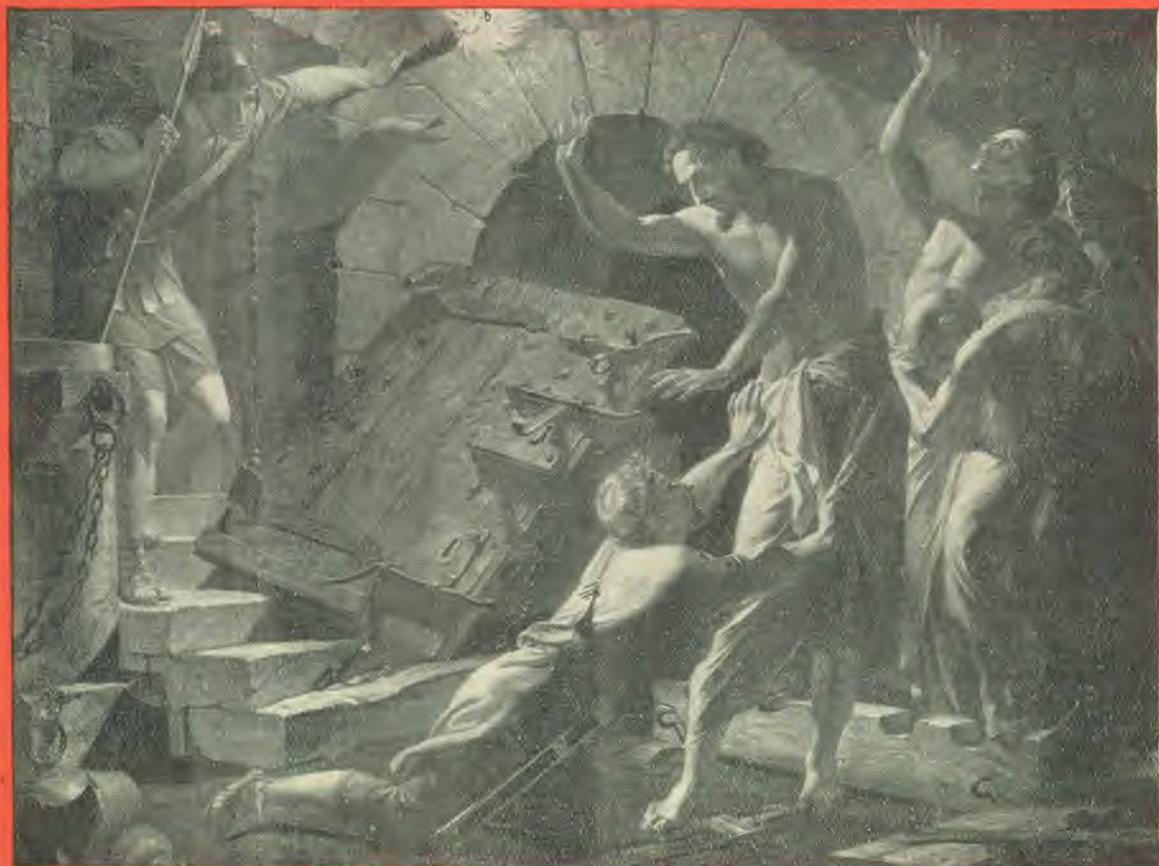


P PRESENT TRUTH



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What Does THE FUTURE HOLD?

BY THE EDITOR



THE beginning of a New Year is a common time for checking up on the past and evaluating future prospects. In all our minds, therefore, the question must arise, as we enter another year of tragic conflict, what does the future hold for us, for those nearest to us, and for the world?

A year ago the conflict was confined largely to Western Europe and North Africa. Since then it has engulfed the whole of Eastern Europe, and, within the past few weeks, the flames have spread to the Far East and the Pacific Ocean, and westwards to embrace the greater part of the American continent.

