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13th June, 1961.

My dear friends,

We are reaching the period of the year when our organisations close down, and we all look forward to a break from the routine of our daily occupation. May I wish you all a very enjoyable holiday whenever and wherever it may be. I hope the weather will be kind to you.

As I think about the 'activities' of the parish during the next few weeks one question looms large in my mind: "What is the business of the Church?" The time is overdue for a reassertion of the business of the Church. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" said the youthful Jesus to His parents on one occasion. Is it not time that we too should say, "Wist ye not that the Church should be about the Father's business?"

The Church exists in this world to prepare and save souls for another world. That and nothing else is the business of the Church. This, of course, does not mean that the Church is not interested in economic and political and social problems but simply that her interest in economics and politics must be conditioned and determined by her primary business of saving souls.

Now it is a fact that there has been great confusion about the real business of the Church. This is proved by the statement that, first and last the real job of the Church is to save souls, which is a task and a process implying of existence of a world beyond the present. And that, of course, has been our trouble, and the deepest source of the Church's weakness in the modern world. Without quite realizing what was happening, many Christian folk believed that history is the unfolding of the Kingdom of God. It is one of the most fatal and deadly heresies in the whole history of the Church. There is a relationship between secular civilization in this world and the Kingdom of God, but that does not mean they are the same. Secular civilization in this world is one thing. The Kingdom of God, even in this world, is something wholly other, distinct and different and must never never be identified, however closely they may be related. Secular civilization looks to man as its creator, and to this world as the arena of its final achievement. It is fashioned by power. The Kingdom of God looks to God as its creator, and to the world-order transcending the present for its final realization. It is fashioned by love. The two fundamental irreducible forces in life are Power and Love — and these are opposites. Power is the characteristic of civilization; Love is the characteristic of the Kingdom of God. By identifying civilization and the Kingdom of God, Christians make economics and politics into primary interests. By the same error Christians make world government a primary interest, transcending in importance the welfare of individual personality, when in fact, world govern-

ment may very well mean the final destruction of personality.

It is souls that matter. It was for souls that our blessed Lord Jesus died — and rose again. He did not endure the bitter pains and griefs of Calvary for the purpose of building a secular paradise. He died so that individual men and women, like you and me in the power of His redemption, may through the discipline of earthly life, be restored at last into perfect relation with God, the Father. I cannot improve upon the language of one of our lovely hymns:

He died that we might be forgiven,

He died to make us good,

That we might go at last to Heaven,

Saved by His precious blood.

What then is the business of the Church? It is to save souls. It is to be primarily concerned with the individual person in his sin, his pain, his need. It is to proclaim to him the joyful news of the Gospel of Christ, that God loves you and me and every mortal son of Adam; the wonderful assurance that we are not masses but men, there are no masses in the sight of God but only in the cock-eyed vision of totalitarianism. In God's sight we are all persons. He loves each and every single one of us. That is the wonderful good news. Won't you accept it?

O dearly, dearly has he loved,

And we must love him too;

And trust in his redeeming blood,

And try his works to do.

God bless you all,

Your sincere friend,

W. HERBERT BULLOUGH.

MUSIC AND WORSHIP

We rejoice that on the 21st of May a new chapter began in the book called Music and Worship at St. Cuthbert's. We welcome our new Organist and Choirmaster, Mr. D. Tinsley. He comes to us with many years of experience behind him, and we look forward to the choral work of St. Cuthbert's being an inspiration behind all our worship. I appeal to all men who can sing to offer their gift of voice to God by joining the Church Choir. Not only men but boys and ladies also. We badly need another dozen boys and a good reserve of boys. Parents please encourage your sons to come and offer their service in the Church Choir. It is my hope that within the space of two years we may have one of the best choirs in this part of Lancashire — there is no reason why we should not.

Much thought has been given during recent years to the alleged failure of the Churches. It is said that the habit of attending places of worship is dying out among large sections of the people, and that institutional religion, as we know it, has had its day. Christian people are charged with a lack of courage in applying the principles which they profess to the practical affairs of everyday life. Our Church services are frowned upon as unreal and

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God's World

DO you want to be shocked? Startled? Deeply interested? Have your eyes opened? There is an easy way of having all four things happen. That is by reading an absolutely first-class booklet called, simply, *God's World*.¹ It is published by S.P.C.K. for the Church Assembly Overseas Council; its purpose is to bring us all up to date—and how many of us need it—on the missionary task of the Church in this day and age. And here, before going on to say a word about the contents of this book, we would like to pay a tribute to its staggeringly good production. Here is printing and propaganda in the name of the Church on a grand scale, not only as good as, but a great deal better than, much that is turned out by secular organizations. We salute it.

But what has this booklet, *God's World*, got to say to us? Only a few of the many fascinating facts presented can be mentioned here. Did you know that, for instance, there are now ten times as many living souls on earth to be won for Christ than there were on the Day of Pentecost, and that every year Christians are a smaller minority among this huge mass of the world's dramatically expanding population? Did you know

TOPIC FOR THE MONTH

that two-thirds of this enormous human race do not have enough to eat? That there are 770 people per square mile in Britain, three per square mile in Australia, 6,847 per square mile in Hong Kong, and that the largest nation in the world is China with 640,000,000 people? Did you know that, whereas in this country there are two cities with more than a million inhabitants, London and Birmingham; in Japan there are five, which between them contain over fifteen million souls? Did you know

that Los Angeles, California, has spread as a town so widely that if London were extended in the same way it would stretch from Leeds to Dieppe? These are some of the new urban conditions in which the Church has to teach man to love God and love his neighbour, often not realizing or knowing or caring who his neighbour is except that he is just another face among the mass.

