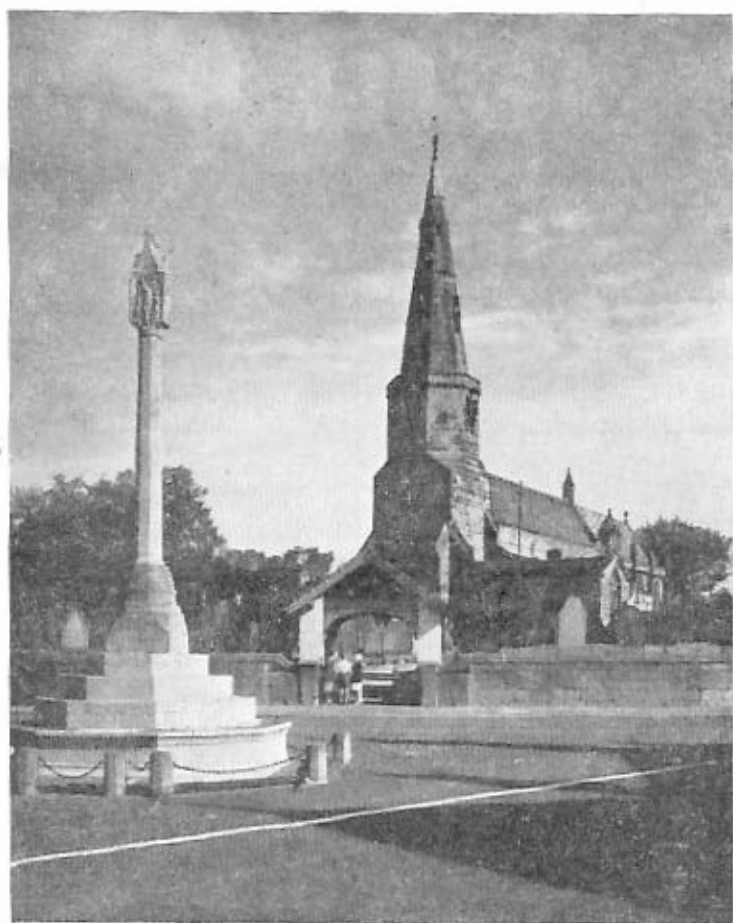


DECEMBER 1961

Price - Fourpence

HALSALL PARISH MAGAZINE



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Halsall.

13th November, 1961.

My dear Friends,

What extensive preparations were made in Ghana for the visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the ruler of the British Empire. Human ingenuity left nothing undone to give her a royal welcome. Police were detailed to guard her safety; officials greeted her with pomp and parade, all along the streets, bedecked with banners and bunting, thousands stood or sat on camp chairs to catch a glimpse of the Queen. Every word she spoke, every dress she wore, every step she took, every place she visited was carefully noted and minutely reported. Newspapers and magazines, radio and television publicized every detail of her activities. Millions of people in our country, though far removed from the glitter and glamour of the sphere in which she moved, followed with great interest the daily news of her social life. Such honour and homage were accorded the Queen of England.

"Behold, thy King cometh!" ADVENT nears, and this holy season tells us that a greater than Queen Elizabeth is coming! The epistles and the gospels, appointed from of old for the period before Christmas, are like trumpet calls, Again and again we hear the note:

Christ is coming
He is coming soon!

And what kind of a reception will He receive when in two weeks the Christian church will once again commemorate His first advent? When He was born in Bethlehem, the world greeted Him in sullen silence. Only a few shepherds and some Eastern sages kneeled in adoration before His manger bed. The tragedy of that first Christmas is repeated over and over again in our age. With few exceptions, Christ's Nativity—now as then—is ignored! Santa Claus has usurped the throne of Christ, our Saviour-King! The holy day, when angels sing again as once they sang in the fields of Bethlehem, has been turned by the world into a holiday of fun and games and frolic.

Be it not so with you. When the Advent trumpet sounds the glad note,

The Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long—
May every heart prepare a throne
And every voice a song.

Decorate your homes with pine and spruce and holly, but oh! do not leave your hearts unadorned! Remember your family and your friends with gifts, but do not forget to come to worship to thank God for His supernal gift! Show kindnesses and be rich in charity towards the less fortunate, but, above all,

let the bright flashes of angel light that once came from the open heavens fill your soul, and let the joyous message of the angelic annunciation, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord," direct your hearts towards Bethlehem, so that in the hustle and bustle of Christmas you will find time and thought for the manger-cradled son of God:

for the mercy of His birth;
for the compassion of His life;
for the atonement of His death;
for the hope of heaven through His resurrection;
for the comfort and the consolation of His second Advent.

So to prepare your hearts will enable you, amid all the distractions and diversions of this season, to celebrate Christmas aright, and I can promise you that you will find your highest joy of that holy day in the birth of Christ.

Who came with peace from realms on high;
And lowly came on earth to die.

May God's peace be with you all.

A Happy Christmas.

God bless you.

Your sincere friend,

HERBERT BULLOUGH.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR SERVICES

Services at the Parish Church and Mission Churches are as follows:

Sunday, 24th December

- 8-00 a.m.—Holy Communion at the Parish Church.
- 10-30 a.m.—Parish Communion (sung) at the Parish Church.
- 3-00 p.m.—The Christmas Carol Service at the Parish Church.
(Please note there is no evening service at 6-30 p.m.)
- 11-30 p.m.—Preparation for and Celebration of Holy Communion at the Parish Church.

