

The Bible and

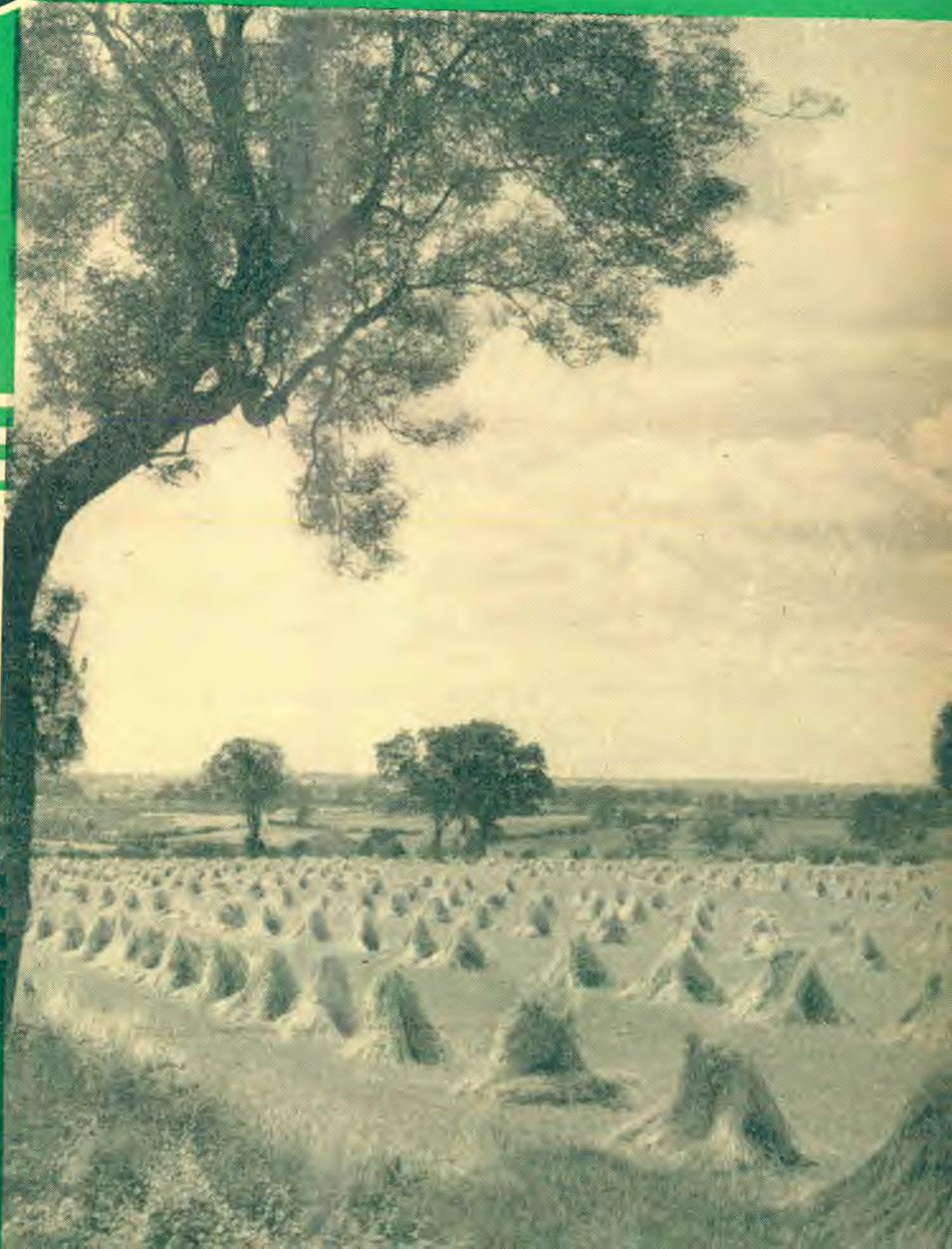


OUR TIMES

A line-art illustration of a steam locomotive pulling a train, positioned behind the letters of the title 'OUR TIMES'.

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© International News
President Eisenhower speaking on world problems
in Minneapolis.

★ EVERYWHERE today men are anxiously asking, "What next?" Convinced that some great, cataclysmic event faces the world, they wonder what form it will take.

What does Bible prophecy predict is coming? Will the human race be wiped out by man's own inventions? Will a group of nations force their will by military might upon the rest of the world? Or will some supernatural act on the part of God end the chaos and inaugurate an eternal era of peace and happiness?

Having tried every form of government in an endeavour to secure peace and harmony between nations, man finds himself at the end of the trail, in desperate need of superhuman help. This divine intervention will be accomplished by the

WHAT NEXT?

By Theodore Carcich

personal, imminent, glorious return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

The doctrine of the second coming of Christ is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures. While it requires very little knowledge to receive salvation, it requires the whole redemptive purpose of God to make that salvation possible. And this includes the return of Christ in glory to this earth.

The importance of the second coming of Christ parallels the importance of His first coming. As surely as the incarnation led to the cross, and the cross to the grave, and the empty grave to the ascension, so the ascension leads to His coming again in glory. The facts of redemption are inseparable.

Jesus Promised

The certainty of the second coming of Christ rests not upon some church dogma, but upon the authoritative statement of Christ Himself, who declared, "I will come again." John 14:3. "The Son of man shall come." Matt. 16:27.

At Christ's ascension two angels said: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:11.

The apostles spoke with equal certainty. Said Paul, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven." 1 Thess. 4:16. "Christ . . . shall . . . appear the second time." Heb. 9:28. Peter takes up the refrain with the words, "The chief Shepherd shall appear." 1 Peter 5:4. John leaves no doubt in our minds when he says, "He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." Rev. 1:7.

While no man knows the exact day or hour of Christ's return, all men may know when His coming is near. This information is provided in Christ's answer to the question: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign

of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Matt. 24:3. The question was raised by the disciples because Christ had previously talked to them about the destruction of Jerusalem.

