



The Bible and

OUR OWN



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A typical picture of Dale Carnegie in the pulpit.

★ A CANDIDATE'S election address reached me the other day and in it were these words: "I believe behind all our legislation must be the thought, 'Are we carrying out the great Christian principles?' The difference between right and wrong, which tends to-day to be forgotten, must be remembered."

Right and wrong! Righteousness and sin! How are we to determine them? God has not left us to flounder about in a sea of doubt. We have no need to go to a psychiatrist to find out whether we have sinned or not. In this age sin is so condoned, minimized, and camouflaged that people persuade themselves that evil is good and good is evil. When we don't deliberately deceive ourselves, someone else tries to do it for us.

All this talk about frustration in youth, free discipline for children, and psychological troubles, only seeks to whitewash wrong-doing and find excuses for sin.

Sin is a prison, beclouding the mind, weakening the physical powers, and blinding the soul to spiritual truths. The Bible gives us two definitions of sin: (a) "Sin is the trans-

Let's Call a Spade A SPADE

Says

A. B. Cheesbrough



gression of the law." 1 John 3:4;
(b) "All unrighteousness is sin." 1
John 5:17.

Whose Law?

Let us briefly look at the first. What law? God's law, of course. That law stands out clear and plain. It is contained in the Ten Commandments. It forbids idolatry, Sabbath-breaking, lying, stealing, adultery, covetousness, murder. To-day a man steals another man's wife, breaks up his home, brings sorrow and heartbreak to the father and disgrace to the children, and he gets away almost scot-free. The divorce courts are full, but we don't send a man or woman to prison for adultery. Yet a woman who took a few tulips from the public gardens was fined five pounds!

Jesus called His generation "this adulterous and sinful generation." Would He not say the same of our generation were He here to-day in the flesh?

"It is not lawful for thee to have her," thundered John the Baptist to Herod. It cost him his head, but he had done his duty. Where are the courageous preachers of to-day? Are they denouncing sin as Wesley, Spurgeon, Talmage, Clifford, Champness, Price-Hughes, Moody, and General Booth did? The holy law of God must be upheld at all costs. It is God's standard of living for to-day. The Ten Commandments are not a set of negations. They call for righteous living. Not to steal is

to be honest. Not to commit adultery is to be virtuous. Jesus said it was to be pure in thought as well as deed. (Matt. 5:28.) By what other law will we be judged if not by the law set out in the twentieth chapter of Exodus?

How necessary then for us to be honest with ourselves now and ask ourselves how we are measuring up to it.

The Way to Holiness

"All unrighteousness is sin." This is the second definition. It goes, if possible, even deeper than the first. It amplifies it. It seems to be written more for the converted than the unconverted. For,

They who fain would serve Him best
Are conscious most of wrong within.

It is a corrective to spiritual pride. It embraces all unbelief, all self-righteousness, and reminds the saint that all righteousness is centred in Christ.

Two other passages of Scripture may well be considered alongside these two definitions of sin. "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10); and, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23. Yes, you and I are sinners. Let's own up to it. It is no use saying, "I'm as good as those who go to church." If the man who goes to church has been down on his knees and confessed his sin and found forgiveness through the precious blood of Christ, then you're not as good. It's confessing and forsaking sin that makes the difference. But if the church-goer feels and displays that spirit of self-righteousness which says, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me: for I am holier than thou," then he is worse than the other. Jesus abominates hypocrisy more than anything else.

"The difference between right and wrong must be remembered," said the candidate, so let's call a spade a spade. Sin is disobedience to God. Sin is love of self more than love to God. And in the light of these facts, we are all guilty before Him. Let us then take our place, no matter who we are, where the poor publican stood and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And we will find that the Lord is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." Psa. 103:8. It was sin that nailed the world's Redeemer to the cross. But through the cross He is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Your BIBLE QUESTIONS Answered

Why did God create the devil?

GOD did not create a devil any more than He created sin. The being who now is the devil was created a sinless heavenly being. Here is a description as found in Ezekiel twenty-eight: "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; . . . thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so. . . . Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created, till iniquity [that is sin] was found in thee." Verses 12-15.

Lucifer was a rational, intelligent creature with the power of choice, or free will. God creates none of His creatures as mere automations or robots. He gives us all the power of choice that we may serve Him with a willing heart. Lucifer, who was perfect until iniquity was found in him, chose to become a devil by sinning against God. So to-day the spirit of the devil is found in men as they choose to sin and enter into rebellion against God. A hint as to the reason for Lucifer's fall is found in Ezekiel 28:17: "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom because of thy brightness."

Can you tell me where our Saviour was during the three days after His crucifixion, as it says in the Apostles' Creed that He descended into hell?

THE statement in the Apostles' Creed is based on Psalm 16:10 and Acts 2:27. The word "hell" as used in Psalm sixteen is a translation of the Hebrew word "sheol." Acts 2:27 is a quotation from this text, and here the Greek word "hades" is translated "hell." Both "sheol" and "hades" simply mean a place of silence, secrecy, rest, darkness, and corruption.