The war is now a world war in a sense that the conflict of 1914-18 never was. We are living in dark days. No wonder that, in anxiety and apprehension, the heart cries out, "What of the night?" "How long, how long?"

As in previous dark ages of earth's history, false prophets, professing to have guidance for our time, are innumerable. And the credulous and the unwary are all too often being led astray by their dangerous deceptions.

Among the most vocal of the self-styled prophets are the astrologers, who occupy with their vapourings precious space in our diminished newspapers and magazines. Many give not a second thought to their inanities, but the fact that their periodicals circulate so widely, and that the astrologers are allowed so much space in the popular press, is evidence that their predictions are read by

vast numbers in search of some ray of hope in a day of fearful crisis.

It further suggests that the attitude of mind of multitudes today is not very different from that of ancient peoples millenniums ago, who, having lost knowledge of the true God, vainly sought after the soothsayers, the diviners, and the astrologers for encouragement in days of overspreading catastrophe and disaster.

To the Babylonians, God exposed the hollowness of the pandering prophets. "Let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up," He declared, "and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee." Isa. 47:13. And pleading with the responsive in heart, God described Himself as He "that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; . . . that confirmeth the word of His servant, and performeth the counsel of His messengers." Isa. 44:25, 26.

No wonder, therefore, that the faithful in Israel sought guidance rather from the true God who knoweth the "end from the beginning" and who is only too ready to illumine the path of His children, that, their feet may not stumble as they tread the narrow way to the eternal kingdom.

Dr. Garbett, Bishop of Winchester, has rightly pointed out that the puerilities of modern astrology are not just "sheer nonsense" but as dangerous a delusion as their earlier counterpart

"which robbed men in the ancient world of initiative," in that they inculcate inert complacency in those who believe the stars benign, and inert fatalism in those against whom disaster is alleged.

"I can think of no better guise for a fifth columnist," he continues, "than that of the astrologer, who declares that the stars show the future must be victorious" without stressing the vital effort necessary for the triumph of righteousness and truth. And what he says about victory on a national and international scale, is equally applicable to the personal victory over sin and evil, for which the individual should be striving in his own life.

We may well pray, therefore, that many will, during coming days, turn from the delusive optimism of the modern "diviner" and listen to the Voice which, while uncompromisingly against sin, yet speaks comfort and courage to those who have "ears to hear" in our anxious day and generation.

It is significant that the war has led not only to a recrudescence of ancient astrology, but also of Spiritualism, that other age-old expedient of those whose ears have ceased to be in tune with the Infinite.

The Spiritualist medium professes to have contact with the wisdom of the invisible spirit-world and to be a purveyor of guidance for mortal man in the conduct of his personal life and the life of human society. How vain such allegations are becomes

BETHLEHEM

By J. LEWIS

apparent when we discover from the Bible that these professed spirit communications proceed not from loved ones "lost awhile," who in reality are sleeping the sleep of the dead, unconscious of anything that happens "under the sun," but from fallen spirits alienated from heaven and God, whose intent is to deceive and destroy.

How equally necessary, therefore, to those who are being lured away by the professed revelations of modern Spiritualism, is the counsel of God to His ancient people, "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, . . . I am the Lord your God." Lev. 19:31.

So at the beginning of this a New Year, as our hearts cry out for light and guidance in the deepening darkness of earth's night of sin, let us turn a deaf ear to the professed revelations of astrologer and necromancer and rather heed the still small Voice of God, as He whispers to the seeking soul, "If ye will inquire, inquire ye." Isa. 21:12.

If we will humbly listen to that Voice, it will bring to us an understanding of the meaning of life, deeper than all earthly wisdom, for, says the psalmist, "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple." Psa. 119:130.

If we will open our hearts and admit that life-giving Word, it will keep our feet in the way of life and truth. For again the psalmist testifies, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Psa. 119:11.

