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HELD IN THE SCHOOL

ON

Saturday, 3rd December,
1960.

OPENING AT

2-30 p.m. by Mrs. A. C. TROWER

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Father Christmas

TO HIS GROTTO

Stalls - - Teas

Admission Free

—♦♦♦—
AT 7-15 p.m. A

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ATTRACTIVE PRIZES.

ADMISSION

2 6

The Rectory,
Halsall.

14th November, 1960.

My dear Friends,

By the time you read this letter the Bazaar will be upon us and so I take this opportunity to appeal to you all to give us your wholehearted support. 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 some of our debts and to enable us to undertake certain urgent works in and around our lovely Church, and schools. Do try to understand how difficult it is for the Church Council to carry out the many and various works when all the time we have to keep our eye on the colour of the ink at the bank. Please understand that apart from the Graveyard, Halsall Church has no reserves, we work from day to day and we live "from hand to mouth." It is sad that this is so. The Finance Committee are giving a good deal of their time and thought to the whole question and no doubt in the New Year their recommendations will be put before you. In the meantime please help us all you can to make the Bazaar a success, and enable us to begin 1961 with a balance on the right side.

Now I turn to a much more serious part of my letter, Christmas. No doubt you are already making your plans, and arranging your parties. I do hope you will 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 that you will find a place in your arrangements for your worship of God. I ask you all to make a great effort to prepare yourself for your Christmas Communion. Will you think very seriously about this and then come and worship with us on Christmas Day. It is your bounden duty and service. The times of the services are printed elsewhere in this magazine. There will be Sung Eucharist on Christmas Morning at 10-30 a.m.

Again I ask you to have in your thoughts and prayers those who are less fortunate, particularly the sick, the aged, and the homeless children. We shall, with your help, do all we can to help them. If any of you wish to make a gift to help with our Christmas charities please hand it to me. It will be gratefully received and faithfully applied.

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.

God bless you.

Your sincere friend,

HERBERT BULLOUGH.

CHRISTMAS AND THE CHILDREN

There can be no season in the year when children are more in our thoughts than at Christmas time. As we think out ways and means to celebrate Christmas in our own homes, and as we plan the giving of presents so that the children who are near and dear to us shall find happiness which is theirs by right and custom, it is worth while to think for a moment of the tremendous task which confronts the Church of England Children's Society in similar circumstances. Instead of our own small family we think of a truly gigantic one of 4,500 children, and year after year the Society feeds, clothes, trains and cares for these little ones who have been deprived of family affection and security.

It is not possible to relate in a few words the Society's many achievements, but we are all well aware of its great Christian principles and the comfort which has been given to helpless babies, toddlers, cripples, the motherless and fatherless, the victims of broken families, all of whom have been robbed through no fault of their own of a background of family happiness which is every child's birthday right. For seventy-six years the Society has been administering to their needs, performing at the same time a valuable service to the Church and to the Nation. Supported almost entirely by voluntary contributions it is now, because of greatly increased costs, burdened with a very formidable financial deficit. They cannot turn away the many deserving applicants which come to them at the rate of four every day, and the children already in their care must not suffer. The fact that it costs approximately 30/- every minute to maintain their large family gives some idea of the magnitude of their task. It will undoubtedly induce in many of our hearts the urge to give generously at a time when we shall be enjoying the spirit of Christmas and all that means, within the warm and comforting circle of family affection.

I very much hope that you will remember this Society in your prayers and give as generously as you are able at this season. Donations can be sent to me at The Rectory, or to Mrs. Victor B'undell at Mancha Hall, or to Mrs. R. Brett at Ha'sall House. We are all members of the Committee at Quarry Mount, Ormskirk, and hope very much to hand in a generous gift from Halsall.

CALLING ALL FARMERS

AND

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

AND

ANYONE INTERESTED

IN THEIR GARDEN

The men on the Parochial Church Council have agreed to help me to arrange for a Dinner and Social Evening for Farmers and Agricultural Workers and their Wives. The date is 16th December and we shall assemble in the School Hall at 7-30 p.m. After the Dinner the following film will be screened:—

"THE RIVAL WORLD"

(in colour)

It is hoped that the outcome of this evening will be the formation of a Discussion Group on a very broad basis and that topics not normally dealt with by agricultural discussion societies could be included in the programme. We wish to make it quite clear that **ANYONE** remotely interested in growing crops and flowers is invited to the Dinner and we hope they will join the Discussion Group. Indeed it is true to say that **ALL ARE WELCOME**. We have had great difficulty in obtaining a caterer and we were almost on the point of postponing the event until January when by a bit of good luck we secured the services of Mr. and Mrs. Marshall of Birkdale. The Dinner is a Christmas Dinner — Soup, Turkey, two veg, roast and mashed potatoes, Christmas Pudding, Cheese and Biscuits and Coffee. The charge will be 10/6 per head and admission will be **BY TICKET ONLY**. The tickets are now on sale and they are strictly limited to 150. They are only obtainable from the men on the Parochial Church Council. You are strongly advised to get your ticket right away if you wish to come.



