

DECEMBER 1959

# Galsall Parish Magazine



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## RECTOR'S LETTER

St. Matthew's Vicarage,  
Highfield,  
Wigan.

20th November, 1959.

My dear Friends,

This month there is a reprint of a very important article from the Church of England Newspaper which I trust you will all read and think deeply about.

I am encouraged by the obvious activity in various organisations and individuals all eagerly directed towards making the Bazaar a success. Every member of each parochial organisation is asked to make an effort to help at the Bazaar. Only by the loyal support of all our folk will success crown our efforts. I have no need to stress the urgent need to raise as much as we possibly can to wipe out our debts. We owe our Diocese £239 on our portion of Church Aid and this should be a priority, it is my hope that we shall soon pay off this debt and thus join those other parishes all fulfilling their obligations to the Diocese. We look forward to seeing you all along with your friends on Saturday, November 28th at 2-30 p.m. and we rejoice that Mrs. Battersby has kindly consented to open the Bazaar.

Under the heading of Parochial Comment I feel I must tell you how concerned I am about the Sunday School at Halsall. We are grateful to those few who are endeavouring to keep the Sunday School open. **What a tragedy when children come and sit for half an hour in a classroom with no teacher.** That is what is happening at the present time. This situation must be put right as soon as possible. I appeal most strongly and urgently to any person finding themselves able to volunteer for this vital service of teaching the future Church in the Sunday School. The qualifications are quite simple; all you need to have for this important job is a deep love of children and a willingness to sacrifice a little of your spare time to prepare your lesson and then come and take your class. There are no examinations to pass before you can teach. Will you please give this matter your immediate attention and speak to me about it if you feel you can undertake this vital service in your Church.

Again I am concerned at all the empty seats in the lovely chancel on Sundays. I do not believe that boys and men cannot be found to make our choir one of the best village choirs in Lancashire.

That should be our aim. We do not ask for men and boys with excellent voices. We ask for men and boys who like to sing and who are enthusiastic enough to want to make our acts of worship on Sunday so inspiring that they begin to draw the people of our village to them. There is much more parochial comment but it must wait for future issues.

I close my letter by turning your thoughts to the importance of right thinking about Christmas. No doubt you are already making your plans and arranging your parties. I do hope you will all have the opportunity to be together as a family this Christmas-time. I hope also for you that you will enjoy the fellowship of your friends. I hope most of all for you that you will find a place in all your arrangements for your worship of God. I appeal to you all to make a great effort to prepare yourself for your Christmas Communion. I ask you to have in your thoughts and prayers those who are less fortunate, particularly the sick, the aged, the homeless, and the refugee.

Finally, keep Christ in your Christmas. Choose good Christmas cards and remember we are celebrating one of the Church's greatest festivals — God's greatest gift to mankind — The Word made Flesh —

May God's Peace be with you all.

Your sincere friend,

HERBERT BULLOUGH.

## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday, December 20th

FAMILY SERVICE, 2-30 p.m.

At this service all children are invited to bring a toy (which they have finished with, in good condition). The gifts will be sent to the Church of England Children's Society Children's Homes. Parents please come to Church with your children.

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE  
OF NINE LESSONS, 6-30 p.m.

Friday, December 25th — Christmas Day

12 midnight Holy Communion (Shirdley Hill)  
7-0 a.m. Holy Communion  
8-0 a.m. Holy Communion  
9-0 a.m. Holy Communion (Barton)  
10-30 a.m. FAMILY SERVICE

## Sunday Services at St. Cuthbert's

### EVERY SUNDAY—

- 8-0 a.m. Holy Communion
- 10-30 a.m. Mattins and Sermon
- 11-30 a.m. Holy Communion
- 6-30 p.m. Evensong and Sermon

Joy is compounded of sorrows — so, away with

### SENTIMENTALITY

THE CURSE OF THE MODERN CHRISTMAS

(Condensed from *The Church of England Newspaper*)

The curse of religion is sentimentality. When religion is present in such a way as to cause a tickling sensation in the spine or a watering of the eyes without a challenge to the reason and a movement of the will to action, it should be avoided like the plague. It is for this reason that the popular presentation of the most staggering fact in human history is to be deplored. The story of Bethlehem can be so overlaid with the sickliness of bad art and music, to say nothing of a vague feeling of "goodwill," that the mystery and tragedy of the Incarnation are completely obscured. This is escapism in its most pernicious form.

As we should expect, the Biblical narrative is both mysterious and tragic. There is nothing "pretty" about a young girl's total offering of herself to God at the expense of the ridicule and gossip of her neighbours and the inevitable suspicion of her betrothed husband. Little imagination is required to feel the full impact of the words "there was no room for them in the inn." Human intelligence and ingenuity will never fathom the depths of the mystery contained in the sentence "God has visited and redeemed His people"; no human experience will ever explore the infinite tragedy concealed in the words "a sword shall pierce through thine own soul." Strange words indeed with which to congratulate a mother on the birth of her first-born son.

Unless we make room in our Christmas meditations for these elements of mystery and tragedy, we shall miss the essential Word which God has to say to us at this season. And if any should say that the predominant note of the Feast of the Nativity is Joy, let us remember that Joy is always compounded with Sorrow and that only those who are prepared to partake of the sufferings of the world are ever able to enter into the Joy of their Lord.

The *mystery* of the Incarnation is focused in the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. It is inevitable that this doctrine should have been attacked in a "scientific" age, but most of the arguments used on both sides have largely missed the point. If we use the miraculous birth of Jesus to prove His divinity, and then use His divinity to prove the Virgin Birth, we are arguing in a circle and no one will be convinced. In so far as human reason can grapple with this problem at all, it must begin by setting the Birth of Jesus in the massive context of God's purpose in creation and redemption. This is what the New Testament does.

