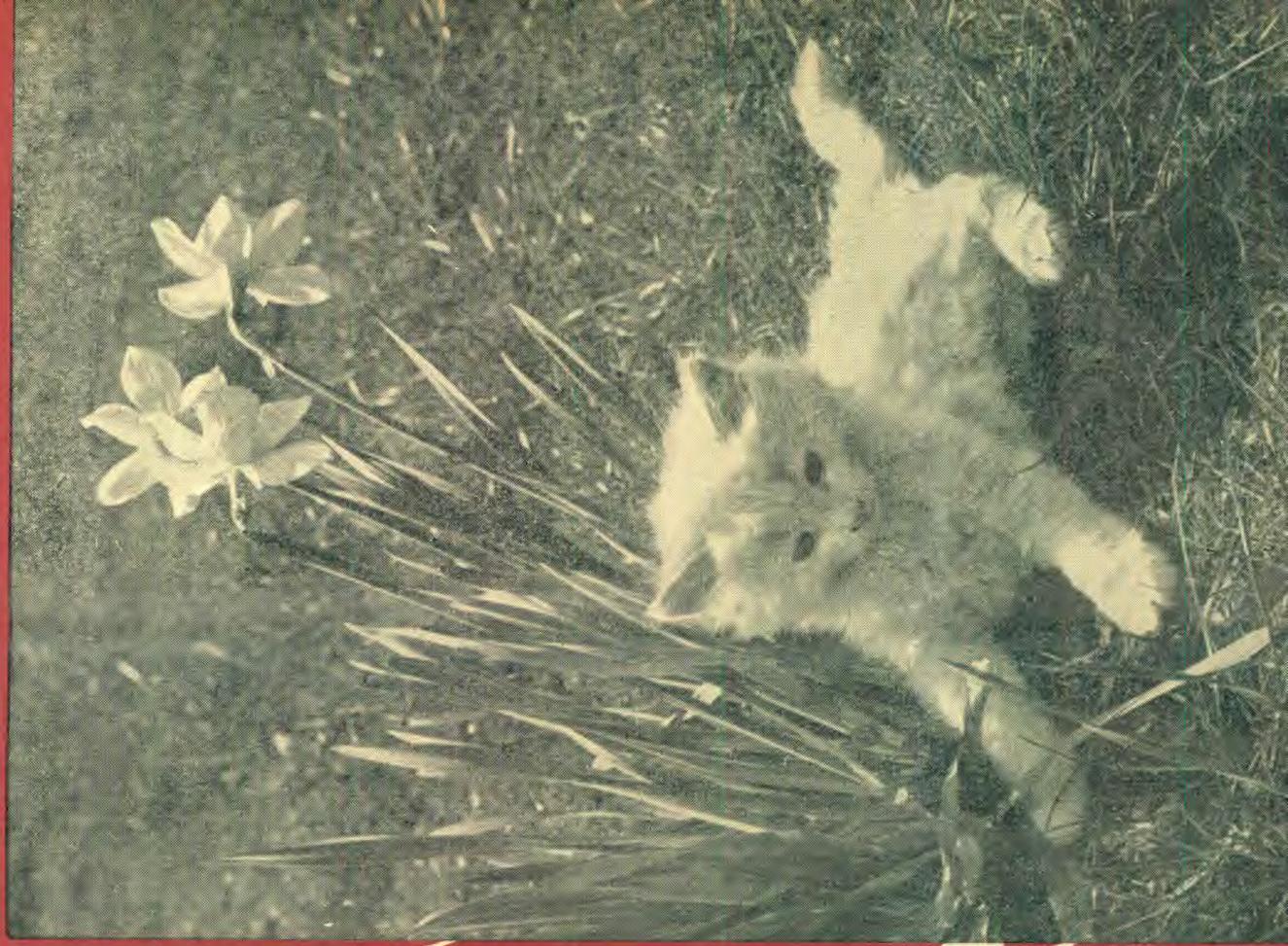
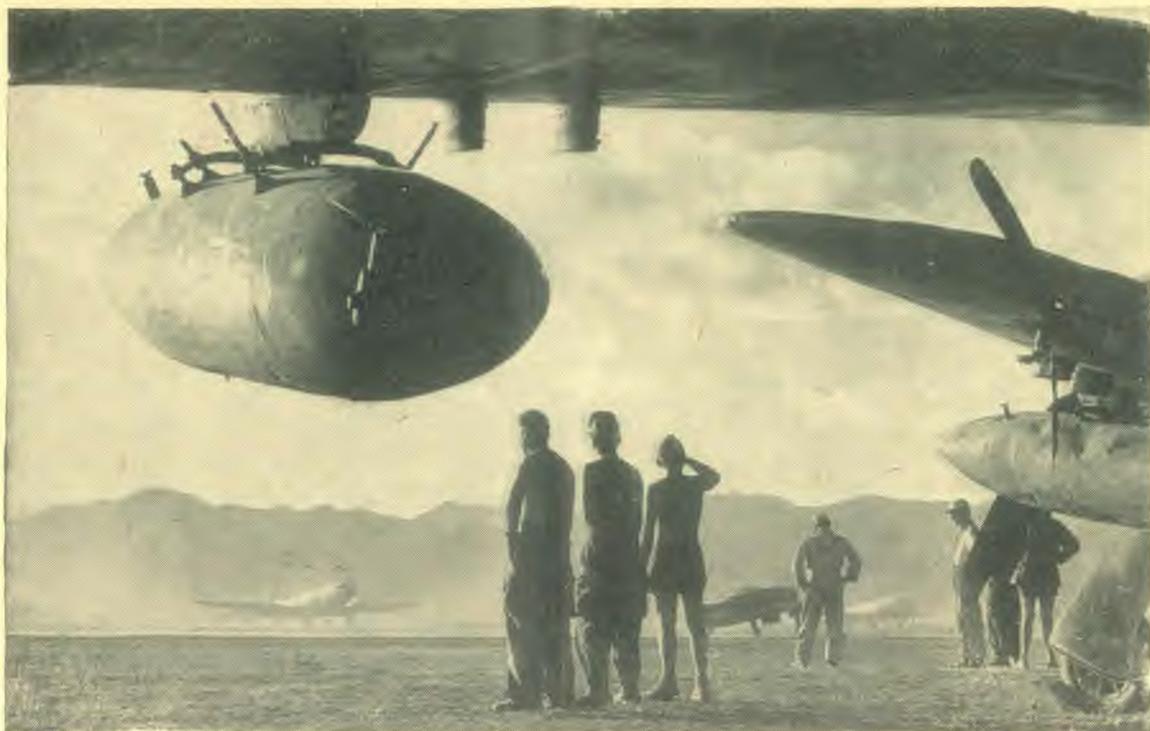