Concerning the fate of the holy city, Christ said, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Luke 21:20-24; Matt. 24:15, 16. In A.D. 66, when Cestius the Roman came against Jerusalem, he unaccountably withdrew, and the Christians discerned in this the sign foretold by Christ, and fled. The siege was resumed, and over 1,000,000 Jews perished by the time the city capitulated in A.D. 70. During the frightful days of the siege, mothers ate their own children, in direct fulfilment of Moses' prophecy in Deuteronomy 28:47-53. The city was destroyed, and the temple was completely demolished. The survivors were taken captive and dispersed throughout the world.

Notice the prophetic words of Christ as to what would follow the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Matt. 24:21. That this was fulfilled in the terrible persecution of the Christians in the first three centuries under the pagan Roman emperors and continued in the greater and more terrible persecution during the long centuries of papal supremacy, is evident from history.

The Signs Follow the Tribulation

Next on the divine schedule are the signs of Christ's return. Concerning these the Master said: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven." Verse 29. Since the last known martyr of the great medieval persecution was put to death in 1750, we should look for these signs *immediately after* that time. History confirms that the sun and moon were darkened on May 19, 1780, and that the greatest display of falling stars on

record took place on the night of November 13, 1833.

Thus these signs in the heavens came in harmony with the divine time-table. But additional signs are to be seen. Notice the sequence of events, "And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:25. Daily our newspapers and radios declare that this state of affairs exists. All around the globe there is distress of nations, while men's hearts are literally failing them for fear as they contemplate the future.

In the midst of these unmistakable signs we are to witness a still greater sign. Said Christ, "And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matt. 24:14.

Never before has there been such an interest in Bible study, and especially in Bible prophecy. Copies of the Holy Scriptures are being sold and distributed by millions. The Bible is by far the best seller of all books published today. Both modernists and fundamentalist are restudying the theme of Christ's return. Men everywhere are expecting some world-shaking event to take place, and many rightly believe it is the long-heralded and long-awaited return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

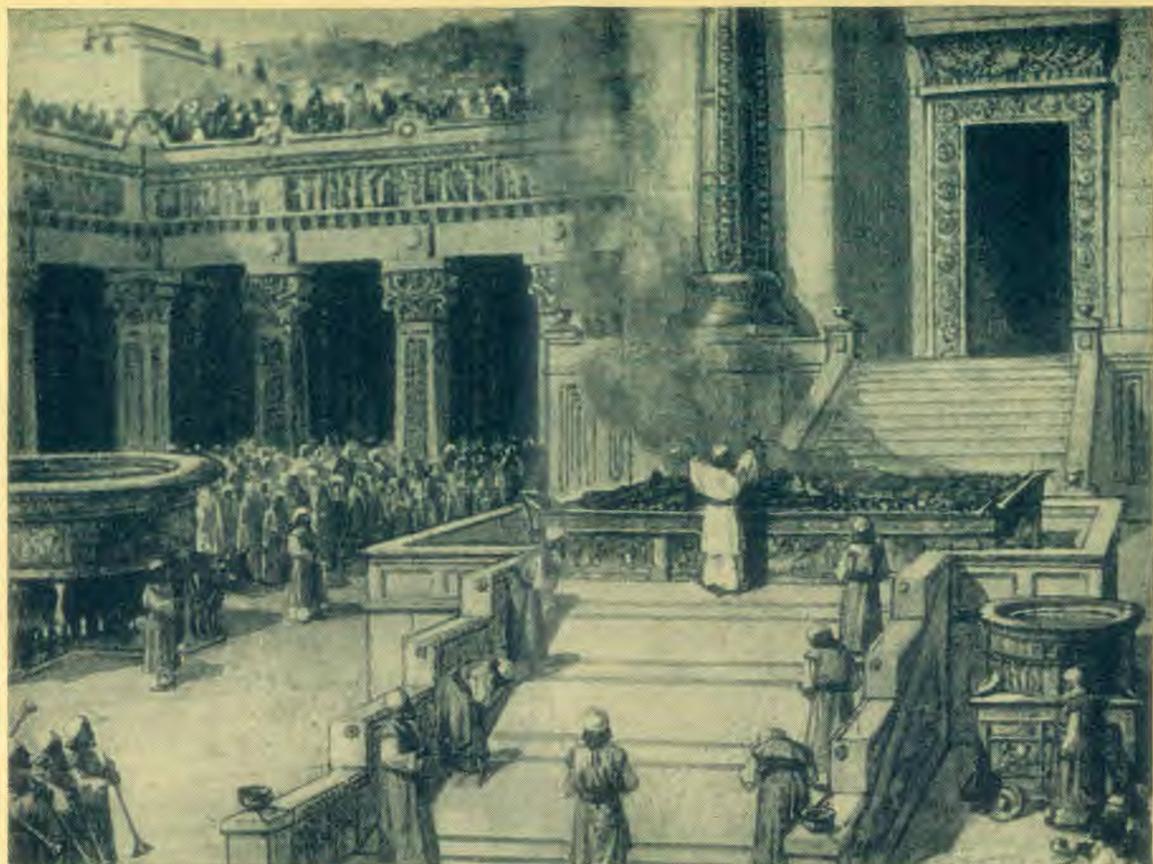
"What next?" cries the politician, the scientist,

(Continued on page 12.)



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AUGUST 20, 1953



By Wm. Hole

Priests ministering before the great altar of Solomon's temple.

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“Thy Way Is in the Sanctuary”

By Victor Hall

★ No other theme links together the chain of Bible truth like that contained in the services, types, and symbols of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary, instituted through Moses after Israel's release from Egyptian bondage. The Bible is the complete story of God's way of restoring mankind from the degradation of sin. In the sanctuary that way is most simply explained and easily understood. Truly said the Psalmist: "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary." Psa. 77:13.

From the time when Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock as a sacrifice, through patriarchal times, throughout Israel's history, when Jesus the Lamb of God appeared, and in the visions given to New Testament writers of future events stretch-

ing beyond the end of the age, the persistent symbol of the "lamb" is rich in meaning. This meaning will be most readily understood as we acquaint ourselves with the ritual of the sanctuary services, where the symbol of the lamb is ever central.