And if our eyes will follow the prophetic beam which it sheds upon the future right down to the end of time, it will prove a veritable "lamp" unto our feet, and a "light" unto our path, which will guide us along earth's devious ways, through every trial and tribulation, in sure and certain hope of the triumph of righteousness and the soon coming of God's kingdom of eternal life and peace.

ON lofty reconnaissance flights over lands at war the eyes of the airmen study the plans and preparations of the enemy. Students of prophecy ascend, as it were, to the balcony of heaven, to observe the activities of the world and the plans and purposes of God. The Bible forecasts the rise and fall of many nations, and does so to guide the steps of the Christian on his way to the eternal kingdom. That is why Peter wrote, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." 2 Peter 1:19.

At Christmas time little children as well as seasoned men of war turn their eyes toward Bethlehem. The children see in the hamlet of white-washed houses the birthplace of the Christ Child, the world's Saviour. The military strategist sees it as one village along the great corridor from Asia to Africa, a not impossible battle-ground in the present world struggle.

Three thousand years ago, Bethlehem was "only a little village of reputation small." A writer described it as "less than all the cities of Judah."

In the year 745 B.C., however, a prophet of Israel declared, "Out of thee shall He come . . . to be Ruler." Micah 5:2. Even farther back in the time of Moses it was said, half literally, half figur-

atively, "there shall come a star." Num. 24:17. From the same prophetic heights Isaiah saw a "rod come out of Jesse [Bethlehem]" who would "judge the poor," and "smite the earth with the rod of His mouth." Isa. 11:1-3. Bethlehem had come into the "news."

Centuries passed over the obscure little village, and life went on comparatively undisturbed, but at the appointed time a government decree brought Mary to Bethlehem, where, announced by a star, the infant Jesus was born.

When the wise men from the East asked in Jerusalem for the whereabouts of the newly-born Christ Child, the priests read from the seven-hundred-year-old scroll, the prophecy announcing His birth in Bethlehem. And there the wise men found Him.

Many more prophecies gleam like stars over our war-stricken world. A joy even greater than that brought to earth by the Child of David's city is soon to come to our troubled world, for the Lord Jesus, who came in response to the prophetic Word has promised before leaving the earth, "I will come again." John 14:1. And the angels at His ascension, encouraged the bereft disciples with the promise, "This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go." Acts 1:11. Paul likewise
(Continued on page 5.)

Photo by W.L.E. © S.P. Ltd.
Modern Bethlehem as seen from
the forecourt of the church of the
Nativity.

JANUARY 15, 1942



TO HEAVEN via HELL

Will sinners be given a second chance?

By LESLIE HARDINGE

IN our last article we tried to show from the Bible that death is a sleep, undisturbed until the resurrection morning. One who is dead knows nothing, does nothing, thinks nothing. Every part of his being ceases to function until called to life by Christ the Resurrection.

"Yes," you say, "but won't a merciful and kind God give any opportunity to amend wrong in the hereafter? I don't feel ready for the judgment. If I died now I'd want some time to get ready for it. Aren't there texts which show that people who have died live somewhere in the interval between their passing and the second advent. What about Moses?"

Why Moses Was Raised

Let us consider the life of this great leader.

The Bible says that "Moses . . . died . . . and He buried him." Deut. 34:5, 6. Then if the dead sleep undisturbed until the resurrection how was it that at the transfiguration "there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias?" Elijah never died. It is simple to see how he could appear with Christ. But Moses died and was buried.

A study of the epistle of Jude reveals that Moses' experience, like that of Elijah, was a special one. Jude tells us of a thrilling encounter between Michael or Christ and Satan about the body of Moses, which reveals that some time after Moses' death

Christ, by a special providence and for His own purpose, came down and resurrected the body of His servant, and took Him to heaven, later to appear with Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration with his Saviour. His was a unique case. Christ contended for his dead body and gained eternal life for His servant.

