



THE BIBLE AND

OUR TIMES





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God's "Flying Enterprise"

By A. B. Cheesbrough

★ UNDOUBTEDLY the epic of the early days of this year was that of Captain Carlsen's attempt to save his ship, the *Flying Enterprise*. The very name of the vessel is intriguing, while the story of his devotion to duty, his fortitude, endurance, and struggle against fearful odds, has added a lustre to the annals of the sea. It is a story that must not be forgotten.

Nor must we forget Mr. Dancy, the mate of the *Turmoil*, who, seizing the opportune moment, sprang aboard the *Flying Enterprise* to help the captain in his loneliness and danger, and who stood by him to the end.

As I read, chalked upon a newspaper placard, "Captain radios: Now sixty miles to go," my heart was thrilled and I longed that he might be successful in saving his ship. But this was not to be and at four o'clock the next day she went down. What a disappointment!

Another "Flying Enterprise"

In the book of Revelation, however, we are told of another "flying enterprise," which will not end in failure and disappointment. This one is largely unheeded by the world at large, but it is none the less real and calls for even greater faith, hope, courage, and endurance. You read of it in Revelation 14:6, 7: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

Angels, of course, do not directly preach the Gospel to us to-day. Jesus said: "Go ye and preach the Gospel to every creature," but He

also said: "All power is given unto Me." The work and ministry of angels are a part of that power. "Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, hearkening unto the voice of His word." This particular angel evidently had charge of a particular phase of the Gospel which was to be given at a particular time. This is clear from the message itself: "The hour of . . . judgment is come."

Climax of the Everlasting Gospel

This everlasting or age-lasting Gospel is the full and complete plan of salvation that was inaugurated by God as soon as man fell and which is now manifestly nearing its completion. Many Christians fail to recognize that this can only be completed by the second coming of the Saviour. Our Lord's parables were given to show us that the kingdom of heaven has various phases and stages of development, from the sowing of the seed to the harvest, from the finding of the pearl of great price to the separation of the wicked from among the just. "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just." Matt. 13:49.

Some there are who talk of the dispensation of grace as beginning with the death of Christ. They quote the text: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," but they fail to recognize that grace and truth were in existence before the death of Christ just as truly as they have been since. "Before Abraham was I AM," declared Jesus. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation

hath appeared unto all men." It appeared unto all men before the cross as well as after it. It was more clearly seen after the final and full revelation of Christ, no doubt, but "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8), and Abraham had the Gospel preached unto him (Gal. 3:8), as also had the children of Israel. (Heb. 4:2.)

We to-day are privileged to hear the angel announcing the completion of the Gospel through the impending return of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and glory.

The Gospel ship has been buffeted through the ages by persecution, storms of unbelief have raged against the Word of God, fast and furious have the winds of vain philosophy blown against those who have taken their stand upon the fundamental truth of the Bible, but the Captain of our salvation is at the wheel. This ship will not sink. With Christ in the vessel we can smile at the storm!

Not a Human Enterprise

This is not a human enterprise. The angel was seen flying in the midst of heaven. It is from above that it is being directed and all who co-operate in carrying its message to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people are assured of divine help.

The hour of God's judgment for the antediluvian world lasted for one hundred and twenty years. It began with the first plank Noah took to build the ark and ended with "the world that then was being overflowed with water," so that all except Noah and his family perished from the face of the earth. (2 Peter 3:5.) We know not how long the hour of God's final judgment will last, but those who have studied the prophecy of Daniel 8:19 know that already more than one hundred years have passed.

During this period, the judgments of God have been in the earth. For the third time war clouds are lowering upon the horizon. As Mr. Truman has just said: "The world still walks in the shadow of a third world war." Turn to Revelation 11:18 and then ask yourself: Is not this a picture of our world and its civilization threatened with destruction? Are not the nations angry in a manner unprecedented in the

long and troubled history of this old world?

These are the conditions which John saw would exist before those momentous words will be uttered: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. 11:15. We are living in a solemn time and because of this we urge every reader to enter the safety of the Gospel ship ere it is too late.

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Man's Modern Idols

(Continued from page 7.)

habits of his offspring. It is here that the heinous nature of sin is seen.

Notice, however, how positively the love of God is declared at the close of the command. He shows mercy unto thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments. Now all parents and all children have sinned and broken His commandments, yet in spite of this, as they repent of their misdeeds and, out of love to God, return to the keeping of His precepts, mercy—boundless and free—is joyfully extended to them.

Yes, here is a mighty bulwark against the wiles of the evil one. Let us heed its wise provisions that lasting peace and happiness may be ours.

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THE Word of God will expel the darkness from our hearts. (2 Cor. 4:6.) If we hide it in our hearts, it will keep us from sin. (Psa. 119:11.)