The *historical* evidence for the Virgin Birth is indeed slight, as we should expect it to be. On the other hand, as an explanation of the known facts, it is more intellectually respectable than any alternative ever offered. Birth of the Virgin Mary places the world's Redeemer in the created universe. He is human flesh; a member of the human race; a descendant of Adam. In His coming as a man, God was not repudiating His creation. Human flesh was not, so to speak, so vile and corrupt as to be of no further use in the divine purpose. And yet, this same flesh had to be redeemed and given a fresh start. Although continuous with what had gone before, there had to be a break in the process of natural causation, in the frustrating circle of sin and its consequences.

The New Man, Christ Jesus, was in nature but not of it; "conceived of the Holy Ghost" witnesses to the direct intervention of God and the bursting of the shackles of sin and death. This then is the mystery of the Incarnation, that the corruptible has put on incorruption, the mortal has put on immortality.

The *tragedy* is its exposure of the depth of human sin. All the callousness, selfishness and pride of man is present at the Cradle as at the Cross. The age-long refusal to care for the weak and the poor has never been more dramatically presented than in the circumstances of Jesus' birth. Within a few months the Holy Family, like millions before and since, and not least in our own day, were refugees on the road fleeing from oppression. Man's cruelty and inhumanity have never been more clearly demonstrated than in the slaughter of innocent children by the tyrannical Herod. In a word, the tragedy of Christmas is that of scorned and unrequited love. For the vast majority of mankind, both then and now, the Babe of Bethlehem was an unwanted child.

The real joy of Christmas, as contrasted with the counterfeit jollity of the world, will come to those who allow these two facts to sink into their



## The Lamb from the Throne

**T**HE Lamb from the throne  
Of his Father came down;  
He was flesh of our flesh, he was bone  
of our bone.

The omnipotent Lord  
By all heaven adored,  
The invisible Godhead, appeared in  
the Word.

The shepherds behold  
Him promised of old,  
By angels attended, by prophets  
foretold.

The wise men adore  
And bring him their store;  
The rich are permitted to follow the  
poor.

Our newly-born King,  
Transported, we sing,  
And heaven and earth with the triumph doth ring.

*Charles Wesley*

*They saw it happen (23)*

## JOSEPH

*... Mary was espoused to Joseph.—ST. MATT. 1. 18*

**H**E was a carpenter, a craftsman,  
a man of his hands. He was  
also of very modest means, and  
when the child Jesus was born and  
presented in the Temple according to  
custom, the price of a pair of turtle  
doves, the offering of a poor man, was

all he could afford. Yet he was also of  
royal line, having in his veins the blood  
of the kings of Israel. The combina-  
tion may well seem strange, but to the  
world and nation and time of the  
husband of the mother of Jesus it was  
only a proud fact. Many were the

*Our poem is reproduced, by permission, from Wesley's Prayers and Praises, edited by J. Alan Kay*

## THE SIGN

*Not ashamed to confess Christ crucified*

No. 660

VOL. 55

DECEMBER 1959

- 4 F. Clement of Alexandria, D.,  
c. 210.
- 6 S. Second in Advent.  
Nicolas, B., 4th century.
- 8 Tu. Conception of the B.V.M.
- 13 S. Third in Advent.  
Lucy, V.M., 303.
- 16 W. O Sapiientia.
- 17 Th. Ignatius, B.M., c. 110.
- 20 S. Fourth in Advent.
- 21 M. St. Thomas, A.M.
- 25 F. Christmas Day.
- 26 S. St. Stephen, M.
- 27 S. St. John, A.E.  
First after Christmas.
- 28 M. Innocents' Day.
- 31 Th. Silvester, B., 335.

*Days of fasting, or abstinence:*

Ember Days, 16, 18, 19.

Thursday, 24; Fridays, 4, 11, 18.

descendants of David and Solomon in those times, and that they worked with their hands and lived humbly was considered in no way at variance with the high dignity of their antecedents. The pride of the class to which Joseph belonged was pride in the right things; not in earthly possessions nor social status, but in their race and history and in the God who, with the utmost constancy and piety, they worshipped.

So such men as Joseph were the background of the nation to which they belonged; grave in manner, high thinking and serious minded, steeped in the tradition and practice of the faith of their fathers. And such a man was Joseph himself, he to whom was granted the signal honour of guiding the Son of God from infancy to young manhood. And since any child is a living testimony, for good or ill, to the wisdom of his parents, what greater tribute to the character of Joseph could there be than two passages in St. Luke which speak of Jesus as a boy: 'And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him'; 'And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man'?

What a picture is there of the steady guidance and loving care, firm and beneficent, of a wise and good man guiding with reverent care the wondrous life which had been placed in his charge!



## A Just Man

The Bible speaks of Joseph as 'a just man.' Beyond that the Gospels are silent, and his grave figure does not thereafter enter directly into the narrative. Yet he was one to whom a messenger of God spoke wonderful words: 'The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.' And Joseph had the ingrained reverence to receive the message, nothing doubting that it was the truth, and to act upon it. Thereafter he is the loving husband and the wise parent. Joseph suffered during the night in the stable at the inn in Bethlehem, as well as the mother of the child who was born there; suffered the anxieties of a poor man who sees his wife in travail in a poor place, and has to do what he can as the tense hours pass. Joseph suffered on the flight into Egypt, the man in charge of a little party, so fragile and so precious, as he strode along guiding the ass by its bridle and stoutly keeping his courage up when the night came down and they had to sleep under the stars. Joseph suffered when the boy Jesus

was found to be missing from the caravan on its way back to their village as they returned from Jerusalem when the boy was twelve years old. And



Joseph, with the mother, sought him sorrowing through the streets and alleys of the awesome city until they found him at last in the Temple itself, deep in converse with learned men whom the lad astonished by the fullness of his wisdom.