Gherardo delle Notti

Uffizi Gallery

Before the Star

THERE was a dear, brief while before the Star
Bestowed bright splendour on the silent skies.
Before it burned above the sleeping hills,
To blind with light the trembling shepherds' eyes.

There was a hushed, sweet interlude of time
In gentle Mary's humble resting-place,
When only Joseph and the patient beasts
Adored with her the radiant Infant's face.

That precious hour was hers and theirs to share,
The marvel of perfected Motherhood.
God, made Incarnate through the pangs of birth,
An angel's message proved and understood.

Still, the great Star must pierce the yearning night,
To light the first believers on their way.
Yet Mary's arms held fast her priceless Babe,
The world's to-morrow—hers alone to-day.

Joan B. Howes

People of the Gospels (12)

The Secret Disciple

... a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews.

ST. JOHN 19: 38

JOSEPH of Arimathea was an important man. He was influential, being a member of the Sanhedrin, the ecclesiastical court which, under the chairmanship of the High Priest Caiaphas, had pressed Pilate, the Roman Governor, to send Jesus to his

crucifixion. He was also wealthy and, as was customary among the well-to-do, possessed a private tomb which had been prepared against his own death.

This man, a native of the hill city where the prophet Samuel had been born, had been a witness of all the

THE SIGN

Not ashamed to confess the faith
of Christ crucified

No. 672

VOL. 56

DECEMBER 1960

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

Days of fasting, or abstinence:

Fridays, 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; Tuesday, 20;
Saturday, 24; Ember Days, 14, 16, 17.

events which had led Jesus to his death. He had been present among the Sanhedrin when the plots against Jesus had been laid. He had seen and heard Jesus speaking and teaching, with dauntless courage, when the net was closing about him. And though Joseph, with his friend Nicodemus, had taken no part in the persecution, he had lacked the courage to say what was in his mind, that this Jesus was indeed innocent.

But there was more to it than that. It was not only of the innocence of Jesus that Joseph was convinced. He felt also in every fibre of his being that truth and holiness, and a strange and compelling power, were in Jesus. This conviction had taken possession of him. He had become a disciple. But he had remained a secret disciple, because he was afraid of the consequences. These consequences would, as well he realized, be extremely grave. The whole edifice of his life would collapse in ruin if he, a highly respected member of the Inner Councils of the Jews, were ever to testify openly on behalf of Jesus. And when he contemplated the price he would have to pay for acknowledging Jesus, he was faced with the sad realization that he lacked the courage to pay it.

All he could do, therefore, was to watch the whole sombre procession of events which led to Calvary. He had seen and heard the trial; he

(Continued on page 91)

SAFE LODGING

By Rosamund Essex



It was pure serenity; that's what it was. I shall never forget it, as I glanced over at the man in the arm-chair. The newspaper that he had been reading lay forgotten on his knees, and he sat looking at—what? I wondered: 'a safe lodging, a holy rest and peace at the last' perhaps.

I was in an Anchorage Home run by the Church Army in Brighton, and as I left the old man in the arm-chair, I went out on to a tiny balcony where another of the old men sat half smiling, as a flicker of sun caught his face, half in light, half in shadow.

The Last Prescription

There were ten men in the house altogether—ten men who would otherwise have had no homes. The youngest was sixty-five and the eldest ninety-two. Here you could meet a retired doctor, outfitter, valet, business man, tailor. But the tailoring, the outfitting, the medicine, the valeting were all finished now, the last coat had been hung in the cupboard, the last prescription written on the doctor's slip. And the men, instead of being left to fend for themselves, lonely and widowed, in cheap lodgings or bed-sitters, had found a home and an anchorage.

Here were warmth and smiles and courage and hope—yes, even though the years ahead might not, for some of them, be very many or very active.

'When I was young,' said a Church Army Sister in charge of an old ladies' home in Southgate, 'it was looked on as slightly disreputable to go into a

home when you were old—like being 'put away,' as you might say. Years ago, I came across a tragic case. A lady brought the family Nannie to us. She was quite unprepared. She did not even know why she had been brought. And when the mistress went away and left her, she was first dazed and then heartbroken. We sent her back after the week-end,' added the Sister, drawing herself up. 'We are not willing to make our real homes into convenient institutions for those whom the more fortunate desire to forget.'

The old ladies of Southgate—the Sister always called them 'the ladies'—come from fairly similar backgrounds, so that they can talk happily together and share similar interests. They have been companions, housewives, ladies' maids, governesses and dressmakers. There was one I noticed who looked drawn and ill, and could not speak very well. 'She has had a stroke,' said the Sister, 'and we carry her up and down stairs because we have no lift. A fund has been started, but it is not anything like full yet.'