In other words, the statement that our Saviour descended into hell merely indicates that He rested in the grave; though He did not stay long enough for the work of corruption to begin its disfiguring effects on His body. (Psa. 16:10.)



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God cannot be "searched out," but He does make Himself known to those who long for communion with Him.

★ WHILE man cannot, by mere mental searching, find out God, he may come to know Him by what He has made and by what He has done in the earth.

When Paul, the great pioneer evangelist, reached the learned city of Athens, he was roused to action by the agnosticism of the Athenians. "As I passed by, and beheld your devotions," he said to them on Mars Hill, "I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." Acts 17:23.

He then proceeded to set before them the true and living God, who made heaven and earth and all things therein; who peopled the earth with the human family and who desires above all things that man should seek to know Him as his Maker, Sustainer, Deliverer, yes, and Judge. (Verses 24-31.)

No man was better fitted than Paul to proclaim God thus to his fellows. Steeped in ancient Scripture and Greek culture, and suddenly checked by God in a misguided course of persecution against the followers of

Can We KNOW GOD?

By H. F. DeAth

Jesus, he received a direct revelation of God through Jesus, His Son, on the road to Damascus. That revelation changed him from a religious bigot into a humble follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, through whom God had graciously revealed Himself to the world. Thus did he become an earnest Christian evangelist who could say, with confidence and conviction, "I know whom I have believed."

Yes, this intrepid preacher of the Gospel knew God, not only by what He had made and by what He had done in the earth of His own creation, but also by what God had done for him personally. And what God had done for him, He could and would do for others who sincerely sought after Him. Hence his message to the Ephesian church, which he afterward raised up: "I . . . cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." Eph. 1:15-17.

God's Character of Love

Having assured ourselves that God "is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6), we need to cultivate a knowledge of His character. For, depend upon it, God has not left us to drift aimlessly and perilously along this world's highway for want of knowledge of Him.

Often men pride themselves on their willingness "to live and let live," as though this were something very noble. But after all, merely to let other people live without showing any concern as to *how* they live is not very creditable. Such an attitude may easily lead to the position expressed thus: "It is no concern of mine whether other folk are properly fed, clothed, sheltered, and enlightened. Let them get on with it."

God doesn't work on these selfish and heartless lines. Nor does He expect His followers to do so. Our physical, mental, and spiritual welfare are His deepest concern. He works on the principal of *love and help live*. And He expects His followers to do likewise. This His ambassador Son taught by both precept and example.

One all-embracing word is used by a New Testament writer to describe the character of God. "God is *love*." 1 John 4:8.

Because God is love He is good. "Good and upright is the Lord," exclaims an ancient saint. His very works proclaim His goodness. In the beginning "God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." Gen. 1:31.

True, Father Adam's disobedience to his Maker's law brought a whole lot of misery and woe into his own life and into the lives of his posterity; yes, and a lot of ugliness too, into the natural as well as into the human world. Nature thereafter became red in tooth and claw. The earth became subject to floods, earthquakes, pests, and diseases, the scene of strife and bloodshed and death.

Yet there still remains enough beauty, sweetness, and tenderness, to make an ancient saint cry out with ecstasy. "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." Psa. 33:5. This is apparent to all those who have eyes to see and hearts open to the Spirit of God, which is everywhere at work in God's universe.

God's Greatest Gift of Love

Over and above the manifold evidence in the natural world of God's love to man, is the manifestation of Himself in the person of Jesus, that, through Him, we might know more fully the divine character of love. To make Himself known in and through the birth, growth, and suffering of Jesus, God stretched to the utmost limits His great heart of love. Things that man could not fully appreciate in the character of God were thus made clear and plain to him. By the advent of God's Son in human flesh to live and die for the redemption of the human race, Jesus of Nazareth became the visible human embodiment of the suffering Maker of heaven and earth. Hence, to Him, above all mankind, we must look for knowledge of God's character and being; for the explanation of life's many problems; for pardon, peace, guidance, and hope.

How God suffered on account of man's ingratitude and departure from the divine law is set forth in the tragic life and death of Jesus. His own people rejected Him. The world did not understand Him. He was crucified with common thieves. Yet He did nothing worthy of the treatment He received. His fellow victims paid the penalty of their own wrongdoing. He suffered as a result of the wrongdoing of the whole race; its blindness and rebellion against God. He learned in the school of suffering and discipline. He demonstrated to mankind that love and discipline are bound up together. Behind God's unchangeable laws is the love that passeth knowledge. Perfect love is bound up with perfect law. Only as we reverence and love the law of God can we rightly appreciate His love for us. Jesus acknowledged the claims of God in that He revered His Father's law by dying for man the death of a transgressor, to satisfy its just and holy claims. We too must learn, through Him, that the way of God is the way of suffering and discipline. Neither Jesus nor His heavenly Father have any of the weaknesses of an over-indulgent parent or of an undisciplined earthly authority. The aim of God and His Son is to refine and discipline us for His kingdom, which is governed by love, with all the inexorable laws bound up therein.

