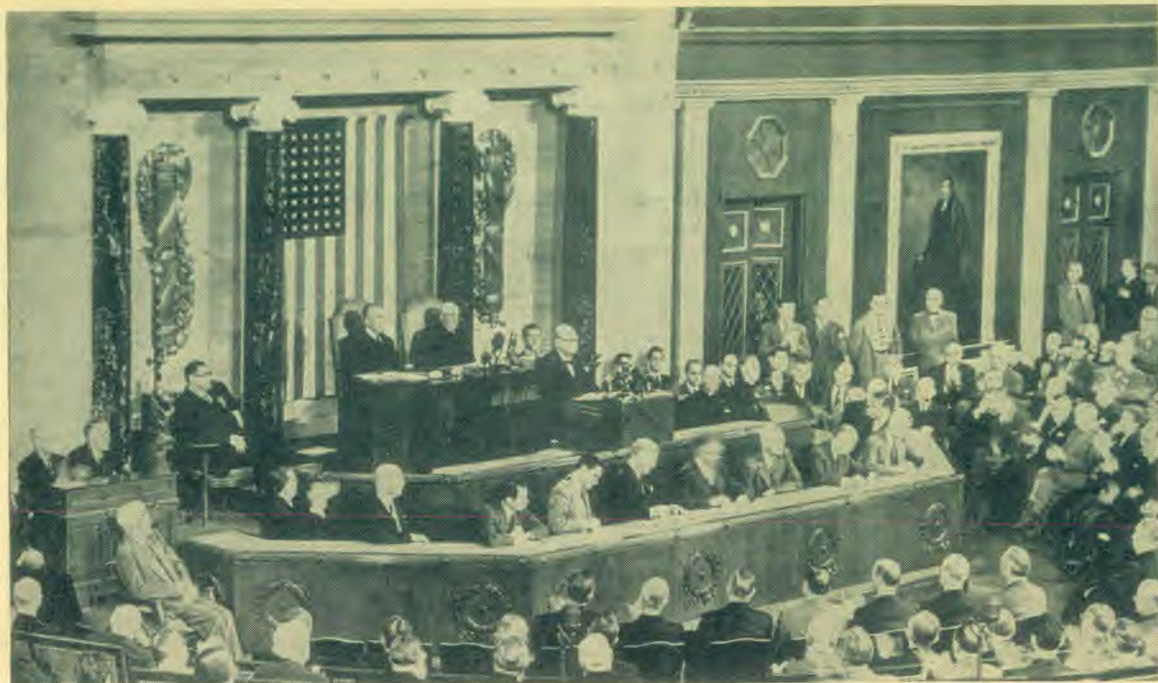




THE BIBLE AND

OUR TIMES



For the third time in his career Mr. Winston Churchill addresses the U.S. Congress. © Keystone

What Does the Future Hold?

By A. S. Maxwell

★ ONE can hardly pick up a magazine or a newspaper nowadays without finding reference to the approach of some major calamity. All too familiar are prognostications of atomic war, a global conflict between East and West, and a titanic struggle for the survival of our civilization. Even sober scientists have declared that the end of the world may be at hand.

It reminds us of a story that appeared in the *Reader's Digest* not long ago. A. H. Crowther told how, while he was visiting a farmer in the Middle West of the United States a call came over the telephone that a flood was sweeping down the Des Moines River and was now only fifteen miles away. Immediately he and the farmer hurried to the bottom lands near the river, rounding up the cattle and driving them uphill. Then it was that they noticed a mother possum with her young on her back, ascending toward higher ground. In a few moments they came across a woodchuck, also going toward

the highlands. A little farther on a mother skunk was getting her family away from the river. "Next it was a rabbit, not streaking away as when disturbed by hunters, but just methodically going up the hill. And in a minute or two a fat racoon came lumbering toward the uplands."

"The farmer said that in all his years on the place he had never before seen so much wild life—and all of it going in the same direction, away from the river. Somehow—I don't pretend to know how—the animals had obviously had a warning of what was coming. They could sense the disaster that was threatening."

Perhaps it was a faint trembling of the ground that they felt, or infinitesimal vibrations in the air, but whatever it was, the animals understood. With one accord they sought a place of safety from approaching destruction.

So also in the affairs of men to-day. A

mysterious warning of coming disaster is affecting people in all parts of the globe. It is leaping from land to land and from nation to nation, so that all men everywhere have the same apprehension and are thinking and talking in similar terms. As Christ predicted, men's hearts are "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:26.

Are the people mistaken? Are the scientists wrong when they talk of the approach of the end of the world? They are not. They may be confused as to the exact nature of what is about to happen, but they are correct in their surmise concerning the magnitude and global effect of the coming cataclysm.