Terrible Memories

'Once this old lady was in a concentration camp in China. She saw such terrible things there that when she first came here she felt she could not say the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us ours, as we forgive them theirs," you know. But the bitterness has passed. Sometimes she forgets where she is. When I took her up two little sandwiches the other day, she insisted on giving me

one of them, with anxiety in her eye. I think her mind had strayed back to camp, where the courageous ones shared their scraps of food with their friends. It makes a lump come into one's throat, doesn't it?'

Here in the Sunset Home, too, there was much serenity as I saw it. And yet not on every face, as you might expect. 'Some are quiet and some are talkative and some are bossy and a bit domineering now and then. We had one old lady who was brought up in a foundling hospital with seventy others. All her life she had had to fight for what she could get. And when she came here, she was a fighter still. You'd expect it, wouldn't you?' and the Sister looked at me challengingly as if she dared me to disagree. Domineering or difficult or sick or talkative or quiet or self-effacing, they were all her dear old ladies, and she loved them and cared for every one of them. After all, she had taken up this work for the old when she was only twenty-four, and had been commissioned for it. She has already been at the work for over twenty years.

Television

Some of the old ladies just sit; some read; some sew; some help in the house with a bit of washing-up or peashelling or table-laying. But all love the T.V., and how I longed that the tiny instrument could have been a bit larger for the thirty pairs of eyes glued to it.

In the Southgate Home there is a small chapel. When I was there, I saw one of the old ladies kneeling with her hand on the altar for support. The chapel is always open and available, and there are daily prayers.

At Christmas 'the ladies' hold their own carol service, with seven lessons which they read themselves. At first there was some nervousness; but as soon as the idea was accepted the ladies found their Bibles and took the whole thing very seriously indeed. One old thing was so determined to read properly, though she was rather blind, that she copied her passage from the Bible and wrote it down in big letters, and read it over and over again beforehand, 'so as to make quite sure, you know.'

On that day you will find the old ladies of Sunset Home raising proud if quavering voices in 'Once in royal,' 'See, amid,' and 'O come, all ye faithful.' Then the tones of a very old lady tell the story of the very young Child: 'And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary his mother.'

(from page 89)

had been present, a horrified spectator, when Jesus was nailed to the Cross.

What happened next had been that the Roman soldiery, sent by Pilate to see whether those who had been crucified were already dead, had driven a spear into the side of Christ to make sure. It was at that moment that the thought came to Joseph of Arimathea that may be there was at last something which he could do, after all, for this man whom he had come to love and revere. He could give his poor broken body the shelter of his own private tomb. It was little enough as a service. But it was something.

His friend Nicodemus was of the same mind. So, while Nicodemus went off to buy spices, Joseph himself, with a beating heart, hurried to the Praetorium where Pilate had his residence. And when at last he was admitted, the interview was not easy. Pilate was irritable. For him it was the end of a long and trying day. It was only the good reputation of Joseph which gained him the audience at all. Thus Joseph made his request.

The brow of Pilate puckered in



thought as he listened. Could this, he wondered, be perhaps a plot to secure the still living body of Jesus so that he could be secretly nursed back to health? But the centurion, summoned by messenger, had no doubt of it. Jesus the Nazarene was, he affirmed,

dead indeed. Pilate nodded briefly. Permission was given.

It was now nearing sunset, and Joseph knew there was little time to lose. Hurrying on his way back through the city to the Bazaar of the Weavers, he bought there a sheet of fine linen in which to enwrap the body, and made his way out again to Golgotha. There, he found Nicodemus ready with the materials for embalment. Tenderly, then, they took down the body from the Cross, and bore it reverently into the garden where the tomb was. Within the tomb, the place was divided into two chambers: the farther one for the reception of the body itself, the nearer one for the utensils of burial. Far within, then, they laid him, and after that Joseph put his shoulder against the great circular stone, having first removed the wedge which held it in position at the top of a little slope which had been prepared for it. When he exerted his strength the whole weight of it rolled forward and settled into place with a dull thud. The tomb was sealed. And as Joseph walked away a profound and aching sorrow settled about his heart.

QUESTION PAGE

4123. Why do the genealogies in St. Matthew and St. Luke trace our Lord's descent through Joseph?

The genealogies in St. Matthew and St. Luke are concerned with our Lord's legal descent. It is necessary to remember that women had a very inferior position under the Jewish law. They had no legal rights, and it would have been unthinkable for a Jew to trace his descent, let alone that of the Messiah, through a woman. The relationship between a father and his adopted son was of greater importance than the son's relationship to his mother.

4124. Does the Bible make any distinction between white and coloured races? St. Paul makes no reference to them in Galatians 3, 26-28.

St. Paul in Galatians 3, 26-28 is quite emphatic: 'You are all Sons of God'—no reference to colour. 'As many of you as were baptized'—with no other qualification. 'Neither Jew nor Greek'—no racial difference. The colour of the soul is not decided by that of the skin.

4125. Is it in accordance with the practice of the Church of England that a layman should act as sub-deacon at the Holy Communion Service?