The Bible and
OUR TIMES





The coming of the atomic age has brought new aerial terrors to our troubled world. © Keystone

Antidote For Pessimism

By R. D. Vine

★ SURVEYING the chaos of war-damaged Boulogne, we recently asked a Frenchman with whom we were travelling: "Why haven't your people rebuilt the town, after so long a time?" With an eloquent shrug of the shoulders and a wan smile, he replied: "What's the good? It will only be knocked down again when the next war comes."

He was a businessman who looked reasonably prosperous and contented, but his reply betrayed an underlying pessimism—a spirit which is becoming increasingly widespread today.

For it is a fact that our age which began as "the century of hope," has been changed by the past few years to an age of pessimism and despair.

The Things Men Fear

The hideous success of the bomb which vaporized Hiroshima darkened human hearts with guilt and fear. Admittedly, it snuffed out

like a candle the gruelling war in the east; but satisfaction was mortified by the realization that here at last was the weapon that might well destroy humanity.

Since then, for over half a decade, east and west have been in the throes of a monstrous atomic arms race, with both sides stock-piling bombs as fast as they can. That we may have ten times as big a pile as our potential foe, can give little comfort when we know that the relatively few which he has, are amply capable of obliterating all our largest cities.

Thus the choice before us is not so much peace or war, as it is peace or oblivion!

Of course, our atomic age could be extremely hopeful and happy. Enormous resources of energy are now at man's command—reassuring in a world of diminishing coal and oil reserves. New atomic

Needs of the Times.—3

piles here in Britain and elsewhere, will, from a single ton of uranium, yield power equivalent to that now produced by a million tons of coal. The significance of this in terms of improved living standards can readily be seen.

In the medical field the atomic age has begun what could well prove to be a chapter of surpassing wonder. The discovery of radio isotopes as a means of combating disease and prolonging life is more than gratifying, while radiation is already being used in the campaign against cancer.

Yet the sorry fact remains, that the sunlight of beneficent possibilities is obscured by the ominous cloud of atomic war. Hence the gnawing pessimism which deprives life of its zest and joy. Hence the prophetic description by Jesus Christ which, for the first time in history, is now being realized. Describing this world's eventful epilogue, He spoke of "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:26. Led on as though by supernatural forces, humanity seems to be heading for the thing which is most dreaded. One can begin to appreciate how true is the apocalyptic vision of the "three unclean spirits," which are "the spirits of devils," and which "go forth unto the kings of the earth" in preparation for the great consummating conflict—even Armageddon.

The Things We Hope For

Deep in the heart of everyone is the desire for human survival. Terrestrial death, as a result of man's moral weakness and misuse of nuclear power, is a nightmare vision which all the world shuns. We desire a world of sanity; a world where human kindness and goodness transcend the differences of race and language. We desire a world where truth and justice—whatever our conception of them might be—shall at last prevail. In short, we desire Utopia, not oblivion.

It is the glory of the prophetic Word that these very things are actually promised. As we have seen in previous articles, the moral and spiri-

tual night of our present age was clearly envisioned by the Bible prophets. Descriptive details pinpointing our very days, are in God's Word for all to see.

But the sombre picture—for which the prophets have been condemned as hopeless pessimists, yet which is now reluctantly recognized as a fact—is merely a passing phase of the prophetic vision. As surely as day follows night, so a golden day is scheduled to replace this earth's night of insecurity, pain, and fear.

This earth, says the prophet Isaiah, shall one day "be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isa. 11:9. What is this but a condition of moral maturity, spiritual enlightenment, and complete harmony of outlook and uplook? What is it but the promise of a united human family, freed for ever from every error?

Of course, were such a desirable object to be based merely on an isolated promise in the Bible, we might be a little dubious. The fact is, however, that it is the consummating goal of several major prophecies in both Old and New Testaments.

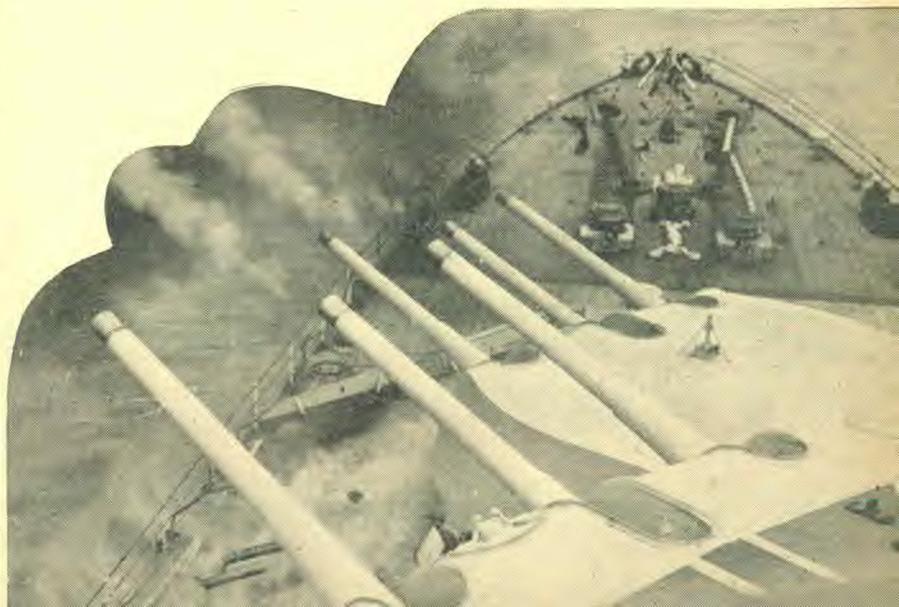
Of these, none is more gripping than the one described by the prophet and statesman, Daniel. Daniel was a godly Hebrew youth who was captured by King Nebuchadnezzar at the time of Jerusalem's spoliation in 586 B.C. His long life thenceforth was spent in the royal court of golden Babylon. His superior spirit and peerless wisdom were recognized and used by the king and his successors.