"Spirits in Prison"

"I agree that Jude does indicate that Moses' translation to heaven was a special case," you may protest, "but didn't Christ go and preach to conscious souls in hell during the Friday and Saturday that He was dead? Didn't He give them a second chance?"

The basis of this question is 1 Peter 3:19, 20. It is supposed that the term "spirits in prison" means "spirits in hell."

Now Isaiah did prophesy that the Holy Spirit would empower the Saviour to preach "liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." But Christ Himself declared that this prophecy was fulfilled in Nazareth. (Luke 4:17-21.) Christ was endowed with the Spirit to preach deliverance to those "in prison."

This "spirit of Christ" also empowered His prophets of old (1 Peter 1:10-12), and as they prophesied and preached, it was as if Christ's Spirit filled them. Their words were no more to be thought of as mere human statements. They were to be as the very words uttered by Christ

during His ministry on earth.

Noah was a prophet. The Spirit of Christ dwelt in Him. He preached that which Christ instructed him to preach for one hundred and twenty years. As a result of this preaching only eight souls were saved from the flood's destruction.

Those to whom Noah preached were "disobedient." Satan had them in his power, for they had been "taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim. 2:26; Psa. 142:7), and "were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. 2:15.

It is only Christ who can break the fetters which Satan has forged around his victims and loose them from the prison and bondage of sin. (Isa. 42:6-8.) Thus it could only be a repetition of the work which Christ did dur-



ing His lifetime, that Noah performed. The Spirit of Christ actuated him.

Let us then read the text again carefully. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sin [on the cross], the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also [the Spirit of Christ] He went and preached [through His representatives, 1 Peter 1:10-12] unto the spirits in prison [in the bondage of sin]; which sometime [during Noah's life] were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited [for 120 years, Gen. 6:3] in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein [in the ark] few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." 1 Peter 3:18-20. There is obviously here no reference to persons in any spirit world listening to Christ's preaching and being saved.

Did Jesus Preach to the Dead?

"But," you will again ask, "what did Peter mean in this statement found in 1 Peter 4:6?"

As in the latter part of the third chapter of this epistle so in the fourth, Peter is using as his illustration the antediluvian world, and in 1 Peter 4:6 he is going back to his point in 1 Peter 3:20. The apostle opens chapter four

with a summary of his previous argument. If we paraphrase it, it would read something like this: "Since Christ has paid for our sins, we should try to live His life. For, in times past we have lived like the Gentiles, but now men think our new way of life strange, 'speaking evil of you.' Don't worry, they will one day have to 'give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.'"

Peter then continues (in our paraphrase): "It was to illustrate the fact that God does judge both the good and the bad that the 'Gospel was preached also to them that are dead [the antediluvians], so that life and death should be open to them.'"

It would be pointless to preach to people who were dead (Eccles. 9:5-7), so Peter, who believed "Moses and the prophets," states that the Gospel (which was preached to Abraham and the Israelites as well (Gal. 3:8; Heb. 4:2), was preached to folk who are dead. Had he wished to indicate that the Gospel was preached to dead persons, he would have said that "The Gospel was preached also to them which were dead."

Thus, far from establishing the false doctrine that in death there is a more abundant life of the spirit and a second opportunity to amend wrong living, these verses of Scripture show clearly that unless we accept Christ before death, we will perish eternally. The word of Jesus is emphasized when He said, "Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matt. 10:28.

The devil's statement that "There is no death," is given the lie forever.

By F. Shields
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The fact that Moses appeared with Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration does not mean that everyone has a conscious existence after death. His was a special resurrection for a special purpose.

JANUARY 15, 1942

Any Questions?

- Have you enjoyed this instalment of our fine new series? If you have, write and tell Mr. Hardinge, c/o The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts. He will be happy to hear from you.
- And if you have any questions or would like more information on this or subsequent subjects dealt with, feel free to send your problems to him. He will reply PERSONALLY to your letters.
- Do not miss this wonderful opportunity!