So whatever experience we may be called to, however tragic and trying, we should never doubt the unfailing goodness of God. On that goodness we may depend at all times and in all circumstances. His ear is ever open to the cry of despair from the sincere heart. The same Lord who piloted Paul through his perils and sufferings "is rich unto all that call upon Him." Rom. 10:12, 13.

So sure and unfailing is God's infinite goodness that He "will command His lovingkindness in the *daytime*, and in the *night* His song shall be with me." Psa. 42:8. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee." Isa. 54:10.

"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." For "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 Tim. 4:8; 1 Cor. 2:9.



By H. Orlik

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Jesus revealed how God could be just and yet the Justifier of the repentant sinner.

God's Justice and His Love

By George Elliott

★ In a notable broadcast a year or two back, Mr. Clement Attlee expressed his confidence in "the supremacy of moral law." We would interpret the ex-Prime Minister to mean that, despite all seeming evidence to the contrary, there is a moral law which is inherently right, which has been ordained as an eternal principle, and which, in spite of setbacks from opposing quarters, is certain of ultimate triumph. That in any case is the teaching of the Scriptures of truth.

The Structure of Divine Law

It may be asked how we can know exactly what is absolute right or wrong? Can good be crystallized into a core of certainty? Are the various racial codes subordinate to any higher, fixed, unchanging moral standard? Indeed, yes.

Authoritative legislation proceeded originally from the supreme Law-giver, God; and is contained in what we know as the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments enunciated by Him.

The apostle Paul declared: "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." James elaborates this by declaring that this "royal law" is a flawless mirror in which all human behaviour may be seen in its true perspective and tested. John adds: "For sin is the transgression of the law" of God.

The converse is equally true. Obedience to the Ten Commandment law of God is righteousness. Says the Psalmist: "All Thy commandments are righteousness." Forming the basis of all just human laws, their universal application and scope may readily be seen. (Eccles. 12:13, 14.) It is amazing to find how

every sin, crime, moral defect, or form of selfishness stands condemned by one or more of these ten majestic precepts. God did not need to amplify the Decalogue into innumerable sub-sections resembling man's labyrinthine legal systems. As they appear, the statutes of God are a clear, concise summary of the whole gamut of sin and every requirement of righteousness.

The Counterwork of Sin

This leads us directly to consider the position of the Decalogue in the government of God and points the real significance to transgression. "God is love" and He is also law! He embodies every one of its righteous qualities. He is the apex of honesty, the soul of truth. Being "holy, and just, and good," it is the text of His own character and consequently the foundation of His government. The law's principles of "righteousness and judgment are the establishment of His throne." *Psa. 97:2, margin.*

From this fact, sin may be recognized at once as rebellion, striking directly at the divine authority. Hence in studying the origin of evil, it is vital to discern in sin not only a hateful intruder, but an element wholly subversive of God's government. While obedience to the moral law is an acknowledgment of God's sovereignty, transgression is an acted impugment which, could it triumph, would mean the virtual dethronement of the great Law-giver.

Could sin be justified, then God would be proved wrong in expecting His creatures to conform to a standard of right. There is the crux of the matter, and so one may well inquire who first presumed to enter into controversy with his Maker on the inviolability of law.

In the Scriptures there is a strange statement which refers to "the angels that sinned." *2 Peter 2:4.* Angels? Yes, that's what it says. Then sin did not originate in man? No, it did not. It was a prince of the heavenly host, named Lucifer, in whom "iniquity" was first "found." *Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:13-15.*

Wilfully this exalted being departed from his primal estate of perfection. He "abode not in the truth." Seeking his own exaltation, Lucifer deliberately repudiated the restraints imposed by the divine law. In so doing, he became the first liar, murderer, and covetous idolater. (*John 8:44; Isa. 14:12, 14; Ezek. 28:17.*) With his insidious and deceptive lawlessness, Lucifer, renamed Satan, tempted many of his

fellow angels from their allegiance until at last he with them was expelled from heaven. (*Rev. 12:7-9.*) Then this spirit foe brought about the corruption of mankind and the earth was made an outpost of sin. Naturally with the multiplication of Adam's posterity, our world developed into the central battlefield on which the conflict between law and lawlessness to this day is being fought out.

Christ and the Law

The advent of our Lord Jesus Christ had a manifold object. It was, in the first place, to provide a substitutionary atonement for sin to save repentant sinners from the penalty of their transgressions. It was to remove all satanically-engendered misunderstanding of God by an exhibition in human experience of the Lord's loving attributes. It was still further to vindicate the law of God by a complete human obedience to it. Nothing could have so fully demonstrated that God's law is immutable and unchanging than the sacrifice of the Son of God Himself on account of transgression. If the divine law could have been altered or set aside, then Christ would not have died to meet its claims. (*Rom. 8:2, 5.*) In the most solemn way, therefore, He taught its indestructibility (*Matt. 5:17*), declaring: "For it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." *Luke 16:17.*