Christmas Day, 25th December

- 7-30 a.m.—Holy Communion at Barton Mission.
- 8-15 a.m.—Holy Communion at the Parish Church.
- 9-15 a.m.—Holy Communion at Shirdley Hill.
- 10-30 a.m.—Family Service at the Parish Church.
- 11-30 a.m.—Holy Communion.

Sunday, 31st December

- Services at the Parish Church as follows:
- 8-00 a.m.—Holy Communion.
 - 10-30 a.m.—Mattins.
 - 3-00 p.m.—Evensong.

11-30 p.m.—Watchnight Service and Holy Communion.
(Please note there is no service at 6-30 p.m.)

NOTICE

The Parish Bus will run for the 3 o'clock services on Sunday, 24th December (which is the Carol Service) and for Evensong at 3 p.m. on Sunday, 31st December.

Residents in the Haskayne area who wish to come to the midnight services on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve should give their names to Mr. Cheetham.

Residents in the Barton district who wish to come to the midnight services please inform Mr. Bond, Gerrards Farm.

Residents in Shirdley Hill who wish to come to the midnight services please inform Mr. C. Shacklady. We will endeavour to arrange transport in cars for the midnight services.

PARISH BUS TIMES

(Sundays 24th and 31st December only)

Mr. Trowers	2-20 p.m.
Shirdley Hill	2-25 p.m.
Haskayne P.O.	2-40 p.m.
Blue Bell	2-45 p.m.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT

On Tuesday, 12th December, the scholars of our Day School will present a Christmas Carol Concert and there will be opportunity for the audience to join in the singing of carols. All are welcome and admission will be 1/6d. for adults and 9d. for children. Refreshments will be provided.

On Sunday, 17th December, the Sunday School will present "Emmanuel," a dramatised version of the Christmas Story in church at 2-30 p.m. A film strip in colour will be used in this presentation. At this service the children will present toys new or old to be taken to the Church of England Children's Home in Ormskirk. Please support this Service and invite your friends.

THE SPIRE AND TOWER

You will rejoice to see the spire and tower of the Church looking so well as a result of the recent repairs. Your interest and gratitude was wonderfully displayed on Sunday, 12th November, when you made your thank offering gifts. A grand total of £180 was handed in to me in Church and this far surpassed anything we had dared to hope for. It was a wonderful effort and the Church Council are indeed most grateful. Well done and again—thank you.

H.B.

CHRISTMAS DECORATION

The Congregation are invited to make small contributions towards the cost of flowers for Christmas decoration. Kindly hand your contribution to either of the Church Wardens.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

Dec. 3 Mrs. L. Huyton.

.. 10 The Girl Guides.

.. 17 The Sunday School.

.. 24 The Congregation.

.. 31 Miss Critchley.

Jan. 7 Mrs. R. Heaton.

DO MISSIONS MATTER?

Let us be honest: most of us wonder about this sometimes. Most of us, at any rate, have the occasional stray doubt as to whether the mission work of the Church really has got much to do with us. It is quite possible to become so concerned with our own affairs, with our own Church at home, as to forget that the spreading of the Gospel is a necessary part of believing the Gospel, and that the mission work of the Church lies at the very heart of things. In such moments it is good to look at such pictures as those on the Church notice boards. Such pictures can powerfully remind us that the mission work of the Church can often mean the remaking both in body and soul of human beings. They remind us that the mission work of the Church really can and does bring people out of darkness into light.

It is not so long since the high tide of missionary vigour was carrying our forbears into Africa. They found it a dark continent. We live in times when it is emerging stormily in its separate nations and states, into what will be a most important part of the human family in time to come. Let the tremendous part which the Church had in all this, and still has, never be forgotten.

The work of missions is not less, but more important and pressing now than ever. The challenge is not less urgent but more urgent. But we have to keep up to date in our ideas of what this work in fact is, for the enemies which face the work of doing it alter from age to age. Among the enemies nowadays are the passionate nationalisms of Africa and Asia, which make many suspicious of anything coming from the West. Herein lies the tremendous importance of handing over as much as possible the work of the Church in Africa to Africans. And then,



The Adoration of the Shepherds

G. delle Notti

A New Look at the Old Testament

By William Neil

12. THE SON OF MAN

THE book of Daniel may not seem to be the most appropriate theme to conclude this series, particularly at Christmas. Next to the book of Revelation, which it most closely resembles, it is perhaps the most obscure book in the Bible. Part of it, of course, is quite straightforward, the splendid stories about the Lion's Den and the Fiery Furnace which we know from childhood. We seldom, however, get past the first half of the book where these tales are to be found and penetrate into that bewildering mixture of visions of monsters and cryptic allusions which makes up the second half.

Yet it is here in this forbidding territory that we find the clue to the description that Jesus most frequently used of himself—the Son of Man. One of the

many lessons we have learnt about the Old Testament in recent years is just how much the New Testament looks back to it and depends on it, and how great a part the thought of the Old Testament played in the minds of the writers of the gospels and epistles. But this is equally true of our Lord himself. All Jewish boys were schooled in the synagogue on the Law and the Prophets, but in Jesus' case this was doubly true. It is clear from his language, his sayings and stories, that he loved the Old Testament and lived with it. That alone should make us want to know more about it for ourselves.