Did you know

¹ From Mowbrays, or any bookseller, 2s. (post 4d.).

THE SIGN

Not ashamed to confess the
faith of Christ crucified

No. 679

VOL. 57

JULY 1961

- 2 S. Fifth after Trinity.
Visitation of B.V.M.
- 4 Tu. Translation of Martin, B., 473.
- 9 S. Sixth after Trinity.
- 15 S. Swithun, B., c. 862; translated 971.
- 16 S. Seventh after Trinity.
- 20 Th. Margaret, V.M.
- 22 S. St. Mary Magdalene.
- 23 S. Eighth after Trinity.
- 25 Tu. St. James, A.M.
- 26 W. Anne, Mother of B.V.M.
- 30 S. Ninth after Trinity.

Days of fasting, or abstinence:
Fridays, 7, 14, 21, 28; Monday, 24.

also that this frightening new world is in a state of terrific ferment, both political and religious? We may know about the political ferment, since we read every day of manifestations of it in countries the world over. What we don't hear so much about is the spiritual hunger of this world, and the mushroom growth within it of sects and crank religions of all kinds and in all places.

Do we care about this? We have to, if we are to be true to our Christian profession. God's world in this day and age is indeed a startling place. Without faith in the beholder it could be a frightening place. God's world is also a challenging place. And upon our ability to meet its challenge may well rest the shape of this world in time to come.

SIGNET

St. Mary Magdalene

Jesus said to her, 'Why are you weeping?'—ST. JOHN 20. 15

TO weep beside his tomb, before the dawn
She came, and found the joy of Easter morn.
'Mary!' to the Magdalene, he said,
And, looking up at him through tear-dimmed eyes,
She saw the Lord, whom she had mourned as dead,
And cried, 'Rabboni!' in her glad surprise.

She who watched by Christ's Cross until the end,
Who, through his touch, from devils was set free,
And offered precious ointments to her Friend,
To bathe his feet, in her humility,
Became the chosen one, as sweet reward,
To tell the glorious tidings of her Lord.

Lucy Bredin

My Neighbour as Myself

By Rosamund Essex



On the Guildford By-pass

Mirrorphoto

ONCE saw a child lying in the road, like a doll that someone has tossed down. Everyone waited in stunned silence for a doctor or an ambulance. In fact it was a priest who came before either. Everyone expected that he would take charge. They were not wrong. He did. Indeed, he had a very calming effect on the scene. By the time the ambulance came, the child was giving a weak smile. There they were: the priest sitting cross-legged, holding the child's hand as she lay. The other person who, perhaps, desperately needed the moral support of the priest, was the motor-cyclist who had caused the accident. But he had to wait till the child was served.

Christianity and road accidents! When I wrote about some aspects of this some time ago in this column, I had a card from an objector saying that Christianity had nothing to do with it. Christians crawling at eighteen miles an hour were just as much a menace on the roads as atheists riding at eighty miles an hour.

A Christian Duty

And, of course, the writer was perfectly right—though why atheists should have the unique experience of fast driving I have no idea. Yet my correspondent was wrong that it all has

nothing to do with Christianity. There is a Christian duty on the roads, as I see it, and now the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has said so openly. It has launched a 'Personal Responsibility' campaign which has the motto 'Be Alive to Others on the Road.'

One of the scripts put out in its name says: 'Christians must shoulder the burden of setting an example in the standard of road behaviour. After all, setting an example has always been one of the basic duties of the Christian.' So that's where the Christianity comes in. The duty can be incorporated, as I see it, in a present-day 'Duty towards my neighbour.'

The Society's campaign is a national one and it has a double emphasis. It tries to safeguard two special groups, the under-fives and the over-sixties. The effective training schemes for children, such as the National Cycling Proficiency Test and Safety Education in the schools, do not reach the under-fives. So it is necessary for mothers to teach the right road ideas to the very young, and, indeed, for all parents to set good examples themselves.

As for the over-sixties—well, some of them are spry enough. Others are getting a little deaf, a little rheumatic and slow, a little short-sighted: and

worst of all, a little indecisive when to go on and when to go back. It is just as much up to them to be careful on the roads as it is for the oncoming traffic. I am sure they need reminding of the rules, which were not so important in their young days.

So, with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents to back me up, I make no bones about returning to one of the most urgent subjects of our day, not now in purely general terms, but as a plea to observe the points that the Society makes. Christians, the Society's writers urge, must discourage speed boasters, pedestrians who dart across the road against the lights, and above all the 'near-accident story-tellers.' 'As I was coming here tonight, there was a chap driving a huge sports car who . . . and off they go. In the end, the 'other' driver always comes out with a driving character as black as midnight while the teller's action shines like the noonday.

The Annual Bill

The final point that the Society makes is the effect that road accidents have on those not immediately concerned. There are the relatives, the nurses and doctors who might otherwise be spending their valuable time fighting disease, and the taxpayer. Every accident affects everybody through the taxes. The annual bill for accidents is £200 million a year. It is a formidable figure.

What positive action can one take? The Society suggests that everyone should read the Highway Code again. It is a practical and highly instructive document. There is something in it for every member of the family, and it is well worth-while for all of them to take a refresher course by reading it again. Those who wish to give more active help, there is plenty to be done in training. The local Town Hall or Council office can give details of a number of schemes in which ordinary citizens can engage.