To-day this truth needs repeated emphasis because of the loose view held by some that in "fulfilling" the law, Christ abolished it! Not only does this contention contradict His words, but it ignores the basic reason for law. Christ kept the divine law as the essential ingredient of righteousness, for to do otherwise would have been to sin. Jesus was "without sin." He was faultless. In all that He said and did the Redeemer was His Father's holy law exemplified. (*John 15:10.*) And He laid down the same rule for His followers. (*Matt. 19:17.*)

With regard to the relationship of law to grace there is probably more misunderstanding than upon any other doctrine. Yet the facts are simple. The grace of God does not make law redundant. Faith in Christ *establishes* the law. (*Rom. 5:31.*) Its righteousness is "fulfilled" in the true believer. (*Rom. 8:4.*) The love of God through Christ in no way removes the reality of each separate precept. "Let him that

(Continued on page 12.)

★ In the account which Matthew gives of the early ministry of Jesus it is stated: "And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." Matt. 4:25.

Not only did the lands on the other side of Jordan figure prominently in the history of Israel in Old Testament times, but in the days when Jesus walked among men, multitudes followed Him from these regions, and in particular from the cities of the Decapolis.

Origin of the "Decapolis"

The name Decapolis means, of course, "Ten Cities" and was a collective term for the federation of Greek colonies, mostly on the other side Jordan, founded by Alexander and his successors after the conquest of Syria in the early third century B.C.

Their earlier association was no doubt primarily as a defensive alliance against incursions of desert bedouin and against the Nabatean empire to the south, whose trade they began steadily to undermine.

In the days of Jesus, however, the consolidation of Roman power on the other side Jordan had made them secure from molestation from the east and the south, and they were entering the days of their greatest prosperity and wealth. This is the reason, no doubt, for their special mention among the places from which the inquiring populace came out to see and hear the great Teacher.

Obviously then my journeyings on the other side Jordan would be incomplete if I did not see as much as I could of these famous cities.

Cities I Had Visited

I had already been to Bethshan, the only one



Photo by the Author

Remains of the great sun-temple

HIGHWAYS of

By W. L.

of the ten cities on the west side of Jordan, and from Bethshan I had looked across the River Jordan to the site of Pella, perched on a high ledge above the confluence of the River Taiyibeh and the Jordan.

In Damascus, on another occasion, I had walked along the colonnaded "street called straight," characteristic of every Græco-Roman town in Syria, though today little more than a few column bases remain there to mark this historic thoroughfare.



Photo by the Author

Some of the standing columns of the Forum.

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OUR TIMES



of ancient Jerash or Gerasa.

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When I had visited Rabboth-Amon, the Philadelphia of Greek and Roman times and the most southerly of the cities of the Decapolis, I had really been able to begin to build up a picture of these cities of Jesus' day, for I had seen still standing some of the fine columns which lined the principal thoroughfare of that city, and I had sat on the stone seats of the great Roman amphitheatre which rose tier upon tier just outside my hotel door!

Photo by the Author

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The triumphal arch at the entrance to the city of Gerasa.

JULY 24, 1952

Of the other cities of the Decapolis, there was Gadara, just south of the Sea of Galilee, and Hippos on the east side of the lake, Dion in the centre of the plateau, and Canatha and Raphana in the Jaulan, south of Damascus. These cities, I knew, had but fragmentary remains of Roman times, but there was one other which I was most anxious to seek out, for not only was it one of the most important of the ten cities, but also the best preserved Græco-Roman city in all Syria, not even excepting the famous Baalbek and Palmyra.

Yes, I had to go to Jerash.

Actually the isolation of Jerash has been its salvation, for while the other cities nearer to the highways of civilization have been subject to the vandalism of conquerors and of time, Gerasa, in the highlands of Gilead, was forgotten and buried for centuries. Only in recent years have its columns and its temples, its theatres, and its later Christian churches been exposed by the spades of British and American archæologists.

Off to Gerasa

We set off by car along the Haj pilgrim road which runs north from Amman, now the capital of the Kingdom of Jordan. To the east the undulating plateau extended to the desert edge, while to the west in striking contrast, rose the wooded hills of Gilead, famous for their oak forests, and for the balm of Gilead which in ancient times became known for its curative properties throughout the Eastern world. (Gen. 37:25; Jer. 8:22; 46:11.)

After some twenty miles, the road dropped down into the deep valley of the Jabbok, through which the rapid stream swirls on its way west to the Jordan.

Up the other side of the valley the road climbed along a little tributary of the Jabbok, at the upper end of which in a fertile valley surrounded on all sides by low hills, we came upon the ruins of the famous city of Jerash, or



Gerasa, as this city of the Decapolis was called in Bible times.

Was This Ramoth-Gilead?

That there was a settlement at Gerasa from earliest times is indicated by the stone age remains which lie a little outside the present city area to the north-east, but as to its history between then and the beginning of the Christian era no trace has yet been unearthed by the archæologist's spade.

There are many, however, who believe that this was none other than the site of Ramoth-Gilead, the scene of many stirring events in the history of Israel.