The Servant of God

But, in addition, when we try to fathom the depths of our Lord's

THE SIGN

*Not ashamed to confess the
faith of Christ crucified*

No. 684

VOL. 57

DECEMBER 1961

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

Days of fasting, or abstinence:

Fridays, 1, 8, 15, 22, 29;
Wednesday, 20; Saturday, 23,
Ember Days, 20, 22, 23.

thoughts about himself, his vocation and mission, we are forced again and again to recognize just how much the Old Testament influenced his actions. Earlier this year, in Lent, we saw how much his mind was moved by Second Isaiah's great conception of the Servant of God, who through his own suffering would lead men to God. This was, indeed, so far as we can, with reverence, seek to probe the mind of Jesus, the role that was uppermost in his thoughts as he set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem and the Cross that awaited him there.

The Son of Man

There was, however, another Old Testament insight that moved him and shaped his purpose—Daniel's vision of the Son of Man. Sometimes, of course, when our Lord uses the words Son of Man, he simply means 'I', e.g. the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head (*St. Matt.* 8, 20). But when Jesus asks the disciples: Who do men say that the Son of Man is? (*St. Matt.* 16, 13) or when he talks of the right of the Son of Man to forgive sins (*St. Mark* 2, 10) or to criticize the sacred Law (*St. Mark* 2, 28) or when he figuratively claims the place of honour at the right hand of God for himself as Son of Man (*St.*

Mark 14, 62), he obviously means a good deal more. We can only learn what was in his mind by turning back to the book of Daniel.

In chapter 7 of that strange book there is a characteristic vision of fierce monsters rising out of the sea. We know from the conventions of this type of writing that monsters stand for world empires, and we are told elsewhere in the book that these particular four stand for the great powers that terrorized the ancient world. But as we read on in this seventh chapter of Daniel we see these hideous monsters being destroyed, and the writer is obviously telling us that sooner or later the days of all ruthless and militaristic tyrannies come to an end. They are not in accordance with the will of God and he brings about their downfall.

The Man

But notice what happens next. The prophet sees in his vision the Almighty on his throne pronouncing judgement on these pagan despots and inaugurating a new kind of world power, 'the kingdom of the saints of the Most High,' and the ruler of this new type of community is called 'one like unto a son of man.' No doubt in Daniel's mind the contrast was between the barbarism of godless world-states, personified as fierce monsters, and the peaceable, lawful character of the new community, personified as a human being or perhaps an angel. But by New Testament times the figure of the Son of Man had become a kind of supernatural visitant from the skies, another name for the Messiah whom John the Baptist expected to come with fiery judgement.

The Everlasting Kingdom

Was this what our Lord meant when he called himself Son of Man? Surely not. As in every other case where he uses the Old Testament, Jesus proved himself its master and not its slave. Our Lord saw himself not as a supernatural, apocalyptic figure, but as the fulfilment of Daniel's vision. His role was to be the ruler of a new kind of community as different from world empires as Daniel's monsters were from Daniel's Son of Man. Jesus knew himself to be the Messiah of God for whom men had hoped and prayed, but he himself would decide what kind of Messiah he would be.

In obedience to God he chose the path of the Servant which led him to a Cross, but beyond the Cross he saw his destiny as Son of Man, the Head of the community of 'the saints of the Most

High,' the Church. As we celebrate the festival of his Incarnation, it is perhaps as perfect Man—the child of Bethlehem, the carpenter of Nazareth, the Master among his friends—that we

think of him most. Let us not fail to remember also what Jesus meant when he called himself Son of Man, and what that means for us to-day. Read Daniel 7, 14.



And four great beasts came up from the sea.—DANIEL 7, 3

Your Magazine in 1962

Your magazine will be as bright as ever next year. What is more, in addition to your favourite features in *THE SIGN*—Question Page, The Topic, Puzzles, The Garden Page—there will be new features too.

Here are some of them. Dr. William Neil, whose articles on the Old Testament so many of you have enjoyed, is writing an entirely new series. He is calling it 'An Outline of the New Testament.' Its background is the New English Bible, and its purpose is to help us all to read it.

There is going to be a new Strip. This will be based on the famous story *Quo Vadis?* the story of how St. Peter, fleeing from Rome in time of persecution, met our Lord and returned to face martyrdom.

There is a new serial too. John Lastingham, whose final instalment of *Ben-Hur* is in this number, is writing a new tale of St. Paul, *God's Adventurer*. It will be illustrated by pictures from the B.B.C. Television Serial, 'Paul of Tarsus.'

Last but by no means least! Hazel Macleod, of the Leicester Domestic Science Training College, will be taking over the whole of the women's interests in *THE SIGN*.

All these, and a good many other things as well, will be in your magazine next year.

Like It or Not (2)

By Rosamund Essex

A MONTH or two ago I asked the readers of THE SIGN to tell me their views on modern art in churches. I have been showered with

They say modern art has a meaning behind it. Well, what meaning? P. M., while approving most modern art, castigated some windows as



The Nativity

Giorgione

replies and fascinated with the strongly divergent answers. May I remind you of the questions I asked. They were:

1. Do you approve or disapprove of modern art in church?
2. Do you think that on the whole modern art is beautiful or ugly?
3. Do you think that we are too conservative in our likes and dislikes of church art?
4. Is your age group under 30, over 30, over 45?

