master continued: "The nations will be in dismay, bewildered, . . . men swooning with panic and foreboding of what is to befall the universe; . . . and then shall be seen the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and glory." Luke 21:25-27, Moffatt.

What significant phrases! Compare them with the turbulent events of this twentieth century, the two world wars, the thrones overturned, the awakening of Asian and African multitudes, and the flood of new discoveries that has thrust us into the Atomic Age. In this new era of explosive power we are being pushed nearer and nearer to the "edge of sheer abyss," and a chorus of voices from sane, conservative men now declare that "time is short" and "time is running out."

But there is One who is "mighty to save," and it is God's will that all people should hear the good tidings of the great Deliverer.

Christ's ambassadors have penetrated to nearly all lands, and the Bible now speaks to men and women in more than a thousand tongues. The Gospel message speeds on its way, and with omnipotent power we are persuaded that the glorious task will soon be finished.

Once He came to die for sinners and redeem the lost; now He returns to deliver His people and to reign for ever as "King of kings, and Lord of lords." This is the supreme message of the Great Book.

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THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

Disobedient Daisy

By Mrs. J. Craven

THE holidays were over, and Daisy and Dorothy Brookes were getting ready to start off for school one Monday morning.

Dorothy had been at school for three years, so she was not really very excited at the thought of going back, but this was to be Daisy's very first day there, and she could hardly wait to get going.

They lived about ten minutes' walk from the school, and had a busy road to cross, so Mummy gave them some last minute instructions.

"Mind you wait at the crossing until the road is quite clear before you go over," she said. "And Daisy—never come home alone. Always wait right by the school door for Dorothy."

She kissed them good-bye, and off they went.

The day seemed to pass by quite quickly for Daisy. She had a very kind teacher who did her best to make her little pupils feel happy; but all the same, she was glad when it was time to go home to see Mummy again. Dorothy came out of school a little later than Daisy, but she remembered Mummy's instructions, and waited patiently for her to come.

All went well for several days,

but one afternoon Daisy grew tired of waiting for Dorothy, and decided she would go off home by herself. She was quite sure she knew the way.

She started off up the road. She felt very important to be walking along all by herself. Presently a little school friend came running up behind her and walked along with her. When they came to the top of the road

Sabbath Bells

Sweet Sabbath bells are ringing—

Come, come, come.

A joyous message bringing—

Come, come, come.

A message full of hope and cheer

For those who love and serve Him
here;

The Saviour's coming draweth
near—

Come, come, come.

Lay by your toil and labour.

Come, come, come.

And bringing a friend or neighbour.

Come, come, come.

Come with willing heart and
hand,

Come and join our happy band,
Marching on to Canaan's land.

Come, come, come.

Elizabeth Rosser.

Daisy was about to take the turning which led to the main road where the busy crossing was, when her little friend said, "Come home with me first, Daisy, and see my lovely little white kitten."

Daisy knew that she ought not to do this, but the thought of cuddling a fluffy, white kitten was too good, and so she went.

She had been playing with the little kitten for some time, when she thought of Dorothy and how she would love him too. Then she began to wonder if Dorothy had reached home yet, and how worried Mummy would be, finding that she was not with her. She decided she had better say good-bye to her little friend and the pussy-cat, and finish her journey home.

She started off again, but now she was in a strange road. She went to the end and turned round the corner. She walked on a little way and turned into another road which she hoped would be familiar. But, no, she was more muddled than ever. She realized she was lost, and then she began to cry. How she wished she had obeyed Mummy and waited for Dorothy.

Suddenly, she thought of the story which Mummy had told her at bedtime the night before. It was about the little lost sheep and how the Good Shepherd left all His other sheep and went and searched for it until He found it. Daisy knew that the Good Shepherd was really Jesus, and she thought perhaps if she asked Him He might help her to be found. "Dear Jesus," she sobbed, "I've been naughty and I'm lost. Please find me."

She wandered sadly up the road, when, all at once a little boy about her own age came running out from one of the houses, followed by a kindly looking lady. The lady stopped and spoke to her.

"Why are you crying, little girl?" she asked.

"Because I'm lost and I don't know my way home," said Daisy, through her tears.

"If you can tell me where you live, perhaps I can help you," returned the kind lady.

Daisy told her the name of the road where she lived, and the number of the house.

"Why," said her new-found friend, "that is the very road we are going to. Come along with us and you'll be quite all right."

As they walked along together, Daisy dried her tears and explained just how she had got lost and how she had asked Jesus to find her. She was quite sure that Jesus had answered her prayer and sent the kind lady to help her.

Meanwhile, Dorothy had searched everywhere at school for her little sister, and being unable to find her, had run home as quickly as she could, hoping to find her there. Both she and Mummy were greatly alarmed at Daisy's disappearance, and Mummy at once put on her hat and coat to go out and look for her. She told Dorothy to stay at home in case Daisy should get back while she was out.

She went down the front path and turned out into the road. She had gone only a short way when round the corner came Daisy with her good friend. When she saw Mummy she ran up to her and began to tell her just what had happened. "And Mummy," she finished, "I'll never be so naughty again."

Mummy was very grateful that Daisy was found, and thanked the lady for her kindly help, and asked her to bring her little boy sometimes to play with Daisy and Dorothy.

Daisy wondered what punishment she would receive for her disobedience, but Mummy thought she had been punished enough, and felt quite sure that Daisy would never again decide to come home alone.

And she never did.



See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Auntie Pam, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than September 16th. In case OUR TIMES arrives late, still send your entry. All attempts will be considered.