The Last Days Are Here

The fact is that to-day we are living in the closing years of human history. All the great lines of Bible prophecy focus on this hour as "the time of the end." All about us to-day we can see the fulfilment of these predictions on a world-wide scale. "The days of Noah"—days of universal violence and corruption—are here again, as our Lord said would happen. The nations are angry, with national pride whipped up to unprecedented frenzy, as John indicated would occur. (Rev. 11:18.) There is unexampled preparation for war, with implements of peaceful husbandry being sacrificed for the deadliest weapons of all time. (Joel 3:10.) The weak nations are saying, "I am strong," with an emphasis unknown in history. Heathen nations, as never before, are awakening to their potential strength, training armies of frightening proportions. (Verse 11.) Amazing scientific inventions, bringing staggering advances in communication and transportation, add their testimony to the arrival of history's crowded climax (Dan. 12:4), while lawlessness of every kind, destroying all the moral underpinnings of society, declares emphatically that the last days are upon us. (2 Tim. 3:1.)

Thus Bible prophecy confirms the findings of the scientists and others who affirm that the world is moving rapidly toward some epochal, history-changing event. And no doubt it is because of this unanimity that people every-

where are afraid of the future. They have dim recollections of biblical references to a day of judgment, and are linking them with the grim warnings of world leaders. Consequently their anxiety deepens and more and more hearts fail for fear.

No Place to Hide

But whither shall men flee from what is coming? In the case of the animals threatened by flood, all they had to do was to move uphill and they were safe. But no hill is high enough to afford protection from what the Bible says is soon to occur.

True, some have thought of the great caves in Kentucky, New Mexico, and elsewhere, but even these mighty underground caverns will provide no place of refuge in that day. Prophecy says that as the great convulsion begins and the heaven departs "as a scroll when it is rolled together," "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men" will seek out such places—perhaps paying high premiums for the deepest bunkers—but it will avail them nothing. Together with those who are unable to find entrance, they will cry "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the

(Continued on page 5.)

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A class of Belgian soldiers study the map of Europe at one of the continental defence force headquarters near Cologne.

APRIL 17, 1952



The Lord WILL Come

By Peter L. Parker

know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job 19:25, 26.

When Jesus appeared in the world as Saviour and Redeemer these prophecies of His coming in glory were not fulfilled, for He then came in humility and permitted men to do their worst against Him. Just before He was crucified, however, He told His disciples: "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:5.

Without question then, the Bible testifies to a still future *return* of Jesus to manifest His glory and to consummate the salvation of all who have put their trust in Him. "Even so, come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20), expresses the sentiment of Christians in all ages. The promise of His coming has ever been their "blessed hope." Titus 2:13. The prophetic words of Isaiah will be fulfilled in the joyful cry of the church in the day of His coming: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:9.

At that time all will be raised to life who sleep in Jesus. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:16, 17. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead." Isa. 26:19.



By C. S. Dixon

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The return of Christ has ever been the "blessed hope" of the church.

★ ENOCH, the seventh from Adam loved his Lord dearly, and during his religious meditations and communings with his God, the conviction of a wonderful truth fastened upon his mind. Constrained by the Spirit of God, he declared to his less godly neighbours: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all." Jude 14, 15.

Job, another great patriarch, suffering and in great discomfort, expressed by inspiration the desire and hope of his heart thus: "For I

In that day, the redeemed with new resurrection bodies will go to heaven with the Lord with their living and translated brethren.

In that day, too, God will deal with sin and sinners and prepare the way for a warless and sinless world. This will be "the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." Rev. 11:18. "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." Isa. 2:17. "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. 24:30. Well, therefore, may those who are doing the work of sinners, take warning and repent before it is too late. For Jesus is coming to make an end of sin, never to let it rise again. "Affliction shall not rise up the second time." Nahum 1:9.

Seeing then that so vital a work is to be accomplished by His coming, we naturally ask: When will Jesus come? Will it be soon? For many long years, men and women of God have hoped and prayed for the return of the Lord in their day, but His time had not come. To-day, however, the signs which Jesus said would be harbingers of His return are following quickly one upon another. There are "wars and rumours of wars." Matt. 24:6. There is on the earth, "distress of nations, with perplexity." Luke 21:25. "The nations" are "angry." Rev. 11:18. Evil men are waxing "worse and worse." 2 Tim. 3:13. There have already been "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." Luke 21:25. "This Gospel of the kingdom" is being preached in almost "all the world for a witness unto all nations." When this work is done, "then shall the end come." Matt 24:14. A host of evidence surrounds every one of these signs. Christians may therefore now "look up, and lift up" their heads, for their "redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28.

Job and Enoch may have waited long to witness the day when the Saviour will return to this earth, but now He is coming very soon, and with the apostle John we may say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20.

What Does the Future Hold?

(Continued from page 3.)

wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. 6:14-17.

That last question is one we should all consider: who shall be able to stand? If we can find the answer to that, we may discover what to do as danger draws nearer and the mysterious warning presses ever more insistently upon our minds and hearts.

Will it be the one who flees to some lofty peak in the Himalayas or descends to the lowest level of Carlsbad who shall escape? No. For there will be safety neither on the mountain top nor in the deepest caverns in that day.

Who then will be saved?

The prophet Isaiah asked the same question—and answered it. "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?" he asked. "Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil." Isa. 33:15.

When the psalmist raised the same question, "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?" he gave reply: "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." Psa. 15:1, 2.

