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WHY THE LEAGUE?

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THE greatest need of the world today and of every individual in the world is the religion of Jesus Christ. More important than any social improvement, any economic advancement, any political or moral reform, is the extension of the kingdom of God, through the proclamation of the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ. Never did the world need this more than at the present time. Material conditions were never better, political and social advancements never greater, yet the world is not satisfied. Unrest and discontent abound. The only true satisfaction lies in the religion of Jesus Christ. The most real way to obey the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is through obeying the first commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

Strange as it might seem, in this time of all times when Christians should present a united front before the world, and proclaim their God-given Gospel with power and conviction, foes to that Gospel have arisen within the very confines of the Christian Church itself, and many are seeking to dilute it until it loses all that gives it its distinctive power. No wonder scoffers outside the church are saying that the church is dead, when men inside the church are denying or explaining away the foundation stones of the church's gospel.

The League of Evangelical Students is a student movement, originated by students, to declare before the world that there are in our educational institutions large bodies of students who believe thoroughly in the evangelical Gospel in all its richness. Radicalism and skepticism is noisy. It quickly makes its presence felt. It spreads rapidly, like the leaven described in Holy Scripture. Reading the accounts of student life in many current publications might lead one to believe that most seekers after learning had gone over to the ranks of Modernism and Infidelity. Attending some student conferences might lead one to a similar conclusion. It behooves the great body of students who accept the "Faith of our Fathers" to band together to witness to their conviction, and to record their opposition to the stealthy progress of religious unbelief.

The enemies of evangelical Christianity claim to represent intellectualism and scholarship. But truth is one, and the truths discovered by human re-

Remembering the reported recent *incorporation* in New York State of an *atheistic organization* alleged to plan the establishment in every American school for higher study—save one, where presumably it is not necessary—of chapters of atheists, the urgent and heart-aching need of the League's work is clear. "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep." "The King's business requires haste." "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." "Lord, take not thy Holy Spirit from us!"

THE STORY OF ANCIENT SODOM IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN SCIENCE*

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Very important explorations and discoveries on the plain at the lower end of the Dead Sea have recently been made. The Xenia Seminary Expedition to the Cities of the Plain in cooperation with the American School of Oriental Research at Jerusalem, 1924, contributed the first scientific and thorough investigation of the location of Sodom and Gomorrah and examination of the record of the destruction of these cities. The researches of the expedition determined very exactly the following:

I. That the civilization which Biblical narrative represents to have been upon the plain in the days of Abraham and of Lot and the Cities of the Plain was actually there. This is conclusively shown by pottery from graves opened by the Arabs searching for treasure. The pottery was unmistakably of the Early Bronze Age; thus the Canaanite civilization of that age was actually on the plain at that time. Moreover a long careful search from one end of the plain to the other failed to reveal a trace of civilization of any kind on the plain from that time onward until Byzantine times, six hundred years after Christ. This is in exact accord with the silence of scripture concerning any history of the plain from the destruction of the cities to the end of Biblical history. The region was so destroyed that it took twenty-five hundred years of climatic influences to bring it again to a condition fit for inhabitancy.

II. The only correct description of the natural conditions of life on the plain ever given is that found in Genesis, "like the garden of the Lord before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah." Notwithstanding the dubious accounts of conditions of life on the plain given by travellers we found most beautiful clear sweet water coming in from the red sandstone mountains of Moab. Better water I never drank. Three little rivers of such water came into the lower end of the sea. Much irrigating was done in Byzantine and Arabic and Crusader times; the remains of aqueducts and reservoirs are abundant. With proper irrigation ten thousand acres could be turned into a

* Dr. Kyle has given us here a summary of an address which he delivered at the Grand Rapids Conference.

tropical garden in which five crops a year could be raised and this region would then be again a veritable "garden of the Lord."