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Despite all human endeavours the "Flying Enterprise" went down. But God's "Flying Enterprise" will not fail.

The Coming

WORLD POWER

By T. S. Walker



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A speaker at the United Nations Assembly pleads for a settling of the world crisis.

the world some advocate the creation of a world-government, a United States of Europe (or of the world) as Emery Reves suggests in his world-famous book *The Anatomy of Peace*. They say that a world reduced in size by the discoveries of science cannot afford the luxuries of a disunited government and that the union of world forces into one will avoid the clashes of East and West. While this proposal sounds good, especially if such a plan would save mankind from the horrors of world wars, there is an unqualified reason why such a plan will not work—and that is because God, in His Word, says so!

Let it be remembered that "we have also a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." 2 Peter 1:19. And that "sure word" reveals this great fact—that though any nation may aspire to the dizzy heights of world rulership, though demagogues may from time to time aspire to a world dictatorship as Charlemagne, Charles V, Louis XIV, Napoleon, the Kaiser, or Adolf Hitler did, the decree of Heaven forbids its realization.

A Remarkable Dream

That decree is found in the prophecy of Daniel, the second chapter. There one reads the story of world drama outlined in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the dictator of Babylon. That proud monarch had great ideas of his empire being not only universal but everlasting. To correct this idea, and incidentally, to correct such an idea in any future national leader, God gave him a dream. It was a dream of an image composed of gold (the head), silver (the upper part of the body), brass (lower part), iron (the legs), and part clay and iron (the feet and toes). In Babylon, at the time of the dream, were the children of Israel, displaced from their own

★ It will be generally admitted that the balance of power in our world is a burning question. Two world wars have been fought to prevent Germany attaining paramount power, and in the second, Germany came perilously near to its realization.

To-day swift developments in the political field are causing attention to be focused on two other potential world powers—U.S.A. and Russia. Both possess unlimited resources though America with her democratic ideals is not possessed of the desire to annexe neighbouring territories in the Hitler-like fashion, as is Russia.

To off-set this idea of one nation controlling

land as a divine chastisement. One of these, Daniel, was called to the office of prophet while in Babylon and was used of God to bring to Babylon's king the meaning of his dream.

The interpretation is recorded in Daniel 2:37-45. Briefly it reveals these facts:

1. That Babylon's empire was symbolized by the "head of gold."

2. That Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom would be the only golden one.

3. That Babylon would not continue but be superseded by another—the silver kingdom of Medo-Persia.

4. That two other world kingdoms would follow the silver kingdom, viz., Grecia and Rome.

5. That Rome would be the strongest of them all and rule with great strength yet withal, be superseded.

6. That no world power would follow Rome but ten smaller powers (Daniel 7) would divide the extensive Roman empire between them.

7. That Rome was the last world power and that as far as this world is concerned, there never would be another.

Now these are remarkable facts. And the course of history has run strictly according to this revelation. Attempts there have been to create another world power, and some (the names of which have already been mentioned) came very near succeeding. But always something intervenes to mar the prospects of those who would seek the power that God has decreed should not any more be held by one man or nation. That was why, in the darkest hours of the last war, those who knew this "sure word of prophecy" knew that Hitler would never reach his goal.

"They Shall Not Cleave"

Another reason why ambitious leaders fail, is revealed in this prophecy. The divided state which followed the fall of Rome in 476 A.D. is symbolized by the feet of iron and clay, unmixable materials. And throughout the history of the past fifteen centuries, the strength of "iron-like" dictators has ever been discounted by the "clay-like" weakness of their associates and all attempts to form successful and reliable alliances have failed even as the Word of God decreed: "*They shall not cleave one to another.*"

For this very reason, the project of a united world government is doomed to fail—for those that would attempt to unite themselves and

form such a world government will "not cleave together" long because of the unmixable ingredients of "iron" and "clay."

An "Other-worldly" Kingdom

We have noted that there were to be four, and only four world kingdoms. And we have noted that so far, there have been four. In Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 2:34, 35), mention is made of a "Stone" which is "cut out without hands" and which smites the image (symbol of earth's powers) and breaks it in pieces, the "Stone" itself replacing all terrestrial powers. This is the coming world-power but it is not a worldly but an other-worldly power!

Without question this "Stone" is none other than the "Stone which the builders disallowed," but afterward was to become the "headstone" of the eternal building. This is but a reference to the time when the prophecy of Revelation 11:15 will be fulfilled: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." Daniel revealed the same great truth: "In the days of these kings [the nations of Europe which followed and shared Rome's empire] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: . . . and it shall stand for ever." Dan. 2:44.