Foolish Risks

And, of course, before we leave the topic, there is also the question of drink. How many people do we all come across who 'are not the least affected by a couple of drinks'? Alcohol certainly gives a man confidence—confidence to take foolish risks. 'If you drink, don't drive; if you drive, don't drink.' It's a wonderful slogan.

'Be Alive to Others on the Road' is another motto worth remembering. Or you can just say 'Live and let live.'

A New Look at the Old Testament

By William Neil

7. HOW TO READ OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

If we have read through Genesis on the lines suggested last month we are left with a mental picture of man's plight and God's plan of rescue. Turning to the next book in the Old Testament, we should remember that, as we saw in our Lenten study, the Church has always looked back on the Exodus under Moses as the first moment when the pattern of how God proposes to rescue man from his plight became clear.

But when we talk of Old Testament history we are generally thinking more of the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, which profess to tell the story of how the people of God established themselves in Palestine after the Exodus, built up a kingdom under Saul and David and then proceeded to lose it, until at the end of the book of Kings nothing is left but the shattered walls of Jerusalem and a chain-gang wearily making its way across the desert to captivity in Babylon.

We might well ask: What can this have to say to us in 1961? Genesis, the Psalms, the Prophets, yes—but this detailed story of blood and fire, of battles and intrigues, of political upheavals and ultimate failure, all this is surely part of Jewish antiquity and

by no stretch of the imagination can it be said to be of any interest to twentieth-century Christians. But this is precisely what we must do—stretch our imaginations.

To begin with, let us remember that the Jews did not call these books 'historical.' They called them the Former Prophets. That helps us to remember that what we call history and what in the Bible appears to be history are not the same. We look in vain, for example, for any account of the notable battle of Karkar in 853 B.C., which is fully documented in Assyrian records and which must have levied such a toll on Israel as could not readily be forgotten. Yet it is not mentioned. Nor is the reign of Omri, father of Ahab, given the courtesy of more than six verses (1 Kings 16. 23–28), although this remarkable warrior king made such an impression on the redoubtable Assyrians that they were calling Israel the Land of Omri a century and a half after his day.

On the other hand, Omri's far less notable son, Ahab, is allotted six chapters in the book of Kings (1 Kings 17–22) and of these six, one chapter is solely devoted to the story of the king's encounter with a quite unimportant peasant, Naboth, who owned a vine-

yard adjacent to the king's palace. The Bible is, however, intensely interested in this vineyard and quite oblivious of the battle of Karkar. The answer is, of course, quite clear. The battle of Karkar, however important it was in the field of world politics, raised no social or moral issues, whereas Naboth's vineyard raised the issue of whether kings had the right to expropriate their subjects for the gratification of some whim, and whether Jezebel was to be successful in ousting Yahweh from his place as the God of Israel.

This illustration ought to help us to keep our perspective right and to understand why the Hebrews did not call these 'historical' books historical.

The Former Prophets

These historical books, as we call them, or the Former Prophets, as the Hebrews called them, are far more theological than historical. For the writers were men who had lived under the great prophets or who came after them. They had made their own insights of Amos, Hosea and Isaiah, and they knew that God's people Israel were like no other people.

Thus the book of Joshua is not so much the historical record of a whirlwind conquest of Canaan as an idealized account of a process that took far longer than Joshua's lifetime to accomplish. The book of Judges gives a more factual record of the slow process of assimilation, inter-marriage and treaty, by which the Israelites achieved predominance in their promised land. But even here the Bible is more concerned to see the meaning behind the events (Judges 2. 11–23). The books of Samuel and Kings provide a prophetic commentary on the failure of Israel to measure up to its vocation. Almost from the first steps to found a kingdom its doom is foretold (1 Samuel 8. 4–22).

All this is not mere history but the playing out on a tiny stage of the elemental issues that affect every civilization—the inevitability of downfall given the normal human failings of pride, greed and vanity. The 'historical' account of Israel's rise and fall is thus intended in the minds of the biblical writers to be an object lesson in how not to confuse the human values of political and economic power with the service of God. Israel had to learn this lesson the hard way and by 'stretching our imagination' we are meant to profit by her mistakes (1 Corinthians 10. 11).



Naboth had a vineyard hard by the palace of Ahab.—1 KINGS 21. 1

BEN-HUR

A Tale of the Christ, retold by John Lastingham*Ben-Hur in Ilderim's tent*

PART 7. MESSALA'S LETTER

SHEIK ILDERIM lost no time in welcoming Ben-Hur to the full hospitality of his encampment in the Orchard of Palms. Ben-Hur told the Sheik frankly that he was not a Roman but a Jew and, moreover, a Jew with a vengeance against Rome, at which information the eyes of the old Arab gleamed with satisfaction. And with that Ben-Hur came to the point of the whole matter which he had in his mind. It was that he should have the privilege of driving the horses which the Sheik owned in the chariot race which was shortly to take place in the great Circus at Antioch.

With that, Ilderim clapped his hands and, to the servant that appeared, he gave the order that the curtain at the rear of the tent should be drawn back. When that was done, four magnificent horses were revealed to Ben-Hur's admiring gaze. At the Sheik's command they advanced into the tent. They were exquisite, with large eyes, deer-soft, and small ears sharpened and sloped well forward.

Stroking the noses of the proud animals, Ben-Hur considered. The best thing, he said, would be for the Sheik to allow him to run a trial race with the horses to see what he could do.

Ilderim had listened closely, combing his beard. Then he said briefly: "Thou shalt have the horses in the morning."