After that there were the years to come of village life and the carpenter's shop, and of companionship between the man and the boy among the wood shavings and the hiss of the saw. And in those years there were to be the long hours of talk when the younger drew from the older all the best that Joseph had to give: inspiring stories from the history of their race, answers to a boy's searching questions about God and the meaning of life. Only the best, only the holiest of men could have been considered fit for so tremendous an undertaking, and such was Joseph the Carpenter.

He did not live to see as a man the child he had guided and nurtured. The words from the Cross, when Jesus commended his mother to the care of the Beloved Disciple, make that clear. Mary was widowed by that time. Joseph, gathered to his fathers, had gone to that reward which is reserved for just men made perfect.

# Question Page

Questions on the faith and practice of the Church should be sent to Question Page, THE SIGN, 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.

4056. Why does St. Matthew 1 trace our Lord's ancestry through Joseph if he was his father only in name?

In the Jewish law descent was reckoned from father to son, or from father to adopted son, and it is no doubt for this reason that both St. Matthew and St. Luke trace our Lord's ancestry through Joseph. It should be remembered that in Israel women had no legal rights whatever.

4057. 'Give peace in our time, O Lord. Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.' Would you please explain this response?

The words 'Give peace in our time, O Lord' were originally the antiphon to the Collect for Peace which follows in Morning Prayer. At the time when this verse and response were written, war seldom ceased in one part of Europe or another, and the common people lived under a constant threat of famine and disease as a result. They had no defence against the demands of the armies of either side, and it must have seemed literally true that only God was fighting for them. In more modern times the response has seemed to many people to be inappropriate, and various alternatives have been suggested; but in these days of atomic weapons against which there is no human defence possible, it again appears as a plain statement of the truth.

4058. How is it that of all the Psalms

## Question of the Month

4055. The idea of our Lord Jesus Christ as 'Redeemer of the World' constantly occurs in Christian worship and literature. Why does the Church use this title, which does not occur anywhere in the Bible?

The title 'Redeemer of the World' appears to have come into use in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in order to express the Church's teaching at a time when a number of Protestant and Catholic theologians (for example, Calvin and Jansen) held the view that redemption extended only to the predestined. The phrase does not, as you point out, appear in the Bible, and had it done so the controversy could hardly have arisen. The traditional view is based on Ephesians 1. 7-10, and 1 St. John 2. 2. These two passages cover the double aspect of redemption, deliverance from sin and the restoration of man and the world to communion with God.

the twenty-third has always been the most loved and popular?

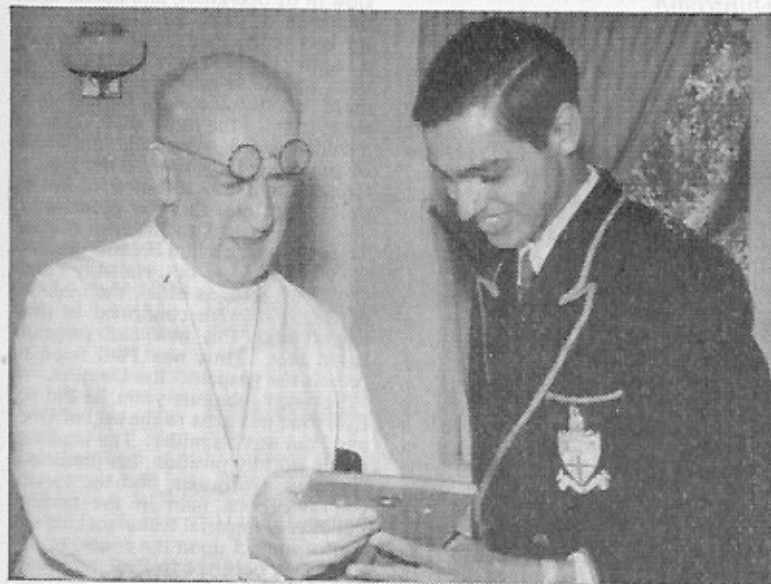
It is difficult to say that any one psalm is more popular than all the rest, since different people would make different choices. The twenty-third Psalm has, however, a very good claim to be the most loved, perhaps because it brings to mind a picture of our Lord himself in the character which he himself chose, that of the Good Shepherd. It is a psalm which is at the same time a comfort in trouble, however deep, and also an expression of rejoicing for God's loving-kindness and mercy.

4059. Are there any words in the Bible commanding, or even suggesting, that women should segregate themselves in convents?

Monasteries and nunneries owe their origin to the desire of leading a life of perfection in greater security than is normally possible in the world. There were such communities in pre-Christian times, such as that at Qumran which produced the now famous Dead Sea Scrolls. There is no specific reference to such communities in the Bible, and Christian religious communities were first founded in Egypt about the third century; and in the West about the fourth century. The day of a nun is spent in the two activities of prayer and work, combined in total surrender of the self to God.

# An Archbishop's Day

By Garth Christian



The Archbishop visits Karachi Grammar School

**T**HE job is really impossible for one man, yet only one man can do it,' declared Archbishop Lang, when discussing the daily labours of the Primate of All England.

Events in the twenty-four years since these words were uttered have not modified their truth. Consider, for example, the heavy responsibilities facing Dr. Geoffrey Fisher, the present Archbishop. He is 'our Archbishop' to thousands of Christians in remote corners of Asia, Africa and Britain. Besides being President of the Convocation of Canterbury, comprising the Bishops and elected clergy from each diocese in the southern Province, he is also Chairman of the Church Assembly.

## Church and State

Month after month he presides at the meetings of the Church Commissioners, responsible for the finances of the Church of England. He is Principal Trustee of the British Museum, taking the chair at their frequent meetings. He is President of the Historic Churches Preservation Trust, and of almost all the great voluntary societies which form the spearhead of the Church's attack in the mission fields both overseas and at home.