The Sanctuary Structure

To the worshipper approaching the tabernacle in the midst of the Hebrew desert encampment it appeared like a large oblong tent, standing in a courtyard enclosed by a wall of linen curtains hung upon brass poles.

The sacrificial animals were slain in the courtyard by the repentant sinner. Every death prefigured Calvary. The carcasses of these sin-bearing

animals were generally burned on the large square brazen altar, whose continually burning fire promised the final destruction of sin.

Between the altar and the tent a laver in which the priests washed taught the necessity of absolute cleanliness of heart and body in the service of God.

Only the priests might pass behind the entrance curtain hung upon five brass pillars into the holy place, the first compartment of the tabernacle. Therein on the left, a seven-branched golden candlestick reflected its light upon the gleaming gold of the walls and picked out the angel forms worked in gold upon the linen veil separating the first from the second apartment and upon the ceiling fabric. This candlestick symbolized Jesus who said of Himself: "I am the Light of the world." John 8:12.

The light revealed a table on the opposite side bearing twelve round flat cakes of bread. These taught that the twelve tribes of Israel depended for life itself upon God. Jesus also said of Himself, "I am the Bread of life." John 6:35.

Standing before the second curtain stood a small altar where incense continually burned, its fragrance rising to the ceiling over the curtain into the most holy place. This fragrance represented the righteousness of Jesus which makes human prayers ascend as sweet incense, acceptable to God.

Only the High Priest, just once a year after special preparation, was permitted to enter the second, the most holy place. In it stood only the ark of the covenant, a golden box, the cover of which was called the mercy-seat. Above this cover, between the beautifully-wrought golden angel forms that stood upon it, the very glory of God's presence was manifested in blinding, burning light.

Three Important Truths

The sanctuary was erected, not because the Hebrews wanted to worship God, but because God wanted to dwell with His people. (Exod. 25:8.) Not their virtues but their weakness and need caused God to show His love thus. In the New Testament the same love is pictured in the father who saw his prodigal, starving, but repentant son when he was a long way off, and ran to meet him and brought him home with joy. This lesson a world of distracted men grappling with superhuman problems needs to remember. God still wants to dwell with us. The cross bearing the human form in which God lived among us is proof beyond doubting of this truth.

Sin Means Death

Choosing a lamb whose life he had tenderly nurtured, a man brought it to the priest. He put his hands upon its head thereby laying his sins upon it in confession. That lamb thus became his sin-bearer. For those sins which it bore but did not commit it must die by the acquitted man's hand. In every sacrifice the solemn truth was therefore declared, that sin means death. "The wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23.

What decreed so drastic a sentence upon sin? In the most holy place was the ark of the covenant and inside the ark were the two tables of stone given to Moses, containing the ten principles of His government. God dwelt with His law. To break that law, to sin, was a crime against God, bringing death. This lawless age needs likewise to remember that God still dwells with His law and that same law declares that sin means death.

Forgiveness Is Costly

The undeserved death of an innocent victim was the only means by which a man might escape the accusing finger of God's law, and indicated to the Hebrew in a symbol something of the cost of forgiveness. But little could the symbol do to assess the true cost of forgiveness that God paid in Christ on Calvary. For us that forgiveness is free. What excuse shall we offer for our failing to value and appropriate to ourselves God's costly gift of forgiveness?

Let us then seek the help of our High Priest, while He yet ministers His precious blood for our sins.

(Next Time: "When the Door of Mercy Closes.")



The Riches of Redemption

(Continued from page 7.)

and embodiment of Heaven's self-denying principle of love, the entire moral creation is to be united, and all things find harmonious cohesion. (Eph. 1:10; 3:15.) "In the ages to come" God purposes to display to the universe the supreme and lasting evidence of "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:7. The marvels of redemption will never fade, its inexhaustible treasure house will not fail for the living exhibits will themselves for ever be a testimony. "Here are they that have been purchased by the precious shed blood of the Son of God!" Hail, Emmanuel!

The Riches of Redemption

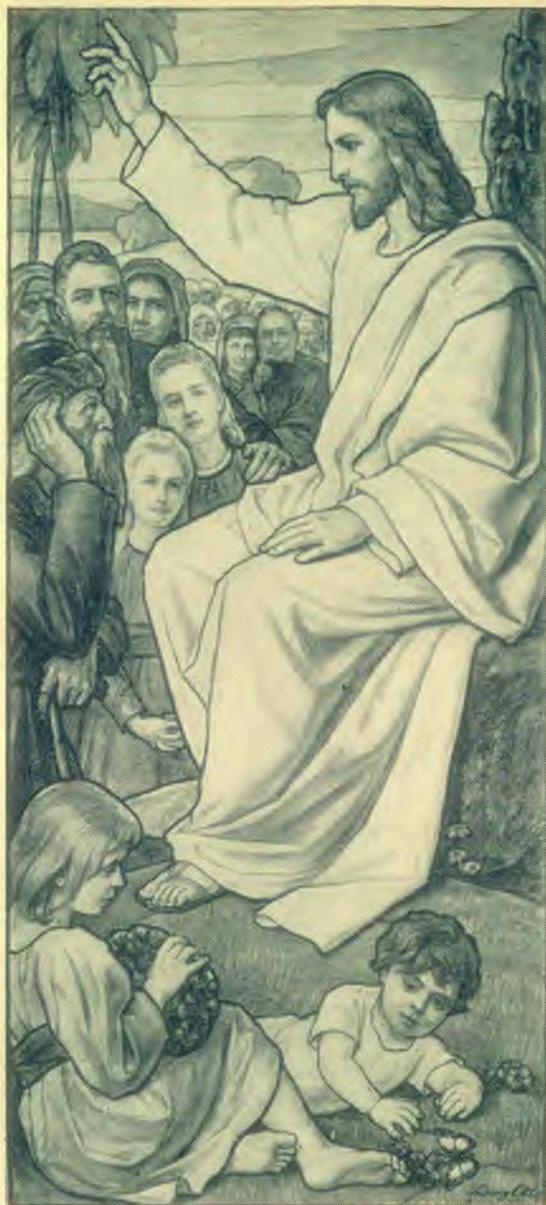
By George Elliott

★ THE Bible tells of the greatest tragedy which has ever occurred. It is the story of transgression and of the separation of the human race from its God. Many cannot understand just how this could be, yet all around evidences of the fact are multiplied. Such things as disease, decay, and suffering had no place in the Creator's original plan. They are coincident with mortality and consequent upon sin. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin . . . so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5:12.