Your Letter

My Dear Sunbeams,

HAVE you heard the fable of the Arab and his camel? It goes like this:

One night the camel became cold, so he asked if he might put his head inside his master's tent. "Very well," said the man, thinking this to be a harmless enough request. But after a time the camel said: "I still find it very cold, and should be so glad to place my fore-feet inside the tent." Again the Arab agreed. Now the camel was half-way in, and before his master could protest he brought his whole body right inside the tent until there just wasn't room for them both inside. Then the camel, upon being asked to leave, refused to do so, and pushed his master right outside the door!

Sin, or disobedience, is like the camel. First of all it comes knocking at the door and begs for a little room, then just a little more, until presently, like the camel, it has complete control. It first entered into the beautiful Garden of Eden when the Serpent tempted Eve to disobey God; and, like the camel, it has been creeping stealthily into our heart-homes ever since.

I'm so glad that Daisy, the little girl in our story, really learned her lesson well when she resolved never to disobey Mother again, aren't you? And I'm sure that we all want to push the camel of sin right out of our hearts and give Jesus, the true Master, complete control there, don't we?

I expect that most of you will have finished your holidays now, and will have lots of exciting happenings to relate! So, don't forget to write to me, Sunbeams, as I shall eagerly await the post which brings me your letters.

Good-bye for now,

Yours affectionately,

AUNTIE PAM.

Results of Competition No. 13

Prize-winners.—Elaine Bunker, Furlzeal Down, Grenofen, Nr. Tavistock, Devon. Age 12; Eunice Gincey, 13 St. Ann's Lane, Godmanchester, Hunts. Age 8.

Honourable Mention.—Christine Dudley (Haytor); Richard Payne (Woodmancote); Maureen Walsh (Hove); Olive King (Chelmsford); Siegfried Baron (Church); Marion Russell (Glasgow); Delia Frost (Northampton); David Cooper (Cardiff); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Eileen Maunder (Bodmin); Marion Paget (Wokingham); Charles Munn (Carlisle); Roger Handysides (Reading); Stuart Payne (Woodmancote); Yvonne Meeckoms (Dorchester); Antony Peart (Cheltenham); Rita Bushell (Northampton); Thomas Bailey (Binfield); Mary Durant (Dorset); Rosemary Dymond (Bodmin); Jacqueline Glasby (Coventry); Elizabeth Geere (London); Heather Payne (Woodmancote); Lesley Ann Hardy (Derby).

Those who tried hard.—Nigel Payne (Woodmancote); Kathleen Ball (Northampton); Arlene Cromie (Rathfriland); Maureen Dolby (Chesterfield); John Gunthorpe (Northampton); Margaret Peart (Cheltenham); Margaret Jordan (High Wycombe); Graham Hardy (Derby); Rowland Jones (Swansea).

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STRAWS IN THE WIND

"Perfect" War Weapons

⊕ The horror of modern war weapons is not confined to "the hydrogen bomb explosion and its lethal rain and dust," says a writer in *European Review*. "At this very moment German scientists are reported to be meeting American ones near Washington to study the latest and most 'perfect' form of bacteriological warfare, including the possibility, already often discussed, of blasting crops with disease to the point of their utter destruction, or poisoning them as human food, leaving the peoples who now feed on them—if they had survived the germ warfare directed against the human population—to choose between death by starvation, or by the eating and drinking of lethally contaminated food and water."

Archæology and the Exodus

(Continued from page 10.)

tant records ever found in connection with the Bible . . . and fully confirmed the historical statement of Joshua."

Jericho Speaks!

The final evidence for the historicity of the Exodus and the entrance of Israel into Canaan has been provided by the excavations of Professor John Garstang at Jericho.

As recently as 1922 Dr. Alan Gardner said of the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan: "All the story . . . ought to be regarded as no less mythological than the details of creation as recorded in Genesis," and "our first task must be to attempt to interpret these details on the supposition that they are a legend."—*Etudes Champollion*, 1922, page 205.

Professor Garstang felt that these suggestions did not do justice to the biblical narrative, and his excavations from 1930-1936 have provided one of the most remarkable vindications of Bible history in the annals of biblical archæology.

He found a double wall surrounding the city of Joshua's day with houses built across the two walls, just as is indicated in the description of Rahab's home. (Joshua 2:15.) The foundations of the walls in many places were found to be noticeably weak and as a result of some catastrophe had collapsed, so that they could quite properly be described as having "fallen flat." Joshua 6:20.

The citadel on the west side of the city had held up the walls for some distance on either side and it may have been on this section that Rahab's house stood. Actually, this point was nearest to the promontory of Jebel Kuruntul, where the spies doubtless found refuge until it was safe to return across the Jordan to Joshua.

Everywhere Professor Garstang found evidences of deliberate destruction by fire. "Archæologists," he says, "are familiar with layers of burning, but here the traces are abnormal." The destroyers, he believes, must have brought in inflammable material in order to convert the city into a huge bonfire.

The further fact that there was no general rebuilding on the site for some five hundred years corroborates the reality of the curse laid upon the city by Joshua. (Joshua 6:26; 1 Kings 16:34.)

Summing up his findings, Professor Garstang says:

"Set side by side with the biblical narrative, the material evidence is seen to bear out in every essential detail the record of the capture and destruction of Jericho by the Israelites under Joshua."

So, once again, the "stones" have spoken to refute the hasty conclusions of the destructive critics and to vindicate the trustworthiness of the Word of God.

(Next Time: "Digging in and Around the Holy City.")