At that moment there was a stir at the rear entrance to the tent, and the servant entered to announce that supper was ready, and that Ilderim's

guest, the old man Balthasar, would join them at the meal.

The evening which followed in Ilderim's tent proved to be a turning point in the fortunes of Ben-Hur, for during the course of it he heard from Balthasar a tale which moved him deeply. Balthasar, old and wrinkled, Ben-Hur recognized as the man whose life he had protected at the fountain from the onrush of Messala's chariot, and Balthasar in his turn recognized Ben-Hur. Thus, when they had become known to each other and, under the hospitality of the good Sheik, the meal had been taken, Balthasar at Ilderim's prompting told the story of how, twenty-seven years before, he had felt moved by an inner voice to follow the guiding of the star, to meet with two other companions in the desert, Gaspar and Melchior, who had been similarly prompted, and to seek out the child who would be born to be King of the Jews.

Ben-Hur asked Balthasar what he had done since the distant time when he, together with his companions, had found the child in the stable at Bethlehem and had knelt down and worshipped him. In reply, Balthasar said that he had lost trace of the wondrous child from that time forth; but that he was still seeking him, and seeking him with hope. For, said Balthasar, he must now be twenty-seven years old, at the time of life when a man is ready and equipped to do what he has to do. And since, by ancient prophecy, what this new king would do would be to

bring in his kingdom, then it seemed to Balthasar that he would begin that mighty work in Jerusalem itself. Therefore he intended to seek him there. But it was when Ben-Hur pressed him as to the nature of this kingdom that the disappointment arose. "The work of redemption which he will do," said Balthasar, "cannot be a political purpose. He comes not to pull down rulers and powers. He comes to be a saviour of souls, and the redemption means God wants more on earth, and righteousness, that his stay here may be tolerable to himself." The old man's face lit up with a holy joy as he said these words. But they were a keen disappointment to Ben-Hur. And when the meal was over and the gathering had broken up, he went out alone to walk under the stars and to ponder these matters in his heart.

While he was thus walking alone, a hand was laid upon his shoulder. He turned, and saw that it was Sheik Ilderim. "A word, and then I must return, for the night is going," said the Sheik. "As to the things you have heard but now," he said, "believe it all except that related to the kind of kingdom which the king will set up when he comes. The Egyptian speaks of his dreams; but there is a merchant in Antioch called Simonides who is wiser. He will tell you—and he is wise in the sayings of your prophets—that the child will be King of the Jews, in fact, a king as Herod was, only better and far more magnificent. And then we will taste the sweetness of vengeance! Peace be to you!"

And with that he retired to his tent.

Meanwhile, in the hall of the palace at Antioch, Messala himself rose early. The first thing he did was to write a long despatch to his friend Valerius Gratus, Procurator of Judea. The despatch was consigned to the hands of two couriers whom he summoned, thus ensuring that at least one of the messages would reach its destination, for the content of the message was of the highest importance. He repeated to Gratus the rumour which he had heard. And with the narrative there went also a warning to his friend. The warning was that if, as he thus had reason to believe, Ben-Hur was alive and now wealthy and powerful, that his first act would be to seek vengeance upon those who had wronged him. It was therefore urgent, Messala wrote, that events should be put in train at once to halt the career, if necessary by violence, of Ben-Hur.

The trial of the horses by Ben-Hur took place upon the very morning upon which Messala sent his message. It was a brilliant success. Ben-Hur had returned to bath himself after his exertions, when Malluch, the servant of

Simonides, arrived at the Orchard of Palms, seeking the Sheik. He brought with him two messages. They were both from Simonides, the merchant in Antioch.

The first commended Ben-Hur to the Sheik, and asked for Ilderim's protection for him. The second, written subsequently and clearly in great haste, warned Ilderim that information had reached Simonides of a dangerous plot on the part of their common enemy, the Romans. This being so, the letter urged, Sheik Ilderim should see to it that any messengers taking the road south from Antioch should be intercepted by Ilderim's men who patrolled the roads, and copies of any documents which they carried taken and shown to the Sheik.

The next day at the third hour the consequences of the orders which Ilderim had immediately given on receipt of the warning of Simonides became apparent. One of his own tribe rode to the door of his tent, dismounted, and handed him a package. The superscription of the package read: 'To Valerius Gratus of Caesarea.' Quivering with excitement, Ilderim opened the document, and then muttered to himself angrily to find that it was written in Latin, a language which he could not read. He bethought himself of Ben-Hur, and courteously sent for him. When he arrived, he placed the letter in his hands and asked that he read it.

The effect of the missive upon Ben-Hur was dramatic. It warned him that his enemies were active in seeking his downfall. There was also in Messala's message a reference to Sheik Ilderim as a traitor, together with the suggestion that, when the time was ripe, he should be taken as a prisoner to Rome.

When Ben-Hur had translated this part of the letter the rage of the Sheik knew no bounds. Anger flashed from his fierce eyes, so that for a time there was no controlling the torrent of his words. When he had ceased his outburst Ben-Hur, who had regained his calm, asked him how he had come by the letter, but Ilderim, who did not wish at this stage to disclose his contact with Simonides, was evasive. Instead of giving direct answer, therefore, he posed another question to Ben-Hur, asking what he intended to do in the light of this information which had come into their hands. In reply, Ben-Hur made it plain that from then onwards his whole soul, his whole energies, would be devoted to seeking vengeance upon Messala and his friends and upon the whole Roman power which they represented.