First I turned to letters of the very young, whose views varied enormously. F. E. P., aged 16, wrote, 'I approve of modern art in churches, for it expresses, not only a picture (as the paintings of Renaissance artists did) but the idea behind the picture.' But K. P., also aged 16, said, 'I think that on the whole modern art is ugly. I fail to see any beauty in it.'

A third youngster (18) asked: 'Why must modern artists portray huge hands and distorted and bloated feet,

'glaringly out of place, like the backdrops of a bad pantomime,' and went on to describe some of the figures as being 'like Belsen victims.'

When the whole pile of letters was finally opened and read, I found that the votes were very close indeed—50 per cent were wholly in favour of the modern trend; 48 per cent were antagonized by it; 2 per cent just could not make up their minds, and there were a few who, like E. M. H., said, 'I disapprove of all art in churches,' and quoted the second commandment.

While we are about it, let us stick to the disapprovers first. A typical letter came from E. O. who said, 'I do not like modern art in church because it seems to me to lack the Christian spirit.' T. W. B. added, 'The modern artists are more apt to express themselves than the spirit of the Church, about which they appear to be wholly ignorant.'

B. M. (aged 32) was very hot about it all: 'What will future generations

think of some of these monstrosities in our places of worship? They will be led to think we were a generation of idiots and inartistic fools.' N. R. called modern paintings 'grotesque and crude monstrosities.' C. M. R. thought 'modern art awful; it bewilders me because I cannot understand it'; and A. M. A. asserted, 'Gothic raised one's eyes and soul to heaven—modern art makes me close them in horror.'

On the other side, H. F. (aged 17) said, 'I find modern art interesting rather than beautiful. . . . Modern art is like the mediaeval in being concerned to express not the objectively real but the spiritually real.' C. S. (aged 35) began with a question: 'By modern art do you mean Bazaine, Leger, Lurcat, Renner Senn, Lambert Rucki, Matisse, Coteau, Moore? . . . Modern art is both beautiful and ugly. Nearly all apostolic Christianity was ugly, with death and torture commonplace. It is to our eternal discredit that we do not face facts, and even make our crucifixes pretty.'

D. K. H. expressed a view repeated by many others: 'Modern art is to me a very mixed bag. Rather than being either beautiful or ugly, I find that some modern art is rather strange and austere, and also it can be very bright and gay' (aged 21). Very many writers said that modern art was appropriate only in modern churches (something with which I myself could not agree: and it is plain that the older masters did not mind in the least adding the genius of their generation to that of any older one). D. G. agrees with me: 'I become more and more convinced that good work of any period will suit good work of any other period,' and he (and others) instance Epstein's and Moore's works.

Of course, this investigation only scratches the top: it cannot be very deep because of the little space at my disposal. Of course, some of the questions beg the question. Of course, when one speaks of 'beauty' and 'ugliness' these are terms that need more careful definition than is possible here. Many letters have taken me to task on such points.

I have only been able to quote tiny pieces from long letters: but let my correspondents be comforted. 'The Central Council for the Care of Churches' has been so interested in our experiment in THE SIGN that I am sending it quotations from the most interesting letters. I thank all my correspondents very much indeed for a feast of fascinating arguments.

BEN-HUR

A Tale of the Christ, retold by John Lastingham

PART 12. THE CROSS

WHEN the first ecstasy of reunion with his mother and his sister, now so miraculously healed of leprosy, was over, the first thing all did was to fall upon their knees in prayers of thankfulness. Ben-Hur himself repeated the prayer with them, but he was still mystified as to the true nature of him in whose power the healing had been effected. He asked: 'Mother, what is this man whom they call the son of the carpenter?'

His mother's eyes rested upon him with all their old tenderness as she replied: 'He is the Messiah. He has his power from God.'

During the next twenty-four hours Ben-Hur became increasingly astonished at the vast numbers of people who were gathering in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. There were Jews from all parts of the world; there was a concentration of power sufficient to raise a revolt in the name of he who was to be king of the Jews. But would that king make a sign? Would he proclaim himself an earthly ruler and so bring the crowds rallying to his side? Ben-Hur anxiously awaited the sign from the man of Nazareth; but no sign of that nature was forthcoming as the Messiah went quietly about his ways. Always the Galilean recruits whom Ben-Hur had so rigorously trained in the past months and, indeed, years, were coming to him with messages keeping them informed of the movements of the Nazarene. It was from them that Ben-Hur soon learnt that the man's life was in danger both from the Jewish authorities and from the Romans. Meanwhile, Ben-Hur himself lived without the city, awaiting the moment to strike. But that moment not coming, and he growing increasingly impatient, there came a night when he decided to ride into the city and to go to the old palace of the Hurs, his boyhood home, and learn there what new developments there might be. It had been his intention to seek out Malluch, but that worthy was out. Simonides and Balthasar the Egyptian were likewise away from the house. It thus befell that he found himself closeted alone with Iras, the daughter of Balthasar.

He was astonished beyond measure by the coldness of her greeting. He soon learnt the cause of her coldness. 'Tell me,' she asked haughtily, 'tell me, O prince of Jerusalem, where is he, that son of a carpenter of Nazareth

from whom so lately such mighty things were expected. I looked everywhere among the procession for a figure with a promise of royalty. Yet all I saw was a man riding upon an ass. Was this thy king, was this thy redeemer of the world?' She broke into ironic laughter.