It is quite in order for a layman to act as sub-deacon at the invitation of the parish priest. Indeed, the difference between the sub-deacon and the deacon is that the deacon must be ordained, and therefore by implication the sub-deacon

Question of the Month

4122. Why are we required to take oaths in courts of law when this practice seems to be expressly forbidden by our Lord in St. Matthew 5, 34?

The thought which underlies St. Matthew 5, 34 and St. James 5, 12 is that the Christian, if he is faithful to Christ, is bound to speak the truth. The oath is, in origin, a device to obtain truthfulness on a particular occasion, when truthfulness is not necessarily to be expected. In a Christian world, oaths would rightly be abolished as contrary to the spirit of Christ. But the State is not yet a Christian society. Its members are not all Christians, hence it is compelled to retain and enforce oaths. And a Christian, as a member of the State, will conform to the State's rule in matters that concern the State in order that justice may be administered, although to him the oath will be superfluous, as he is equally bound to speak the truth at all times.

need not be. Strictly speaking, a layman may not read the Epistle unless he has been licensed to do so by the bishop.

4126. What did Jesus mean when he said, 'In my Father's house are many mansions'?

The word 'mansions' in St. John 14, 2 is, perhaps, misleading, as nowadays we regard a mansion as being a large house. In the Latin Bible the word is almost the same—*mansiones*, which means quite simply 'resting places,' or 'abodes.' A related word in Latin is *mansa*, a farm or dwelling. This suggests that all who attain heaven will feel at home there, and that they are not strangers.

4127. For some time I have felt the calling to become a nun. How can I find out what communities for women there are in the Church of England?

There are quite a number of Anglican Sisterhoods in this country, and we suggest that as a first step you should obtain the *Guide to the Religious Communities of the Anglican Communion*, which may be obtained from Mowbrays at 5s. (post 6d.). From this Guide you should be able to select a suitable community, and your next step would then be to write to the Mother Superior, and perhaps arrange to stay with the community for a week or so as a paying guest in order to ascertain more about it.

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.

Hallowed Housework

By Mary Andere

THE doctor was calling to see my little son, and whilst he waited for the thermometer to register he looked round the room and then smiled at me.

'Don't you get tired of housework?' he asked. 'It must be dreary doing the same thing day after day.'

I said, 'Dreary...?' and paused. It had never occurred to me like that before, so I said, half-banteringly, 'Well, you have to do the same thing day after day, too, don't you? We all have to, really, and it just depends on whether or not you are happy in your work....'

Opportunities

After he left I pondered his words, and was even more astonished that he, a man who for forty years had been doing a vocational work, and doing it excellently, should not have realized that housework also has its vocational and even sacramental side. For those of us who are not called to great vocations such as medicine or teaching, surely housework is one of the loveliest of all tasks... it is so closely linked with our faith, and has, of all the daily work one may do, perhaps the greatest opportunities for recollection and meditation.

There is hardly a task about the house which cannot lead the thoughts to God.

Does it sound irreverent to say that whilst I fry the breakfast bacon and stir the porridge I think of him who prepared the breakfast on the shore of Galilee? I think of the fire he lit, and of the little meal he prepared with his own hands for his friends.

And, whilst I think about it all, and of the joy the disciples must have known as they came up the beach and saw him once more, lo, the children are ready and the meal is cooked, and once more the day is under way. Then I remember the words of the Bible, 'This is the day the Lord hath made... I will rejoice in it and be glad.'

Seeing the family off on its separate ways, I remember how our Lord sent his disciples out into the world, the big, difficult, unknown world, and said, 'Lo, I am with you always...' and I know that he will be with them all the day to help and guard and guide them if only they will turn to him in their need.

Drawing back the curtains and let-

ting the daylight flood into the room, I recall that it is written, 'And God said, Let there be light: and there was light,' and I know that things are only seen clearly and properly in the light. Even as sunshine shows up the dust and untidiness in a room, so the Light of God in our hearts shows us our sinfulness and weakness, and therefore we need his Light all our days, knowing that, even as sunlight will kill germs and dirt, so the purifying fire of his Spirit will fight our sins and burn them away, if we will only give him entrance.

Then comes the great 'set to' as I try to tidy up the chaos left each evening by the family. Somehow, it seems as though one were being permitted to share in the creativeness of the Holy Spirit, who brought order out of chaos.

Washing Up

But, you may ask, what meditations fit in with such jobs as washing up dirty dishes and pots and pans? Well, perhaps in this, the most frequently performed of all household tasks, may be found the loveliest of all meditations, for I remember then, 'the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which cleanseth us from all sin,' and even whilst I ponder the mystery of those great words and think how our Lord

suffered in order that we, you and I and all men, might be cleansed from our sins and become acceptable unto God, in Christ, the task is done.