Here then is the secret of protection against the trouble that is coming. It is not in buying a plot on a mountainside or a niche in a cave, but in living with God from day to day. It is not in the size of your air-raid shelter, but in the uprightness of your character.

How true it is that "he that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty"! Psa. 91:1. Then in the time of trial, "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler." (Read verses 4-7.)

So as the mysterious warning grows ever louder, ever more definite and distinct, let us not falter or fear, but rather turn to God with all our heart and pledge Him our love and loyalty now and for ever.

The Bond of Home

By Kenneth A. Elias

★ OUR studies in the commandments of God now take on a new angle. So far, we have considered exclusively our duty and relationship to God, and it is right and proper that we should do so. Our first duty is to God. Speaking before the council headed by the high priest, the apostle Peter stated a principle that should never be forgotten by the disciples of Jesus. In bold confidence he declared: "We ought to obey God rather than men." Jesus Himself had said: "He that loveth father or mother . . . son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." Matt. 10:37. And again: "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, . . . and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:26. Clearly then God must come first in our hearts and lives, otherwise discipleship for us is impossible.

Granted that our primary duty is to God, are we then entitled to assume that our God-given obligations end there? Surely not. Complementary with this over-riding obligation is our duty to our fellow man. It is significant, if coincidental, that while four commandments of the Decalogue set out our relationships to God, no less than six deal with our associations with our fellows.

Further, our first duty to man concerns our associations with our loved ones. It is especially interesting to note that, like the fourth command, this one too is positive. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Exod. 20:12. The inference is clear—after an all-loving, all-powerful God, the greatest blessing, the most important institution we have, is the home.

Nor is the reason for this far to seek. God has chosen the home to be the training ground for heaven. In a sense, God has appointed parents to be His deputies. Unassisted, it is well-nigh impossible for children to picture God as He is. Our heavenly Father therefore

designs that parents should represent Him to the little ones.

Here then is the primary reason for the command. In honouring our parents we honour God; and in dishonouring our parents we dishonour God, for these parents are God's appointed representatives as far as we, their children, are concerned. No wonder then that this precept was considered of the utmost importance in Israel. "He that revileth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death." Exod. 21:17 (margin).

But this principle is capable of much wider application still. That is, that all actions taken toward God's representatives are considered as being taken unto God Himself. Back in the days of Samuel the Israelites demanded a king, Samuel, the servant of the living God, and leader of the people at that time, took this as a personal affront. The people, he felt, had turned against him. But God looked upon their request in a different light. "The Lord said unto Samuel, . . . they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." The people had sought to depose Samuel from rulership over them, but in reality they had deposed God, for Samuel was God's duly appointed representative.

Clearly then the fifth commandment while calling for rightful honour to be bestowed upon our parents, also demands due respect for all God's representatives. This surely, will apply particularly to His ministry, those men set aside by the laying on of hands and ordained as His ambassadors to mankind. As men, they are no different from any others; but as God's representatives they are entitled to honour on God's account. No more telling illustration of this occurs in Scripture than the story of the destruction of the forty-two "little children" ("youths" would be a better rendering) who jeered and "cat-called" after the prophet Elisha at Bethel. (2 Kings 2:23, 24.) In dishonouring Elisha they were actually dishonouring God

and thus brought severe punishment upon themselves as a warning to others.

But what does "honouring" our parents mean? A hint to the true answer is given to us, incidentally, by Isaiah. Speaking concerning another topic he writes: "Honour Him, not doing thine own ways." Isa. 58:13. That is, we honour anyone by not doing our ways but theirs; by not being selfishly head-strong and self-opinionated, but by submitting to guidance from them. Obedience then is the basis of honour. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." 1 Sam. 15:22.

Obviously, we cannot honour our parents without cherishing their reputation and refusing to do anything that would bring disrepute upon their good name. This of course, immediately puts a responsibility on parents themselves. Their wishes must be of such a nature that they are capable of being obeyed by a child of God. No child is called upon to obey his parents, when in so doing he would

be acting contrary to God's command. Hence a parent must only act as God would act. Truly this standard is tremendous. It applies not only to parents, but to all God's representatives alike. As parents, our reputation must be good, otherwise the child cannot uphold it. This commandment then, calls for full discipleship of parent and minister.

In closing, notice that this is the only command with promise. "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." That land is the promised land, the earth made new. No one can enter there with disrespect for God. But surely the promise applies indirectly to this earth also. Paul says: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; ... that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth." Eph. 6:1-3.

May our homes indeed be happy places on earth, true symbols of our heavenly home.



By Wm. Lance

© Autotype Fine Art Co. Ltd.

The home of Jesus in Nazareth is the perfect example for the Christian home.

MEMORIES OF THE

By



Photo by the Author.

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Tombs decorated in the Assyrian "crowstep" style, probably dating from the early Nabatean empire.

★ COMING down from Obelisk Ridge high above Petra, the ancient capital of the Edomites, with its vivid reminders of the "standing stones" and "high places" of Canaan, our curiosity was now fully aroused to follow the subsequent history of the "rose-red city" after the fall of the Edomite kingdom, and to discover links with the later history of the Jews.