Thoughtfully he returned from the guest chamber where he had been speaking to Iras to seek Simonides in the little house upon the roof. But Simonides was not there. Instead, curled up in her father's chair and asleep, was his daughter Esther. Sadly and longingly Ben-Hur looked upon the girl, and as he looked he saw her beauty, and he remembered her faithfulness. Leaving her asleep in the chair, he went out into the moonlit city and there walked straight into a strange adventure.

The first thing he saw was an armed party, partly made up of Temple guards, partly of Roman soldiery,



The Procession to Calvary

Ben-Hur understood all. She had been banking upon the worldly gains which would come to her from association with Ben-Hur as a lieutenant of the king who was to be. And now, seeing the meek and humble nature of this so-called king, she was angry and disappointed. He would have left her, but she held him back. And what she held him back for was to make a plea to him—and this for the second time astonished him beyond measure—to forgive Messala the massive debts which the Roman had incurred by being the loser of the chariot race at Antioch with Ben-Hur. It was clear, though now revealed for the first time, that she was the lover and the ally of the Roman. Proudly Ben-Hur replied. He would not forgive Messala his debts. And though, as he learned, the Roman was broken in body after the accident of the chariot race, he could not in that find any reason why he himself should abate one iota of his vengeance. Nor did the threats of Iras to disclose Ben-Hur's true identity to the Romans move him at all. She could do, he told her, her worst. And with that he parted from her.

making their way purposefully out of the city, carrying torches and lanterns under the moonlight. Three men among them he noticed particularly: the first was the chief priest, the second was an officer-guard of the Temple, the third was one whom he knew to be called Judas Iscariot, one of the followers of the Nazarene. To this man Ben-Hur called a greeting, but the other, walking with his head sunk upon his breast, passed him without returning the salute.

Because it was Passover night the gate of the city was open. Joining himself to the procession, Ben-Hur followed him down the gorge and over the bridge at the bottom of it to where was a little garden known as Gethsemane. There, outside the entrance, stood a man in white clothes, bare-headed. His hands were crossed before him in an attitude of resignation and waiting. He was the Nazarene! Presently his clear voice was heard saying: 'Whom seek ye?'

'Jesus of Nazareth,' replied the High Priest.

The reply was simple: 'I am he.'

And at that moment he whom they

called Judas said 'Hail, master!' And with that he kissed the Nazarene.

It appeared to have been a signal. The guards closed upon him whom they had clearly come to take. Surely, Ben-Hur thought, he would not allow them to bind him! Yet it was even so, and though one of the disciples standing by made a move to resistance and, drawing his sword, cut off the ear of a servant of the High Priest, the Nazarene restrained his follower and heeled the man with a touch.

Ben-Hur, now wildly excited, resolved to ask one question of the man whom they were taking so easily. Fighting his way to his side, he asked breathlessly: 'Tell me, I pray thee, if I bring rescue, would thou accept it?'

The Nazarene never so much looked up nor allowed the slightest sign of recognition, but only passed on. But the action of Ben-Hur brought attention upon him and many hands were reached out to try and seize him also.

Next morning, about the second hour, two men rode at full speed to the doors of Ben-Hur's tents. They brought urgent tidings. The Nazarene was condemned to die and the Cross of shame awaited him! Ben-Hur sprang up.

And so it came to pass that Ben-Hur was a witness of the Crucifixion. Three companions were with him: Balthasar, failing fast, in anguish of spirit, and carried in a litter; Simonides, and his daughter Esther. They saw Golgotha, the place of the skull. They saw the procession arrive, they saw and heard the vast crowd which accompanied it; and in the midst of all they saw the Nazarene. And then, as he watched the preparations for the Crucifixion, the climax of Ben-Hur's life came. He was conscious of a change within him. A conception of something better than the best of this life began to dawn upon his mind clearer and clearer, bringing to him a certain sense that, after all, the mission of the Nazarene was that of a guide across the boundary for such as loved him, across the boundary to where his kingdom was set up and waiting for him. Then it seemed to Ben-Hur that he heard again the saying of the Nazarene: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.' The words repeated themselves over and over, and took form, and the dawn touched them with its light, and filled them with a new meaning and understanding. Going over to where Balthasar was kneeling, Ben-Hur, laying his hand upon the good man's shoulder, said: 'O wise Egyptian, thou alone wert right, the Nazarene is indeed the Son of God.' Simonides, for his part, was deep in thought. It was at his suggestion that the little party drew near to the Cross, noting how the figure upon the centre one remained silent while the thieves upon either side of him groaned and cursed.

Simonides folded his hands and said: 'The darkness is gone. I see with other eyes.'

Even so was it with Ben-Hur himself.

The End

The Pilgrim's Progress

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

The Heavenly City



QUESTION PAGE

4187. Why is so much importance given to the ancestors of St. Joseph, in tracing the ancestry of Jesus, when Joseph was not, in fact, his father?

The genealogies of our Lord in St. Matthew and St. Luke are to a large extent symbolic, and they illustrate the three stages of Jewish history, from Abraham (or Adam) to David, from David to the Exile, and from the Exile to Christ. It is important to remember that in Old Testament times women had no legal status, and it would have been unthinkable for a Jew to trace his ancestry through a woman. Relationship to a father by adoption was considered of greater importance than to a natural mother.