Reigning sovereigns and prime ministers may seek his judgement on vital matters affecting Church and

State. He is the Church's principal spokesman in the House of Lords. 'In his dealings with the various Provinces of the Anglican Communion,' wrote Bishop G. K. A. Bell, an Archbishop of Canterbury's labours 'may be compared to those of the Secretary of State for the Dominions. He discharges many of the duties of the Minister of Education. Occasionally he may be called upon to act as Judge... He is also a Diocesan Bishop...'

A century ago, when a primate's duties were less arduous, the archbishops rarely walked across the courtyard from the Chapel at Lambeth Palace without an escort of footmen or flunkies bearing impressive torches; and visitors at dinner were served by powdered footmen in wigs! No flunkies carrying flambeaux, I knew, precede Dr. Fisher as he walks across the courtyard to his 'lodgings.' Yet as I rang the bell at the main gate and mounted the splendid staircase, I half expected to find the elegant rooms of Lambeth Palace housing a large flock of secretaries and a formidable corps of discreet chaplains. In fact, the Archbishop has only two chaplains and four secretaries. Assisting him in the Diocese of Canterbury are three Suffragan Bishops.

After the early celebration in the

Chapel, now restored after becoming a burnt-out ruin during the Battle of Britain, he may entertain to breakfast a couple of African bishops, a group of bishops-designate who are staying with him on the eve of their consecration, or perhaps some representatives of the continental churches. Before the morning is old he is hard at work coping with letters, interviews, meetings... more letters... more interviews... more meetings. A primate's day is perpetually crowded. It is not surprising, perhaps, that Dr. Randall Davidson, on being nominated for Canterbury, meditated on some words of his old schoolmaster, Dr. Westcott: '... Because the fashion of the world changes we think that heaven is further off now than in the childhood of the Church. Let our Fathers in God make it clear that every righteous activity is a Divine service...'

Dr. Fisher tells of an occasion when he was standing in a street in New York clad in episcopal uniform. 'A man stopped, looked me up and down, fixed his gaze on my gaiters, and said in a friendly way: "Say, what's the cute idea?"' The American's good-humoured question is echoed—perhaps with more vehemence—when the Archbishop boldly expresses the Christian view on moral problems.

An archbishop must for ever voice the conscience of the Church. Invited to address a group of Manchester businessmen, he emphasized that employees should not be kept in the dark; the man at the bench should know what he is doing, and why he is doing it.

## Work and Prayer

One day, perhaps, the Archbishop may spend hours preparing for the establishment of a new province in Central Africa, praying with his ordinands at Canterbury, composing his Christmas Day sermon, or studying a Government Report in his room at the House of Lords.

Visitors to Canterbury through these last decades have occasionally seen a figure unobtrusively walking into the choir as Evensong begins. As the service ends he rises from his stall and hurries away, unnoticed by the congregation. Indeed, they might be astonished to know that the Primate of All England—Davidson? Lang? Temple? Fisher?—had been praying with them. Prophet and statesman, pastor and administrator, an archbishop is all of these things. But recalling that 'every righteous activity is a Divine service,' the successors of St. Augustine are also humble men.

## I, PAUL

By Charles Dunscomb

## PART 11

PAUL had been planning a journey to Rome, and he had written a long letter to the Christian community there in order to pave the way for his visit; but he had never expected to go there as a prisoner. Rather, he had meant to use Rome, the capital of the known world, as a base from which he might make a further journey to Spain and perhaps beyond. He knew himself to be the apostle to the Gentiles, and his passionate desire was to preach his gospel to the whole Gentile world; but now his longest journey was made as a captive, and thoughts of Spain had to be abandoned. Rome, it seemed, was to be the limit of his travels. Paul did not mind. He knew the providence of God to be completely inscrutable; but he knew, too, that the power of God was subject to no limitations, and so he did not worry or fret over his apparent helplessness. What he did not know—and it might have staggered the faith and the vision even of Paul—was that by means of that apparently wasted letter to Rome and some of the other letters which, now, he had almost forgotten writing, the power of God and the gospel of Christ crucified would eventually be taken to remote corners of the world so far beyond Spain that neither Paul nor any of his contemporaries even suspected their existence. Thus, in the end, Paul's confidence in the providence of God was borne out to an extent far beyond his wildest dreams.

Meanwhile, Paul in captivity was perhaps even more powerful as the agent of God than he had been when he was free. After his arrest in Jerusalem there had been the dreary months of waiting while the ponderous and enormous machinery of Roman law was set to work. There had been the appearance before the Sanhedrin, followed by an attempt to assassinate him. In turn, Paul had been brought before Felix, the brother of Pallas, a dubious favourite of the Emperor; before Festus, a much more respectable character; and, lastly, before Herod Agrippa the Second. But none of these courts had been able to decide how to treat his case, and when he appealed to Caesar, to Caesar he was sent. It was late in the autumn of the year A.D. 58 when he sailed, and the voyage was a dangerous one. As usual, Paul's personality dominated the company in which he found himself. Even the Roman officer who was in charge of the prisoners got into the habit of asking Paul's advice; and on the one

occasion when he did not take it, the ship was wrecked on the Maltese coast. To everyone in the ship, these days of storm and disaster seemed endless and appalling: to everyone but Paul, that is to say. For, to Paul, it was as clear as crystal that, though ships' captains might make mistakes and imperial officers might reject good advice, the mission of Christ to Rome could not be dependent upon such things. And, of course, the sea did not swallow them up. Instead, it cast them ashore on Malta, where they spent the winter; and in the spring they reached their destination. Paul came to Rome.

The spirits of an ordinary man might well have been at their lowest ebb. But Paul entered Rome in exactly the same spirit in which he had so often before entered other cities as a free agent. He was alive. The Holy Spirit would not fail him. Rome needed to hear the gospel, as every other city needed to hear it. Therefore, ahead of him lay, not restraint, but opportunity. His immense, unquenchable, Spirit-driven optimism was reinforced by his welcome; for the Christians of Rome came out to meet and greet him as though he were a visiting ambassador of the greatest consequence. Indeed, this showed their perspicacity, for Paul was an ambassador of far greater

consequence than any other who had ever set foot in the eternal city; for he was, even though in chains, the ambassador of Christ.