In the first year of the regent, Belshazzar, grandson of Nebuchadnezzar (553 B.C.) Daniel had a vision which, in the most dramatic way, swept

(Continued on page 10.)

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On land and sea weapons of war are kept in constant readiness against the outbreak of a new world conflict.

APRIL 1, 1954



"Forgive Us Our Debts"

By E. W. H. Vick

the prayers we address to God. If we pray to Him and yet have sin in our hearts, we cannot expect that He will hear or answer our prayers. The act of asking for God's forgiveness, therefore, should come early in our prayers. When that burden is lifted we may commune freely with God.

But Jesus announced another aspect of our duty. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matt. 5:23, 24.

In this case it is not our sin that hinders our communion with God, but the bad feelings of a brother toward us. When everything is put right between us and those within our world we can approach God. The duty of reconciliation rests with us; we are to forgive others even before we are asked.

Conditions of Answered Prayer

This petition of the prayer states the question positively. In Matthew 6:14, 15 it is stated both negatively and positively: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Jesus illustrated this by the parable of the two debtors. Here we have the strange example of a man who owed a large amount and to whom was owing a small amount. Because he refused to forgive his debtor, his own great debt which had already been remitted was placed on him again. The difference in the amount of money owed emphasizes that it was the spirit of the man that



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From earliest years the "Lord's prayer" is upon the lips of the children of God.

★ THE very fact that we pray for forgiveness reveals that we recognize ourselves as sinners; it shows that we feel our need of having sin removed. Furthermore, by asking God to forgive us, we recognize that God alone is able to forgive and that through prayer we may experience it.

It is a good thing for the Christian to be sensitive to sin; that we are spiritually alert is shown in our speedy recognition of sin in our lives. But in seeking forgiveness we commit ourselves to the conditions under which it is obtained, one of which is that we show a forgiving spirit to any who might have sinned against us.

How can we expect God to forgive us if we are stern and harsh with any who seek to be reconciled to us?

In this petition we see man as a penitent suppliant. How essential is the act of penitence in

mattered. The forgiving heart is the only one which is prepared to appreciate forgiveness. By this parable we learn that God's forgiving mercy is to be the measure of our own. Is there anything more ugly than a Christian showing an unforgiving spirit? It is a sin worse than many we hesitate to mention.

Sin is not only "trespass," going over the line, doing what we know is wrong, but it is also failing to do what we know is right. Jesus' parable of the condemnation of the man for failing to use his one talent illustrates this great principle. Omission as well as commission is sin. Notice the fateful words of the just Judge when He explains the surprise of those who had hoped to be saved: "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me." Matt. 25:45.

It is comparatively easy to forgive what someone has done against us; but it is much harder to forgive what we know someone ought to have done. Yet we are to forgive our "debtors." That is Jesus' lofty standard. We are to clear our hearts of every trace of an unforgiving spirit. Then we may pray for God's forgiveness. In our approach to prayer we are to see that all is right between us and our fellows. We pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." The prayer means that because we have set our lives aright we can expect God's blessing of forgiveness.

Why does sin need forgiving? It corrupts the soul and retards the growth of character that will fit a man for heaven. The great purpose of life is to become like Jesus. The effect of sin is to retard that process. A family sets off in a car to pay a visit to their friend who will entertain them for the day. On the way they get a puncture; consequently they are delayed. The host wonders whether they have forgotten, and is grieved. But finally his visitors arrive. It is true they are late, but their host is understanding. He says: "Forget the journey, and make yourself at home." He cannot give back the lost time, but he starts where they are. Sin retards growth. When we are forgiven we are set on the road again. When God forgives, He overlooks the past and says: "We will start again from here." In forgiveness we take a forward as well as a backward look.

Sin needs forgiving because it takes us away from God. Forgiveness brings us back to Him. "Sin is a raised hand, a clenched fist, and a blow in the face of God." It is a denial of His Fatherhood and our sonship. When we sin we are

atheists. Forgiveness is a restoration to sonship, like the restoration of the prodigal son.

"Sin No More"

When we ask for forgiveness it means that we are going to mend our ways. Not only does forgiveness affect the past, it looks forward too. Restoration for the past; reformation for the future. The attitude to sin which we have when we seek forgiveness will be the attitude we shall take to sin afterward. We can seek forgiveness in a flippant attitude; if we do so we shall have no barrier against it afterward. God gets rid of sin in our hearts because He changes us. He forgets the past. When He forgives, God forgets that we ever committed sin. Our faith in His forgiveness should be strong enough that we do not call our sins to His memory again. If we are certain of forgiveness we can be joyful. If we take God at His word we can be certain of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is not a denial that sin is a serious thing, nor does it mean that we can side-track its results. If we can understand what sin is, and learn to hate it, no matter how deep our sin, God forgives it. We are prepared to take the consequences of sin, but we bear them without the weight of the sin as well. Repentance is not an emotional sorrow for those consequences; it aims at the deadliness of the sin itself, and pledges the sinner to a set purpose to do better.

The Bible is the textbook of salvation. That is its theme. Divinity is the solution to all the ills of humanity. Man needs remission, God gives it. The law brings to us a sense of sin, we recognize that we have broken it, we go to Jesus, He forgives our mistakes and gives us power to do what in our strength we have failed to do. Through Jesus we may live above sin. The Bible emphasizes the remedy for sin, it gives that first place. In the words of Isaiah: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isa. 55:7.

God's purpose is to bring us to the place where we no longer need His forgiveness. Why should we struggle on with pain and regret when God gives the power to make us perfect, like Himself? The resources of Heaven are at our disposal. Why should we be spiritual paupers when our Father is waiting to give us all? Why should we be spiritual gypsies when God is waiting for us in His home?



By W. Clemens

When Judas betrayed Christ he had sinned away his day of grace.