Much moved, Sheik Ilderim put an arm upon the young man's shoulder, saying passionately: 'Take thou this from me as a promise; thou shalt have my hands and my goods, my men,

horses, camels, and the desert for preparation. I swear it!

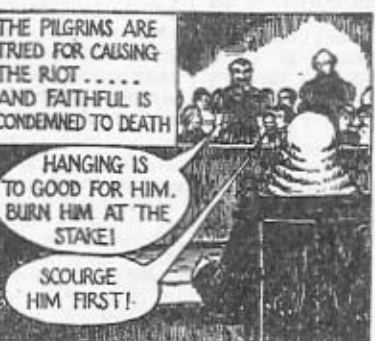
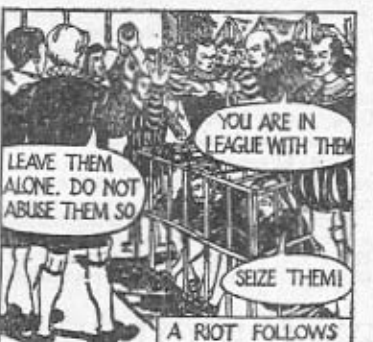
With that he turned and hurried off to seek Simonides in the city.

To be continued

This story is from the book by General Lew Wallace, on which Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer have based their motion picture William Wyler's presentation of Ben-Hur. Photographs © by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc., 1961.

The Pilgrim's Progress

Faithful's Death



QUESTION PAGE

4159. In Psalm 118, 22 we read: 'The same stone which the builders refused, is become the head-stone in the corner.' What building is referred to, and what is a chief corner-stone?

The Old Testament has many references to sacred or mystical stones, such as the Stone of Jacob at Bethel, and the stone 'cut out without hands' of Daniel, which St. Luke evidently has in mind (20. 18) when he quotes St. Mark 12. 10. It has been suggested that the chief corner-stone was the highest pinnacle of the tower over the eastern gateway of the Temple, which was the first to catch the light of the rising sun as it appeared over the Mount of Olives, and thus announced to Jerusalem the moment when the morning prayer was said by every pious Jew. Another tradition identifies the rejected stone of Psalm 118 with the foundation stone of Isaiah 28. 16. We must not expect scientific precision of the Western kind from these allusions; they must be accepted and enjoyed

as the idiom of men who described holy things in terms of things which were familiar; seed, salt, fire, mountains, vineyards, stones, and so forth.

Question of the Month

4158. Why (in St. Mark 4. 12) did our Lord say 'that seeing they may see, and not perceive... lest at any time they should be converted,' as if he did not wish 'them that are without' to be converted?

This is one of the most difficult sayings in the Gospels. It is made even more obscure in the Authorized Version by the word 'these,' which does not appear in the Greek. The New English Bible reads 'To those who are outside everything comes by way of parables.' We may perhaps regard this as describing the spiritual and mental condition of such persons, and not the intention of Jesus in speaking in parables. There are some who never see the inwardness of anything; everything comes to them in riddles; they are blind to the great vision of God; they are deaf to his Gospel; they have

what we call an inhibition, an unconscious dread of the truth. As the Old English proverb puts it: 'None so deaf as those who won't hear.' The position may be summarized thus: (1) The knowledge of the kingdom of God comes by way of insight and vision; (2) it is naturally expressed in 'parables' or figures of speech; (3) those who have not attained it can make nothing of the imaginative forms in which it is talked about by those who have attained it; (4) there is no alternative but to use those forms, and explanations can help only to a limited extent.

4160. In St. James 5. 4 there is a reference to the 'Lord of Sabaoth.' What is the meaning of this phrase?

'Sabaoth' is a Hebrew word meaning armies or hosts. The divine title 'Lord of Hosts' (or 'Lord of Sabaoth') occurs no less than 282 times in the Old Testament.

In the early history of the Hebrews it expressed the belief that it was God who led their armies against their enemies, but in later times the reference was to God's dominion over angels and other celestial beings, and therefore over the destinies of man.

4161. Would you kindly explain the words 'And there is no health in us' in the General Confession?

The word 'health' comes from the Old English word 'hale' or 'whole,' and implies robustness or vigorousness. The thought is that because we have strayed from God's ways and followed our own devices and desires, offending against God's laws, we have become spiritually sick. Were we spiritually strong we would do good and refrain from evil, whereas in fact, as even St. Paul had to confess, 'the evil that I would not, that I do.'

Questions on the faith and practice of the Church should be sent to Question Page, THE STON, 28 Margaret Street, London, W.1, with a stamped addressed envelope for reply. Each will be answered by post individually; some will be printed on this page. A book token for 5s. will be awarded to the sender of each question published.

HOUSEWIVES' CHOICE

By Elizabeth Gundry

ORDINARY raincoats need re-proofing when they are dry-cleaned—an expensive business. So last summer SHOPPER'S GUIDE tested a number of those pretty little poplin showercoats which had suddenly become a fashionable alternative. Made in light colours, they were being widely advertised as washable, and sounded the ideal solution to the problems of our variable climate.

Alas, few were really showerproof, or really washable either, and one leading maker admitted that these coats were still in the experimental stage. How can the shopper tell whether this year's coats are any better?

It seems as if silicone proofing is better (and dearer) than other chemicals—for one thing, it also repels creases and dirt to some extent. SHOPPER'S GUIDE found most showercoats creased very badly, and looked far from immaculate after washing. Skilful ironing is usually needed (in spite of drip-dry claims), especially with lined coats—yet to be really rain-resistant a coat should have a proofed lining, either on the shoulders or, better still, throughout.