Fortunately for the Church of God, Roman justice was slow and liberal: slow in its operation, and liberal in its treatment of those awaiting trial. So, for two years, Paul spent his time in a captivity which was more nominal than real, and which involved little more inconvenience to himself than submitting to the loose supervision of a soldier guard. As usual, Paul began by preaching the gospel to the Jews of Rome; for it was a matter of settled policy with him that the gospel must first be preached to his own people. Those who heard him became passionately Christian or violently anti-Christian; and, as usual, the majority of the Jews were confirmed in their disgust with this new and generally hated sect. Thus was Paul freed to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

For two fabulous years he did so. Everyone was grist to the mill of God, and Paul was his miller. The weakness of his worldly position, his precarious status as a prisoner, and the forlorn chance of one man in the teeming millions of imperial Rome making any sort of impact upon the course of history never occurred to Paul, and never impeded the power of his ministry. Men and women from all ranks of society came to listen to him; and, as a result, members of the Praetorian Guard—that military élite—courtiers and beggars, philosophers and runaway slaves, respectable citizens and disreputable gladiators, women of patrician blood and women of the

(Continued on page 86)

## The Story of the Early Church

The capture of Jerusalem by the Romans marked the final separation between the Christian Church and the Jewish Synagogue



They kill him by throwing him from a pinnacle of the Temple



James, a kinsman of Jesus, is the first Bishop of the Christian Church in Jerusalem.



The Romans lay siege to Jerusalem



# ANIMALS OF THE BIBLE PUZZLE COLUMN

## 35. The Raven

THE raven has the distinction of being the first bird mentioned by name in the Scriptures. Re-

leased from the ark at the end of forty days, it went to and fro, obviously finding plenty to eat, as one would expect of a bird that lived largely on carrion. Entirely black and with a heavy beak that is powerful enough to strike out an eye, a fully-grown raven is over two feet long and by far the largest member of the crow tribe. The

Palestine bird is just the same as the one we see and hear flying among the Welsh and Scottish hills, or nearer home, perhaps, at the Tower of London.

Just as we sometimes refer to all members of the crow tribe as crows, so it is likely that the Hebrew word for raven also included some smaller cousins, but this does not in any way affect the sense. The ravens, with other crows (Lev. 11. 15: 'Every raven after his kind'), were rightly classed as unclean and, therefore, not to be eaten, for though they take all sorts of insects and other small animals,

including eggs, they could easily spread diseases from the carcasses which they help dispose of. So perhaps it seems surprising that God should have chosen ravens to take food regularly to Elijah when he was in temporary hiding.



The glossy blackness of the ravens' plumage finds comment in the Song of Solomon 5. 11: 'His locks are bushy, and black as a raven,' an expression that is in use to-day. It was a raven, too, that our Lord took in

St. Luke 12. 24 as an example of the animals' dependence upon God for daily supplies. Perhaps this is a direct reference to Job 38. 41: 'Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat'; and Psalm 147. 9: 'He giveth... food... to the young ravens which cry.' Some commentaries see in these two verses a reference to an ancient legend that the parent birds refused to feed their young until they had started to get their dark feathers and were thus recognizable as their own kind.

GEORGE CANSDALE

## Disaster at Jerusalem. A.D. 60 to 70



He is noted for his life of prayer



At a Passover feast he is seized by the Scribes and Pharisees



which finally falls with the burning of the Temple



James' successor, Symeon, leads his flock to Pella after the fall of Jerusalem

## By Richard Tatlock

### 21. ADVENT ADVENTURE (open to all)

December spells Christmas. Yet twenty-four of the December days are spent in Advent. So Advent is our puzzle-theme this month.

The first thing to do is to discover four words. This is what you do. Take the four Prayer Book psalms appointed for the First Sunday in Advent (sorting things out is part of the Adventure) and then make the first word by taking the first letter in each case of verse 2, word 8; 6. 5; 3. 7; 2. 6. (It helps a good deal if you use the 'right' psalm.)

For the second word, use the first letters of verse 3, word 9; 2. 17; 1. 21; 4. 4; 5. 4; 6. 7 of another psalm.

For the third, the first letters of verse 1, word 4; 3. 1; 7. 9; 3. 7; 5. 5; 4. 5.

For the fourth, the first letters of verse 5, word 11; 3. 7; 2. 4; 4. 6.

So far so good. But now the puzzle begins. These four words are 'associated.' On a postcard, give the four words and a brief explanation of how they are associated with each other. The clue, of course, is still the same—Advent.

Two prizes of book tokens of one guinea each.

(Personal from the Puzzle Editor: I have been told that this puzzle is too difficult—that no one will discover the 'association.' I do not believe that this is so—so, puzzlers, don't let me down.)

### 22. ALPHABETIC TAILS (age limit 12)

Alphabet riddles are so popular that it seems a good idea to have another one—but different. Previous riddles have all been concerned with first letters. This month we are going to look for last letters. Not heads—tails!

The puzzle is to make a list of words which end with the letters of the alphabet.

Example: SEA  
CLIMB  
ARC  
SAID  
ROOF and so on.

But, of course, it's December, and December means Advent and Christmas—so your words must all be chosen from the Collects, Epistles and Gospels for Christmas Day and the four Sundays in Advent.

By the side of each word give the phrase where the word appears.

Example:  
dead—'the quick and the dead'  
grace—'give us grace that we may'

Send your list of words on a sheet of paper and write the number of words at the top, not forgetting that you may not be able to get a word for every letter. Neatness counts. Don't forget your name, age, and address. Three book tokens for 5s. for the best entries. Closing date for both puzzles is December 15th. Send your entries to: The Puzzle Editor, THE SIGN, 28 Margaret Street, London, W.1.