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The Unpardonable Sin

By C. R. Bonney

★ THE most fateful pronouncement Jesus Christ ever uttered, so far as the scriptural record is concerned, is found in Matthew 12:31, 32, and here is the statement: "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

This is a very solemn passage of Scripture. No doubt John was speaking of this sin when, in his first epistle, he says, "There is a sin unto death." 1 John 5:16. Is there a sin that God cannot or is

not willing to forgive? Christ said so, according to the text I have just quoted, and He said that it is sin or blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

But what is sin against the Holy Spirit? Some people think that the unpardonable sin, or the sin against the Holy Ghost, consists in some fearful words of cursing that men may utter against the Holy Spirit. Others think that the unpardonable sin consists in committing suicide. Some think that the unpardonable sin is the committing of some unspeakable crime that is so terrible, so dreadful, so heinous in the sight of God that He simply cannot pardon it.

But please notice the first part of the thirty-first verse of Matthew 12. Jesus says, "All manner of sin . . . shall be forgiven." There is no sin of

committal then, no matter how horrible, which cannot be forgiven, but forgiveness will follow confession.

God declares in Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, let us reason together: . . . though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The great God has actually bound Himself to forgive your sins when you repent of them and confess them to Him. The Lord says in 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Notice how that promise reads: If we confess, He forgives. God never fails to fulfil His promises. What He says, He does. What He promises, He makes good. As surely as you do the repenting and the confessing, God does the forgiving. It doesn't matter how vile his sin is in the sight of society, if a man accepts Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, if he repents of that sin and confesses it to God, it is forgiven.

The conditions of obtaining the mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression: but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy, whatever that sin might be. This is one of the wonders of the love of God.

The Sin God Cannot Pardon

Well then, what is the only sin that God will not forgive, and, in the very nature of the case, cannot pardon? It must be the sin which man refuses to confess and surrender. Every sin that is repented of and confessed to God, is forgiven. The only sin that will never be forgiven, is the sin that man clings to, and will not give up.

The unpardonable sin, or the sin against the Holy Ghost, is evidently the unrepented sin. It does not consist merely in frightful words of swearing that a man might utter in a fit of anger, or in some overt act of wickedness unmentionable in society. It is rather a *condition* that men get into by persistently refusing to yield to the pleading of the Holy Spirit. The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is the persistent refusal to repent.

You may ask, "How can a person get into a condition in which he cannot repent?" Many people are under the false impression that they

can repent whenever they please. That is why men postpone making their decision to obey the commandments of God. But the truth is that if we expect to receive forgiveness, we must take repentance when God offers it to us.

Men can never repent without the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. In speaking of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said; "When He is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8 (margin). The Holy Spirit is the only agency in the universe whereby a man can repent. Repentance can take place only under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. We can no more repent without the Holy Spirit to awaken our conscience, and to give us a desire to obey God, than we can obtain forgiveness without the blood of Christ. Repentance is just as much a gift from God as forgiveness. In Acts 5:31 we learn that Christ has been exalted to give repentance and forgiveness unto men. Repentance is something that you cannot produce yourself at will. Jesus said in John 6:44: "No man can come to Me, except the Father . . . draw him."

Resisting the Spirit

If a person yields to the pleading, wooing, drawing, convicting power of the Holy Spirit, he will receive repentance from God. If he receives repentance, God forgives all his sins. If God forgives all his sins, he will be saved. But if a man resists the Holy Spirit, he will never get repentance. If he never gets repentance, he will never get forgiveness; and if he never gets forgiveness, he will never be saved.

Three Scriptures may be cited which indicate that if a person persistently refuses to yield to the pleadings of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit will leave him, never to return. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Gen. 6:3. It is sad to know that in the days of Noah, the Holy Spirit finally left everybody in the world except eight people. All the others refused to turn and obey God. They refused to accept the message God sent them through Noah.

This text indicates that the Holy Spirit strives with a man for a time, but if he refuses to yield to His pleading, the Spirit leaves that man, never to return. Then he has committed the unpardonable sin. His sins will never be forgiven. Why? Because they are so wicked that God could not pardon them? No! But because he has grieved away the only divine agency whereby he can ever

(Continued on page 11.)



By Franklin Booth
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The future life
will be as real
as the life we
now live, but
infinitely more
satisfying.

God. "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." 1 Cor. 2:9, 10. The Bible, written by men whose minds the Holy Spirit moved, is the only reliable source of knowledge concerning heaven.

Heaven on Earth

The term "heaven is used of the atmosphere surrounding the earth, as the phrase, "the fowls of heaven;" of the starry heavens, as in

IS HEAVEN

David's poem, "The heavens declare the glory of God," and of the dwelling-place of God. It is about this latter that we ask: "Is it real?"

King Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the newly-completed temple at Jerusalem reveals his insight into this subject. When he said, "Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" he recognized the truth that God is everywhere present by His Spirit. But he also makes it clear that God is a Person

★ TIME was when the hope of heaven was part of the comfort and cheer given from the pulpit to lighten the Christian's step along the path of life. Yet today, how common is the attitude toward the after-life expressed in the cynical phrase, "Pie in the sky—by and by"!

A waning hope of heaven has accompanied a decreasing faith in the Bible. Man has no other mental equipment or experience for building up knowledge of the after-life. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him." He must rely on information from

with a dwelling-place, as distinct from merely an all-pervasive, impersonal life-force. "Hearken Thou to the supplication of Thy servant, . . . and hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place: and when Thou hearest forgive." 1 Kings 8:27, 30. Heaven, God's home is as real as God Himself. If it appears hazy and unreal to us, we would do well to ask ourselves: "Is it because God Himself seems far away from my life?"

We have often heard it said: "We make our own heaven on earth by the way we live." While it is true that right living will make of our homes, if not actually a heaven, at least a haven on

earth, it is also sadly true that accident, war, disease, circumstances beyond our control, can and do sweep away many such little paradises. No, only God can make a heaven that will last. What is more His plan is eventually heaven on earth.

When Jesus returns the second time, "the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." According to His own promise, Jesus takes His people from this old earth, ravaged by war, disease, and famine,

and rejoice even with joy and singing. . . . And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water." Isa. 35:1, 2, 7. An equable climate will preserve and enhance this fertility. "Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." Rev. 7:16.

Radiant health will be the portion of this new world's population, for "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. . . . Behold, I make all things new." "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." Rev. 7:16; 21:4, 5; Isa. 35:5, 6.