Lost Bible Empire Comes Alive

The name of the conquerors of the Edomites—the Nabateans—will seem quite unfamiliar to the great majority of Bible students, as it occurs nowhere in sacred history. But while not mentioned by name in Scripture, the Nabatean empire has very definite connections with the Bible history. For with the royal line of the Nabatean kings of Petra was linked by marriage the famous or infamous Idumean family of the Herods in the time of Christ.

As previously mentioned, the Nabatean invaders were a Semitic people from Central Arabia. The great traveller Burton has suggested that they may have been descended from Nabajoth, the eldest son of Ishmael. The names are certainly closely akin.

Coming into Transjordan about the time

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of the fall of Babylon, they possessed themselves of Edom, enslaving many of the Edomites and forcing the rest across the Arabah into southern Palestine. They quickly adapted themselves to settled life and in a few centuries had built upon and greatly extended the earlier civilizations of Moab and Edom.

In the centuries that followed they began to recognize the commercial value of control of the strategic highways which passed through their territory. As a result they created a great trading empire and became one of the most cultured and wealthy nations of their day.

To protect their commercial interests the Nabateans repaired and strengthened the old Edomite fortresses and built many new ones. Explorers of the American School of Oriental Research have found more than five hundred Nabatean fortresses and watchtowers, towns and villages, scattered over the territories of Edom and Moab.

Without a doubt the Nabatean treasury was vastly augmented by the tolls which the traders who used the highways paid for their security. It is significant of their wealth that on the two occasions that Alexander the Great came against them they were able to buy off the great conqueror.

They were similarly able to maintain friendship with the successors of Alexander and with the Jews during the Maccabean struggles. And as a result of this policy of neutralism, the reign of Aretas I, at the beginning of the first century B.C., was a time of great prosperity.

OUR TIMES

HERODS

L. EMMERSON

In 55 B.C., when Pompey swept through Syria, his general, Gabinius, received the surrender of Petra to Rome, but for another century and a half the native kings were allowed to retain their authority in loose attachment to the empire, before their territories were finally absorbed.

Linked with Herods

It was during this period of semi-independence that the family of Herods, descended from the ancient Edomites pushed over into southern Palestine, came into prominence, and for many decades their fortunes were closely linked with those of the Nabatean kingdom.

Shortly before the beginning of the Christian era, Herod the Great, who slaughtered the children of Bethlehem, secured the friendship of Aretas IV by helping him to consolidate his position upon the Nabatean throne. His son Herod Antipas, the murderer of John the Baptist, married the daughter of Aretas, but later aroused his enmity by throwing her over for Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip.

From 2 Corinthians 11:32 we learn that the kingdom of Aretas IV then extended as far as Damascus and it was the city governor placed there by the Nabatean king who sought to apprehend Paul.

Exploring Petra's Wonderful Ruins

I thought of the long and brilliant history of the Nabatean empire and its Bible associations as I gazed around at the marvellously carved architectural remains which, even in their decay, entrance every visitor to Petra today.

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Desert Trails Beyond Jordan.—7

All round the great basin and up every ravine running into it they had cut their mighty columned temples, banqueting halls, and tombs out of the living rock, copying the art of the nations with whom they had political and trade connections.

Because of the lack of inscriptions and the fact that practically no excavation has yet been undertaken, it is extremely difficult to date the monuments of Petra. If, however, the so-called "rectilineal" monuments with simple straight line decoration and the "corniced" monuments recalling the cavetto cornices of Egyptian tombs and monuments represent the pre-Nabatean period at Petra, the so-called "Assyrian" monuments may be the earliest

Photo by the Author
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Right.—The temple of Ed Deir, the greatest of the monuments of Petra.



Photo by the Author
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Left.—A close-up of the giant urn surmounting the great temple of Ed Deir.



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Nabatean work. These which are characterized by the "crowstep" style of decoration familiar in Assyrian architecture, constitute more than half of the monuments of Petra, indicating that they date from the period when the Nabatean empire was beginning to be great and wealthy.

Finally, when contact with the Greek and Roman world was established, the older styles of architecture were almost completely abandoned in favour of the classical temple and tomb façade with columns and pediments in the style of the monuments of Greece.

It has been suggested that the introduction of the classical style may date from the reign of Aretas III (80-65 B.C.), for his name, the "Philhellene," indicates the direction of his interests.

The Khazneh Fir'an which I had seen in the Siq gorge on my way into Petra is one of the best known of the classical monuments in the form of a temple façade with six columns and an upper storey comprising a circular pavilion and an encircling colonnade surmounted by an urn.

From the ground level to the top of the urn the total height of the monument is 130 feet, while the greatest width is ninety feet.

Inside, the perfectly plain chambers which open out of a central hall, suggest that the

monument may have been the tomb of one of the last Nabatean kings.

Maybe Herod Antipas himself paused as he rode down the Siq to admire its lines and to note the light and shade as the morning sun or the reflected afternoon rays illuminated its superb details.

