

'Three Wishes'; Deborah's Legacy

By BRUCE STAPLETON
Last October, 11-year-old Deborah Leah Maxey's life came to a tragic end when she strangled on a piece of hard candy at Darby Junior High School. A quiet, reserved girl, one of Deborah's favorite pastimes was writing, and in this area she was perhaps more adept than many adults. During her 6th grade year at Pike Elementary School, teacher, Mrs. Goldeen gave the class 20 minutes to write three wishes. What Deborah wrote so impressed Mrs. Gooch that she read it at teaching conventions and meetings during the following summer. For in those three wishes Deborah expressed a depth of feeling and understanding far be-

persons a lifetime to realize. Bill Maxey, Deborah's grandfather, says it was almost as if she had a premonition of death. On a trip to Six Flags over Texas last summer she had shown a marked fear of riding on the various rides. In Sunday School class only three days before her death she had prayed that, if she died, God would save her soul. When tragedy struck, Mrs. Gooch felt that Deborah's wishes would serve to uplift her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gary Maxey, during their time of crisis. Mrs. Gooch called the theme "The most wonderful thing that could happen." The wishes were read at Deborah's funeral and

Harold Smith, Major John Roy Jones of the Salvation Army, and several others have preached on them in their sermons. Recently copies of her theme were printed by a local firm for circulation first to the Maxey family and now to the general public. Below are Deborah's three wishes:
"If I woke up one morning and a Jennie was standing beside my bed saying, 'You have three wishes,' what could I wish for? I wouldn't get up and say, 'I want a horse, a dog, and a cat.' I would wish for something wonderful that I could have the rest of my life. I would be hap-

piness, everlasting happiness. My second wish would be love. I want someone to love me and I want to love them. My third wish, the most important, would be when I die, I go live with God in His heaven. There I would be happy. I'd have love, no tears, no pains, no heartaches, only love and happiness in heaven.
"The most splendid and wonderful place in the world is heaven. It's God's home."