September Winners: No. 15. C. Garland. No. 16. Gerald Mettam (Sheffield), Judith Pearson (W. Ardsley), Eileen Kennett (Borden).

Puzzlers will see that this month we have solved the identity of the author of Puzzle Column. Mr. Tatlock has, in fact, been responsible for puzzling our readers ever since Puzzle Column began, and we hope he will long continue to do so.

# My Garden in December

By W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER, M.B.E.



*Primulas for Christmas*

## *I, Paul (from page 84)*

street, Jew and Greek, bond and free, quietly—almost secretly—joined the Church of God. It was well for both Rome and the world that it was so.

For two years Paul lived and preached in the heat and sunshine of Rome with almost as much freedom as if he had not been a prisoner awaiting trial. It was a time of sunshine for the Church of God, too; for men and women were won to faith in Christ almost daily. But by the early summer of the year A.D. 64 a storm began to come up against the wind of God's continuing victory, and the sky over the Christian world was darkened by the gathering clouds of persecution.

Then, to the consternation of the Christian community, the voice of Paul was silenced. His freedom was curtailed. The immediate result was that, for the first time, the Church realized what the voice of Paul had come to mean in its life. There were rumours that he had been removed from the city; but there were as many rumours to the contrary, and everyone had a different theory. Paul had been swallowed up in the gathering darkness of godless revolt.

The burning of Rome was the spark which set the fires alight. Rome burned, and very soon the Church of God was burning too. The Emperor

Nero at this time set the crown of infamy upon an already evil reputation. First, he burned Rome for the fun of the thing and to clear the ground for his own architectural projects. Then he successfully pinned the blame for the fire upon the Church, and roused the mob to a vengeful frenzy. Slowly the fires of persecution died down. The survivors crawled out from their hiding-places in the catacombs, in the cellars and sewers, and from under the safety of the rubble that had been Rome. Surprisingly enough, many had survived; and the Church began, once again, to take stock of its position. No one knew anything with any great degree of certainty. Rumours and unconfirmed reports were abundant. Peter, it was said, had been crucified. But none of this was very certain. As for Paul, at first no one knew how he had fared. For a time, it was even hoped that he might have survived; but as the days went by and nothing was heard of him, it seemed certain that somewhere in the ashes of Rome there must be a handful of burnt dust that had once been Paul. But the ashes kept their silence. Later, someone emerged who testified that he had seen Paul put to the sword just outside Rome by the side of the *Via Ostia*; but there were too many dramatic stories of this kind for the Church to pay much attention to them all, and no one knew for

THIS is a good month for doing many jobs that one never seems to have time to do earlier on. The mending of the seed boxes, for instance, and the dipping of them in a solution of Cuprinol to make them last. It always pays to wash the pots thoroughly in hot water; give them a really good scrubbing. See that the tools are sharpened. A spade with a bright blade and keen cutting edge digs far more easily than an old, blunt, rusty specimen. Oiling the handles with linseed oil also helps to keep them.

Don't leave the stumps of the winter cabbage and cauliflowers in the ground because they rob the earth of so much plant food. Bash them up with the back of an axe on a chopping block, put them on the compost heap and sprinkle them with fish manure to rot down. When clearing the row of runner beans, leave the roots in the ground because they will provide nitrogen for the crops that follow. Lift the seakale and chicory for forcing under the staging of the greenhouse and blanch the endive by covering individual specimens with upturned flower pots, whose drainage holes have been blocked with a cork.

If the ground becomes hard and frozen any time during the month, take the opportunity of wheeling out into position barrowloads of compost. These will be dug in later.

certain how Paul had died. The only certain thing was that he was dead.

But, as time passed, the Church learnt not to mourn. For as the months went by, and as the flowers of God's peace began to bloom again in the waste places of Rome, men and women began to realize that the persecution had been a defeat, not for the Church, but for the persecutors; for the Church rose from the ashes of Rome with more vigour than ever. Once again—and not for the last time—the people of God learnt the lesson of the Cross: the essential lesson that God acts with his unhindered power through the obedient weakness of his people. For, as God raised Christ from the dead, bringing life out of the tomb, so God raised the universal Church with new power out of the shambles of Nero's Rome. The blood of the martyrs was indeed the seed of the Church; and as that Church grew, flourishing and flowering with the blossoms of grace, so it learnt to praise God for the death of Paul, and not to mourn for it. For Paul—that greatest of all great teachers—taught the Church as much in his death as he had ever taught in his lifetime; and the lesson of his life and his death was the same. It was that 'none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.'

# THE CHRISTIAN HOME

By Anne Proctor

CHRISTMAS is, above all, a family festival, but it is still possible to be selfish as a family. Christmas is the season for giving, but if we merely give to those who give to us, it ceases to be giving and simply becomes an exchange of presents, and that is not Christian giving. Most of us, I suppose, try to explain to our children that the presents we give and receive are a symbol of the presents which we would have liked to be able to give to the Holy Child of Bethlehem, but we also need to give them an example that we believe that true giving expects nothing in return. So as we look forward to Christmas, and buy or make our presents, and plan our parties, and bake our cakes and puddings, we need to keep before our eyes the core of the Christmas story, and that is the case of a mother far from home who because of a tyrant dares not go home, but has become a refugee, a displaced person.

There fared a mother forth, out of her house to roam,  
In the place where she was homeless,  
All men are at home.

This year a real drive is being made to tackle the refugee problem, the terrible fact that thousands of men and women and children are still displaced persons without home or security or even hope, although the war has been over for many more years than it lasted. Many people have already given something to the refugee appeals, but however much we may have given before, and especially if somehow or other we have missed our opportunities to give, no Christian should let this Christmas pass or this year close without doing something *more* for this corporate responsibility. Perhaps every Christmas dinner table could have a box for gifts to the Little Refugee, remembering the Child who fled, homeless, to Egypt.