When the land was divided among the tribes of Israel, Ramoth-Gilead became one of the cities of refuge. (Deut. 4:43; Joshua 20:8; 21:38.) These cities seem to have been chosen as nearly as possible opposite one another on either side of the Jordan, and Gerasa is, in fact, almost opposite Shechem, which was the city of refuge in Samaria.

Ramoth was a centre for the collection of supplies and revenue in the days of Solomon (1 Kings 4:13), and Ahab was able to reach it by chariot from Samaria. The facts indicate that it (1 Kings 22:34) must have been situated on the main lines of communication in Transjordan which would be met by the situation of Gerasa, from which roads radiate across Gilead to Es Salt, down the Jabbok to Succoth and Samaria, over the hills by Mispheh to the beautiful valley of Ajlun, and north-west to the Yarmuk valley.

Ramoth must also have been accessible from Damascus as it was constantly involved in the wars between Syria and Israel. (1 Kings 22; 2 Kings 8, 9.) This, too, would fit Gerasa, standing as it is on the line of the ancient King's Highway running up through Edom, Moab, Gilead, and Bashan to Damascus and the Mesopotamian region. There is, in fact, no more accessible city in all Gilead than Gerasa.

If this identification is correct, then it was here that the wicked king Ahab, seeking to recover this important centre from the king of Syria, was killed, and where his temporary ally, Jehoshaphat of Judah, barely escaped with his life.

Gerasa in Christ's Time

But if the associations of Gerasa with Old Testament times are still uncertain, there is no

question of its importance in the first century of the Christian era, when it was one of the chief cities of the Decapolis.

The foundation of the Greek city goes back probably to the third century B.C., when it is believed to have been established by Antiochus IV and given the name Antiochea.

Its early days, like those of the other Greek colonies, were precarious and it was sacked several times before the first century A.D.

The beginnings of its settled existence and commercial prosperity came when the Romans annexed Transjordan and established a line of fortresses along the desert edge to protect the new province.

The building of Trajan's military and commercial road along the line of the ancient King's Highway brought Gerasa to the period of its greatest wealth and prosperity in the second century of the Christian era, and it was in the days of the Antonine Cæsars that the city took its final shape.

But while many of the buildings which remain to this day date from a century or so after the days of Jesus, the remarkable ruins which have been uncovered in recent years provide us with a wonderful picture of the cities beyond Jordan from which came some of the multitudes which followed Jesus.

On Gerasa's Main Thoroughfare

We stopped our car beside the ruins of a triumphal arch still standing forty feet high with a great centre arch and two side arches carved in typical Roman style.

Away to the left, one noted a depression now overgrown with grass in which once stood a rectangular stadium which could be filled with water and used for seafighting and other water spectacles dear to the hearts of the maritime Greeks.

Continuing along the line of the ancient road we soon reached the remains of the city gate, also with a triple entrance. From it in either direction stretched the city wall, parts of which are still perfect.

Just inside the gate were the remains of one of the most beautiful buildings in the city, a temple with a portico once comprising a double row of eight Corinthian columns fronting on the main street, though only one column now remains.

On a little hill a short distance beyond the
(Continued on page 12.)

DOORS!

By Mary J. Vine

★ I HAVE knocked at scores and scores of doors during the past few weeks, and I have met scores and scores of people. Some were glad to see me, I know they were. They came *running* to the door. "You should give me time to finish my sentence," I laughingly remonstrated with one little woman. "Oh, but I saw you coming up the street," she said, meanwhile pushing her ready coins into my collecting box. Such as she were nice to meet.

I like to think that once I brought peace. I had already rung the bell before I realized there was a palaver going on in the hall. She was as cross as he was, and they were saying far from complimentary things to one another. But it was too late for retreat. The door opened. Obviously they knew that I knew. I smiled on them both and tried to sound natural. "We're just making our yearly call again," I said, "on behalf of our world-wide medical missions—"

She didn't let me finish, she went to look for her purse. Like every other woman's, however, it wasn't there, wherever "there" was supposed to be, so perforce, she returned empty-handed. He still stood where she had left him, an awkward silence prevailing. Mutely she held out her hand to him. I'm glad to relate that he didn't let her down. Putting his hand in his pocket he drew out a handful of coins and she took what she wanted to put into the canister. He gave her something else too, I noticed. He gave her a smile, and I am glad that she smiled back. So, they and I were blessed.

"I can't give you much, but what I have I will give you gladly," said one fragile little



old lady. One scarcely liked to hold out the canister. It would have been so great a pleasure to give her a helping hand instead. That the good Lord will be in debt to no-one is a great encouragement at doors such as this. There was another woman once who could give but little, but who nevertheless gave it gladly, and He who saw her said she had given more than they all.

There is a door, and each year I promise myself I will not go there again. But each year I have forgotten just which door it is, though I am fairly certain I shall remember it next time, and, maybe—hoping still—knock on it again! The door opens all right, but immediately—before I have said one word—it begins to close. Apparently that gentleman has no use at all for missions. I always feel, though, that he might at least be polite to me, just an ordinary woman, doing what she honestly feels is an hour's service for the Master.