4188. May an agnostic be married in church?

All baptized persons are entitled to be married in church provided they have not formally disclaimed belief in the Christian Faith, or adopted a non-Christian religion; and can, with a good conscience and a right understanding, take their part in the marriage service. An agnostic, in cases where the other partner to the marriage is a believer, could presumably take part in the service with a good conscience by adopting the attitude 'I do not know whether this means anything or not. In so far as it does mean anything I am prepared to accept it.' The Church has never turned away those faced by honest doubts, and prays their doubts may be resolved.

Question of the Month

4186. Why was December 25th chosen as Christmas Day, as the actual date of Christ's birth has never been ascertained?

When Christmas Day was added to the Christian Kalendar in the fourth century it was assumed that our Lord began his ministry exactly thirty years after his conception, and that his ministry lasted for exactly three years. It was calculated that the date of the Crucifixion was March 25th, and this was therefore fixed as the date of the Annunciation. The Nativity was fixed nine months afterwards on December 25th. A further reason was that in the Roman Empire December 25th was observed as the festival of the re-birth of the sun (after the passage of the shortest day) and was a day of national rejoicing. Christians turned the pagan festival into a Feast of the Church.

4189. How can Jesus be present in our hearts, and in the Blessed Sacrament, as well as in heaven?

Jesus is God, as well as man, and being God, is not limited in time or space. How this can be is beyond our limited human comprehension; but the Psalmist

expressed it in the language of poetry in Psalm 139:

If I climb up into heaven, thou art there: if I go down to hell, thou art there also.

If I take the wings of the morning; and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there also shall thy hand lead me: and thy right hand shall hold me.

4190. Why do choirboys wear a cassock, surplice, and ruff?

Choirboys wear a cassock, surplice, and ruff because this was the uniform of the clergy in Elizabethan days. A cassock is convenient because it covers all one's ordinary garments. The white surplice symbolizes purity, and is referred to in the New Testament, for example, in Revelation 7. 9. The ruff, or Elizabethan starched collar, looks extremely well if it is clean and tidy, and has been adopted by many choirs.

4191. What are the responsibilities of a sacristan, and from whom is his authority derived?

A sacristan is responsible for the good order of the chancel, under the direction of the parish priest. It is for him to see that bread and wine are always available for Holy Communion, that candles are changed when necessary, and that the altar linen is always clean and available. His authority derives from the parish priest, under whose instructions he must act at all times.

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.

HOUSEWIVES' CHOICE

By Elizabeth Gundry

IF someone told you that a concoction containing vitamins, enzymes, proteins, amino acids, glucose, fructose, organic acids and saccharides was health-giving you would probably be impressed. To a lay mind, barely understood technicalities usually impress.

If you were told that honey is beneficial, the information might not carry much weight. Familiarity breeds contempt.

All the constituents mentioned in the first paragraph are in an unimpressive pot of honey, so the moral is:

If an advertiser proclaims that his product contains some chemical bearing an awe-inspiring name, it is generally advisable to refuse to be awed until you have discovered the exact significance of the claim.

That is what SHOPPER'S GUIDE investigations have shown. In so many issues there have been analyses and test reports that included phrases such as 'negligible amount,' 'no appreciable value,' and debunking of a similar kind. And not only in that periodical. In a Government Committee Report there was this:

'Glucose beverages are at present widely advertised as a source of energy. If account is taken of the amounts likely

to be consumed in a normal diet, no soft drink at present on the market can in our view be regarded as a sufficient source of carbohydrate to justify special claims to energy value. For this reason also it would be misleading to promote the sale of glucose beverages or any other soft drink by advertisements of a medical or pseudo-medical character or testimonials from individual purchasers. We therefore recommend a prohibition on the use of any testimonial or nutritional claim based on carbohydrate content.'

Thumb through a pile of County Analysts' Annual Reports and you will find plenty of examples of what one Medical Officer of Health calls 'blurb calculated to blind the lesser-informed individual with pseudo-scientific mysticism.' This sort of thing: tablets described as containing 'caffeine in a fast-moving base' were found to have as much caffeine as there is in a cup of tea or coffee, and the base moved too fast to be caught for examination!

Much modern advertising is simply an extension of the same salesmanship principle. In nine cases out of ten—just mumbo-jumbo.

An example of this 'little extra something, lot of extra price' business is provided by—

Stain Removers

Nearly all household dry-cleaning fluids consist mainly of carbon-tetrachloride; some contain nothing else. If you provide your own bottle (tightly stoppered, as the stuff is volatile), most chemists will sell you some carbon-tetrachloride at about 3½d. per fluid ounce; if you buy a much-advertised branded cleaner you will pay at the rate of at least 4½d. a fluid ounce. That is the cheapest—the scale rises to as much as 1s. 2½d.

For the extra outlay you perhaps get an additional chemical or two, and in a few cases there are cleaning pads. But is the higher payment worth while? To answer this question SHOPPER'S GUIDE had half a dozen of the leading makes examined. The report was that the basic constituent of them all was tetrachloride (in two cases, that alone), and with the four to which something had been added decisions were that they might be 'slightly more efficient though not significantly,' 'doubt whether the additional chemicals would make the cleaner differ greatly in effect from plain tetrachloride' and 'does not differ greatly in cleaning properties.' Even when the additive bore such resounding names as perchlorethylene and petroleum hydrocarbon (a cheaper solvent than tetrachloride) the verdict was 'no appreciable improvement.'