## Christmas Pudding

This recipe makes one large pudding, but the amounts could be proportionately increased if more are needed: 4 oz. plain flour, 5 oz. brown sugar, 4 oz. suet, 2 oz. fine breadcrumbs, 4 oz. mixed fruit (sultanas and raisins), 2 oz. currants, 2 oz. cherries, 2 oz. chopped almonds, 1 teaspoonful baking powder, grated rind of one lemon, pinch of salt, 3 large eggs,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoonful grated nutmeg, 2 tablespoonfuls rum, if liked. Call in the children to help to clean the fruit, crumble the bread, and chop the almonds (remembering, as my own

mother always did, the verse from the Bible which says *muzzle not the ox which treadeth out the corn*, so allow more fruit than given above before



cleaning). Mix all together, and call all the family to stir and wish. We always stir, too, for those away from home, and think of friends in the countries from which the fruits have come. Put in a basin, cover with greaseproof paper, tie in a cloth, and steam for at least six hours. (E. M. T., Pembrokehire.)

## The Man About the House

By VICTOR SUTTON

IN a group at home we can do much to make up extra items for the Christmas decorative scheme. Collect up some bunches of nicely-shaped twigs about 18-24 in. long and on to which we can add our own odds and ends. Paint these in deep green, blue, orange or silver. Cycle shops stock handy little pots of enamels in many shades. Now collect up bunches of berries, acorns, pine cones, hips, haws, poppy-heads and tufts of rug and darning wool. Touch up some in bright shades and get some covered wire at the horticultural store. One can make up most interesting bunches with these, and I have even seen toffee papers made into butterfly shapes.

Quite cute little bells can be made up

## Christmas Plays

Two good ideas for dressing up at Christmas. First, do you need a halo? Cut the brim off an old felt hat; if it is the wrong colour, cover it with suitable material, or silver paper, or paint it silver. Then trim with matching ribbon. Old sandals can be painted gold or silver for angels, heralds, kings. The crown of the hat can be used as the centre of a cardboard crown, too. (Mrs. M. W., Edgware.)

## Christmas Card Game

Here is a game which uses the Christmas cards when they have been taken down. Six cards are distributed to each player with an extra packet of six for a 'pool' which is placed face downwards on the table. The first player picks one of his cards and asks the player on his left for some prominent feature on that card. For example, 'I want holly.' He places the card face upwards in the centre of the table and waits for the second player to look through his cards to find holly. When he has found one he places it on top of the first and asks the player on his left for something on that card, e.g. 'I want a dog.' If the third player cannot produce one, he takes the top card from the 'pool.' If there is no 'dog' on that card the fourth player tries in the same way. If none of the players each in turn can produce the object required either from their own packs or by drawing one from the 'pool,' the player who first asked for this has another turn and asks for something else from another of his cards. The winner is the one who first gets rid of all his cards. (Mrs. E. G. W., Woolwich.)

The last of our grandmother and grandchild photographs is of Peter John Hough of Harrogate and his grandmother.

on a thimble. All you do is to collect plenty of silver paper and pack this around the thimble to a nice thickness and add a little length of cotton which is pasted in. Larger bells can be shaped this way, using the tub-shaped cotton reel as the core.

Most stores now sell sets of the figures to go in the crib setting. One can make this imposing with a setting of crushed crepe paper over well-shaped chicken mesh. Little pots with evergreen foliage can be set around and with this idea you have something original. Sandpaper, painted with poster shade, can also be used to make the groundwork. Small pieces of broken brick will also make a little more scenery for the project.



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consciousness, on the one hand the power and mercy of God and on the other the sinfulness and ingratitude of men. From this knowledge proceeds the only hope for the world, that the Creator God who made us has not left us but is with us in the depths of our human tragedy, redeeming and saving those who are responsive and obedient and saving those who are responsible and obedient to the heavenly vision. Without this response of the will the love of God is as helpless as the Babe bound in swaddling bands for it is through us that it flows out into a loveless world.

Let us not be mistaken, therefore, into thinking that cribs and carols are the reality of Christmas. In the background are refugees, cold and homeless, the horrors of military conflict; neglected and unwanted children. Unless our wills are moved to do something about these things when Christmas is over, we have not penetrated into its meaning.

### THE DREAM OF DARKNESS

by J. Chalmers Lyon

#### I

I dreamed that I lived in a strange new world  
Where the Atheist's Creed prevailed,  
And the "Church of Reason" took the place  
Of God's Church which had "failed."  
And I stood with the crowd—in my dream—and  
heard

The Atheist 'Gospel' thus declared:  
"There is no God, and therefore Prayer  
Is but a cry in the empty air!  
There is no God, no message of love  
Sent by 'Our Father' from above  
There are no good or evil deeds;  
Each for himself is the best of creeds.  
Morality is a mere convention,  
A fad, like others that we could mention.  
There is no hope of an endless life  
After this age of sorrow and strife,  
For Life's but a bubble, and Death is the End!  
That is the Atheist's Gospel, friend."

#### II

But it seemed that a blight lay over the earth  
When the Atheist regime came to birth.  
For the fairest ideals of all were fled;  
Self was exalted, but joy was dead.  
There were fear and suspicion, instead of trust;  
Love was replaced by unbridled Lust;  
Purity perished without defence  
And childhood was robbed of its innocence;  
While over the world lay a blank despair  
And for 'things that are better' none had a care.

For none can be 'better' and none be 'worse'  
In a wholly non-moral universe!

Thus, helpless and hopeless, it seemed to me  
I was crushed with a burden of misery  
Until—in my dream—I awoke, and found  
That the bells were ringing on Christmas morn,  
And I thanked my God for the Hope new born  
That comes through faith in the Saviour's Name  
To a world redeemed from its sin and shame,  
For He brought sin's captives a full release  
And opened the way to Life and Peace.  
Now throned in the glory His Voice comes  
through:

'Behold, I am making all things new'.  
And the centuries prove that His Word is true!