That is the kingdom of which Christ spoke (and which should be the subject of our prayers) in His great prayer: "Thy kingdom come." For that kingdom's realization Christ came into the world—"unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulders" (Isa. 9:6), and that was why He travelled "in the greatness of His strength" all the way to Calvary and why "up from the grave He arose, triumphant over all His foes" and is now on God's right hand, "angels and powers being subject unto Him," while He waits for the day when He can take over the government and reign in righteousness over all the earth.

The waiting time is your time—time to prepare to meet Him "face to face." And if you will let Him become friend and Saviour to you, He will make you fit to inhabit His kingdom, for only those who are "made white" by His cleansing power and the indwelling of His righteousness, can be partakers of the "kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven" which "shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High." Dan. 7:27.

Man's Modern Idols

By Kenneth A. Elias



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The Roman Catholic Church has eliminated the second commandment in order to sanction the veneration of idols.

★ OUR investigation of the commandments of God, now brings us face to face with a precept specifically designed to act as a mighty bulwark against the wiles of Satan. Disobedience to this command brings not only spiritual depravity in its train, but is the sure harbinger of temporal and physical poverty in addition.

Throughout the monotonously recurring history of this world, men and women have been divided into two general groups. The first, consisting of the vast majority of mankind always, has freely and persistently worshipped idols; while the second has just as tenaciously worshipped the living God, the divine Creator. Group one, significantly enough, has consistently been superstitious, down-trodden, backward, and degraded; while group two has been the very opposite of these negative characteristics. History testifies that it is among this latter group that the enlightened, progressive peoples of any age have been found. From their limited circle have come those destined

to launch and improve our civilization. Take a map of the world, shade in those areas where idolatry has been rife down through the ages, and you will find you have shaded the uncivilized areas of the globe to-day. The unshaded portions, those where the worship of the living God has been perpetuated, mark the very areas where our civilization has flourished and grown. Here is no coincidence, but a direct result of a very definite cause.

Clearly then this second command of the Decalogue is of the utmost importance and benefit to mankind generally. Like the first precept, it is not designed to bolster up the prestige of the commandment-giving God, but is given by an all-wise, all-loving Deity to safeguard man's very existence.

Note carefully the wording of the command. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments." Exod. 20:4-6. Notice that the decree has two sub-sections. The first, in verse four, stipulates that "thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or likeness," while the second, in verse five, adds that, in addition, "thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them."

The Tragedy of the Golden Calf

Both these divisions have their significance as was so vividly demonstrated at Sinai. There

in the thirty-second chapter of Exodus is the tragic story of the golden calf. Aaron, impossible as it may seem, made the calf and the people bowed down and worshipped it. Both were equally guilty. In the heathen orgies which followed, the results of this particular disobedience were seen. Men became as beasts of the field as naked they danced about their lifeless idol. The plague that followed was doubtless a direct and natural result of their sensuous folly.

Just as Israel fell, so Satan has caused multitudes to fall through the centuries. Heathenism has always been riddled with image worship. We hear of the sacred bulls of Egypt, and the sacred cows of India; of sacred snakes and groves and shrines unending. All of them are inevitably linked up with lasciviousness and debauchery of the most degrading kind.

But Satan is not content with victory over the heathen; he determines to enslave Christian people in addition. So well has he succeeded that one great church of Christendom has actually eliminated this second command from its "Decalogue," that the heathen practice of idolatry may continue unrebuked and embarrassed under the cloak of Christianity.

Turning to Deuteronomy 4:15-18 we find an expansion there of the commandment. There we are bidden to "take good heed unto yourselves . . . lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast . . . the likeness of any winged fowl . . . the likeness of any thing that creepeth . . . the likeness of any fish." Right there of course is condemned the papal practice of erecting images to saints and of venerating the crucifix and the so-called Christian relics. To improperly regard these incidentals of the Gospel is to tend to regard the Saviour and the message of the Gospel less. It is here that the wrong lies. To trust in the saints and the relics of the cross, etc., is to trust in an empty shell. That is the way of certain disillusionment. Life is to be found only in God and the Son of God whom He sent.

Sunday and the Second Commandment

There is a further implication of this commandment which we should not overlook. Verse nineteen points out that we can all too easily make an image out of something already existing—even something made by God Him-

self, such as the sun and moon and stars. A moment's reflection will convince us that sun worship, that thorn in the flesh which had a major share in Israel's fall from grace, has repeatedly been the curse of the ages. Yet amazing as it may seem, that very sun worship is perpetuated, unwittingly, in Sunday worship to-day. The veneration of Sunday rests not upon a divine command, but is merely a perpetuation of ancient sun worship adapted by papal authority to the practice and garb of Christianity. Thus quite apart from the fourth commandment, Sunday worship must be suspect by all who heed God's ten commandments.