HOME AND GARDEN

1. MAKE YOUR OWN MINCEMEAT

By Hazel Macleod

HOME-MADE mincemeat is much nicer than the bought kind. I was given a jar of it last Christmas and liked it so much that I asked the friend who gave it to me for her recipe. She had obtained it in turn from an elderly relative and that is why it is named

Deborah's Mincemeat

2 lb. apples when peeled, 1 lb. raisins, 1 lb. sultanas, 2 lb. currants, 1 lb. mixed peel, 1 lb. suet, rind and juice of two lemons, 2 lb. sugar, 2 teaspoonsfuls grated nutmeg.

Put the apples (cored), raisins, peel and suet through the mincer. Add the currants and sultanas, the grated lemon rind and juice, sugar and spice.

Mix well. Allow to stand overnight before packing into jars and covering down. If you like you can moisten the mincemeat with a little rum or brandy, which will also improve its keeping quality, but this mincemeat does not seem to ferment very readily and we have, in fact, kept a jar for several months without the addition of any spirit—in a cool place, of course.

As a change from mincepies use your mincemeat for an open mince tart. Line a pie plate with a good shortcrust pastry. Put in your mince-

meat filling, covering it with a greased paper to stop it burning. Use your trimmings of pastry to make star shapes (cut out the shape from card if you haven't a star biscuit-cutter). Bake them on the shelf below the pie (oven 400°—No. 6) and place on the pie when it is cooked.



Mincepies at the party

2. MY GARDEN IN DECEMBER

By Dr. W. E. Shewell-Cooper

MANY people have electrically-heated greenhouses these days with the result that they can sow tomato seeds about the 20th of the month and thus ensure an early summer picking. The immune variety Syston Cross is the best for this purpose and the compost used should be the Eclipse No-Soil Compost. If you find the latter or the seed of the former

difficult to get, write to me enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

See that your newly-planted trees are staked, for if they rock in the soil ever so slightly in the winter a cone-shaped depression is formed at the base of the stem. This fills up with water, breathing is stopped and the tree is killed. Watch the apples and pears in store. Diseased specimens must be removed. If the storehouse is too dry the fruit will shrivel; sprinkle

the floor of a dry store with water occasionally to create a humid atmosphere. Hedges may be beautiful as well as useful. Now is the time to plant such fascinating hedges as Stoe Pink, Purple Flash and Flamboyant. Clear up the debris under your present hedges and put this on to the compost heap, sprinkling with a little fish manure. If this debris is left around insect pests will live in it over winter.

If the ground becomes hard and frozen, wheel barrowloads of well-rotted compost on to the soil and put it into heaps, i.e. one load to each 8 square yards. This will be ready to dig in when the thaw has taken place. Consult

The Complete Vegetable Grower (Fabers). This book contains a complete chart showing exact quantities of seeds required for a family of four or five.

It's easy to force rhubarb under the staging of a heated greenhouse in the dark providing you use three- or four-year-old clumps and syringe them over from time to time. Another method of forcing is to cover the crowns outside with boxes or pots upside down and then to surround these with dung or straw.

Richard Tatlock's Puzzles

23. SEVENSES (open to all)

This month brings us to the end of another year and the end of our puzzles on the shorter Epistles. It also brings me to my swan-song as Puzzle Editor and a retirement long overdue. Puzzle Page, 1962, will be 'under new management.'

Make words of seven letters (not six, five, or four, but seven) from this table according to the following rule: the first letter must come from column 1, the second from column 2, the third from column 3, and so on.

When you have made as many words as you can, discover how many of them occur in the First and Second Epistles of Paul to Timothy. Discard the rest.

For each word give the Epistle, chapter and verse number, and, please

note, the score will not be the number of words which occur in these Epistles, but the total number of references you

A	A	C	E	I	C	E	1	2	3	4	5	6
E	B	H	E	I	L	E	A	A	A	E	A	H
F	I	L	E	N	N	E	E	A	D	S	A	N
I	O	O	H	O	S	G	J	A	I	M	E	L
O	P	O	I	R	U	H	N	L	M	R	E	N
S	P	S	L	S	U	R	S	N	M	J	O	H
S	T	V	S	T	V	S	S	O	S	U	P	W

find. For example: if *Timothy* were one of the words and it occurred six times, it would give six towards your total score.

Two book tokens for 10s. 6d. will be awarded for the best entries.

24. SIXERS (age limit 13)

The second table will provide six names of famous people in the Bible. To discover these names, each of which has six letters, take the first letter from somewhere in column 1, the second from somewhere in column 2, and the third from somewhere in column 3, and so on.

When you have discovered the six names, write them on a sheet of paper and by the side of each name give one chapter from the Bible where that name is to be found.

Three book tokens for 5s. will be given for the best and neatest answers.

Entries for both puzzles should be addressed to the Puzzle Editor, THE SIGN, 28 Margaret Street, London, W.1. Closing date: December 15th.