If that were all that Inspiration had to reveal the outlook would be bleak indeed. But the Word of God comes to us comfortingly saying: "I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jer. 9:24.

Because "all have sinned" all are in need of salvation from sin and from all its sorry effects. It was this that touched the heart of God. It became His purpose to redeem "that which was lost." Because He was "rich in mercy," the arm of the Lord was outstretched to save.

It took the supreme Gift to avert the supreme penalty. When man had lost all, God gave all. In the amazing, limitless provision of the Gospel of Christ one is brought face to face with infinite gain. Having plumbed the depths of despair, those who are despondent may now be lifted to the heights of hope. They may contemplate with reverent awe the handiwork of redeeming love. They may see the cross and the substitute—Jesus! "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. In suffering His Son to be sacrificed as a ransom for a rebellious race, the condescending pity of the Father and the magnitude of the



By Ludwig Otto

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Jesus Preaching.

cost to Him surpasses all thought and eloquence.

Redemption evaluates man anew. So costly a purchase makes the object, mankind, of infinite value in God's sight. As He foretold, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold." Isa. 13:12. Moreover, the fact that Christ "emptied Himself" of the inherent riches of divinity in order to remedy man's moral bankruptcy, places upon every human being an imperative urge to respond to God's grace. "Ye are not your own,"

"ye are bought with a price." 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. What an incentive to be rich in faith and "reconciled to God."

Manifold Blessings Now

The peerless worth of Jesus Christ to the soul is clearly set forth in a parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Matt. 13:45. Christ is that Pearl of indescribable value. Without Him one is spiritually destitute. With Him there looms the vista of infinite personal enrichment. Whatever a man may lose, he is wealthy if he finds Jesus. No matter what a man may acquire, it is all as dross compared with "the unsearchable riches of Christ." The love of the dear Saviour for each of us cannot be given measure or dimension. (Eph. 3:18, 19.)

One thing should be carefully noted. It took "all that he had" for the merchant in the parable to secure the precious object he sought. Redemption through Christ is free. "It is the gift of God." It flows out to humanity from "the riches of His grace." It may be had by all for the exercise of genuine belief in Jesus. Simple faith is acceptance. But it takes the entire surrender of self to God for a person properly to grasp His great salvation, and to enable Him to make its healing virtue fully manifest in human experience.

The Christian life is often supposed to be colourless, restricted, mentally and physically inhibited. That is a mistake. The gift of Jesus includes in Him the supply of every needed material advantage. (Rom. 8:32.) The Saviour promised that service to Him would bring in return "a hundredfold now [even] in this life." Mark 10:30. But admittedly the emphasis of the Gospel is on higher and spiritual values. "The riches of His glory" of character is what the Lord seeks to impart to the saved. This constitutes "the true riches." Luke 16:11.

Each glorious endowment which through the world's Redeemer is conferred upon man is inseparably linked to its fellow. Pardon, peace, joy, wisdom, righteousness, and life appear in pulsating abundance. In forgiving our sins, God ends the torment of regret. Peace floods the soul. There is joy in truth, in the possession of wisdom to choose aright. The penalty of sin is exchanged for the opulence of His righteousness, the poverty of weakness for His ample strength. The power of an endless life begins. The process of restoring

the divine image has commenced. There is a "new creature." An indwelling Saviour reigns.

Untold Blessings Hereafter

In the light of these facts it might be assumed that every human being would make haste to seek "the blessing of the Lord" that "maketh rich." Prov. 10:22. There is an everlasting inheritance to be won and an eternal grave to be shunned. The important thing is not how much a man may now gain by effort, but what "weight of glory" ahead does he stand to forfeit by neglect? Who can explain the unthinking hedonism of the masses? Let our Lord's warning strike home: "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world [now], and [ultimately] lose his own soul?" "Riches profit not in the day of wrath." Mark 8:36; Prov. 11:4.

Jesus who so often enlarged on the future joys of the kingdom of God points to its splendour as an enduring possession. "Lay up for yourselves," said He, "treasure in heaven." It is for the delectation of all who in "the resurrection of the just" receive "in the world to come, eternal life." The promises of God are certain of fulfilment. The redeemed of the Lord are heirs to all the pure delights of His kingdom. (Matt. 25:34.) 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 Cor. 2:9.

Eternity is to be an expanding revelation of what the sacrificial love of God has accomplished through Jesus Christ. From the casket of divine benevolence there is to be showered upon the people of God treasures of provision (Isa. 65:21, 22), treasures of position (Matt. 25:21), treasures of protection (Isa. 17:2), and treasures of presentation, commencing when the Lord Jesus introduces His ransomed ones to the Father "with exceeding joy." Jude 24. Into the canopy of space there is to rise the sweet strains of an ever-swelling crescendo of praise to God. As never before His displayed goodness is to be appreciated. (Jer. 31:14.)

In this present devil-racked world it is not easy to discern the gentle loveliness of God's character. Clamouring evils distort and cloud the vision of eternal verities. But in the earth renewed, with sin no more, in an atmosphere of perpetual tranquillity, the Lord is to joy over His redeemed with rapturous song. In Christ, as the focal point

(Please turn back to page 5.)

THE GREAT

By J. A.



By James Archer

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"You are a Christian!"

★ THE second of the seven wonders or signs of the Revelation is introduced by John in these arresting words: "And there appeared another sign [margin] in heaven; and beheld a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." Rev. 12:3.

In our first article we saw that the woman of verse one was a symbol of the true church of God and that the series of seven signs contained in Revelation 12-17 had to do with her career, persecutions, and destiny. We are now introduced by this symbolism to the enemy of the church. We referred to the warning of Jesus that His followers would be hated and persecuted by the world. (John 15:19, 20.) Just before these words, how-

ever, Jesus had specified that this hatred would be inspired and directed by "the prince of this world." John 14:30. The hatred of the world then stems from a power hostile to God and the Lord Jesus Christ, for He testified: "He that hateth Me hateth My Father also." John 15:23.