Undoubtedly, it made a tremendous appeal to the Romans when they occupied Petra, for its pattern was copied in more than one later monument carved by Nabatean craftsmen to their orders.

Petra's Most Famous Temple

After another look at this "model" monument of the classical period at Petra and a row of magnificent monuments along the mountain slopes on the north side of the Siq, I set off in search of the most remarkable of all the temples of Petra, that of Ed Deir, high up in the hills to the west of the city.

Ascending the ever-narrowing gorge of the Wady ed Deir, we came out at last onto a little plain among the mountain-tops 3,500 feet above sea level, on one side of which, carved in the massive cliff face, was the monument itself. Its Arabic name, Ed Deir, the convent, reveals the use to which it was put when the Christian hermits came to Petra, but in Nabatean days it was a temple.

It consists of two storeys, the first with six columns on either side of a great door twenty-six feet high and a second storey with a central tower like the Khazneh and surmounted, also like that monument, with a gigantic urn thirty feet high.

The massive dimensions of the monument will be appreciated when it is pointed out that its height to the top of the urn is 132 feet, while its width of 154 feet makes the sixty foot west front of Westminster Abbey seem almost insignificant.

Inside, like all the monuments of Petra, there is merely an undecorated square temple chamber. What furniture and fittings it once contained we have no knowledge whatsoever. The elaborateness of the façades and the simplicity of the interiors of the temples and

(Continued on page 12.)

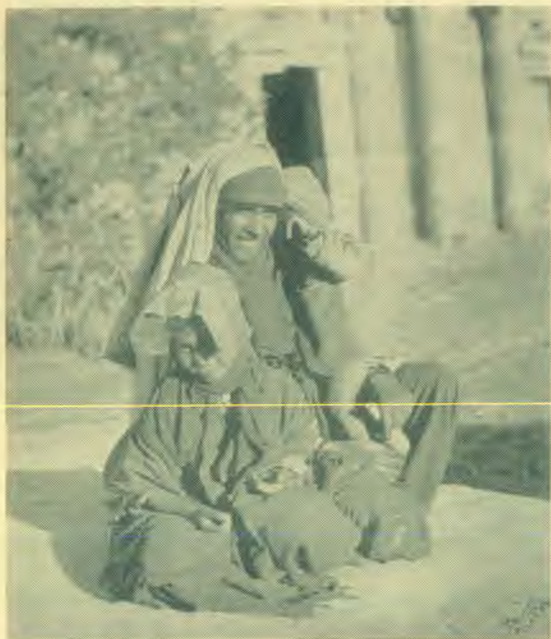


Photo by the Author

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A poor Arab family living amid the ruins of the once famous Edomite and Nabatean capital.

THIS BUSY DAY!

By Mary J. Vine

★ Of one thing I am quite sure. When I come to the end of this day there will be many things that I want to do that will still remain undone.

There was a young woman once who ridiculed the assertion that a woman's work is never done. Just a matter of organization and the application of a spot of common sense, she said to herself, and she visualized how it would be. A phrase from Myrtle Reed's book, *The Master's Violin*, had fastened itself in her memory. Describing Aunt Peace's home, it said: "There was about it an exquisite cleanliness which was not merely a lack of dust and dirt, but a positive quality."

That was how her home should be, she determined, "exquisitely clean," always in apple-pie order. She thought with satisfaction of the shining floors and furniture, the warmly-gleaming brass. How she would shine and polish!

She would sew, too, for she was not unhandy with her fingers, and as the dream developed there fitted very nicely into that "exquisite" background a happy family of neatly-clothed, well-cared-for children and a well-groomed, contented husband. Not his the frantic search for socks that had no holes, the sickening discovery that his Sabbath shirt was still without buttons. In her tranquil, well-ordered days she would have time for everything, and to spare. She would do her work and still have time to be a good companion, yes, and to read, and maybe pursue a hobby.

She knows differently now.

It was an illusion!

With the gradual arrival of a not-so-small family, and having no kindly Abigail to make up for her

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Woman's work truly is "never done."

deficiencies—oh, how fortunate those families who are blessed with such—she has discovered that there are very decided limits to what one pair of hands can do, and it's just a question of getting it clear in the mind what should come first, and what is important and what is not.

It didn't take very long for the brass to disappear, some here, some there. She occasionally covets it when she sees it gleaming on other walls, but it doesn't take long to remember again the awful, dingy cloudiness of unpolished brass. Many pretty things that might otherwise titivate her home are buried in the depths of this trunk and that. Maybe they will titivate other homes some day.

The Home Corner

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For the present they require too much dusting. Her floors, if clean, are not so shiny as they could be, and they are often littered. A ring at the door, and there is more often than not a frantic scramble to make ready at least one comfortable chair.

But what would you, when they have become just anything you like to name in the realms of phantasy—from prison walls to post office gratings, from shop counters to garages and hospital beds. By all the means she can, she feels, she must hold on to those few precious things, companionship and time to read, and time, at least occasionally, to do the things she likes herself to do. "Time," she cries, "if only I had time." I can sympathize with her for I know her well. We sleep, eat, and think together, she and I. I have known her for a long time. She is myself.

