



"THOU SHALT PUT AWAY THE EVIL FROM ISRAEL."

Penalty for Transgression.

IN the old dispensation, how was an idolater punished?

"And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." Deut. 13:6-10.

2. What was done to a blasphemer?

"And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him, as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land." Lev. 24:16.

3. How was a perverse son punished?

"If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, . . . all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die." Deut. 21:18-21.

4. What punishment was inflicted upon an adulterer?

"The adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." Lev. 20:10.

NOTE.—The same penalty was judicially visited upon the Israelites for violating the Sabbath commandment, or, indeed, any of the others. This was not considered the *final* punishment for their deeds, any more than hanging for murder is now considered such. The judicial sentence that now consigns the murderer to death, in nowise takes the place of the final sentence that God will visit upon the incorrigible sinner in the last day. So it was, under the Levitical law. The law of God, as a whole, was taken as the basis of their judicial system, and death was meted out to the offender. But all those who thus suffered must the next time be arraigned before God in the final judgment, when they will receive the sentence that their wickedness deserves. It will thus be seen that because death is not now visited upon those who swear, steal, and commit adultery, it does not prove that God's law which forbids these sins has been abolished.

5. Has the death penalty for sin really been abolished?

"For the wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23.

6. Why is not the old penalty executed in this dispensation by gospel ministers?

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us." 2 Cor. 5:20.

NOTE.—An ambassador's work is not to punish criminals. The penalty of death was attached to the violation of the ten commandments under Moses, not as a part of the *moral* government of God, but as a part of the *civil* polity of the Jews. But when the Jews ceased to be God's special people, as a nation, that polity came to an end, and that practice would of course no longer continue. Since the first advent of Christ, God has had no occasion for a theocracy among men; and his ministers now deal only with the moral aspects of his work in the earth. Of the ministers of Christ under the New Testament, the apostle, in 2 Cor. 3:6, says: "Who [God] also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; *not* of the letter [that is, to inflict punishment upon the transgressors of the law], but of the spirit [that is, to offer life through Christ to the penitent]."

7. To whom does vengeance belong?

"Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Rom. 12:19.

8. To whom has the execution of the death penalty for sin been committed?

"For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." John 5:26, 27.

9. And when will he execute it?

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all." Jude 14, 15.