It is vital that the fabric should be close-woven to keep the rain out—even good proofing can diminish after a few washes, especially if rinsing is not very thorough, and a high price is little guide to the quality of the proofing: a £5 coat did better than an 8-guinea one in the SHOPPER'S GUIDE tests!

Better than elbow grease

Plastic seals are intended to give a more-or-less permanent finish to wood or other floors, to save weekly re-polishing. Any porous material, such as lino or cork, can take a seal of this kind—provided old wax and dirt are removed first, or else covered with a 'seal barrier.' Removing old wax is a job for an electric sander, which can be hired (a noisy, dusty job)—or else for hard rubbing with steel wool and white spirit. Plastic seals can be used on whitewood furniture, too.

SHOPPER'S GUIDE has compared all the brands at present on sale. There are three main types, of which the one based on urea-formaldehyde is best because it dries in two hours, does not discolour the wood, and resists wear and stains well. Prices vary, according

to brand, from 52s. to 61s. a gallon—enough for most 15 ft. by 18 ft. floors.

Softly, softly

Noise abatement is much in the news—and one big contribution to it can be quiet dustbins.

If you do not want to buy one of the new plastic ones (their drawback is that hot cinders may harm them), an old metal dustbin may possibly be fitted with a rubber lid and plinth to deaden sound. These are available to fit bins of British Standard size.

A dustbin made to British Standard requirements is exceptionally strong and well designed. Made of thick steel with a really rust-resistant galvanized coating, a British Standards bin has smooth, close seams and no dirt-collecting cracks. The base has to be reinforced, the lid close-fitting, handles strongly attached. Because the sides are tapered and the bottom concave, the contents empty out easily. Such dustbins naturally cost more (with rubber base and lid, over £3), but they outlast several cheap and flimsy ones. So look for the British Standards Kitemark when you buy.

A list of products made to British Standards, and one about SHOPPER'S GUIDE, can be had free from the Consumer Advisory Council, Orchard House, London, W.1.

HOME AND GARDEN

1. FRUIT CREAMS

By Hazel Macleod

FRUIT creams can be made with fruit in season or using a small tin of inexpensive fruit. I used tinned mandarin oranges for this version: 1 small tin evaporated milk ($\frac{1}{4}$ pt.), 1 orange jelly, $\frac{1}{2}$ pt. custard, 1 small tin mandarin oranges.

1. Make $\frac{1}{2}$ pt. custard with eggs or custard powder (about the consistency of sauce—it must not set like a blancmange). If you beat it occasionally while it is cooling it will not form a skin.

2. Dissolve the jelly in $\frac{1}{4}$ pt. of water or fruit syrup from the tinned fruit. Leave to cool until it is syrupy but not set.

3. Whisk the evaporated milk until thick.

4. Add the cooled jelly to the evaporated milk and continue whisking.

5. Add the cold custard and whisk until the mixture begins to set. Quickly fold in the drained fruit and pour into a glass dish or into individual glasses. When thoroughly set decorate with cream or some of the fruit.

For a really quick version of this recipe make up the jelly with $\frac{1}{2}$ pt. of water and while it is still hot mix in a family-sized brick of ice cream. (Allow it to stand at room temperature to soften slightly.) The fruit can be folded in as the mixture thickens. The

resulting sweet bears no relation to ice cream, but children like the sweet flavour and creamy consistency.



2. MY GARDEN IN JULY

By Dr. W. E. Shewell-Cooper

THE wallflowers and forget-me-nots, which were sown in special beds in May, should now be big enough to be transplanted into rows six inches apart, allowing four inches apart between the seedlings. If any of the wallflowers appear to be lanky, the growing points may be pinched out to make them bushy. If aphids are seen on the roses the bushes should be sprayed thoroughly with liquid derris I.T.P. A thorough soaking must be given and a second application made five days later. Where there is black spot present on the leaves, Captan should be applied and the soil should be mulched with sedge peat, one inch deep. The moment the delphiniums have

finished flowering, cut the plants down to within eight inches of soil level, and put the tops on the compost heap. Apply a fish manure to the soil at 3 oz. to the square yard, and then hoe among the plants lightly. Split and replant the polyanthus and pyrethrums. If the weather is dry afterwards, be sure to keep the ground watered. Layer the border carnations as they become ready; consult the *A.B.C. of Carnations* which gives good drawings. Plant out the bulbs of the Autumn Crocuses, which are so beautiful in August and October.

Keep the bedding violets cut back as the flowers pass over to prevent them producing seed pods. If the Flag Irises are showing leaf spot, spray with Captan, and a month later cut back the leaves by half. Give the sweet peas a feed with fish manure, containing 10 per cent potash, at 3 oz. to the yard run, and if the weather is dry water this in well. Start propagating the healthy strawberries by runners. Peg down the young plants with wire pegs shaped like hairpins. It helps if plenty of sedge peat is applied to the garden first.

Most pears need thinning early in July, with the idea of spacing the little fruits out at about five inches apart. Don't, however, thin a variety like Conference. Blackberries usually flower late, and the canes should be sprayed in July with liquid derris to kill the beetles which cause the maggoty fruits. Be sure to control all slugs and snails this month. A free leaflet is available to SIGN readers who enclose a stamped addressed envelope for a reply.

Richard Tatlock's Puzzles

13. CATHERINE WHEEL

(open to all)

From the letters in the pattern make words of three or more letters according to the following rules.