But there are not many of us who cannot sympathize, are there? There is so much that most of us would like to do, but it has, perforce, to remain undone.

What beautiful cooks we would be—if only we had time.

What a lot of sewing we would accomplish—if only we had time.

What letters we would write—

What church work we would do—

How helpfully neighbourly we would be—

If only we had time!

One blessed thing about the lack of it—it does infinitely increase one's pleasure in the precious moments that one can wrest from the clamouring duties of the day, and whether it is obvious or not, it is true that we always have time enough if we will only use it aright.

If we will only use it aright!

There might be some divergence of opinion about that.

In a certain radio programme recently one good gentleman was bitterly critical of housewives who chatted over the garden fence. Days later, in the same programme, a lady doctor spoke of those self-same little gossips as being a good refresher, enabling the housewife to come back to her chores with more enthusiasm. For myself, I enjoy my seldom chats with my neighbours and I do feel distinctly better for them.

One thing is certain, this day and every day, we, every last one of us, need to take some little time off for the thing that matters above all

others, both with the family and by ourselves. For the only way to cement our own companionship is to make sure that we also cement our companionship with the Father above.

Maybe, even regarding this, we have sometimes said, "If only we had time." Friends, we must make time, and if something has to go to enable us to do so, let it go. Maybe we'll need to get up a bit earlier to get the word of prayer in before the children go to school—let's get up. Maybe we'll all have to forfeit something—well let it be forfeited. Just so long as we hang on to these *first* things. We shall in the end find that we have forfeited nothing, indeed only have made great gain.

"O Lord," prayed Lord Ashley before he charged at the battle of Edge Hill, "Thou knowest how busy I must be this day; if I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me."

Praise God He doesn't forget us even if we do forget Him. But what a lot we lose ourselves by our neglect.

In Frances Gay's *Friendship Book* for 1952, I came across this the other day:

"Will you be opening your Bible to-day?"

"You can leave your Bible, if you have one, unopened for years, and the book will be none the worse. But depend upon it, you will suffer.

"God speaks to you through its inspired pages. When you read there comes to you the truth that makes you free, the love that touches your heart and gives you comfort, the awareness of things spiritual that redeems your humdrum life from the commonplace and gives you strength to keep on serenely in these hard days.

"Why not open your Bible and share your busy day with God?"

Shall we?

God bless us, every one.

Memories of the Herods

(Continued from page 10.)

tombs of Petra, are indeed one of that ancient city's greatest mysteries.

From the plain of Ed Deir we got a wonderful view of the peak Jebel Harun, 4,450 feet high, the reputed burial place of Aaron. On its summit a little white wely or tomb containing a stone sarcophagus and canopy marking the supposed place of Aaron's death, is one of the most sacred Moslem places of pilgrimage.

As with the legend of Ain Musa, however, there is considerable doubt whether this is the Mount Hor of the Bible, many believing that this mountain must be sought over on the other side of the Arabah.

A little to the north of Jebel Harun we saw the flat-topped mountain of Al Baiyara, whose impregnable summit, reached by one steep path, may be the "eagle's nest" to which Obadiah referred as the place of retreat of the Edomites in times of dire danger. (Obad. 4.)

The City Herod Knew

Returning again down the Wady ed Deir we made a final tour of the floor of the valley with its scattered bush-covered hillocks and tried to picture the appearance of the basin in the first centuries of the Christian era when it was covered by streets and buildings.

Broken columns among the hillocks mark the site of temples or baths, and fragments of masonry here and there indicate other buildings.

The only walls now standing are those of a ruin called Kasr el Bint, from which a columned roadway led past a massive altar to the city forum, still marked by column bases.

Much of this city must have been in existence in the days when Herod came to the court of Aretas IV to claim his bride. No doubt he walked in the Petrean forum, visited its temples, frequented its bathing places, and perhaps watched spectacles in the great theatre in the Outer Siq.

Doubtless, too, Herod's memory was thoroughly execrated in Petra after the shameful divorce of his wife, for Nabatean women were held in high esteem.

Who knows but that John the Baptist came here, for it was that prophet who fearlessly denounced Herod for his iniquitous conduct. Perhaps Paul visited Petra, too, during his voluntary exile in Arabia after his conversion on the Damascus Road.

We can know none of these things for certain, but it is hardly likely that these

worthies were unacquainted with this important cultural and political capital beyond the Jordan.

Full End of the "Rock" of Edom

The end of the Petra which Herod and perhaps John the Baptist and Paul knew, came as a result of several contributing circumstances.

Its political independence came to an end when the Romans decided to incorporate it into the province of Arabia.

Then, following the rise of the kingdom of Palmyra in northern Syria which gave a new security to the desert highway from Damascus to the Euphrates, much of the trade which had passed through Petra was diverted along the northern route. In consequence Petra declined into insignificance.

For a brief period it stirred again with the coming of the Christian faith. It was then that Ed Deir was converted into a monastery and numerous Christian symbols were cut in the rock monuments of the ancient city. The probability is, however, that this Christian population were mostly solitary hermits rather than composing a Christian community.