I am always a little amused at one lady. You may see her counterpart on the cover of any fashion magazine. I don't know what she thinks I am collecting for; she never gives me

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PAGE

time to tell her. She opens the door with a rush. "Oh, I haven't time," she says, "I haven't time," and forthwith the door is shut abruptly again.

I am embarrassed sometimes, but not by refusals. It is when they tell me that in these days such things should be cared for by the Government, that they are tired of people coming round collecting, that they could very well do with a little help themselves, and then—after that and much more—still drop something into my canister. It seems such a pity thus to make their gift of none effect so far as blessing to themselves is concerned. The benison of any gift should fall first of all upon the giver, but it does and can fall only on the cheerful one.

If I am not exasperated I am almost pityingly amused at one quite common response. A big, burly man will come to the door and say in all seriousness, "There's nobody in," as though one could scarcely expect himself to have so generous an impulse. Nobody in! I wonder if he really feels so poor a cipher.

I am glad, though, that as the years go by I am becoming a little less nervous, and find instead a certain exhilaration at the opening of the door. Whose feet are they coming thus to meet me? Someone bright and gay, or someone burdened and anxious? Someone free-hearted and happy, or someone disillusioned and grouchy? Someone sorrowing and heart-stricken, or someone tight-lipped and sour? Doors—who is behind them? It is a fascinating subject for speculation.

There is One Who Knocks!

There is One who knocks who knows, and despite His awareness of His reception, still continues to knock. He is knocking at *all* our doors, the doors of our hearts.

What do *we* do? What do *we* say? Do we tell Him we haven't time and shut the door on Him quickly? Do we try to persuade Him that there's nobody in? Do we maybe argue with Him that He's expecting too much? Or do we fling the door wide and welcome Him in joyfully? "If any man . . . open the door," He says, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

Oh, the joy of having such a Guest; oh, the bountiful provision. We provide for Him a place, we think, but by some mysterious alchemy, the abundant feast is by Him spread. God help us not to miss it.

God's Justice and His Love

(Continued from page 7.)

stole steal no more," is an example. (Eph. 4:28.) Hence the instruction: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." John 14:15.

The grace of God is expressly given to sinful man to enable him to obey the Ten Commandment law, which in his unregenerate state he is unable to do unaided. (Rom. 8:7.) So far from ministering to lawlessness or authorizing the Christian to continue in presumptuous transgression (Rom. 6:1), the one object of the great salvation of God for us is "that in our case the requirements of the law might be fully met." Rom. 8:4, Weymouth.

The Triumph of Law

The whole history of men and nations may thus be seen as a conflict in which the forces of light are upholding law and through divine grace and power bringing men back to obedience, while the forces of darkness are ever striving to tear down the divine standard and to ruin men in transgression.

There is much prophetic evidence in the Scriptures that the controversy is, in our time, to reach a stupendous climax. The binding nature of His law will be brought home to every soul, and God's people will be revealed as those who "keep the commandments of God." Rev. 14:12.

Thank God He is soon to interpose to save His people. He is to uphold His righteousness, vindicate and avenge His outraged authority, and signally overthrow His enemies. The kingdoms of this world are at His glorious return to be given to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the emblem of whose authority is a "sceptre of righteousness." Under His benign rule there will be no more transgression of the law, and as a direct result "no more death." But through eternal ages those who have kept the commandments of God will be honoured with eminence (Matt. 5:19), and those who have been "teachers" of God's law of righteousness will shine "as the stars for ever and ever." Dan. 12:3, margin.

Let us then strive to be among their number.



Highways and Byways of Gilead

(Continued from page 10.)

temple the great theatre, capable of seating

6,000 people, looked across the town. Twenty tiers of seats still remain, together with fragments of the highly ornamented stage.

Further along, the road widened into a great open space more than 300 feet across at the widest point and once wholly enclosed by Ionic columns each two feet in diameter and sixteen to twenty feet high. Fifty-seven of these columns still stand.

This must have been one of the assembling places of the town and has been given the name of the forum.

From the forum a street of limestone and basalt columns placed twelve to fifteen feet apart on either side of the road ran straight as a die across the city. This was the "Street called Straight" of Gerasa, corresponding to the equally famous one in Damascus where Paul lodged in the house of Judas.

There are Straight Streets at Palmyra, Antioch, Philadelphia, and Samaria, but none are so clearly marked as the Via Columnata at Gerasa. The pavement of the road in places is perfect and shows the ruts made by the countless chariots which passed along the road. Even some of the manholes which carried away the surface water into underground drains are still in position.

Walking along the Roman pavement we came to an intersection with another colonnaded cross street. At each corner were alcoves where once stood massive statues.

Beyond the cross roads great buildings lined either side of the street. The finest of these, approached along an avenue of columns, was the great sun temple of Artemis. On the opposite side of the road a colonnaded avenue led to an ornamental bridge which once spanned the river.