Returning to the wording of the commandment, we find all too often that the stated reason for this prohibition confuses even ardent believers of the Word. We are not to make, or bow down to graven images, "for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments." Exod. 20:5, 6.

In what way is God jealous? He is jealous for our welfare, for our happiness, and for our life. It is entirely for our own advantage and protection that the command is decreed. Keep the principle and, other things being equal, we shall live; deny it and our eventual and eternal death is inevitable. Man is so built that he, by nature, must worship something. But the worship of the true God alone preserves life—hence God's directive.

Does God Punish the Innocent?

But does God then declare that innocent children are to be made to suffer for their parents' sins? No, certainly not! Through the pen of the prophet Ezekiel, God declares: "When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all My statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." Ezek. 18:19, 20.

What, then, does the command mean? It means that by nature the effects of a father's sins pass to his children. By his example he, to a very large degree, moulds the lives and

(Please turn back to page 3.)

Down the "King's Highway"

By W. L.



Photos by the
Author

Modern desert travel may be speedier than the age-old means of communication but it has its own peculiar problems!



Hashemite dynasty of the Jordan, whom he had himself driven out of Mecca.

A Famous and Ancient Road

Close to the road at Ziza we saw a great Roman reservoir which had been repaired in recent years as a watering place for the flocks and herds moving ceaselessly from between the desert and the sown land.

★ It was noon when we turned our backs on Nebo with its panoramic view of the land of Canaan, and set off on our journey southward through Moab and Edom.

At first the road ran almost due east across the cultivated plateau. Gradually the patches of tilled land grew fewer and fewer and soon we found ourselves out in the bare, tawny desert.

At Ziza we struck the great pilgrim highway which runs from Damascus in the north down through Transjordan to Maan, where it turns south-eastward in the direction of Medina and Mecca.

More or less parallel with the road is the Hejaz railway, which once also ran all the way to Mecca. Lawrence of Arabia, however, so completely wrecked it during World War I that for years it was unusable. Eventually it was restored as far as Maan, but the Arabian section of the line still lies broken and scattered, as Ibn Saud saw no reason for providing an easy means of invasion of his territories by the

That relic of Roman times reminded me that this desert highway and railroad was once the "Royal Road" built by the Emperor Trajan in the second century A.D., and that his fine road followed the track of one of the world's most ancient roads, the famous "King's Highway," along which the Israelites vainly sought permission to travel. (Num. 20:17.)

At once the long history of this remarkable desert track and the successive Bible civilizations which grew up astride it, began to come back to me.

Originally the ancient road was no doubt made by nomads who, like their modern counterparts, moved up and down the edge of the desert in search of pasture and water.

However, at least as early as the middle of the third millennium B.C., this region was occupied by a settled population and the road had become a major highway of commerce and culture between Arabia and Egypt in the south and the Tiro-Euphrates valley to the north-east.

King's Highway"

IMMERSON

As a result of widespread archaeological surface surveys in Transjordan during the past three decades, numbers of fortified settlements along the whole line of this north-south road have been found with associated pottery and other remains which betoken a highly developed agricultural civilization in the latter half of the third millennium B.C., which was spread over the whole of Transjordan and the Jordan valley. Of this civilization the "cities of the plain," in which Lot went to dwell were a part.

At that early date the land must have been flowing with milk and honey and dotted with little city states which flourished upon the products of the rich cultivation around.

It was this first great civilization of Transjordan which excited the jealousy of the peoples to the east and north across the Syrian desert, and which resulted in a succession of disastrous incursions, of which that recorded in Genesis fourteen was but one.

In that chapter we have the account of a confederacy of four kings under Chedorlaomer over-running Transjordan and taking all the fortified cities along the great highway from Ashteroth in the north to El-Paran in the south, before sweeping up into the Jordan valley to carry away Lot with other notables of Sodom.

The critics used to hold up this story to ridicule as completely unhistorical and fabu-



Photos by the
Author

The palace-fortress of Meshatta is typical of the forts which have guarded the King's Highway from time immemorial.

lous. Archaeology, however, has established both the reality of this civilization and its extinction somewhere about 2000 B.C.

Site after site examined by Dr. Nelson Glueck of the American School of Oriental Research showed pottery remains which could be dated between 2500 B.C. and 2000 B.C. and then a great gap until the middle of the second millennium B.C., indicating the blotting out for some five hundred years of this widespread culture.

Rise of Moab and Ammon

It was into the vacuum created by the extinction of this third-millennium civilization that the descendants of Lot came to establish the Moabite and Ammonite nations. (Gen. 19:37, 38.) They occupied the city sites of the earlier peoples and restored the ancient highway which ran north and south through the land. It was during this period that it first appears in biblical history as the King's Highway.