We do not have far to seek for a scriptural interpretation of the meaning of the great red dragon. John sees the dragon engaged in deadly conflict with Michael and his angels in heaven. He sees the dragon "cast out" even as Jesus predicted he would be "cast out" (see John 12:31) and he explains: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Rev. 12:9.

The identity of the dragon then is established. It is a prophetic cartoon of Satan, the god of this world. He it is, who deceives the whole world, turning men's hearts from the love and truth of God. Paul testified: "We . . . have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Cor. 4:1-4.

A Spiritual Warfare

This passage throws light on the prophetic symbolism of Revelation. The warfare carried on by Satan is a spiritual warfare. The battlefield is the human heart. The destiny of mankind is the stake. The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the centre around which the contestants wage their struggles. On the one hand is the church telling men of the love of God, setting forth the supreme demonstration of God's love in the atoning sacrifice of Calvary. Such a manifestation of divine

RED DRAGON

McMillan

mercy would win all hearts, were there no malignant forces to counteract the grace of God. But arrayed against this Gospel or good news of the compassion and long-suffering of God is Satan and his demonic forces. By every subtlety of deceit, by clever misrepresentation of the truth, by appealing to every baser instinct, he blinds the eyes, deafens the ears, and hardens the hearts of men, in order to shut out the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ. So men grope in darkness and fight against those who would bring them light.

It is Satan who is responsible for the world's condemnation. "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. . . . And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." John 3:17, 19. The devil is the author of this love of darkness. To the people who plotted His death, Jesus said: "Ye do the deeds of your father." And He spoke more plainly and said: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father will ye do." John 8:41, 44. Yes, truly, the great red dragon "deceiveth the whole world." In explaining the origin of evil, Jesus told His disciples: "An enemy hath

done this. . . . The enemy . . . is the devil." Matt. 13:28, 39.

Coming back to the arresting symbolism of this prophecy we must seek an explanation of the details of this cartoon. What do the heads and horns represent? Have they any special significance and is it possible to identify the reality they set forth?

Early Instruments of Satanic Wrath

We should keep in mind that the symbolic picture represents two distinct but related ideas. One is a representation of Satan, the other of the worldly powers used by Satan. That is clearly stated in Revelation 12:9. We should therefore regard the heads and horns as being suggestive of worldly powers directed by satanic influence.

When we consider the beast of the seventeenth chapter we are given important clues. "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. And these [R.V.] are seven kings. . . . And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings." Rev. 17:9-12. As these seven signs are a connected prophetic vision, this angelic explanation must hold good for chapter twelve. Thus the heads and horns are representations of kingdoms.

As another has expressed it: "No doubt these heads are intended to represent the complete forms and powers under which the enemy has persecuted the people of God since the beginning of history." And Dr. Milligan states: "The word 'kings' in the language of prophecy denotes, not personal kings, but kingdoms. These seven 'mountains' or seven

Christian
martyrs
in the
Colosseum,
Rome.



'kings,' therefore, are the manifestations of the beast in successive eras of oppression suffered by the people of God."—*Expositor's Bible, Revelation*, page 284.

When we study the seventeenth chapter we note that the heads are consecutive while the horns are contemporaneous. This is in harmony with the general content of biblical numerology. The series of sevens in the Bible are generally consecutive—seven days, seven years of plenty and seven years of famine, seven times, the seven churches, seven seals, and the seven trumpets of Revelation. This is borne out by the angel's reference: "And these are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come." Rev. 17:10, R.V. On the other hand, ten is usually associated with things that are contemporary. The ten commandments, the ten virgins, the ten pieces of silver are examples. In the prophecy of Daniel, the ten toes of the second chapter and the ten horns of chapter seven are symbols of the ten kingdoms that emerged from the divided Roman Empire and ruled side by side.

The reality then of this cartoon is that the church does not wrestle "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places." Eph. 6:12 (margin). Multitudes may be very religious, but they are deceived by the lies of the dragon and belong to "the synagogue of Satan." Rev. 2:9. The devotees of many religions are sincere and earnest, but their worship is "in vain" because it proceeds not from God nor does it bind the heart to God. (Matt. 15:5-9.)

As we trace the fulfilment of this great series of prophetic cartoons, we will discover that deep and grievous crimes have been committed in the name of religion. One of Satan's most subtle deceptions is that a pretension, profession, or garb of religion makes an act right or commends one to God. The Bible repeatedly warns us against this deception, but multitudes do not heed the warning. Ponder the following: "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." Matt. 7:21. John wrote: "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 2:4.

Returning to the Apocalypse we should observe the difference between the picture in the twelfth chapter and the succeeding pictures of chapters thirteen and seventeen. Note the contrasts:

"Having seven heads, and ten horns, and *seven crowns upon his heads.*" 12:3.

"Having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns *ten crowns*, and upon his heads names of blasphemy." 13:1 (margin).

"Full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." 17:3.

In comparing chapter 12:3 with 13:1 it is significant that in the first, the heads are crowned and in the second, it is the horns that are crowned. The reason for this difference will become clearer as we proceed.