#### III

O Christ our hope for eternity  
Draw us and keep us close to Thee,  
And make us all that we ought to be.  
Till saved by the might of Thy matchless grace  
We come at last to that blessed place  
Where 'His servants serve Him and see His  
Face.'

### CHOIR NOTES

#### Welcome to Mr. Bullough

It is with great pleasure that I, on behalf of the Choir, extend to Mr. and Mrs. Bullough and their young son, a very warm welcome amongst us. Mr. Bullough has already shown his keen interest in our work and our future, and we assure him of our intention to play our part in ensuring the success of his ministry here in Halsall.

#### Mr. T. K. Gradwell

Since I last wrote the Choir has lost a faithful member and a dear friend. Mr. Gradwell's sudden passing, after a lifetime's devoted service—more than half a century—in Halsall Choir, has left it immeasurably poorer. He is mourned by all. May his soul rest in peace.

#### Choir Membership

This is a matter of extreme urgency! We need at least six new boys and six more men. Do not the empty choir stalls present a challenge? Surely there are twelve amongst us who will ensure that they are filled. If you enjoy singing and feel you can help us, please come along. We don't ask for wonderful voices—just real enthusiasm.

Parents! Do please encourage your boys to offer themselves, and their voices, in God's service. There is no more rewarding work. We want the rafters of our lovely old church to ring with voices praising God. Boys and men, come a'long now, in time to make our Christmas services a truly worthy offering to the new-born King.

Our Rector has appealed to us to make Halsall Choir the finest village church choir in the district. I am confident that we can easily do this with your enthusiasm, encouragement and support.

Let us begin at once! Choir Practice is held each Friday at 7-15 p.m. for the boys and 7-45 for the men. We look forward to seeing **YOU**!

### The R.S.C.M. Canticles

Congratulations! After considerable prejudice on the introduction of the Canticles pointed to be sung in speech-rhythm the members of the congregation now seem to be getting quite familiar with the new pointing and are, I hope, well on the way to forgetting the old altogether.

I am sure many of you now feel that we have made a great step forward in our aim to sing 'with understanding.' Please use the leaflets provided, for they will help you to master the pointing even more successfully.

Incidentally, the 'new' pointing isn't really new at all! It is something like thirty years old now, and it is hoped that all churches will adopt it in due course.

With every good wish for Christmas and the New Year.

H. J. WOOD.

### SCHOOL NOTES

The dates of forthcoming end of term festivities have now been fixed and are as follows.

The Senior and Junior Parties will take place on Wednesday, December 16th and Thursday Dec. 17th respectively.

On the following Monday, December 21st at 7-15 p.m. the School Choir will tell the story of the Nativity in Carols, Reading and Tableaux. Part II will consist mainly of carols, in which the audience, led by the choir, will be asked to join. We hope to have a happy evening. Please come along and help to make it so.

We break up for the Christmas Holidays on Tuesday December 22nd, returning to school on Wednesday, January 6th. During the holiday the Education Authority will make a start on the interior decoration of the School.

### HOLY BAPTISM

"Received into the Family of Christ's Church."

Nov. 22 DAVID WAYNE son of John Kenneth and Kathleen Sally Hillier of 94 New Cut Lane

### BURIAL OF THE DEAD

"In sure and certain hope."

Nov. 21 GEORGE BROOKS of 125 Moss Road Birkdale aged 68 years.

### THE MOTHERS' UNION

- Dec. 2 Meeting at Barton, speaker Mrs. Unwin  
Jan. 9 Party in the School Hall at 7 p.m. Young Wives are invited.

### CHURCH COLLECTIONS

(November)

|    |  | F.W.O. | Cash                    |
|----|--|--------|-------------------------|
| 1  | All Saints Day, 8 a.m.<br>10-30 & 6-30 p.m.                                    | 5 18 9 | 1 7 0<br>7 10 0         |
| 8  | 24th Sun. after Trinity<br>8 a.m.<br>10-30 & 6-30 p.m.                         | 6 15 9 | 1 14 6<br>15 1 1        |
| 15 | 25th Sun. after Trinity<br>8 a.m.<br>Shirdley Hill 9 a.m.<br>10-30 & 6-30 p.m. | 6 5 6  | 1 2 0<br>1 0 6<br>7 5 8 |
| 22 | Sun. next before Advent<br>8 a.m.<br>10-30 & 6-30 p.m.                         | 7 4 3  | 1 12 0<br>8 17 4        |

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### SIDESMENS' ROTA

10-30 a.m. 6-30 p.m.

|    |            |            |             |            |
|----|------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| 6  | R. Lewis   | R. Dutton  | H. Prescott | H. Gaskell |
| 13 | C. Aindow  | T. Forshaw | E. Grimshaw | R. Brett   |
| 20 | J. Huyton  | S. Parks   | E. Serjeant | H. Guy     |
| 27 | R. Gaskell | H. Baldwin | H. Dean     | J. Balmer  |

### ALTAR FLOWERS

- Dec. 6 The Sunday School  
13 Miss Critchley  
20 The Congregation  
27 The Congregation  
Jan. 3 Mrs. R. Heaton

### ALTAR ROTA

8-30 a.m. 11-30 a.m.

|        |  |                 |
|--------|--|-----------------|
| Dec. 6 | Brian Heaton                                   | Harold Grimshaw |
| 13     | Peter Balmer                                   | Alan Hanson     |
| 20     | Norman Jenkinson                               | Job Grimshaw    |
| 25     | 7 a.m. Brian Heaton<br>8 a.m. Norman Jenkinson |                 |
| 27     | Alan Hanson                                    | Peter Balmer    |
| Jan. 3 | Brian Heaton                                   | Job Grimshaw    |

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