Without a doubt it was the growing pros-

perity of Moab and Ammon which precipitated the new invasion of Central Transjordan just before the middle of the second millennium B.C., by Sihon, king of the Amorites, or Amurru, and the resultant driving of a great wedge between Moab and Ammon, through which Israel had to break on their way to the Jordan.

Like the Moabites and Ammonites and the Edomites farther to the south, the Amorites built up their civilization on the ruins of that destroyed half a millennium before, intensively cultivating the available land, and restoring the border fortresses on the edge of the desert and along the rims of the deep transverse wadies which separated the several nations, as to-day they divide the various bedouin tribes of Transjordan.

So the situation was stabilized again until the arrival of the Israelites once more threw all into confusion.

At present the relics of these civilizations are exceedingly scanty, largely because only surface surveys have thus far been possible in Transjordan. But the remains of the great city walls, forts, and houses, together with the fragments of red and brown polished and decorated pottery scattered on the surface in their vicinity, reveal both the virility of these nations and their connection with other great civilizations north and south along the King's Highway.

Portraits of Israel's Enemies

The appearance of these peoples may be to some extent judged from the occasional clay figures which have been found depicting faces with prominent eyebrows, small, narrow mouths, pointed chins, and braided hair hanging in locks.

A bas-relief found at Aroer, just north of the Arnon, pictures a Moabite warrior in short Egyptian breeches and plumed Hittite head-dress, giving us some idea of the forces which opposed Israel's passage and who later harried the Hebrew kingdoms.

The nature of their religion is suggested by the standing stones, dolmens or stone tables, and stone circles usually associated with sun worship, and the pottery figurines holding sacred loaves of bread, no doubt dedicated to the fertility gods and goddesses.

The Coming of Israel

About the middle of the second millennium B.C., the Israelites escaped from Egypt and

began to move in from the eastern desert. Avoiding conflict with their kinsmen the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites they pushed the intrusive Amorites back again into the desert, overwhelmed central Transjordan, and then crossed over into and occupied Western Palestine.

We usually think of Reuben and Gad and part of the tribe of Manasseh as rather failing in loyalty to Israel in desiring to remain on the east side of Jordan instead of going over with the rest of the people into Canaan.

So the other tribes no doubt felt at the time, but the workings of divine providence can clearly be seen in these settlements. In later years the kings of Israel began to realize the enormous value of control of the Transjordan uplands and the great highway which ran through it. Much indeed of the wealth of Solomon and the later rulers of the two kingdoms was the result of their trade communications on the other side of Jordan, and when they eventually lost their hold on this region their prosperity and glory rapidly declined.

New Cities on the Ancient Highway

After the fall of Moab and Edom and Israel at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians, the King's Highway remained the link between Egypt and Arabia and the valley of the Euphrates, and continued to be dominated by its successive conquerors.

When Alexander annexed Syria to his empire he settled many of his veterans there, while other colonists were attracted by the health and fertility of the plateau. As a result, new Greek cities were founded bordering on the ancient King's Highway. Under the Seleucids, and later the Romans, these developed into the famous confederacy of the Decapolis which flourished in the days of Christ. (Matt. 4:25.)

It was the power and organizing ability of Rome which raised the land on the other side of Jordan to the height of its prosperity in the early centuries of the Christian era, the Emperor Trajan reconstructing the King's Highway and calling it the "Royal Road."

In his day it was a double-track paved road all the way from Damascus to the Red Sea with raised blocks down the centre and on either side. Sections of this fine road, and the mile-stones which were set up at regular intervals,

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Have You Grown Up

★ ONCE when our Lord was endeavouring to make clear to His disciples the way to heaven, He called a small child to His side and said: "Except ye . . . become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 18:5.

By this He meant that all who would inherit heaven must abandon the soul-destroying cloak of self-sufficiency. The converting grace of Jesus Christ must be given complete freedom to revive and establish in each heart those childlike qualities of sympathy, love, trust, and humility. As a child has complete trust in his parents, so must we put our trust in the Lord.

A Divine Paradox

While, however, these childlike virtues must ever flourish in the life, God expects us also to grow to spiritual maturity. We must not remain in a condition of spiritual childishness, though we must ever be childlike.

"Grow in grace," is the apostle Peter's admonition. "Grow up into Him in all things," says Paul. He further urges us "to increase and abound," and to "go on unto perfection." Arrested spiritual development is even more regrettable than arrested physical or mental development.