For bed-making there is the remembrance of that last sleep we all must come to, and how, once he to whom we owe our all, came, a small Child, to Bethlehem, and had for his bed only a manger; and how often in later life he was without where to lay his head, and, at the end, he was laid upon a rocky ledge in that small chamber that Joseph of Arimathea had offered for his last sleep. How can I grumble, then, remembering that he had no bed, no cool, clean sheets, and yet, for us, he was content that it should be so...?

Polishing

For the polishing, I recall the words of St. Paul in his great chapter on Love, and how here we see in a glass, darkly, but there we shall see face to face, and I try to ensure that my polishing may reflect truly and clearly even here, so that it may catch and hold God's precious light even on the dullest day. I remember, too, that it has been said that the effects of friction are greater than those of ease; even so, God the Holy Ghost is always at work polishing off bits of roughness in our characters, rubbing off the dark patches, seeking to make our souls shine until one day the world may catch a slight reflection of our Lord in us.

When a shelf needs nailing up, or

(Continued on page 95)

The Story of the Early Church

The accession of Constantine the Great marked one of the great turning points in the history of the Christian Church.



Seeing a cross in the sky on the eve of battle he adds the symbol to his army's standard



On the death of his father, Constantine is proclaimed Emperor by the legions at York



He wins the Battle of the Milvian Bridge and his rival, Maxentius is drowned

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

By Anne Proctor

THIS seems a curious photograph to print in THE SIGN as an illustration for our Christmas

number, but, in fact, it is the heart of the matter, for this is the jewelled star set into the pavement of the stable-cave in which tradition tells us that Christ was born. The words set round it are *Hic de virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est*, which mean 'Here was Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary.'

We are apt to take Christmas at our own cheap value to-day, on the level of easy goodwill, of exchanged kindnesses and presents between friends and relatives, of feasting and lights and parties. But while these things are harmless enough they are very much less than the message of the Gospel.

The Good News

What, then, is this good news which we sing about in all our carols at Christmas? Is it relevant to-day? Has Christmas any real meaning in the twentieth century? These are questions which tease us all at times, and even in Christian homes make young people uncertain of their beliefs.

This year happens to be the centenary of Charles Darwin's great book, *The Origin of the Species*, which upset religious people so badly in Victoria's reign. We have learnt to appreciate it since then, and to see that though it greatly increased our understanding of the natural laws of God which we call Biology and Zoology, this does not undermine the good news of the Gospel; on the contrary, it enhances our need of Christ's message.

The good news which Jesus brought came first to a pagan world, whose old religion of gods and goddesses had been discredited by thinking people. Most people either feared their malice, or despised them as untrue. Jesus was born a Jew, and the Jews had long since learned that God was one, and righteous and merciful; the good news of the Gospel enlarged the Jewish conception of God too. It brought the world the new idea that love was the force which could solve the world's problems. Not an easy sentimental

love like the phoney benevolence of so many Christmas cards, but a strong self-giving love which involves loving



Where Christ was born

one's enemies, and doing good to them that hate us, and praying for those who use us spitefully. It also brought us a message of hope in the idea that God is Love, and that we can approach him as children to a loving father.

Christmas shows us people making the right choice, from Mary's acceptance of God's will for her, to Christ's acceptance of the death on the Cross. We can choose to follow our own

selfish way, or we can choose to accept Christ's way, and his offer of new life, and with it a re-birth into being what the New Testament calls the new man. As the Gospel for Christmas Day sets forth, '... the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. ... He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' This is the eternal good news of the Gospel, this is what the carols are rejoicing about, and this aspect of Christianity is as necessary to the nuclear scientist as to the humblest housewife. The scientist is a man dedicated to the search for truth. As a scientist and while he is doing his work, he is lifted into the presence of something greater than himself, right

out of the arena of the petty round. But as a man the scientist is like the rest of us, and we all need the gifts of the spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, adaptability and self-control to replace the greed and jealousy, envy and hatred, bad temper, factions and party spirit and the rest of the horrors of our lower nature.

(Continued on page 95)

The Man About the House

By VICTOR SUTTON

WE can make far better use of the drawers we have in use in the house if we take the trouble to plan them a bit better. Quite a few drawers will take slip-in flat trays. This is a simple job with present-day hardboard and prepared clean strip wood in the size of 2-inch and 3-inch depth. Some drawers will hold much more if you divide them. Wood strips across can be held by flat pieces glued on the drawer sides and to keep the divisions regular. Cardboard boxes are another good idea.

I have made a handy extra clothes airer with two normal clothes-hangers and five 3/4-inch diameter dowel rods. All dowel rods are standard 36 inches long, and the hangers need to have five holes drilled through them so that you then insert the dowels and glue them. Strengthen the hooks and then you will have a fitment for the airing space with nearly fifteen feet of space.

It can be taken down and put away.

Christmas on the way, you will have plenty of visitors. Congestion in the hall with coats and other equipment may be a problem. I have a length of floorboard, 6 inches by 6 feet. This is stained and fitted with eight of the two-prong coat-hangers. In the top are strong screw-rings which fit into two old curtain-pole rings. They in turn hook over into a couple of picture hangers. After the affair, this can be stacked away to be used perhaps when the holidays start again.