The temple itself is one of the most perfectly preserved in Syria. It reaches back more than a hundred and fifty yards on three ascending platforms and many of the columns five to six feet in diameter still stand to a height of forty-five feet.

On the propylon is a dedication to the solar god worshipped in the temple.

Farther along the street we passed a second theatre and a Roman bath. Beyond, the roadway, often quite perfect, runs to the northern city gate and disappears in the hillside beyond.

Altogether no fewer than three hundred columns still stand in Gerasa, which is far in excess of any other Græco-Roman site in Syria, and enough to conjure up in the mind of the visitor the splendour of the city in the days of its glory.

On the other side of the stream which runs through the city is a mosaic pavement leading to extensive baths with associated colonnaded courts.

When the News Came to Gerasa

Unique indeed is this city of Gilead, and as I slowly wended my way back along the colonnaded street, past the temple of the sun, over the cross roads, and through the forum to the city gate and the triumphal archway beyond, I could almost hear the excited chatter of groups along the street as they discussed the news of the great Teacher beyond the Jordan and expressed their resolve to go to see and hear Him.

I wondered if Jesus Himself ever came here. Quite conceivably He might have done, and in that city may have been wrought some of the wonderful works which are included in the "many other things" He did, but which even the New Testament record was inadequate to chronicle.

A Land of Sacred Memories

Nowhere more than in Gerasa was I more conscious how replete with memories is this "other side" of Jordan—from the far-off time when judgment came upon the cities of the plain to the days when the Master trod the highways and byways of the land.

Yes, I was glad indeed, that I had been "over Jordan."

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THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

The New Neighbour

By Winta M. Armstrong

LILIAN and Jeanette were on their way to school. As they passed a big, shabby house behind a neglected hedge, Jeanette said, "Someone must have moved into the old Milton house. I see curtains at the windows."

"Yes, it's an elderly lady," answered Lilian. "I don't recall her name. Mother met her at the sewing circle. O Jeanette! Look what is following us!"

Jeanette turned to see Lilian's pet kitten, Fluffy, walking along at their heels.

"Go home!" Lilian stamped her foot at Fluffy. "Go home this minute! I mean it!"

Fluffy turned as if to obey

her. Then he gave a sudden jump, landed on top of the wrought-iron gate in the hedge, and quickly jumped to the ground inside. He began to run.

"Oh!" cried Lilian. "We must get him quick!"

She was opening the gate when a tall woman, with a broom in her hands, came out of the house.

"You cat, get away from here!" she ordered, shaking her broom at Fluffy.

She sounded cross!

"I beg your pardon!" Lilian struggled to be polite. "Fluffy is my kitty—"

"Then take him out of my garden!" snapped the lady. "I

won't have him bothering the birds. Take him home and keep him there."

"Fluffy couldn't catch a bird if he tried," Lilian defended. "He's nothing but a kitten." She took the purring bundle in her arms.

The girls hurried away, and carried Fluffy back home, at the risk of being late to school.

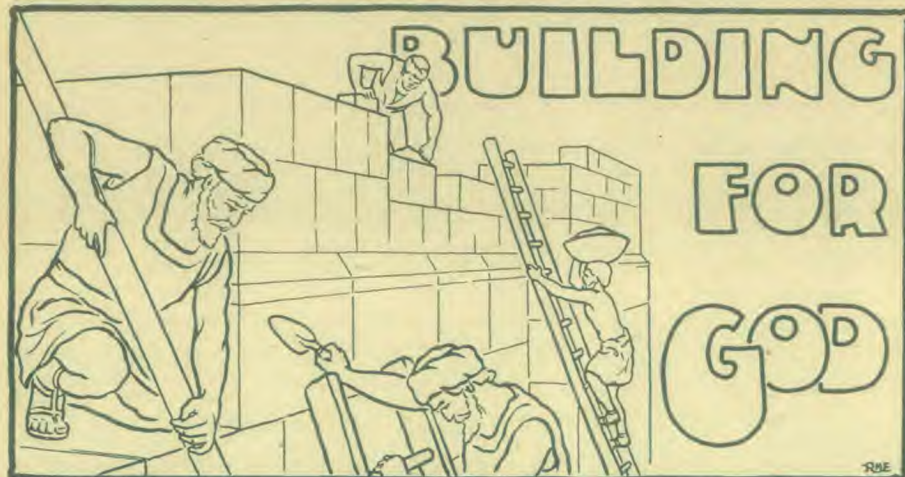
That evening at Lilian's house they told about their adventure with the "mean lady," as they called her.

"Don't call her that," protested Lilian's mother. "Her name is Mrs. Davis. As for her being 'mean,' Lilian, you know that your cat had no business going into her garden. At the sewing circle last week, Mrs. Davis spoke of having a birdbath put in her garden. That would attract the birds, of course; and birds and cats don't go together."

"But we were getting Fluffy out of her garden as quickly as we could!" said Lilian. "And she kept right on scolding. She—she used threatening language!"

"Awfully cross!" chimed in Jeanette.