I will never forget visiting a very godly woman some years ago. Crawling on the floor of her home, quite contented and very happy, was her sister. She gurgled with delight at the sight of her doll which had just been put to rest under the fire-side mat, and smiled broadly as she reached for her frame with its colourful beads. A thrill of horror chilled me for an instant as I looked, for this sister on the floor was not a little girl, but a middle-aged woman. She had made no mental advancement since the early age of four or five. Doubtless she began

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Paul more than once had to reprove the believers in the early church for spiritual immaturity.

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Spiritually?

well, but something had gone wrong. Her bodily growth advanced, but mentally she stood still.

Now God wants His children to experience a harmonious development of body, mind, and soul. Development of the physical without the mental is the sad lot of some unfortunate people; but many who seem to attain reason-

By R. D. Vine

able physical and mental stature, completely fail to grow spiritually. Yet the latter is the most vital aspect of our development. We must grow, or die.

Moses' Complaint

Censuring ancient Israel for their failure, Moses asked: "Have I conceived all this people . . . that Thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth



the sucking child?" Num. 11:12. They were unstable and lacked the ability to stand on their own feet. Like immature children they seemed to have no strength in themselves, and depended completely on their leaders for moral support and guidance. They lacked spiritual stamina. They had failed to grow.

Now such should be our condition that we are prepared to stand independently for God and for truth. Others may fail, and moral support may even give place to opposition. But the mature son and daughter of God will stand firm for the Master.

Belief, Not Credulity

Another mark of spiritual childhood is a willingness to believe almost anything, without applying the test either of sound reason or—which is more important—that of God's Holy Word. "The simple believe every word," is the wise man's reflection on this childish type. Young children are prepared to accept anything without question, whether it be a fantastic fairy tale or the sober truth. But people who are spiritually mature will not thus be numbered among the gullible and credulous. They will rather be like the Bereans of Paul's day, who nobly applied the test of Holy Scripture to the apostle's teaching. (Acts 17:11.) Surely, a most effective way of attaining spiritual strength.

Play or Work?

Many others betray the fact that they have failed to grow by a great reluctance to serve God or their fellow-men. They prefer pleasure and self-indulgence to sacrificial service. The prophet Zechariah described the "boys and girls playing in the streets." Zech. 8:5. Love of play and reluctance or inability to work, is characteristic of children. Likewise there are under-developed Christians who, receive and enjoy the blessings of God and the church, but their main concern is their own enjoyment. There is much truth in Sir Philip Sydney's assurance that "doing good is the only certainly happy action of a man's life." "He that would be greatest among you," said Jesus, "let him be the servant of all."

The world's great need to-day is for men and women who are spiritually mature, who are discerning in the things of God, kind and sympathetic, stable and buoyant, and who are just as concerned about helping their fellows along life's rough journey as they are to travel suc-

cessfully themselves. May Christ's redeeming grace thus equip us. May the abiding Spirit of God free us from the many symptoms of spiritual immaturity. And when Christ comes, as soon He will, may we hear those thrilling words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Down the King's Highway

(Continued from page 10.)

can still be traced along the modern desert track.

To protect the Royal Road and the new Imperial provinces through which it passed, the Romans rebuilt the border fortresses of the earlier kingdoms. Far out in the desert to the east are the ruins of these frontier posts, forty to sixty feet square and with walls often still fifteen to twenty feet high. Among the ruins of some are evidences of occupation from Moabite right through to Roman and even later times.

Sir Aurel Stein some years ago traced this line of Roman fortresses from Akaba on the Red Sea right across the great Syrian desert to Palmyra and Hit on the Euphrates.

From Military Road to Pilgrim Way

For centuries after the days of Trajan (A.D. 98-117), the Romans maintained these frontier fortresses to protect their flourishing provinces. Then, when the Middle East was overrun by the Moslems, the Royal Road became the Haj road, or road of pilgrimage, from Damascus down to Medina and Mecca, and new Moslem forts began to spring up along the ancient highway. These, in the more tranquil days which followed, were also used as hunting lodges, and some became veritable desert palaces.

One of the finest of these lay only a few miles east of the track at Ziza, so we made a detour to see the remains of the famous fort and hunting lodge of Meshatta.

This particular structure was built by one of the Ummayyad caliphs of Damascus in the eighth century A.D. and was originally some 500 feet square with round towers at the corners and at intervals along the side walls. Inside, the enclosure was divided into several large courts and a number of smaller rooms in which the royal parties lodged during their

hunting excursions into the Syrian desert.

An indication of the game they hunted is provided by the remains of a remarkable sculptured frieze on either side of the gateway in which are most exquisitely carved lions, gazelles, panthers, buffaloes, peacocks, partridges, parrots, etc., as well as fruit and foliage.

To this and similar forts the caliphs and their retinues repaired after days spent in the chase to regale themselves with "wine, women, and song," before returning along the famous road to the palaces of Damascus.