There we shall know the satisfaction of tasting the fruits of our own labour, so often denied us in this life through greed and misused power. "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them." Isa. 65:21, 22.

War preparations will not waste the resources of the earth, nor war ravage its prosperity; for God's people "shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places." Isa. 32:18.

Does not your heavenly home beckon you on? For yours it is, prepared for you, bought for you.

How real was Jesus, who rose from the dead, who ascended to His Father's house? You remember how frightened the disciples were when they first saw Him after the resurrection. They "supposed that they had seen a spirit." How did Jesus assure them that He was real? "Behold My hands and My feet, . . . handle Me, and see." . . . "Have ye here any meat?" He inquired. "And He took it and did eat before them." It was Jesus, real and recognizable. (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:24-29.)

"This same Jesus" will return for those who shall share heaven with Him. The heaven-life is as literal and real as that which Jesus lived with His disciples during those forty days before His ascension. We shall be as real on the resurrection day as Jesus was. For while "it doth not yet appear what we shall be: . . . we know that, when

VEN REAL?

to the "many mansions" in the "Father's house." 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; John 14:1-3. In other words, the redeemed go first to heaven, God's home.

At a later time, John the revelator tells us, God will transfer His throne from His present dwelling-place to this earth. "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth," declares God through Isaiah. In John's vision he saw the earth made new as the centre of God's government. "They shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God." "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face." Isa. 65:17; Rev. 21:3; Rev. 22:3, 4. The presence of the Father and the Son makes heaven infinitely desirable and undoubtedly real to those who have experienced divine power and divine love.

The Former Things Are Passed Away

The conditions under which this exalted companionship is enjoyed will be ideal; so different from present conditions as to seem almost too good to be true; so literal that to spiritualize them away is to wrest the obvious meaning of human language.

Isaiah's beautiful words describe the fertility of that land: "The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly,

By Victor H. Hall

He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2

God has not revealed the actual nature of the resurrected body. Paul says that just as a seed's rough and dead appearance gives no indication of the plant that will grow from it when it is buried, so our present bodies give us no idea of the nature of our resurrected bodies. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." Those who are living when Jesus comes will experience a sudden and complete physical change. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. . . . Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Cor. 15:35-38, 42-44, 51-55.

Immortal, happy, real, recognizable people, destined to inherit the earth made new. They owe it all to Jesus who with His own life bought them and their inheritance. "We . . . are free citizens of heaven, and we are waiting with longing expectation for the coming from heaven of a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who . . . will transform this body of our humiliation until it resembles the body of His glory." Phil. 3:20, 21 (Weymouth).

Antidote For Pessimism

(Continued from page 3.)

back the veil of future history. The symbolic scenes Daniel saw provide us with but one of the several inspired versions of the rise and fall of empires, of political and religious trends, to the very end of time.

Rise and Fall of Empires

The prophet saw symbolically portrayed, the four dominant empires from his day onward, the break-up of the fourth into ten divisions, with a simultaneous rise of religious tyranny, and the ultimate end of all things. His vision is described in Daniel chapter seven.

The first symbol was a lion with eagle's wings. (Verse 4.) King of beasts and king of birds combined, this was a fitting symbol of the great Chaldean empire under Nebuchadnezzar. Babylon actually used this very figure as a national symbol, just as the lion today stands for Britain, the eagle for Germany, and the bear for Russia. Babylon combined the power and dominion of

the lion, with the swiftness of the eagle. The world was at her feet. For a time none could stand against her.

But those eagle feathers were plucked and the lion-like heart was changed to that of man—symbol of decline and decay. The empire Nebuchadnezzar fondly hoped would dominate the world for all time, was to go. Historian Breasted says that: "Of all the glories which made it world-renowned in its time little now remains. The German excavations . . . revealed for the most part only broken fragments of dingy sunbaked brick."—*Ancient Times*, page 221.

Daniel's second prophetic beast was a bear with three ribs in its mouth. (Verse 5.) The bear is notably cunning, fierce, and rough. It was therefore an appropriate type of the Medo-Persian empire. The Persians lacked the grandeur, and polish of their predecessors, but their fierceness and their cunning were unequalled. On that historic night of Belshazzar's feast (Dan. 5), Babylon fell, and the king was slain. (Verse 31.) This happened in 538 B.C.

The "three ribs" in the bear's mouth are a fitting symbol of the three main victims of Persian ferocity—Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt.

But now a third beast emerges—a four-headed leopard with four wings. (Dan. 7:6.) Though equally cruel, the leopard, unlike lion and bear, is distinguished for its swiftness. This particular creature's natural swiftness was increased by its four wings. In Scripture the leopard is next in dignity to the lion.

How fitting a symbol of the Greek empire which finally overthrew the Persians at Arbela in 331 B.C. Led by Alexander the Great, the Greek armies with unbelievable swiftness raised their country to world leadership. With his own hands Alexander fired the stately palaces and temples of Persepolis, just as the Persians had once done to those of Athens and Miletus. Soon the whole civilized world from the Adriatic to the Indus was at the feet of this Macedonian youth.

But at thirty-three he died, and his empire was shared by four Macedonian generals, symbolized by the leopard's four heads.

Man's Last World Empire

Finally, a fourth beast "dreadful and terrible" emerged on the prophetic scene. (Dan. 7:7.) Himself providing the interpretation, the heavenly messenger told Daniel: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth." Verse 23.

History clearly answers this prophetic declaration with its record of the rise of the mighty Roman empire—an empire having wider dominion, being more exacting, and exercising more severity than any predecessor. The Greek power waned, and by the second century before Christ, Rome was undisputed mistress of the world.

This dominion, which lasted over 500 years, was broken by the barbarian invasions of the fourth and fifth centuries after Christ. With Rome's collapse, ten main nations dominated the political scene—symbolized by the ten horns on the head of this symbolic beast. (Verses 7, 24.) Essentially, these are none other than the nations of our day, and they are to continue until the end.

Is it not striking that, after Rome, not a fifth great empire, but world disunity should be envisioned by the prophet? Here was a completely new phase in human events, quite unlike all that had gone before, yet thus it was unerringly described.