Opposition of Pagan Rome

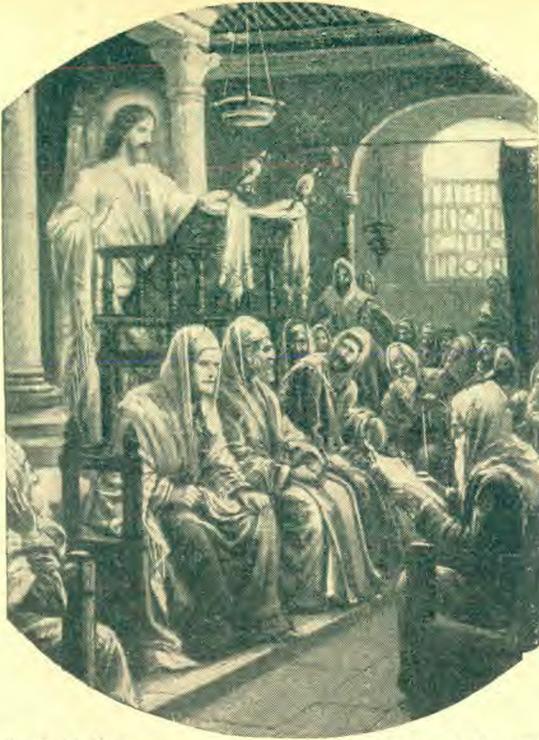
Chapter twelve deals with Satan's warfare against the church of God at the beginning of the Christian era—apart from the reference to war in heaven, which is put in to give the background of Satan's enmity against Christ from the beginning. In that first century, Satan used apostate Israel and pagan Rome to persecute the woman who brought forth the man Child. Referring again to a previously quoted author, we find this statement: "The dragon is said to be Satan; he it was that moved upon Herod to put the Saviour to death. But the chief agent of Satan in making war upon Christ and His people during the first centuries of the Christian era, was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the prevailing religion. Thus while the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of Pagan Rome."—*The Great Controversy*, page 438.

This should not be confusing if we keep clear in our minds that the dragon is a symbol of Satan, but the heads and horns are symbols of successive earthly kingdoms through whom his will is expressed. And John was expressly told in a later vision that a point would come when five of these heads would have fallen, and one (the sixth) ruled, and the seventh had still to come. (Rev. 17:10.)

Whatever details in this prophecy may be obscure or not fully understood, we should grasp one outstanding truth. The devil hates God's Word and God's people. Open hostility and clever counterfeit are part of his weapons of warfare. And this will continue until he goes "into perdition." But Jesus has defeated his most subtle efforts and His followers have overcome "him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Rev. 12:11. Following Jesus, they know that the victory is certain and the outcome sure.

What is Christian Perfection?

By E. W. H. Vick



By C. S. Dixon

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In the Synagogue.

★ JESUS' command that man should be perfect has given rise to much concern on the part of many humble Christians who do not feel they can claim that they have attained to perfection. Yet Jesus said: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. 5:48. Why did Jesus make such a statement?

God only is perfect. That is, only He has every quality which as men we know to be good developed to its uppermost limit.

No doubt many have begun to doubt their progress in the Christian life, because their thoughts on this matter have been confused. Much harm has also been done by the teaching that a person who is sanctified is beyond the possibility of sinning. Sanctification is not a guarantee that we shall never sin again. Neither is it freedom from temptation. What then is it? Can one be sanctified and sin? If we are sanctified, is there any more progress to be made? Have we arrived at the goal?

God's Presence Makes Holy

Sanctification and holiness are used with the same meaning in the Scriptures. You will recall the story of Moses at the burning bush, when he

received God's call to service. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground," was the command. Joshua received a similar injunction when a mysterious visitant said to him: "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy."

In the old sanctuary service another illustration is provided. The tabernacle had two apartments, one more sacred than the other, yet both were holy.

It is God's presence that makes a place holy. God's presence appeared in the flaming bush, in the figure of the soldier; it was manifest in dazzling light between the cherubim, and in the holy place.

What God has done for a place, He can do also for a person. By dwelling Himself with and in that person, that one is made holy. So a sanctified person is one in whom God dwells. This is God's own promise.

"For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. 57:15.

It is because God Himself is holy, that His presence makes holy: "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy." Lev. 19:2.

But it is encouraging to realize that God's holiness is linked with the humility of the meek. "The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." Isa. 29:19.

Holiness is coming under the influence of God so much as to become like Him. It is to conform

to His desire and will. It is to chose His purposes in place of our own.

Degrees of Holiness

But there are degrees of holiness. All gold is not refined to the same degree; but even that which is of the lowest degree will endure the furnace that separates it from baser metals.

In the Christian's life, there are certain basic experiences that culminate in conversion. Here is a person who turns to God with his whole heart. God forgives him. But He does even more than that. He gives him credit for having done what he intends to do. We call this "righteousness by faith." Then the Christian begins to grow. First, he is accounted perfect, then he is made perfect. Notice these words: "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*" 2 Cor. 7:1.

"Perfecting holiness." It grows; there is progression in holiness. Is it possible that a person who has only travelled the Christian pathway for a few months can be said to be sanctified? Is it possible also, that a person who has travelled the Christian pathway for many decades can be said to be sanctified? What is the difference? Paul wrote two letters to the church at Corinth. He introduced them like this: "Unto . . . them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia."

Paul wrote a letter to the Hebrews; in it he speaks of the church thus: "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." Heb. 3:1.

Yet when we read these letters we find much severe reproof, and much encouragement to press on to higher things.

The answer is that both the process and the goal are called sanctification. One who has begun the journey is said to be sanctified; another near the end of the journey is also said to be sanctified, provided they are both on the road. What man has been able to do in co-operation with the Lord is called imparted righteousness. What he has not achieved God makes up to him; this is called imputed righteousness. So, however far he may have gone, he stands complete in Jesus. He is sanctified.

So sanctification is a matter of growth. We can thus take up the Christian life with renewed confidence knowing that in Jesus there is strength to achieve, and that in Him the Christian stands complete.

What Next?

(Continued from page 3.)

the businessman. "What next?" cries all humanity.

In simple language that can be understood by all, Christ tells us that the next great event of human history is His return to the earth in glory. Not in the far-distant future, but in the close proximity to the signs already mentioned. Said He, "And *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." Verse 30. The divine schedule is certain, the final event sure.

The last great day is near. When it dawns, property and fame will be worthless. Money will not be able to buy anything. Mansions and hovels, jewel-decked garments and rags, will perish together.

There will be a great prayer meeting that day, the largest prayer meeting ever held on this earth. People may be reluctant about attending prayer meeting, but here is one they will attend. Christ's return will be so sudden that many will be found unprepared. Because of their unprepared condition, "then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." Verse 30.

It will be a sad prayer meeting, for it is held too late. Too late, men will realize that the last sermon has been preached, the last appeal made. Together, the rich and poor, the learned and ignorant, the famous and obscure, will mingle their tears as they sigh in bitter regret over their failure to prepare to meet their Lord in peace. Often they heard the warning, "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24:44. They heard, but heeded it not. Now with bitter lament they cry out in anguish of soul, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jer. 8:20.