For variety the handyman can do much to help his wife with original ideas. At Christmas we have a setting of flowers down the centre of the table. Normally these can be too tall, especially when holding a conversation across the table. I have painted three long baking-tins in deep green. Into these we fit a good packing of chicken mesh and then my wife is able to arrange the flowers as she wants them.

My Garden in December

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

THE Essex countryfolk tell me that 'a right good winter brings an even better summer.' So I suppose I ought to wish you all a really hard, cold, snowy Christmas, and then, if the saying be true, you will have the joy of lots of sunshine next July and August. Anyway, a blessed gardening Christmas to you all! This means that I hope you will get lots of Christmas presents which will help you: books of mine like the A.B.C. Gardening Series, which any bookshop will show you; nice stainless steel tools which are easy to keep clean, and first-class secateurs like the Rolcuts or Wilkinsons, which are so light and which make cuts perfectly.

Digging with Discretion

Continue with the digging but don't do too much at a time or you will have a bad back. Fortunately, we have shown to-day that very deep digging isn't worth while. Please clear all the crops as they cease to be of use, because if you leave the stumps of cabbages and cauliflowers in the ground they merely rob the earth of twice the amount of plant food they did previously. If you can spare the time to bash them up with a big hammer on a chopping-block, then

they will rot down well on a compost heap, if you sprinkle them with a fish fertilizer. They make such good manure. Put, if you can, some leaves in between them because these will help to engender heat.

If the soil does become hard and frozen you can wheel out barrowloads of compost into positions where it will be needed later on. You can work among the Brussels sprouts and remove the yellowing, decaying leaves from them. These are no use to the plants once they have started to turn yellow, and they'll give better dividends on the compost heap. If you've got any spare cloches or Ganwicks, put them over the celery trenches to prevent the rain seeping down the centres of the plants. I went into somebody's garden near here and found they were using a number of old umbrellas for this same purpose!

Prepare all the seedboxes, and if you dip them in a solution of Cuprinol they will last much longer. Give all the pots a jolly good scrubbing, and when they are clean dry them off before storing them away. Oil all the handles of the tools with linseed oil, and when you have sharpened the blades and cleaned them, wipe them with a mineral oil.

Hallowed Housework (from page 92)

toys must be repaired, I remember that our blessed Lord was a carpenter, and he will show me how to drive the nail in best, and though my work will not resemble the perfection of his, he will know that it is done in his Name and for his glory, and he will bless it.

In the business of laying a fire, or polishing a floor, we are afforded an opportunity of kneeling in company with all those thousands the world over who, through every hour of the day and night, are offering prayer and praise to our God, and in the accustomed position and attitude of prayer, the heart automatically raises itself to salute its Creator, and the meanest task is hallowed.

This is one of the loveliest things about our Christian faith... the way in which it hallows and enfolds each and every smallest and least important piece of work we do. It is not only those called to great vocational tasks who can share in the sacramental side of our religion and make out of their daily lives some beauty which may be offered to the Lord we love. He who was once a carpenter and lived an ordinary family life for the greater part of his time amongst us, knows that in each simple, humdrum piece of work we may be conscious of the presence of God, and we may sanctify the dreariest of tasks if we offer it to him and do it for the love of God.

Yet in thy dark street shineth
The everlasting light,
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

A Personal Note

As the Editor explains elsewhere on this page, I have decided that after nine years the moment has come for me to pass on the writing of the Christian Home Page to other hands. During these years I have had thousands of letters and hints sent in to me, and I

YOUR MAGAZINE IN 1961

THE SIGN next year will contain many new features. First will be the story of Ben Hur, specially retold for THE SIGN by John Lasingham and illustrated with scenes from the film running in London and the provinces.

A New Look at the Old Testament

Dr. William Neil—well known as the translator of *The Bible as History*, and for his appearances on television—has written a new series for THE SIGN which presents the Old Testament as a coherent whole, and shows how relevant it all is to Christian life to-day.

Established Features

As her postbag shows, Miss Rosamund Essex has secured a large following for her monthly feature *As I See It*. She will continue to express her own personal point of view in 1961. Our front page will continue to carry the monthly *Topic*; and *Question Page*, our long-established feature, will answer as many readers' questions as our space allows. *Puzzle Page* will also appear regularly month by month. The strip cartoon will make a new departure, for after some years devoted to Church history it will turn to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Home Pages

THE SIGN next year is also devoting more space to women's interest. Each month Hazel Macleod, of the Leicester Domestic Science Training College, will be writing about special recipes of her own devising. Also, Elizabeth Gundry, Editor of *Shopper's Guide*, will be giving expert advice—coupled with some warnings—on making purchases for the home. Dr. Shewell-Cooper, Director of the Horticultural Training College, Arley, will be continuing his popular monthly series of hints and advice for gardeners.