The Christians eventually disappeared before the Moslem tide in the seventh century and nothing more was heard of Petra until the Crusaders for a brief period established a castle there as part of their defence line in Transjordan. When they were expelled by Saladin, the one-time wealthy and prosperous city passed into oblivion.

To-day the sole inhabitants of Petra are about a hundred and fifty bedouin of the Ibn Gazi tribe. Living in the caves of the ancient city they cultivate a few patches of wheat and barley, keep a few goats, and supplement their meagre livelihood by the sale of "antikas" to those who visit the famous valley.

The city "in the cleft of the rock," the "strong city," the "Rock" of Edom is no more!

(Next Time: "At the End of the King's Highway.")

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THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

The Best Gift

By Rose Hart

ANDY grew more silent as his two friends talked. When they turned into the street that led up to the hospital, he wished he had come alone to visit Bennie.

Fred jingled some coins in his pocket. He said, "I think Bennie will be glad I came. You wait until he eats the ice cream I'm going to buy for him."

"He can think about the fun he will have with this new ball when he gets out of the hospital," said John.

They both looked at Andy. Fred crinkled his nose. "I wouldn't think of visiting anyone in the hospital without

taking something to cheer him," he said.

They walked across the gravel drive, and Andy thought his heart felt as hard as the stones under his feet. He had tried hard to think of something to bring to Bennie. Bennie didn't have many playthings, but neither did he.

"I'd give him anything I have," he whispered to himself before he left home and went out to meet the other boys. "But my cricket bat is cracked and he's read all my books." If only he had money to spend as Fred and John always had!

He followed them through

the wide hospital doors. After riding up in the lift he followed behind the others down the hall, so as not to be the first in Bennie's room. They had always been good friends. He supposed Bennie would change his mind now.

Andy crossed the room and looked out the window while John and Fred gave Bennie their gifts.

Fred said in a loud voice, "The nurse is going to bring you a whole pint of ice cream after a while. I was sure that would cheer you, and make you forget about your broken leg."

Bennie was smiling. His eyes shone as he tried to bounce the ball on his bed.

"Hi!" he said as Andy went to stand at the foot of the bed. "When I get home, we'll have fun with this ball!"

Why, Bennie was already thinking of sharing his gift. Andy's heart felt tighter than ever. He didn't even smile. He was thinking, "When one has nothing to give, one feels mean inside."

In a flash the strangest thought came to him. For a moment he did not hear what the other boys said. He whispered to himself: "It's when you don't want to give that you feel mean. If you truly



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 May 1st.

want to give, you can find something."

Then his mouth pulled into a tiny, lopsided smile. All at once he heard what Bennie was saying.

"If I could read, the time would not seem so long. My eyes trouble me so much since I have to lie here. The nurse won't let me have any books."

The others talked on and on. Andy was thinking. When it was time to go, his heart was so light he felt like shouting. Again he purposely waited until the other two boys

through the tears that swam across his eyes. "Andy, you're my best friend."

Andy's throat felt tight, too. But he managed to say: "So long. I'll see you to-morrow, and every day."

THE Sunbeams' CORNER



Your Letter

My Dear Sunbeams,

WHAT an exciting month April is! Trees turning green, flowers bursting into colour everywhere, and the sun daily getting warmer. Your letters to me show some of this excitement. Pearl Rich tells of twenty-seven lambs down on her farm in Cornwall. I just wish I could see them frolicking in the spring sunshine.

Vera Watson of Birmingham has found a grand spring hobby. She is studying birds, so outside of her window she has hung a string of nuts and fat. On the sill she places crumbs. Already she has been visited by many feathered friends. Have any other Sunbeams tried this good hobby?

I had a nice letter from Josie Hyde who lives at South Cave, in Yorkshire. Josie tells me that she sat for her scholarship exam not long ago. We all hope you have passed, Josie. Which reminds me of the greatest examination of all which will one day take place, when everyone will be tested. The test will not be to find how well we can do sums, or read, or write. It will be to find how well we have lived. God Himself will test us.

All true Sunbeams will pass with honour.

Yours affectionately,

AUNTIE MARGARET.

Results of Competition No. 3

Prize-winners. — Peter Carter, 18 Adelaide Road, Liverpool, 7. Age 14; Ruth Campion, 8 Haslam Road, Upton, Torquay. Age 9.

Honourable Mention. — Lawrence Wroe (Chapelton); Neville Kerry (Norwich); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Barbara Ferguson (Black-

burn); Gillian Bennett (Oldbury); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Amy Randlesome (Stockton); Geoffrey Rudd (Norwich); Jacqueline Dunstan (St. Mabyn); Brenda Herridge (Rickmansworth); Richard Payne (Bishops Cleeve); George Saunders (Middlesbrough); Esther Dunstan (St. Mabyn); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Ruth Balderstone (Watford); Ursula Birch (Rickmansworth); John Rich (Launceston); Molly Rich (Launceston).