Are You Ready for that Event?

There will be only two classes when the Lord returns, those who are ready and those who are not. It was so in Noah's day, and it will be so when the Lord returns. The Bible clearly teaches that some will be found ready. When the Lord returns, they will say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us." Isa. 25:9. To such He will reply, "Come, ye blessed of My father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34.

You ask, How can I become ready? Listen to

Christ's answer: "Not every one that saith unto Me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." Matt. 7:21. How can one know the will of God? By studying His Word. Combine this with daily prayer for strength to fulfil God's will. You need not be lost! You can be among the redeemed. Begin living as God wants you to now.

Your **BIBLE QUESTIONS** *Answered*

Do you believe that the study of prophecy is helpful to Christians today?

THE study of Bible prophecy is not only helpful but essential to all. Here is what we read in 2 Peter 1:19: "We have a more sure Word of

prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." We are living in a dark hour of this world's history and we certainly need the light of the prophetic Word. It reveals to us the meaning of our times, and the fact of the second coming of Christ soon to take pace. You will remember that the people of nearly two thousand years ago missed Christ as their Messiah because they failed to study and understand the prophecies concerning His coming. On the way to Emmaus, after the resurrection, He told two of the disciples that they were foolish not to believe the prophecies concerning His first coming. If they had studied them and believed them they would have accepted Him and have been ready for Him. I wonder how many will be taken unawares again when He comes the second time because they do not study prophecy?

What does the word "Christ" mean?

It is a Greek word and means the "Anointed One." The corresponding Hebrew word is "Messiah."



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THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

Jerry's Present to Mother

By Dorothy M. Williams

IT is hard to be an active boy seven years old and have to wear a big heavy brace all the time on one leg. But if anyone took a look at Jerry, he could tell that he was always a cheerful little sunbeam. Of course, he didn't like the brace, but he knew that probably after a year he could take it off for good.

Jerry had one mile to go to school, and he caught the bus only a short distance from home; so he didn't have to walk far with that heavy brace. Mother gave him his bus fare every morning to go to school, and to come back again in the afternoon.

Mother's birthday was only a couple of weeks off, and Jerry

was beginning to think of what he could get for Mother that she would like. At the place where he got off the bus was a big sweet shop, and in the window there were lovely big boxes of chocolates. Some of them even had a fancy ribbon across them, with "Happy Birthday."

Jerry felt he would like to buy one for Mother for her birthday, but he had only a shilling, and the cheapest box was half a crown. All that day at school Jerry thought and thought how he could earn enough money to buy Mother the sweets. He couldn't work very well with that crippled leg of his, but he'd find a way. In fact, he already had an idea!

The next morning Mother was a bit surprised to have Jerry tell her that he wanted to start for school twenty minutes earlier. Mother said that would be all right, and gave him his money for the bus fare. She didn't notice the mischievous twinkle in Jerry's eyes.

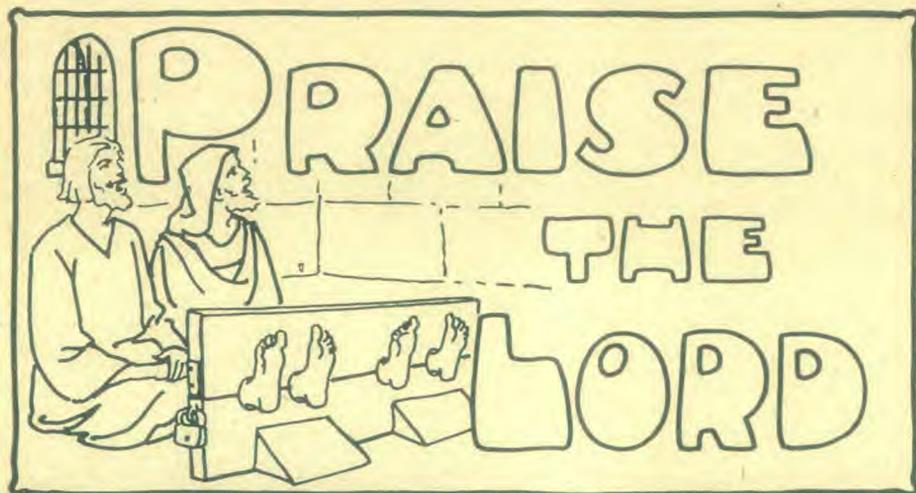
That afternoon after school Mother noticed that Jerry was a little later getting home, and that he seemed tired and wanted to rest before playing with his train.

The next morning Jerry again wanted to leave earlier, and the next morning, and the next. This went on for about a week and a half, and by this time Jerry was so pleased about something that he blurted it all out to Mother.

"Mother, I have almost enough money saved to buy you a nice birthday present," said Jerry one day on coming home from school. "And Mr. Moore is saving the prettiest one in the shop—" Then Jerry stopped and caught his breath. "Oh, I didn't mean to tell you yet, but it just sort of slipped out."

"Why, Jerry," said Mother. "What have you been doing? You know you mustn't work with your leg in a brace. A nice card would be all Mother would expect, dear."

"But I saw those nice boxes



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 September 3rd. (In case Our Times arrives late, still send your entry. All attempts will be considered.)

of chocolates down at the shop, all fixed up with ribbon, and you should have one for your birthday. I thought you'd like one, so I've been walking to school, and home again, too, and saved my bus fares so I could get one for you." Jerry looked up into Mother's face, to see her wiping away a tear.

"Well, bless your heart. You know that Mother would go without anything rather than have you take those long walks

in your brace, for it makes your leg so sore. Mother will never forget this birthday present, dear, and she knows she has the best boy in all the world." And Mother gave Jerry a big hug.

"You know, Mother," said Jerry, "it is lots more fun to give something to someone else than it is even to get a present, isn't it?"

"You've learned a great lesson in life, Jerry, when you've learned that."

What do You Have?