III. It is now fully established also that the catastrophe did take place exactly as recorded in Genesis. This was determined by the geologists in the past quarter of a century, and now confirmed by observation of this expedition in 1924. The Biblical account draws aside the curtain that we may see what God was doing, it gives the miraculous events connected with the catastrophe; it does not tell us whence the material used in the destruction of the cities came. The geologists know only what was actually done in the region and the remains of the catastrophe now to be seen.

This is a burned out region of oil and asphalt. There is also a great stratum of rock salt underneath Jebel Usdum on the west shore of the sea. It is 150 feet thick and exposed for six miles; how much may be under the ground no one knows. This stratum of salt is overlaid with a stratum of marl through which is mingled free sulphur in a very pure state. At sometime the geologists say something kindled the gases which accumulate with oil and asphalt and there was an explosion; the salt and sulphur were carried up into the heavens red hot, whence it literally rained fire and brimstone and utterly destroyed the cities and the whole plain and everything that grew out of the ground. The incrustation of Lot's wife with salt when she turned back and was caught in the deluge shows that there was salt also mingled with the fire and brimstone. The great smoke like the smoke of a furnace which Abraham saw from far off Hebron is explained when we remember the asphalt that is found in this region. What makes a greater smoke than boiling asphalt! Thus the remains in this region show that the catastrophe did take place exactly as narrated in Genesis.

IV. The location of the cities, which are not now visible, is determined by several considerations.

1. The catastrophe took place where the ruins of the catastrophe now are; ruins do not move around. The ruins of the tragedy are around Jebel Usdum as we have already seen. The great High Place was discovered at Bab ed Draa on the mountainside within easy reach of the cities located round about the plain.

2. When Lot became afraid to remain in Zoar after the destruction of Sodom, he went up into the mountain; it was the mountain of Moab on the east side of the plain. Sodom and Gomorrah from which he fled must then have been on the western side of this narrow valley which again puts them immediately in front of Jebel Usdum.

3. The rivers also converge on a point immediately in front of this mountain. The confluence of rivers is the natural location of the metropolis; just here then we would expect to find the cities located.

4. The water of this part of the sea is very shallow, from a few inches to thirty-five feet, while the main body of the sea is 1200 feet deep.

There are submerged forests also on both the east side and the west side of this shallow part of the sea showing that the sea has risen much here within the last one hundred years. Many similar evidences all around the Dead Sea show that the waters have been rising. Personal observation for over thirty years has observed a rise of about fourteen feet. This rising of the sea causes it to overflow at the southern end and flood the plain and cover the ruins of the lost cities. There they lie hiding their shame in the mud at the bottom of the sea in front of Jebel Usdum.

V. The representation of the narrative in Genesis that Lot became the father of Moab, that is to say the progenitor of Moabite civilization, is also subject to testing by scientific evidence. We may inquire whether or not the civilization of Moab began after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. We found a great Moabite temple, the only one thus far discovered; it lay on the mountains above the plain at the lower end of the Dead Sea. The pottery found at this old temple was of a transition period from the Early Bronze Age to the Middle Bronze Age, thus exactly agreeing with the claim made in Genesis that Lot was "the father of Moab."

Thus every point in the narrative concerning the Cities of the Plain has received scientific confirmation and the trustworthiness of this ancient portion of Scripture stands out clearly before us.

CHAPTER AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

A consecrated group in Cornell University has organized as a chapter of the League. Besides meeting weekly for the study of the Bible, meetings are held on Sunday afternoons in an endeavor to reach other students in the University. That this group has an active missionary spirit is further evidenced by the fact that during February more than fifty dollars was raised for the cause of foreign missions. The next number of *The Evangelical Student* hopes to announce organization of similar groups in other universities and colleges.

NOVEMBER CONFERENCE IN ST. LOUIS

Upon invitation of Xenia Theological Seminary, it was decided to hold the Second Annual Conference at that school. Plans are under way for making this a great meeting of inspiration, fellowship, and discussion of common problems. Outstanding men in the world of Christian thought will be secured as speakers. Suggestions for the conference will be appreciated by the Executive Committee.