Our Times and Beyond

Our own times then, are covered by the symbol of the ten horns. The world today is divided—yet, as thinking men declare in this atomic age, it must be "one world or none." Happily the prophecy leaves us not in the darkness of disunity and contention. Its next and final step is thus expressed: "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." Dan. 7:27.

Here then, is the antidote for pessimism. We know what lies ahead. The prophetic Word has thus far proved infallible. Its final scene will just as surely come to pass. Not an atomic nightmare, but world peace is ahead. Not a world torn with petty yet fierce national prejudices, or rent with opposing political ideologies, but a universal human brotherhood, is the prospect. Before us is not world unity enforced by pagan tyrants and maintained by terror, but a benevolent, eternal reign by God Himself whose authority will be

gladly recognized by all, whatever their present nationality.

As surely as Chaldea, Persia, Greece, and Rome held universal sway, as surely as disunity has prevailed since Rome, so surely will the world, one day soon, be populated by saints under the universal dominion of our great Creator Himself. Appropriately we repeat the prophet's own assurance: "The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." Dan. 2:45.

Men and women cherishing, and preparing for, such a prospect, will find no room for pessimism.

The Unpardonable Sin

(Continued from page 7.)

obtain repentance. And since he will never be able to obtain repentance, he will never be able to put himself in the place where he can obtain pardon. By persistently refusing to yield to the Holy Spirit, a man may put himself where he cannot meet the condition on which pardon can be granted.

The second text is Psalm 51:11. David had sinned in a despicable way. In fact, it was a double sin of murder and adultery. He feared that the Holy Spirit might be taken away from him. He knew that if the Holy Spirit had left him, he was lost for ever, no matter how much he prayed. So he pleaded with God, "Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." This indicates that the Holy Spirit can be taken away from people who persist in sin. If the Holy Spirit is taken away from a person, he is just as much lost at that moment as he will be at the day of judgment.

In Ephesians 4:30 is the third text. Paul admonishes the Ephesians, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." The attitude that we assume or maintain toward the Holy Spirit, seals our fate for eternity.

A man may be powerfully moved by the Holy Spirit to turn from his sin and become a Christian,

(Continued on page 13.)

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Know Your Bible

THE PLAN of SALVATION

From whom does salvation come?

"Salvation belongeth unto the Lord." Psa. 3:8. "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no saviour," Isa. 43:11.

Does the salvation of mankind necessitate a plan?

"For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth He devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him." 2 Sam. 14:14.

Who were associated in this plan?

"Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord: even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Zech. 6:12, 13.

This scripture tells of the counsel of peace made between the Father and the Son. It undoubtedly applies to Christ and reveals the great powers of the Godhead counselled together to work out the salvation of man.

What kind of temple would Christ build?

"Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house." 1 Peter 2:5. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" 1 Cor. 3:16. "Upon this rock I will build My church." Matt. 16:18.

Not a temple of material things, but of living souls, would Christ build.

What qualifies us as living stones?

"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." 1 Peter 2:7.



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"And I will build My church on this stone; that is, on the faith which thou professest. All God's church is built on this stone, that is, on Christ, for He is the foundation of all the fabric of His own church. All God's churches are accounted as one congregation, and that is constituted of chosen men, not of dead stones, and all the building of these living stones is founded on Christ, for we through that belief are accounted His limbs, and He is the Head of us all."—*Aelfric* (c. 1,000 A.D.)

Did Jesus recognize the part He would play?

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10.

"The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole Book clusters, is the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God. . . . The burden of every book and every passage of the Bible is the unfolding of this wondrous theme—man's uplifting—the power of God 'which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!' 1 Cor. 15:57."—*Education*, pages 125, 126.

How much was lost in the fall?

a. Man's integrity. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world." Rom. 5:12.

b. Man's dominion. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet." Psa. 8:6.

c. Man's union with nature. "For the creation fell into subjection to failure and unreality, . . . yet there was always the hope that at last the creation itself would also be set free from the thralldom of decay." Rom. 8:20, 21, Weymouth.

d. Man's life. "For the wages of sin is

death." Rom. 6:23. "And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James 1:15.

Did Jesus restore these lost things?

a. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17.

b. "And Thou, O tower of the flock, . . . unto Thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." Micah 4:8.

c. "Because the creation (lit.) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Rom. 8:21.

d. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23.

"The earth originally given to man as his kingdom, betrayed by him into the hands of Satan, and so long held by the mighty foe, has been brought back by the great plan of redemption. All that was lost by sin has been restored. . . . God's original purpose in the creation of the earth

By J. A. McMillan

is fulfilled as it is made the eternal abode of the redeemed. "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever."—*Great Controversy*, page 674.

What simple condition does God lay down?

"For by grace are ye saved through faith." Eph. 2:8.

What two great events are linked in the plan of salvation?

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28.

Here are disclosed the twin pillars on which the plan of salvation is built. The first advent of Christ provided an atoning sacrifice by which the guilt and power of sin are vanquished. The second advent of Christ will banish the very presence of sin from God's universe.

What solemn appeal does the Scripture make?

"For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. 2:2, 3.

The Unpardonable Sin

(Continued from page 11.)

but if he does not act on that conviction immediately, if he keeps putting it off, the impression may become weaker until the time comes when the Spirit of God will fail to convict him at all. He may reach the place where he cannot make a decision to obey God. The Holy Spirit leaves him. He has sinned the unpardonable sin. His sins are not so terrible that God cannot pardon, but by putting off his decision, by postponing, delaying, and holding back, he finally causes the Holy Spirit to leave him.

Can We Know?

Some will now be asking, "How can we tell when a person has committed the unpardonable sin?" The very fact of your worrying about it is a proof that the Holy Spirit is still pleading with you and drawing you to God.

If the Holy Spirit is still speaking to your heart, then it is time for you to come. If you are convicted of your sins, God has not given you up. If you have a sincere desire to do right and to serve God and be saved in His kingdom, there is hope for you. All will be saved who wish to be saved, who make the great decision and meet the conditions. Remember, the Lord Jesus Christ tasted death for every man, as we read in Hebrews 2:9. Yet many men will never benefit by Christ's death because they will not hear the voice of the Spirit convicting them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; desiring to comfort them, to bring them to the experience of the new birth, to dwell in them, to intercede for them, to give them power to witness, to guide them, and to seal them unto the day of redemption.