"Girls!" Lilian's mother admonished, "don't dwell on it so. Look out of the window! The sun is about to set. Doesn't that remind you of something?"



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 August 7th.

Lilian and Jeanette exchanged glances. Then Lilian began sheepishly, "Let not the sun go down—"

"Upon your wrath," finished Jeanette. "That's from Ephesians 4, verse 26."

"Correct!" said Lilian's mother.

"Oh, of course, we forgive the mean—Mrs. Davis, that is," said Lilian. "But it is difficult."

Her mother thought a minute, then said brightly, "One of the best ways to get over hurt feelings is to do something kind for the person who roused those feelings. Tomorrow is a holiday. Suppose you girls put on your thinking caps and plan a nice surprise for Mrs. Davis."

"But we don't know her!" objected Lilian. "We haven't any idea what she'd like."

"Almost everyone likes home-made sweets," remarked her mother. "But, no! That won't do, for Mrs. Davis said she couldn't eat chocolate or nuts."

"Mother has a fudge recipe that doesn't call for either!" Jeanette declared. "Sugar and whipped-up egg whites, with vanilla flavour! And chopped raisins, if you like!"

"Goody!" Lilian was interested in spite of herself. "Will our allowances cover the cost of materials?"

"No, but I would gladly take care of that, dear," her mother assured her.

"And my mother will take care of half of it, I'm sure," said Jeanette.

"Well—if she likes. But you girls can provide the box, tissue paper, and ribbon."

"Oh, dear! I have only three-pence left!" wailed Jeanette.

"But I have sixpence," her chum consoled her. "And there's that pretty box my Christmas stationery came in. Wouldn't that be nice?"

"Just the thing!" Jeanette

clapped her hands. "But surely you don't want to part with that!"

"N-no. But it would be lovely for the fudge."

"And the nicest gift"—her mother smiled at her—"is the one that involves a sacrifice."

"That's so," agreed Jeanette.

Early the next morning Lilian and Jeanette made the fudge. It turned out creamy without being too soft.

Well before dinnertime the chums, having shut Fluffy in the back garden, set out for Mrs. Davis's house. When they came to the gate their courage faltered.

"I wish it was her birthday or something," murmured Jeanette.

"It was Mother's idea," Lilian backed away from the gate. "Let's coax her to come with us."

Then a voice said, "What is it, girls? What do you want?" And Mrs. Davis stepped from behind a clump of shrubs! This time she carried a rake.

Lilian felt she ought to begin with an apology. "I'm s-sorry my F-Fluffy bothered you!" she stammered.

"You took your cat away, didn't you? That was all I asked."

Could it be that Mrs. Davis sounded somewhat kind? Lilian timidly held out the box.

"Here's something Jean and I made for you," she said. "It hasn't any nuts or chocolate in it."

"Oh! Is it fudge?" Mrs. Davis took the box from Lilian. "Why, there's nothing I like so much! You girls are dears! Let me show you my house."

Fifteen minutes later, the girls burst into Lilian's house. "O Mother!" called Lilian. "Mrs. Davis wants us all to come to her home for a party next month! It'll be holiday time then! And Mother, she's the nicest lady—not one bit mean!"

Your Letter

My Dear Sunbeams,

I HOPE you all do your best to colour our picture this time. I have some nice prizes for the winners. Remember that six "honourable mentions" also win a prize.

By the way, you will be interested to read the story of our picture which shows the Jews rebuilding the great walls which surrounded Jerusalem. Ever since King Nebuchadnezzar had come from Babylon seventy years before, and ordered his soldiers to break down the walls, Jerusalem had been in ruins.

Now God wanted His city to be built once more. Enemies like the crafty Sanballat and Tobiah tried hard to stop God's builders, but they bravely carried on till the work was finished.

Sunbeams, you too are building for God. Every day we are building characters. To do this God wants us to build with such beautiful stones as honesty, cheerfulness, helpfulness, prayer, and many, many others you can think of. Of course, Satan will always try to stop us, just as Sanballat tried to stop the builders in our picture. You can read the Bible story in Nehemiah. See if you can find the chapters.

Yours affectionately,

AUNTIE MARGARET.

* * *

Results of Competition No. 9

Prize-winner.—Robert Smith, 27 Toby Field Road, Bishops Cleeve, Gloucestershire.

Honourable Mention.—Amy Randlestone (Stockton); Richard Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Jilda Sleeman (Torquay); Paul Martine (Bungay); Paul Coupland (Birmingham); Vernet Handysides (Cardiff); Heather Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Colin Linton (Bristol).

Those who tried hard.—Nigel Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Allan Handysides (Cardiff); Olive King (Chelmsford); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Patricia Norman (Huntingdon); Pauline Waters (St. Leonards); Ann Shoney (New Tredegar); Joan Fowler (Wallasey); Jean Belcher (London); Muriel Forder (Norwich); Gillian Bennett (Oldbury); Trevor Goddard (Iver); Leon Liddam (Norwich); Stuart Payne (Bishops Cleeve).

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