Present Controllers of the "Road"

With thoughts of the palace-fortress of Meshatta and the more utilitarian military posts which preceded them along this historic and ancient highway we drove back to Ziza and turned into the square stone police post to register our car before proceeding on our journey. The Arab flag flying over the block house reminded me of the present controllers of the road and I wondered, as we became acquainted with the efficient system for the protection of traffic through these inhospitable

regions, how it compared with the traffic control of earlier days!

To-day, under the regulations of the British-trained Arab Legion of the Jordan, every car must stop at the police post and leave details of the direction of travel, which are promptly radioed to the next police post down the road. If the car does not arrive within a reasonable period the Legion go into action to discover its whereabouts.

Some distance farther down the track we met an armoured car and two machine-gun lorries patrolling the road just as—though with very different equipment—the Roman and still earlier legionaries must have done in centuries past.

I asked our driver if he had ever found it necessary to carry a weapon when travelling these desert ways and his reply came quickly, "God is my gun."

Certainly a fine testimony to his simple yet ardent faith, and an echo of the faith of Moses, who, in the long ago, led Israel along a part of this road to the promised land.

(Next Time: "Tracing the Advance of Israel.")



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THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

The Broken Bridge

By Estol Dressel

"ONE, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine," counted Freddie. "There are only nine pieces; we must have ten," he explained to the other three boys.

Freddie, being the oldest, took charge of the bridge building. The bridge was to cross the small stream that found its way over a corner of their farm. Having spent much time in searching for boards from which nine pieces had been cut to form the bridge, they were anxious to start putting them together, and were much disappointed over the missing piece.

"Can't we build it out of nine?" inquired Jay.

"Just one missing piece

wouldn't matter, would it?" asked Ray.

Ray and Jay were twins and were as nearly alike as could be.

"I don't want to look for more. I'm tired and anyway I don't think there is another board on the farm," pouted little Larry, who was the baby of the family.

"Well, Uncle Frank's plan has ten pieces and a place for each piece. I don't think we can build the bridge by the plan with only nine pieces," mused Fred. "Besides it's the very middle part," he continued.

Uncle Frank was a favourite uncle who had been visiting the farm. During his stay he

had explained many things about building to the inquisitive little boys. The boys were especially interested in bridge-building, so before leaving for the city, Uncle Frank drew a plan, saying that a sturdy bridge could be built by following the plan closely. You see, Uncle Frank had seen the stream and knew exactly what was needed, because he made plans for really big bridges.

"Perhaps if we space the boards wider, nine will do," offered Ray.

"Ah! let's just forget the plan and build the bridge our way," said Jay.

"No, I think we will follow the plan. But we will just leave the one board out. Uncle Frank told us all about building, so we can make a bridge with nine boards that will be as good," decided Freddie.

The boys worked eagerly with the boards. Little Larry smashed his finger, and almost swallowed a nail, but he didn't cry—he was having too much fun. Freddie did the nailing, the twins held the boards in place, and Larry supplied the nails from the sack they had found in the tool shed. Once Larry dropped the nails into the water and Freddie had to



See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Auntie Margaret, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than March 6th.

fish them out, but at last the bridge was finished.

"It's kind of wobbly," said little Larry doubtfully.

"Oh, it will be all right when we get it across," Fred reassured him. You see, they had forgotten that the plan told them to put the two long pieces across the stream and build from one end to the other, so here they were with the bridge finished, but not

HAVE YOU ?

When cats lose their tempers
They open their mouths
And say mean things by the
yard.

They lash their tails
And their ears go flat
And their eyes look bright
and hard.

You laugh at a picture
Of two angry cats,
For they look very silly to
you:

But say—have you looked
In a looking glass
When you have been angry,
too?
Winnifred J. Mott.

across the stream. They learned that it was not so easy to get even a small bridge across a stream.

After working for some time, they finally had an end resting on the other bank rather awkwardly.

All four boys started to cross at one time, anxious to test their work. The bridge groaned under their weight and with a screech gave way in the middle, dumping the boys into the water.

Of course the stream was not deep, and they had a good laugh, that is, all but little Larry, who was frightened, and cried. They all felt sorry about their wasted work, however, and decided to follow the plan and use ten boards in making their next bridge.

Mother smiled upon hearing

the story, and gave them dry clothing. After they had changed, she said: "That's a good illustration of what happens when we do things our way instead of listening to one who knows. For instance, when we give ourselves to Jesus, we are reminded that we have ten commandments to obey. If we leave out one, they are all broken—"

"Just like our bridge," interrupted little Larry excitedly; "all the boards broke and we fell into the water."