You would not even have a desire to obey God unless the Holy Spirit were working on your heart. Jesus said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father . . . draw him." No man will want to obey unless the Father is drawing him by His Holy Spirit. So if you have a desire to obey God, thank Him for it, and act on it. If you neglect to act on that desire, it may leave you entirely. If you keep on saying "No" to the Holy Spirit, you run the eternal risk of crossing the hidden boundary between God's mercy and His wrath—of committing the unpardonable sin.

There are many with whom the Holy Spirit has long been striving. Why not yield to Him today? Do not trifle any longer with God, but turn to Him now.

THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

The Disappointment

By Daisy Morrish

"PLEASE may we go up to the common to pick some blackberries this afternoon, Mummy? Peter and Ann are going. Do say that we may go too."

Robin and Jane waited eagerly for their mother's answer, and to their intense delight she was agreeable.

"But remember," she said, "you must be home by five o'clock—and Jane, you can wear your new wristlet watch, then there will be no excuse for your being late."

Robin and Jane each gave a whoop of joy and ran into the back kitchen to get a large basket in which to put the blackberries they hoped to gather. Mother had taught them never to pick any strange looking berries as

some were poisonous; but Robin and Jane were twelve years of age, so old enough to know the difference between the various berries.

"Now don't forget to be home by five o'clock," reminded Mother, as the twins set off with their young friends.

How they enjoyed the afternoon! But time went far, far too quickly, and it seemed such a pity to have to go home so early when they could have spent another happy hour on the common. But the baskets were now filled with delicious blackberries, and the hands on Jane's watch pointed to half-past four. Peter and Ann were preparing to leave, too.

"Oh, do let's stay a tiny bit

longer," urged Jane. "Let's stop and have another game of rounders. It won't matter if we are a little late."

"No! Our mummy said we were to be home by tea-time, and it will take us quite twenty minutes to walk home," replied Peter. "You remember what your mother said, Jane."

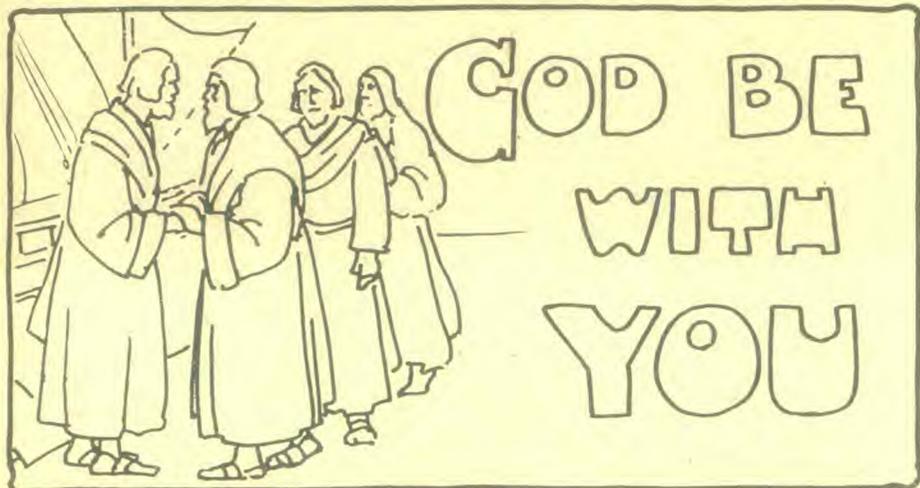
"Oh, be quiet!" butted in Robin. "We aren't in such a hurry if you are, so you and Ann can go on without us. We don't mind."

Robin and Jane were disobedient. They never thought of Mother who would be anxiously waiting at home. So they watched their two friends hurry off across the common toward the road, and then they had a game of catch ball.

It had gone five o'clock when they decided to wend their way slowly home. As they got near to the village, they saw some big boys having a game of cricket.

"Let's go and watch them for a little while," suggested Robin.

"Oh, yes," agreed Jane; and so two naughty children peered over the barred gate of the field, while the tiny watch ticked the minutes away, and soon it was beginning to get dusk. Then just as they were about to leave, a large and frisky dog came



See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to—Auntie Pam, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than April 15th. In case OUR TIMES arrives late, still send your entry. All attempts will be considered.

bounding up to the gate and knocked over the basket of blackberries! What a frightful mess he made! There was no time to pick them all up—not now! Besides many were squashed, and lots were mixed up with the dust of the lane.

It was about seven o'clock when they arrived home, very tired and very sad. They knew, deep down in their hearts, that they had done wrong. Mummy and Daddy would perhaps punish them for being so disobedient, and what would they say when they saw the nearly empty basket? Of course, there would be no blackberry tart for dinner tomorrow!

Mother was very hurt because they had disobeyed her; but she did not scold them, for she had disappointing news for them, which she thought would be sufficient punishment.

"At half-past five Uncle Brian called here with his car, and wanted to take you both to the Girl Guides' concert this evening," she said. "He had already bought the tickets, and thought it would be a lovely surprise for you."

"Oh!" gasped Jane, "and we would love to have gone to the concert. You know we would Mummy. But Uncle will come back for us, won't he?"

"No, I'm afraid not," said Mummy. "He waited a little while and then went to see if Peter and Ann were home. As they were, he took them instead."

Robin, who wasn't so grown-up as he pretended to be, burst into tears, while Jane was silent, her face downcast.

"I'm sorry," said Mother, "but you should have come home when I told you. When you are naughty you not only hurt me, but you grieve the Lord Jesus who loves you so well. And through your disobedience you missed this treat."

It was specially hard to go to bed knowing that Peter and

Ann were having a good time at the concert. Both Robin and Jane wished that they had been obedient. That night they prom-

ised that ever after they would do their best to be obedient, and to please the Lord Jesus by doing the things they should.

My Dear Sunbeams,

I REALLY thought our letter would be squeezed right off the paper this time. As it is, there is just room to welcome a very distant Sunbeam. Her name is Regina Fyle, and she attends the Freetown Secondary School.

Regina would like a pen-friend. She is a third-former and her address is: 42 Adelaide Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone, B. W. Africa.

Yours affectionately,
AUNTIE PAM.

BEWARE, MY BOY!