By Edith Cling Palm

EVERYONE has something. Some of us have many things. Perhaps some of us have money. Some of us have more time than money. Some of us have talents and gifts from God. Some of us have a kind and pleasing personality. All of us can do good in the world with what we have.

A very poor woman wished that she could give a Christmas gift to a dear friend, a wealthy woman.

But the poor woman did not have money with which to buy a gift. Besides, her wealthy friend had everything that money could buy.

The poor woman finally thought of a gift. She called her friend on the telephone and said, "I will give you three hours' time ironing as a Christmas gift."

"Thank you very much," said her friend. "That means much to me. My laundress is sick this week, and I am very busy with other work."

The gift of three hours' time at the ironing board was appreciated, and we can be sure that the poor woman was richly repaid for her gift of love.

Perhaps you have no money for a birthday gift for Mother or Daddy. Why not give them some of your time? Tell Mother that you will do the supper

dishes every evening for a week or a month. Mother will appreciate such a gift. Or tell Daddy that you will mow the lawn for him all summer.

A young girl came to her minister one evening before the service, and offered to sing. There was sickness in the pastor's

Evening and Morning

Oh, there is beauty in the evening.

When the sun sinks in the west,
And the weary worker wends his way

Toward his home at close of day,
To find God's peace and rest.

The day is past with all its care,
And soft grey shadows linger where

A bird trills out its evening lay
As if to wish us all good-bye.

Then wings its last long flight
"Twixt me—and a roseate sky.

But the glories of the morning
Are more beautiful to me
As I look beyond the bright green leaves.

And watch the rising sun which weaves

Its wonders o'er the sea:
All Nature, wakened from her rest,
Now smiles toward the glowing east:

And bird and flower
And heaven and earth
Break forth in one glad song of mirth—

A morning symphony.

Mrs. E. A. Robinson.

home, and the day had been very trying. The young girl's spirit of loving service was like a benediction on the evening worship.

What do you have to give?

Make use of what you have, and God will bless you in your service of love.

Your Letter

My Dear Sunbeams,

WHAT a strange picture we have to paint this time, don't we? And what an awful place in which to praise the Lord! Read the story of our picture in Acts chapter sixteen. It shows Paul and Silas in prison. They can't sleep very well, so here they are, singing hymns at midnight.

We too, must praise the Lord, even when we sometimes have disappointments like Paul and Silas. If we keep our Sunbeam rules, we will always be happy.

Yours affectionately,

AUNTIE MARGARET.

Results of Competition No. 13

Prize-winners.—Eunice Pitcher, 2 Coronation Terrace, Pakefield Street, Lowestoft. Age 10; Trevor Goddard, 34 Barnfield, Iver, Bucks. Age 9.

Honourable Mention.—Jilda Sleeman (Torquay); Valerie Banks (Bushey); Margaret Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Nigel Payne (Woodmancote); Ann Gittins (Wallasey); Ann Sharp (Coventry); Sylvia Esson (Dyce); Amy Randleman (Stockton); Heather Payne (Woodmancote); Roger Sleeman (Torquay); Colin Doggett (Norwich).

Those who tried hard.—Paula Chatfield (Eastbourne); Pauline Fulford (Birmingham, 25); Stuart Payne (Woodmancote); Eleonora Baron (Church); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Jean Hocking (Liskeard); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Beryl Timms (Nr. Reading); John Roberts (Bishops Cleeve); Siegfried Baron (Church); Richard Payne (Woodmancote); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Anthony Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Rachel Hayward (Pennington); Martin Block (London, N.14); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); John Holmes (Laydon Gardens); Irene Turner (Coventry).

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Straws in the Wind

Cost of Atomic Killing

THE Cambridge scientist, Fred Hoyle, estimates that in about two years atomic killing will cost only one pound per victim compared with several thousand pounds by ordinary explosives.

Bible in More Languages

THE translation department of the British and Foreign Bible Society is working on more than 200 new translations. Of these, forty-nine are in languages in which so far no part of the Bible has been issued. Thirty-four complete Bibles and thirty New Testaments are in course of preparation.

Rank's Fine Testimony

IN an American radio programme in which prominent persons expressed their personal philosophy of life, J. Arthur Rank, the film magnate, said: "This I believe—that God is our Father and loves us and that Christ died for the world and came to show the world what God was like and to teach the world the way to have a joyous life and be free from fear—and the world includes you and me. . . . I believe in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. . . . I believe in faith in humanity and a faith in a God who understands and guides me, and against

which the fears, trials, and disappointments of our day cannot prevail."

Dwell Thou Within

Dwell Thou within, O Lord, I pray,
Within this heart hold kingly sway;

May every motive, each desire,
Be cleansed by Thy consuming fire.

Dwell Thou within, O Lord, I pray,
And speak in everything I say,
May Thine own Spirit bless each word,
And thus draw sinners to their Lord.

Dwell Thou within, O Lord, I pray,
Take these poor hands—I would not say
What they shall do; they are Thy hands
And shall fulfil all Thy demands.

Dwell Thou within, O Lord, I pray
Direct my feet in Thy blest way;
I would not follow my own will,
But long to do Thy bidding still.

And so may all my powers be Thine,
Take them, dear Lord—no longer mine.

Speak through these lips, use Thou my hands,
And may I walk in Thy commands. Edgar A. Warren.

"Asia-Conscious"

THE *Richmond Times-Dispatch* expresses the view that the new top military command in the United States is 'more 'Asia-conscious' than the one it is replacing."

Alcoholism in France

IN a debate in the French National Assembly on a bill aiming at reducing chronic alcoholism, it was revealed that twenty-two per thousand of the population of France are alcoholics and that ten per cent of the French family income is spent on drink.

Dutch Sunday Law

WHILE relaxation of Sunday laws is being sought in this country, the Netherlands Parliament is tightening up. A recent law forbids public manifestations before one o'clock on Sundays and prohibits any noise which could be heard at a greater distance than 600 feet.

One in Five

ACCORDING to the 1953 *Britannica Book of the Year*, one in five of the world's population is a Catholic, the total number being put at 425,508,220. And one in every two Christians is a Catholic. There are 196,503,-520 Protestants.