Far from providing a second chance for sinners the Bible teaches that "the soul and body" will be *destroyed* in hell.

It is only in Christ that man can be freed from the prison-house in which sin has bound him in this life. It is only by believing the preaching of Christ's servants, filled with "the Spirit of Christ" that such freedom can be gained.

It was so in the days of Noah. The "few" who believed Noah, were actually believing "the Spirit of Christ." They were saved. Those who disbelieved Noah were actually disbelieving "the Spirit of Christ." These were lost. "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." 2 Chron. 20:20.

Bethlehem

(Continued from page 3.)

wrote to one of the churches he had raised up, saying, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven." 1 Thess. 4:16.

Every one of the hundreds of prophecies of Christ's first advent was literally fulfilled and we may be sure that the fulfilment of the one hundred or so prophecies of His return are equally certain and will not long be delayed. Soon we shall see the Prince of peace, the Ruler of Bethlehem, returning to earth, in glory, to make "wars to cease unto the ends of the earth."



THE NEW ORDER

By H. F. DeATH

WE hear much to-day of "the new order." To the German rulers it means one thing, while to the leaders of Britain it suggests something quite different. From the beginning "new orders" and their apostles have been legion. Mankind seems never to have been satisfied for long with any order it has created and is for ever seeking for something better. But always it has been vain, because of himself man cannot make good the harm that sin has done.

God's perfect order marred by sin

The Bible clearly teaches that when God created this earth He introduced an order that was perfect. Not until the father and mother of the human race disobeyed their Creator's express command, was that perfect order marred by imperfection. Since then a constant conflict has been going on between God's perfect and man's imperfect order. And when it has seemed that the divine order was in danger of being altogether banished from the earth by the perversity of sinful man, God, in His own way and time, initiated a call to mankind to return to His own perfect standard.

Such an appeal was issued before the great flood, when God chose Noah as His worthy representative and spokesman. For decades that stout champion of the divine order pleaded with his generation, until the overwhelming flood swept those incorrigible sinners into oblivion, leaving only Noah and his family to carry forward the work of witnessing for that order.

Nor was there anything vague and uncertain about the lofty order of which Noah was the divinely chosen ambassador. It was the noble order of faith in God and unswerving loyalty to His commandments. Against it were arrayed the forces of atheism and worldliness, led by the

builders of Babel. (See Genesis chapter 11.) Listen to the description of the boasted new order espoused by those degenerate builders: "Let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Gen. 11:4.

Those Babel builders were actuated by purely selfish class interests. Others could scatter themselves modestly over the unpeopled earth, according to God's plan, but they would constitute the ruling class, with palatial headquarters from which to direct their proud, tyrannical schemes to enslave their fellows. No wonder the Almighty stepped in, confounded their selfish plans, and scattered them abroad, before their mean and mischievous order had a chance to establish itself.

Nor did the Almighty leave the matter here. To carry forward the reforming work of Noah, He selected a worthy descendant of Shem, one of Noah's three sons even Abraham, the "father of the faithful," to represent the pilgrims of faith and loyalty to the divine order.

Christ the Great Restorer of God's Order

So down through the ages God's perfect order has never been without worthy champions to meet and oppose the selfish, sinful, soul-destroying orders of wicked, designing men. The Almighty's plans to revive and re-establish His perfect order in the world reached a glorious climax when He came to this earth in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, who was miraculously conceived by Mary His earthly mother. To Him was given the task of establishing, not a new order, but the old order which began in innocent Eden. In Him the work of Prophet, Priest, and King reached a glorious consummation. Well did Zacharias, on the occasion of the birth of his

son, John the Baptist, the rugged forerunner of the Messiah, express His mission to the world:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He swore to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." Luke 1:68-75.

Enemies, temporal and spiritual, still assail the divine order on every hand. From all these Christ came to deliver His loyal subjects. He is against all brutal aggression and tyranny, religious intolerance and persecution, against everything, in fact, that hinders the progress, mars the peace, and handicaps the spirit of the church universal. Hence He is the "rack" of salvation both here and hereafter.