Beware of the wiles of the devil,
my boy,
And watch every day unto
prayer,
For Satan is seeking to keep you,
my boy,
From the joys of God's kingdom
so fair.

He tempts you to smoke, drink,
and gamble, my boy,
Nor count e'en a cent of the
cost;
He'll lead you to waste time in
dance halls, my boy,
Where many good souls have
been lost.

That's why he desires to ensnare
you, my boy,
And turn you away from the
light;
He strives to the utmost to harm
you, my boy,
With arrows that fly in the
night.

Yet none of his wiles will deceive
you, my boy,
If Jesus be ever your guide;
Your foes He will vanquish
completely, my boy,
And Jordan divide in His stride.

So follow Him through to the
kingdom, my boy,
And watch every day unto
prayer,
For Satan is seeking to stop you,
my boy,
From reaching God's city so
fair.

W. Dowson.

Results of Competition No. 1.

Prize-winners.—Dorothy Sage, 105 Cavendish Avenue, Old Heath, Colchester, Essex. Age 10; Anne Coupland, 131 Pretoria Road, Bordesley Green, Birmingham 9. Age 6.

Honourable Mention.—Alan Bowns (Stroud); Eleonara Baron (Accrington); Carole Williams (Hayes); Brenda Statham (Warwick); Rodney Exton (Liverpool); Yvonne Webber (Lymington); Georgina Phillips (Garston); Barbara Abbott (Brixton); David Wilkinson (Shiremoor); Delphine Proudley (Garston); Anthony Peart (Cheltenham); Jacqueline Glasby (Coventry); Diane Burrige (Acocks Green); Judith O'Kelly (Newport); Marilyn Foote (Bristol); Marion Paget (Wokingham); Peter Hayes (Burton).

Those who tried hard.—Dorothy Brown (Belfast); Margaret Millett (Aston); Helen Davidson (Liverpool); Lesley Hardy (Derby); Eileen Aguera (Ely); Michael Metcalfe (Colliers Wood); Madeline Langston (Glamorgan); Hazel Brown (Watford); Eileen Shaw (York); Elaine Wright (Ardwick); Derek McDonald (Norwich); John Gunthorpe (Northampton); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Christine Horne (Bristol); Jean Weatherstone (Raynes Park); Clive Eliassen (Glamorgan); Lesley Monk (Netherton); Michael Rosser (Cardiff); Colin Doggett (Norwich); Carol Jones (Erdington); Grace Billard (Shirley); Olive Swift (Lymington); Margaret Grainger (Smethwick); Irene Piper (Smethwick); Rachel Hayward (Pennington); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); David Hocking (Liskeard); Melvin Coleman (Coatbridge); Trevor Freeman (Blackwood); James McCrone (Stewarton); Jean Hocking (Liskeard); Angela Westacott (Swansea); Alison Hardy (Derby); Mervyn Dando (Cardiff); Jennifer Jane (Billericay); Robert Groombridge (Edmonton); Mervyn Brown (Watford); Graham Hardy (Derby); Susan Parker (Harrow); Miriam Harris (Chesterton); Siegfried Baron (Accrington); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Amy Randlesome (Suffolk); Sandra Braznell (Smethwick); Julia Storer (Macclesfield); Ethel Veness (Loughborough); David Hocking (Liskeard); Ann Ruffe (Aldershot); Anne Howard (Nottingham).

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STRAWS IN THE WIND

Says Billy Graham

⊕ "God is unchanging, holy, and pure and righteous, and He is a God of love. We lost contact with God because Adam and Eve sinned. When Adam sinned, the human race sinned with him. There is only one way back, and that is through Jesus Christ. On the cross, Jesus Christ took your judgment. He will give you joy and peace and happiness."

U.S. and the Vatican

⊕ The question of U.S. representation at the Vatican has again been raised by the Under-Secretary of State, Walter Bedell Smith, who recently stated that "from the point of view of diplomatic affairs and particularly in our global opposition to Communism, it would be worth while if we should re-establish some kind of formal relations with the Vatican."

Profound regret was at once expressed by the president of the American Council of Christian Churches, who asserted that the U.S. ambassadorship to the Italian Government was "adequate."

No Weapon Can Prosper

⊕ "The faith," asserts the Archbishop of York in a pastoral letter, "is built on a firm foundation; it can be stated and defended in the terms of reason. The assaults of atheist and hostile critic can be repelled when trouble has been taken to know the reasons for belief."

God Still Speaks

⊕ "Through the Bible," declares the Archbishop of York in a pastoral letter, "God still speaks to us as He did to our forefathers. It is a lantern given

WHEN

When we give to one another
Without a thought of loss;
When we show some wayward
brother

The pathway to the cross;
When the burdens of our neigh-
bours

We lend a hand to bear;
When we with our smiles and
labours

Smooth out a line of care;
When we preach God's Word to
sinners,

When we read and learn His
Word,

When we give the best that's
in us

In the service of the Lord;
When we've followed out His
precepts,

And His promises made
known,

We shall then have learned to
love Him,

And have made His will our
own.

—Rose Condlyffe.

to guide our feet, and we
stumble in the darkness when
its light is neglected."

Middle East Cauldron

⊕ "There are all sorts of strains
and tensions," comments the

Catholic Times, in the Middle East. "Both in Egypt and the Sudan an excessive nationalism has been fostered to the point of eruption. Thus the Canal area, with Syria, have the appearance of a boiling cauldron. The question is, Who is supplying the fuel to keep the pot boiling? There is grave danger in the Middle East."

Catholic Expansion at the Antipodes

⊕ The *Catholic Times* claims that the Catholic community in Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific islands, is "probably the largest Catholic community within the Commonwealth today, in proportion to the population. There are now 1,696,954 Catholics in this area."

Hydrogen Peroxide Submarine

⊕ In Britain's latest submarine, the *Explorer*, the oxygen needed for fuel combustion is supplied by hydrogen peroxide, which will make possible long cruises without surfacing. It is stated to be the world's fastest underwater craft, not even excepting America's atomic powered submarine.

UN Fights Disease

⊕ According to the 1953 report of the United Nations children's fund, more than 16,000,000 persons were given protection against malaria during the year, 9,000,000 children were vaccinated against tuberculosis, and 1,500,000 were treated for yaws.