All this means that after nine years we shall be bidding farewell to Anne Proctor. The Editor of THE SIGN takes this opportunity of thanking her for the tremendous help she has been during this long period, and he is sure that all our readers will wish her well for the future.

September Puzzle winners:

No. 17. Miss J. Morgan (Glasgow). Miss J. W. D. Butler (N.W.11). Rev. John Elphinstone-Fyffe (Chalfont St. Peter).

No. 18. Margaret Ogden (Werneth), Eileen Kennett (Borden), Sylvia Shrigley (Aspull).

have enjoyed this contact with so many of you. Thank you all very much for your encouragement and interest. Some of you write so regularly that I feel I know you quite well. I shall now enjoy reading the pages of THE SIGN as a reader once more, and I am sure you will too. So let me end by wishing you all good in the New Year, and a very happy Christmas, too.

The Christian Home (from page 94)

The microscope has revealed the amazing complexity, for instance, of birth: the more we learn the more miraculous does every birth appear. But the star of Bethlehem remains as a symbol that there is more to life than even bio-chemistry can discover. '... the law was given to Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,' not only to the Jews but to men of all nations and colours.



HOUSING and NURSING accommodation is now provided by the Pensions Board for over 450 aged people of the parsonage.

PENSIONS are being paid to over 1,300 **CLERGY WIDOWS** & dependants who would otherwise have insufficient on which to live.

The Pensions Authority of the Church of England has accepted the challenge to find £100,000, the cost each year—will YOU help?

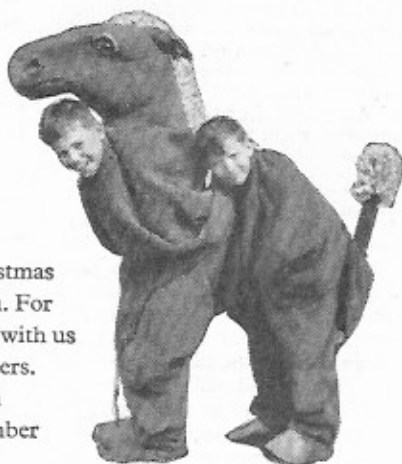
Please send YOUR personal contribution or your P.C.C. subscription to Mr. W. H. OATLEY, O.B.E., F.C.A.

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31, TUFTON STREET, LONDON S.W.4.

(Forms of legacy and other information gladly sent on request)

A Christmas to remember

This will be the first Happy Christmas many of our children have known. For some older ones it will be the last with us before they start out on their careers. While you are planning your own family's Christmas, please remember to share some of your happiness with Dr. Barnardo's children.



Gifts are always welcome, but cheques and postal orders (crossed please) are most urgently needed.

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10/- will help to provide Christmas fare for one child

Christmas Donations gratefully received

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(formerly WAIFS & STRAYS)
Old Town Hall, Kennington, London, S.E.11

SPECIAL REBUILDING APPEAL

To minimize expenses, we have had to centralise our activities. All our boys, with the exception of those on the 'Arethusa,' are now cared for and educated at Twickenham. This necessitated the immediate provision for a further 250 boys. It is to meet these heavy commitments, that we are making this Appeal. Please help us all you can.

Please send a donation to:
General Secretary, F. A. Thorp, Esq.

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The next two meetings have been arranged for Friday, 17th February and Friday, 17th March. I am grateful to the Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture at Ormskirk for their valuable help in arranging these meetings. Mr. and Mrs. G. J. Clarke will be our guests at the Dinner.

H.B.

FUTURE PROGRAMME

17th February, 7-30 p.m.—

"SEED TIME AND HARVEST"

Mr. G. J. Clarke.

17th March, 7-30 p.m.—

"SOIL SURVEY OF ENGLAND AND WALES"

Mr. B. P. Richardson.

"THE ORIGINS OF LANCASHIRE'S SOILS AND LANDSCAPE"

Mr. B. R. Hall.

Illustrated by Film:

"MAKING OF THE SOIL"

Balance Sheet of Whist & Domino Drive & Dance held on Friday, 18th November

Receipts

Sale of Tickets, Door Money,	
Donations, Sale of Refreshments	52 2 9
Raffles	20 11 2
	£72 13 11

Expenses

Hire of Hall	5 5 0
Band	3 10 0
Caretaker	1 10 0
Printing	3 7 6
Advertising	13 10
Orange Juice	1 2 6
	£15 8 10
Net Profit	£57 5 1
	£72 13 11

We wish to express our grateful thanks to all who helped us to raise the grand sum of £57 5 1. It was a great effort and a wonderful result. H.B.

THE MOTHERS' UNION

Our next meeting is at Barton on Tuesday, 13th December, at 2-30 p.m. and not 6th December as previously arranged. We are having the usual stall at the Bazaar, groceries and bring and buy. Any small gifts would be appreciated. Bazaar day is also a very important day for Mr. & Mrs. Knowles; it is their Golden Wedding Anniversary. I'm sure all M.U. members wish me to send to Mr. & Mrs. Knowles congratulations and the very best of wishes for continued health and happiness in the future. I.G.