He hurried after the two boys. He was the first in the lift, first outside the big doors, first to cross the gravel drive. He whispered to himself: "I'm really happy, because I am giving the best I have."

Those who tried hard.—Peter Scott (Norwich); Vera Dodd (London, E.3); Adrienne Edwards (Torquay); Robert Allen (Birmingham, 23); Mary Strowger (Lowestoft); Robert Hodge (Portslade); Linda Smith (Defford); Pearl Rich (Launceston); Pamela Maitland (Croydon); David Balderstone (Watford); Eric Frost (Norwich); John Peacock (Coventry); Ann Metcalfe (Colliers Wood); Evelyn Atkinson (?); Doris Metcalf (Enfield); Roger Smith (Southampton); Monica Seck (Tottenham); Neil Cecil (Colne); Pauline Fulford (Birmingham); Colin Evans (Ynysybwl); Victoria Terry (Portslade); Jean Myers (Newcastle-on-Tyne); Judy Clutterbuck (Ross-on-Wye); Maureen Horn (Bradford); Christine Sanders (St. Austell); Margaret Cook (Leyton); Terry Riches (London, E.14); Nigel Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Sandra Tucker (Bristol); Diane Ralph (Chatham); Peter Morgan (Bargoed); Marion Paget (Wokingham); Miss G. Ward (London, E.17); D. Digby (Paignton); Margaret Maddy (Pontllynn); Robert Lee (West Croydon); John Miller (London, S.E.7); Albert Wagstaff (Rickmansworth); Muriel Forder (Norwich); Geraldine Kurley (Bargoed); Phyllis Maiden (Penrhiwceiber); Eleonora Baron (Accrington); Brenda Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Siegfried Baron (Accrington).

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A Child's Prayer

Our holy Father up in heaven,
Great King in majesty
Who rules o'er all the universe,
Yet cares for such as me;
I humbly kneel to thank and
praise
Thee, God, for love and care.
Shield from temptation, keep me
true—
This is my daily prayer.

Let come what may, Lord, hold
my hand,
Help me to choose the right,
Trust Thee when all seems dark,
and pray
At morning, noon, and night;
Though but a child, yet still I
know
I have a cross to bear,
For those who fear to bear the
cross
A crown will never wear.

Sue M. Cole.

started ahead. Then he went close to Bennie's bedside.

"I'll come every day and read to you," he said. "Would you like to have me bring my book of Bible stories?"

Bennie reached for Andy's hand. He held it tight. His voice sounded choked as he said: "I've missed most of all reading my Bible storybook. Andy, there isn't anything—nothing at all—that would make me happier. It will be better than ice cream or anything else." Then he smiled

Straws in the Wind

Modern Mass Expulsions

SINCE 1945 it is estimated by the German association "Caritas," that 27,000,000 have been expelled from their homes by political policies. Since 1912 the number must total 68,000,000.

Braille Bible

"A COMPLETE Bible" in Braille, declares the Rev. J. H. Williams, M.A., Assistant General Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, "runs into thirty-nine volumes and needs shelving seven feet long." Its cost price is over £25, though blind persons are able to obtain them at only 1/6 per volume.

New Desert Railway

A RAILWAY is under construction right across Saudi Arabia from near the island of Bahrein on the Persian Gulf, through Riyadh, the capital, to Jedda on the Red Sea. It is already open for passenger traffic from the Persian Gulf to Riyadh.

Dutch Revised Version

A NEW translation of the Bible in Dutch has just been issued by the Dutch Bible Society. Work on it was be-

gun in 1926 and the translation was completed last year. It will provide a modern alternative to the State Bible of 1637 which corresponds to our Authorized Version of 1611.

GUIDE ME

A contrite heart, and humble,
Lord, give to me;
A meek, and quiet spirit, too,
Oh, I beg of Thee.

Ambition, all self-seeking
Forbid, dear Lord, I pray,
And Jesus, let me serve Thee,
In just a humble way.

No self-important bearing,
I pray Thee, Master, none,
But just a lowly servant;
And Lord, a faithful one.

O righteous, Holy Father,
I come again to Thee.
Control my every action,
Dear Saviour, guide Thou me.
Mrs. T. Buchman.

Catholic Heads of Government

THE Universe claims that Roman Catholics are at the head of all European governments west of the Iron Curtain, except those of Denmark,

Norway, Greece, and Switzerland. "The Prime Ministers of Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Eire, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain are Catholics."

New Syria Oil Pipeline

FOLLOWING the closing of the twelve-inch and sixteen-inch oil pipelines from Kirkuk in Iraq to Haifa, a new thirty-inch line was begun from Kirkuk to Banias in Syria. It will be in operation by this April and will carry fourteen million tons of crude oil per year.

Robot Age

IN the United States there are no fewer than 1,000 robots serving man in industry. The world total must be greatly in excess of this. There are robot computers, robot helmsmen, robot gun-layers, robot hoes, robot lightships, and many others.

Latest Guided Missile

IT is reported that the latest guided missile developed in the United States and called "The Sparrow" is capable of completely destroying an enemy plane at a distance of three or four miles, or actually before it comes into view.