In any word you make:

1. The middle letter must be used, but only once.

2. Of the outer letters, a maximum of two may be used twice, at your discretion, but not necessarily.

3. The remaining outer letters may then only be used once each.

Example: SLEEPER is not possible. It does use P (necessary). It doubles S (allowed). The remaining letters come from the outer circle once each (necessary). But E is trebled (not allowed). On the other hand SLEEP is possible.

When you have made all the words

you can, turn to this month's puzzle epistle, *The Second Epistle of Peter*. Now make a list of all those words you have made which occur in the Epistle, giving the chapter and verse reference in each case. Discard the remaining words.

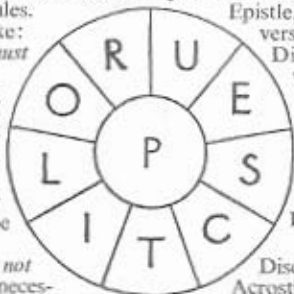
Two book tokens for 10s. 6d. will be awarded for the best answers. And credit will be given for long words.

14. ACROSTIC

(age limit 12)

Discover the word in this Acrostic:

My first is in Scone, but not in One
My second in Done, but not in Sun
My third is in Vile, but not in Style
My fourth is in Vein, but not in Rain
My fifth is in Hymn, but not in Slim
My sixth is in Fear, but not in Queer



My seventh in Snow, but not in Blow
My last is in Strong, but not in Wrong

When I was a boy I didn't like it when Sunday Evensong fell on the 15th of the month. Why? Because we sang Psalm 78, which has 73 verses! Today, it's one of my favourite psalms. It tells the story of Israel from the days of Jacob to the days of David.

Study Psalm 78, and make a list of all the verses in which the Acrostic word appears. Then tell me what the word means.

Three book tokens for 5s. will be awarded for the best answers.

Don't forget to add your name, age, and address.

Entries for both puzzles should be addressed to The Puzzle Editor, THE SIGN, 28 Margaret Street, London, W.1. The closing date is July 15th.

April winners:

No. 7. Sian Davies (Chipperfield), Jeannette Mercade (S.E.12).

No. 8. Eileen Kennett (Borden, Sittingbourne). Only one prizewinner for this puzzle.

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insincere, a mere mouthing of conventional phrases; and our creeds, our sermons and our hymns are almost regarded with indifference or contempt.

Now it must be admitted that so far as current hymnody is concerned there is justification for such criticism. Some of the hymns sung in our churches do not ring true. Read almost any standard collection right through from cover to cover; and honest analysis will discover an admixture of unhealthy sentiment and downright unreality. One of our most urgent needs in the religious life of our nation today is a thorough overhauling of our hymnals and the sacrifice of those hymns and hymn tunes that do not minister to true worship and to real spiritual experiences and needs.

But there is another aspect of the situation which demands our thought. It may be that the defection is not so much in the editors of our hymnals as in ourselves. We have in this busy age, largely lost the spirit of devotion; and it is hard for us to soar where the poet saints have soared. When we unite together in worship we should be seeking after something that transcends experience. Our worship-song should be expressive of sentiments and dispositions which we ought to possess. It should be shot through with imagination, and should uplift us to the heights where we may catch a vision of the immediately unattainable.

Has our church-going become a mere form, our ritual a mere pageant, our worship-song a mere emotional pleasure? Church music and congregational singing act as a powerful external stimuli upon our emotions; but if those emotions do not find an outlet in behaviour, a weakening of the moral nature inevitably follows. When a person goes to church and hears the nineteenth psalm beautifully sung, or the closing verses of the seventh chapter of Revelation beautifully read it increases "the intensity of his awareness both of the shortness and sadness of human life and of the external and overcoming peace of God." But the crucial question is, does this enhanced "awareness" make us better men? The value of religious emotion must be measured in terms of conduct. History bears abundant testimony to the fact that Christian hymnody has helped countless men and women to "fight the good fight" and to live in closer touch with God; but constant watchfulness is needed lest our acts of public worship fail to fulfil themselves in righteousness of life.

At every stage of its journey humanity marches to the sound of solemn music. It began when the foundations of the earth were laid and the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. And it will grow in volume and in sweetness until at last the voices of the angels shall blend with the voices of every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

W.H.B.

THE ROSE QUEEN AND FIELD DAY

We appeal to all our parishioners to help us raise a large sum of money on the 15th July. The general account of our Church is "in the red" and we are dependant on the success of our field day to pay our way. What a sad thing to have to say! Let us hope that this will be the last time we have to say it. Will you, one and all, do your little bit to help us? Gifts for the stall will be welcome and also gifts for the refreshments. If we all do our little bit the effort will be a success.

H.B.

THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE

The fact that the New English Bible has proved to be a best-seller has come as a surprise to many of us, and would seem to be an indication that the English Bible is indeed regarded by vast numbers of the people of Britain as part of our heritage. Many different reactions to the new translation have already been expressed — some favourable, some unfavourable; and some undecided.