THE YOUNG WIVES

The next meeting will be at "Greenways" on Wednesday, 30th November, at 2-30 p.m. Cake Icing Demonstration.

M.G.

Server's Rota

	8 a.m.	11-30 a.m.
Dec. 4	Robert Gaskell	Harold Grimshaw
.. 11	Peter Balmer	Ian Ainscough
.. 18	Stanley Marshall	Anthony Grimshaw
.. 25	Arthur Gilbert	10-30 John Gaskell and Peter Balmer
Jan. 1	Lewis Hanson	John Davies
.. 8	Ian Ainscough	10-30 Harold Grimshaw Stanley Marshall

Sidesmen's Rota

	10-30 a.m.	6-30 p.m.
Dec. 4	J. Cheetham, E. Battersby, W. Jenkinson	T. Sismey
.. 11	H. Sergeant, T. Swift, J. Serjeant, J. Banks	
.. 18	H. Prescott, H. Gaskell, R. Lewis, R. Dutton	
.. 25	E. Grimshaw, R. Brett C. Aindow, T. Forshaw	

Altar Flowers

Dec. 4	Mrs. L. Huyton
.. 11	The Guides
.. 18	The Sunday School
.. 25	The Congregation
Jan. 1	Miss Critchley

THE CHURCH COMMISSIONERS FOR ENGLAND

Very often I am asked why the Church of England is always "begging" when the Church Commissioners have an income of over £14 million each year. We hear it said "Why don't the Church Commissioners pay up — they have the money?" It is essential that every member of the Church of England can state with authority what the Church Commissioners do with their income. Here is the true picture of how they spent it in 1959/60.

How the Church Commissioners' Income (£14,296,643) was spent in the year ended 31st March, 1960

	Amount spent £	Proportion of each £ spent	
		s.	d.
Towards stipends of 11,400 rectors and vicars	7,361,283	10	3½
Towards stipends of 2,400 curates	540,772	9	
Pensions for retired clergymen & provision for future pensions	1,351,608	1	10½
Parsonages*	1,498,000	2	1
Towards stipends of bishops, suffragan bishops and archdeacons	361,956	6	
Towards stipends of deans, canons & cathedral servants (and payments to cathedral bodies)	459,208	7½	
Additions to capital, mainly to add to gifts by the laity	213,938	3½	
Church buildings in new housing areas	217,904	3½	
Church schools	40,000	0½	
Other church property	121,200	2	
Beneficiaries under particular trusts	232,643	4	
Reserves and sinking funds...	328,958	5½	
General reserve for use for capital or revenue purposes	636,730	10½	
Irrecoverable income tax ...	223,040	3½	
Administration	709,403	1	0
	£14,296,643	20	0

*Of this amount £1,000,000 was, in fact, in the general reserve, but definitely allocated to be spent on parsonage houses, being the second instalment towards a £2,000,000 scheme for that purpose.

SERVICES FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

AT THE PARISH CHURCH

7-30 a.m. HOLY COMMUNION

(Please note time)

10-30 a.m. SUNG EUCHARIST

3-0 p.m. EVENSONG AND SERMON

There is no service at 6-30 p.m. **Please Note.**

AT SHIRDLEY HILL (ST. AIDAN)

11-30 p.m. Christmas Eve, Holy Communion

AT BARTON (ST. OSWALD)

9-0 a.m. HOLY COMMUNION

CHILDREN'S TOY SERVICE

On Sunday, 18th December at 2-30 p.m. in the Parish Church there will be a Children's Toy Service. The Children are asked to bring a toy (which they have finished with, in good condition). The gifts will be sent to Quarry Mount for the children there. I hope very much that we shall have a grand selection of toys. Parents are especially asked to come to church with their children.

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS

This enjoyable service will be held on Sunday evening, 18th December, at 6-30 p.m.

HOLY BAPTISM

"Received into the Family of Christ's Church"

Nov. 13th — Carl, son of Leslie and Margaret Diane Fletcher, Small Lane, North Halsall.

Nov. 13th — John Spencer, son of Clifford Ralph and Dorothy Ann Barrett Roberts, Chestnut Cottage, Summerwood Lane, Halsall.

BURIAL OF THE DEAD

"In sure and certain hope"

Oct. 25th — Margaret Threlfall, Davies Farm, Haskayne, age 72 years.

Nov. 2nd — Thomas Peet, New Cut Lane, Halsall, age 94 years.

Nov. 12 Norman Rimmer Wareing of Holly Farm Plex Lane, aged 57 years.

Nov. 17th — William Threlfall, 61 Grimshaw Lane, Ormskirk, age 63 years.

Nov. 23 Thomas Leadbetter aged 86 years, Primrose Hill, Scarisbrick

Nov. 25 Mary Spencer aged 87 years, Weaver House Bridge, Halsall.

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