"Something much worse will happen," continued Mother; "if we leave out one of God's commandments in our life, we will be left out of the beautiful kingdom of our heavenly Father."

"That would be worse, much worse," agreed all the boys, and they said they were very glad that they learned their lesson with the bridge, and would be careful to follow God's plan and obey all ten of the commandments and not leave one out.

THE Sunbeams' CORNER



Your Letter

My Dear Sunbeams,

We haven't had much room for a letter lately, have we? I wonder if we can think about Sunbeam promise number four in the space left for us this time?

Promise number four reads: "I will defend all animals I see unkindly treated." I know all Sunbeams do their best to keep this promise, because they love their pets.

I remember reading a story about a man and his dog who were very close friends. One day Mac, the master, fell downstairs, and had to be taken to hospital. Bruce went with him, but when Mac was wheeled into a lift, Bruce was not allowed to follow. "I won't be long, Bruce. Wait till I come back," said Mac.

Unfortunately Mac never did come back, for he died the next day. Bruce waited and waited. Nothing could persuade him to move. The nurses placed a mat for him and fed him, and there he stayed at the lift entrance not for a few days, but for ten whole years. Dear old faithful Bruce!

I could tell you many similar true stories about cats and even birds.

Let us show Jesus how grateful we are for such faithful dumb

friends by always treating them kindly.

Yours affectionately,
AUNTIE MARGARET.

Results of Competition No. 26

Prize-winner. — Robin James, 1333 Queen Elizabeth Avenue, New Addington, Surrey. Age 7.

Honourable Mention. — Eleonora Baron (Church); Siegfried Baron (Church); Jennifer Sharpe (Manea); Ron Burton (Norwich); Gillian Bowermann (Ferring); Paul Martine (Beccles); Tony Moses (Tottenham).

Those who tried hard. — Margaret Johnson (Rochester); Gerald Smith (Bushey); Pauline Elsdon (Ilford); Maureen Mitchell (Carlton Colville); S. Webster (Sheffield); Nigel Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Susan Tye (Bristol); No Name (Cheltenham); Amy Randlestone (Beccles); Margaret North (Ashton-under-Lyme); No Name (Portishead); Rose Dunkley (Tottenham).

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Straws in the Wind

WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS?

MR. CHURCHILL on his recent American visit said that "the prospects for peace are solid in 1952." Mr. Truman, however, said: "The world walks in the shadow of another war."

VAST U.S. REARMAMENT

In his economic report to Congress, President Truman stated that military expenditure in 1952 would reach 65,000,000,000 dollars and would use one-third of the steel, one-fourth of the copper, and half the aluminium production of the country.

EXCAVATING THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S CAPITAL

THE American archæologist, Wendell Phillips, has asked King Ahmed of Yemen for permission to carry out five years' digging at Mareb, believed to be the ancient capital of the Queen of Sheba.

BIBLE STILL "BEST SELLER"

THE British and Foreign Bible Society reports the production in London during 1951 of 3,629,752 Bibles and portions. Of these there were 1,470,291 Bibles, 732,748 New Testaments, and 1,426,677 portions. Besides these an almost equal number of Bibles and

portions were printed for the Society in Australia, Canada, Europe, Cairo, Hong Kong, and elsewhere.

My Life For Him

Could I but stand in Peter's door,
At sunset o'er the sea,
And hear the echo of Jesus' voice,
In the waves of Galilee;

Could I but kneel at Kidron's brook,
In the murmuring breeze,
And feel His presence near to me
Under the olive trees;

Could I but touch His cruel cross,
And bathe it with my tears,
Sensing my gain from all His loss,
And lose my anxious fears;

These things I know I'll never do.
But something I may give,
He asked me for it, and He'll take
My life—for Him to live.

Mary Kelly.

VATICAN APPOINTMENT DELAYED

WITH the request by General Mark Clark that his name be withdrawn as a possible U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican, the question of representation

at the Holy See may be delayed for a considerable time. President Truman will make another nomination "at a later date."

BRITAIN AND UNITED EUROPE

BOTH Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden have made it clear that Britain will not join a Continental federation of European countries, but will actively support such a union, just as the United States is prepared to do.

TO MEET SUBMARINE MENACE

ACCORDING to *Jane's Fighting Ships*, Russia has 370 submarines in service, 120 under construction, and plans for a total of 1,000 craft. To counter these Britain is converting some forty-five destroyers into submarine killers, while the American navy is said to be converting 291 vessels. Besides these, giant aircraft carriers would provide bases for aerial patrols.

COMMUNIST "PEACE" APPEAL

THE Communist-supported World Council of Peace claims a total of 596,302,298 signatures from sixty countries for its appeal for a Big-Five peace pact.