I think we need to keep in mind the chief reason for the new translation. I take it to be the recognition of the need for a translation couched in 20th century English. Many of us who have been brought up with the Authorized Version of 1611 A.D. may have felt quite happy with that version. Words and phrases, and whole passages of that version have been impressed upon our minds and occupy an accepted and unquestioned place in our vocabulary and thinking. This, however, only applies to certain sections of the New Testament. A vast amount of the Epistles in the Authorized Version are difficult to understand, and are frequently unintelligible to anyone but a theologian. Even in well-known passages in the Gospels the precise meaning in all its fullness is not clear from the text. Of the many letters to the Press on this subject I offer the following quotation:

"The epistles, especially in their present translation (A.V.) are almost incomprehensible to those with no theological background. We know — from experience in the pew! For example, read the epistles for the fourth Sunday after Epiphany, and for the fifteenth after Trinity in the Prayer Book. Then look at their renderings in the new Bible, and the meaning is crystal clear instead of obscure and difficult. Do we want people to understand what the Bible is saying to them or not? If we really want to show people the relevance of the Bible and liturgy in their lives, as the seventeenth century divines tried so hard to do, we must not keep that Bible and liturgy wrapped up in an antiquated 'holy' language. We must present the challenge of that Bible in a language 'understood of the people.'"

This letter presents the crux of the matter. The old version is beautiful literature, and is a delight to read as literature, and will always remain so, but meaning is of even greater importance, and precise

meaning as far as possible. The new version will be welcomed by thousands of Christians who wish to gain a deeper, and clearer, understanding of the scriptures.

WHAT MATTERS MOST . . .

It is not the multiplication of our contacts with the things of God that matters most, but the singleness of our contact with Himself. Of what use is it to have many irons in the fire, if the fire is going out?

FIRST THINGS FIRST

In God's economy, emptying comes before filling, confession before forgiveness, and poverty before riches.

THE DEDICATED WEEK

Sunday

Give me an understanding mind,
A heart that is both strong and kind,
Ears deaf to rumour's lying word,
A tongue to speak for truth, O Lord,
Fingers ready to work for all
Be that work either great or small
And feet with eagerness to speed
To those in sorrow or in need
Above all eyes that always see
Goodness and beauty around me.

Monday

Christ in His mercy, tries to see
Some likeness of Himself in me;
So may I always strive to find
The good and evil, in mankind.

Tuesday

Dear Lord we ask of Thee
Vision and love to see
The Christ, Thy blessed Son,
In every suffering one.
Dear Lord, we ask of Thee.
Wisdom and grace to be
Helpful in word and deed
To all men in their need.

Wednesday

God, guard us as we sit at meat,
God, watch o'er us when we're asleep,
God help us this and every day
To live more nearly as we pray.

Thursday

So many tears have fallen upon earth,
So many clouds have darkened the bright sun,
So let us spread some comfort, love and mirth
To those around, until our race is run.

Friday

Oftentimes we would be good, but we fail
Oftentimes we would be brave, but we quail
Oftentimes we sin, but the Christ forgives
Oftentimes we wound His love, but He still loves.

Saturday

God guard you well along life's way
God hold you when you wish to stray
God give you comfort as He may
God bless you this, and every day.

—Helen Turner

THE MOTHERS' UNION

On Tuesday, 11th July our members are invited to attend a mass meeting to be held in The Cambridge Hall, Southport, at 7-30 p.m. The Speaker is Mrs. Vorah, of Southwark. Cars leave the Church at 6-50 p.m. Any needing transport please be at Church at 6-45 p.m.

SIDESMEN'S ROTA

- July 2—10-30 a.m. H. Prescott, H. Gaskell.
6-30 p.m. R. Lewis, R. Dutton.
" 9—10-30 a.m. E. Grimshaw, R. Brett.
6-30 p.m. C. Aindow, T. Forshaw.
" 16—10-30 a.m. E. Serjeant, H. Guy.
6-30 p.m. G. Porter, S. Parks.
" 23—10-30 a.m. W. Leadbetter, J. Balmer.
6-30 p.m. R. Gaskell, H. Baldwin.
" 30—10-30 a.m. W. Jenkinson, T. Sismey.
6-30 p.m. J. Cheetham, E. Battersby.

CHURCH FLOWERS ROTA

- July 2—Mrs. H. Gaskell.
" 9—Mrs. E. Grimshaw.
" 16—Mrs. Leatherbarrow.
" 23—Vacant.
" 30—Mrs. Kniveton.
August 6—Mrs. H. Grimshaw.
August 13—Mrs. Moorcroft and Mrs. Sephton.

SERVERS' ROTA

- July 2—8-00 a.m. John Davies.
11-30 a.m. Arthur Gilbert.
" 9—8-00 a.m. Peter Balmer.
10-30 a.m. Harold Grimshaw
John Gaskell.
" 16—8-00 a.m. Arthur Gilbert.
11-30 a.m. Anthony Grimshaw.
" 23—8-00 a.m. John Gaskell.
10-30 a.m. Harold Grimshaw.
John Davies.
" 30—8-00 a.m. Anthony Grimshaw.
11-30 a.m. Peter Balmer.
August 6—8-00 a.m. John Davies.
11-30 a.m. Arthur Gilbert.

HOLY BAPTISM

"Entered into the family of Christ's Church"

May 21—Susan Jane, daughter of Dennis and Betty Knowles, of 300, Wharf Road, Crowle, near Scunthorpe.

HOLY MATRIMONY

"Those whom God hath joined"

June 3—Derek Edward Perry, of Mount Vernon, Bull Cop, Formby, and Joyce Rimmer, of Joy Mount, Station Road, Barton.

BURIAL OF THE DEAD

"In sure and certain hope"

June 14—Margaret Cunningham, of Ollery Hall Farm, Halsall, aged 72 years.

NOTICE

There will be no Sung Eucharist at 10-30 a.m. on Sunday, 13th August. There will be a celebration of Holy Communion at 11-30 a.m. on that date.

H.B.

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