The full and final triumph of the divine order cannot now be long delayed. Even though the world is in the throes of one of those great cataclysms which threaten to stamp out that order, from the welter of world conflict will emerge triumphant its true patriots and ambassadors, "a people prepared for the Lord."

Just as John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, His royal cousin according to the flesh, so the advent message is preparing those who will share in the full and final triumph of God's own order. Jesus, the "Captain of our salvation," shall return from heaven, whither He went after His resurrection from the grave, to claim His own and establish them universally and for ever in a new earth wherein He will have full and undisputed control.

May we be ready for that final and glorious issue.

Sunbeams' Corner

Hallo Sunbeams:

ONE morning, a week ago, the Editor told me he wanted to speak to me.

Wondering a little what I had—or had not—done I followed him into his "sanctum."

"Miss Watson," he said, "has accepted an appointment at University College Hospital (she's secretary to the Almoner by the way), and we would like you to take over the children's department—and be 'Uncle.' Will you?"

Well, what a surprise, but, as you can imagine, as soon as I found my voice I said, "Yes, of course I will," and then went back to my own office thinking what a responsibility it was suddenly to be presented with such a large family of nephews and nieces.

But, of course, we're not really strangers, are we? I know lots and lots of Sunbeams, and I've seen your photos in the album.

So be sure to write and tell me how you are getting along.

I know, too, that you want to wish Miss Watson "Good-bye" and best wishes for her new work, so include a greeting in your letters and competition entries, and I will pass them on to her.

Now Sunbeams, as this is the first number of 1942, we wish you a very happy New Year and, in spite of rationing, as the Scots say, "May the mouse ne'er cross your pantry wi' a teardrop in his een."

And remember that there is only one way to be really happy—and that is to make others happy.

Why not start with Mummy and Daddy because, after all, they are the ones who most deserve it.

Good-bye, Sunbeams,
UNCLE LOUIS.

Results of Painting Competition No. 23

Prisewinner.—Joyce Wilnot, 19 Edward Street, Lower Weston, Bath. Age 10

PRESENT TRUTH

Printed and published in Great Britain fortnightly on Thursday by

THE STANBOROUGH PRESS LTD.
WATFORD, HERTS.

EDITOR: W. L. EMMERSON

Six months3/- post free
Twelve months5/6 post free

Vol. 58. No. 1

Price 2d.

The Two B's

CAROL swung his bag of beans lightly in his hand as he started down the road. He waved to his twin sister who was sweeping the porch. Wouldn't Clair be surprised when the summer was over! He felt very gay, indeed, as he ran down the hill and crawled under the fence into a field covered with ground briers.

Carl laughed aloud as he opened his bag and knelt down. If he planted his beans here he was sure he would have nothing to do through the summer but watch them grow. So he made little holes between the briers and dropped a bean in each hole.

After that the long-summer days were hotter than usual. Each morning Carl wondered if his beans had sprouted, but he did not want to walk so far to find out. Plenty of time, he told himself, to look after them before they were ready to pick.

Then one day he noticed in the garden that his mother's beans had suddenly blossomed. His had been planted four days earlier. He longed to see all the blossoms that must be on his own plants by this time. So he hurried off to the field.

Here was surely the place. Carl dropped to his knees. At once he jumped up with a howl of pain. Briers had scratched his legs.

Surely there had not been so many here before. Yes, there was a bean, there another. He counted six. Yet Carl felt sick at heart. His beans were barely out of the ground, and yellow and wilted. Slowly Carl went to the house. He saw Clair in the garden.

"What are you doing there?" he asked.

"Mother said I might have this patch since you didn't take it for your beans. I'm going to plant flowers and take them to the school exhibition this autumn. Maybe I can win a prize with them."

"It's hard work to hoe on a hot day like this," Carl said as he went down the garden path to her.

His twin laughed at him. "You look more tired than I do, I'm sure. And I dare say you have not been doing any work at all."

Carl hung his head. Wasn't he tired almost every day? Yet he never had anything to show that he had done any work. Why, now he wouldn't even have any beans to surprise Clair with when the summer was over. For there would only be lots of briers where he had planted beans.

"They both begin with a 'B,'" he cried suddenly.

Clair looked at him in surprise.

"Beans and briers," he told her. "If you work you have beans. If you don't work you have only good-for-nothing briers." He grabbed the hoe out of his sister's hands. "You rest awhile," he told her. "I'm going to work too."

G. M. GEARHART.

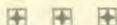
Hope there will be snow enough for a snowman—but anyway, paint the picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Uncle Louis, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., by February 3, 1942.





HOPE OF FEDERAL EUROPE

"I HOPE," declares the Archbishop of York in the *Fortnightly Review*, "that about five years after the cessation of hostilities a Congress of European nations will be assembled, with American and Chinese assessors, to work out by degrees the political problems of Europe, and . . . that it may itself, with needed modifications, become in effect and at last (perhaps fifty years later) by full right the federal Council of a united Europe."



LAST WAR'S TOLL

REFERRING to casualties in the war of 1914-18, Captain McEwen recently stated in the House of Commons, that the German dead totalled about 2,000,000 out of 13,000,000 troops; those of France, 2,000,000 out of 8,000,000; and those of the British Empire, 1,000,000 out of a total of something over 9,000,000 put into the field.



A SINCERE CHRISTIAN

A STRIKING testimony is borne by Alan Campbell Johnson, to the simple Christian faith of Viscount Halifax. High though his position has long been, he has always been an "enthusiastic practising Christian who, when he entered a church, put aside the trammels of earthly greatness, refused the special places reserved for him, and, as a fellow-worshipper, quietly joined himself with the rest of the congregation."

THREAT TO CHURCH

THE Catholic Hierarchy of America, in a recent statement,



A New Leaf

*She came to my desk with a quivering lip;
The lesson was done.
"Dear teacher, I want a new leaf," she said,
"I've spotted this one."
I took the old leaf so stained and blotted,
And gave her a new one all unspotted,
And into her sad eyes smiled:
"Do better now, my child."*

*I came to the throne with a quivering soul;
The old year was done.
"Dear Father, hast Thou a new leaf for me?
I've spoiled this one."
He took the old leaf so stained and blotted,
He gave me a new one all unspotted,
And into my sad heart smiled:
"Do better now, My child."
—Selected.*



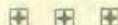
have asserted that "Christianity faces to-day its most serious threat since the church came out of the catacombs."



MORE COTTAGE MEETINGS

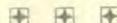
TWO more ministers, one the rector of Ordsall, and the other the vicar of the country parish of East Markham, are finding, ac-

ording to the *Church Times*, that informal gatherings for prayer and Bible study in private homes are one of the solutions to the decreased church attendance through war-work and other causes.



HEALTH AND SECURITY

"PROGRESS toward social security," asserts Sir Alexander Macgregor, Glasgow Medical Officer of Health, "is progress toward better health," whereas "unemployment is generally recognized to be a fertile source of subnormal . . . or bodily ill-health."



NOT ASHAMED OF LEAGUE

WHILE "some people are telling us that the lesson now is to forget the League and all it stood for, and go back to sheet power-politics, a strong Britain, a strong Empire, a sole regard to our own interests," says the Rev. Prof. D. M. Baillie, "we will not be ashamed of the League of Nations, however much it may need to be transformed."



THE HEAVENLY VISION

"IF we were given one glimpse of the reality of heaven," says Fr. Owen Dudley, "if for one moment the eternal vision and possession of God, the source of all life and happiness, were ours, we would suffer gladly a thousand bitter deaths for another such moment."