Sept. winners: No. 17, Miss Marian Smith (Harrow), Mr. W. T. Jarvis (Leatherhead). No. 18, Caroline J. Evans (Woolstone, Cheltenham), Leonard Richardson (Leighton, Co. Durham), John Denyer (Worthing).



PEACE ON EARTH

Christmas Eve—and a child dreams of the excitement to come. Gaily wrapped parcels... cheerful crackers... the tinsel-strewn tree. Won't you help us to make that dream a reality for all the children in our care? At this the season of goodwill we ask you to be especially generous so that they, too, will enjoy a Happy Christmas. Don't let us disappoint them.

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too, there are the enemies of materialism and indifference active overseas just as much as they are here.

Yet perhaps the most dangerous enemy to this work lies in ourselves, here at home, in our ignorance and misunderstanding of what it really is. The mission work of the Church means, in fact, the sharing of a faith which has the power to redeem the world, and the time may well come when Christians in distant lands will be showing us what the living of that faith really involves.

S.P.G. PROJECT NEWS

S.P.G. Project. In addition to our general support for S.P.G. we have now a particular project which our money supports directly. It is the support of District Missionary, The Rev. B. S. Hayllar, in the Diocese of Chota Nagpur in India. The amount that is needed for this in the year 1961-64 is £1,557/10/0 per annum—not of course all from our parish or indeed from any one parish, but we shall be helping to reach that target.

To give us some idea of the place and the work we shall receive photographs and bulletins from time to time. The first photographs are on display on the notice board and here follows extracts from a letter from Mrs. Hayllar, who is helping her husband there. She describes a visit that she made with her husband and the Bishop of Chota Nagpur to Christians living in remote villages where contacts with a priest are few and far between. They left Jamshedpur for Badampahur in a borrowed jeep. Then on to Simlipahal.

Rural Communion. "On the outskirts of the town I spotted the Bishop's car standing outside a village house. This was our rendezvous, so we went into a courtyard, where a canopy of leaves made a ceiling above, a mat of leaves made a carpet, a rough wooden table served as an altar and a plain wooden chair as the Bishop's throne. Forty human beings, seven large goats, several chickens and four guinea-fowls made up the congregation for the Communion Service, in which we joined kneeling on the ground with bare feet as is the custom. I found it rather distracting to have a guineafowl scratching for food and fluttering about just under my nose!

They Rarely See a Priest. "The spiritual welfare of these villages is in the care of a very old catechist, who takes services in the churches and prepares candidates for Confirmation. The congregation is included in the parish of Katbari, so the priest there is responsible for giving them the Sacraments. He is an old man, and not having the advantage of a jeep, he has to walk, which means a three days journey each way. At the end of such a trip he nearly

always has an attack of fever. Consequently, Simlipahal is lucky if it gets a visit from the priest once a year. Bruce was the first missionary to visit the village for 15 years.

Crop and Cattle Talk and Other Problems. "The men told us of the harvest and the prices of rice, and how it is a constant battle to make a living as when the lentil crop is growing the deer come and eat it; then tigers and leopards, which come to eat the deer, find the cattle and goats of the villagers easier prey. The paddy fields are constantly being wrecked by elephants who trample down the 'bunds'—the small mud embankments that are made to keep the water in while the rice is growing.

"We also heard of the toll of life taken by various kinds of sickness; how the nearest doctor is two days' walk away through the jungle; how they use herbs and roots as medicines, but still they die. But as they have a very strong faith in God, they take it all calmly.

Improvised Dispensary. "The following morning," says Mrs. Hayllar, "we woke up at dawn to the sound of chopping wood and the thump and rustle of straw, as the young men of the village erected a little shelter-cum-dispensary just outside the church. Here it was that after eating breakfast prepared by the Bishop's servant, I laid out my medicines and Bruce laid out his books that he had brought to sell, while the church was cleared for the service and the Bishop examined the Confirmation candidates.

A Moving Service. "For the service, people started arriving from far and near. Soon the little church was packed and we started singing the first hymn, a Mundari 'bhajan', as the Bishop processed up the aisle. This meant stepping over and around the small children seated in the middle, amazed at the wonderful sight of the Bishop in cope and mitre.

"It was a very moving and long service—Confirmation followed by Holy Communion. As it was all in Mundari, of which I know only a few words, I was not able to follow the Bishop's sermon, but it didn't seem to matter."

And So Back to Jamshedpur. On the return journey they visited two more villages, "then on again towards the distant glow of furnaces of the Tata Steel Works, until finally we reached the city with its blaze of street lights, roar and clanking of the numerous factories, people streaming from cinemas, cars, buses and lorries dashing about, express trains whistling and diesel trains honking, until it seemed that the last few days had been nothing more than a dream."

BURIAL OF THE DEAD

"In sure and certain hope"

- Oct. 30—John Halsall, age 70 years, Plex Moss House Farm, Halsall.
 „ 30—Thomas Shaw, age 81 years, 29, Renacres Lane, Halsall.
 Nov. 3—James William Bailey, age 12 years, New Cut Farm, New Cut Lane, Halsall.
 „ 7—Mary Alice Freeman, age 83 years, 19, Cottage Lane, Ormskirk.
 „ 13—William Halsall, age 78 years, Culvert Lane, Newburgh.
 „ 15—Henry Swift, age 65 years, Trundle Pye Farm, Halsall

SIDESMEN'S ROTA

- Dec. 3 10-30 a.m.—J. Cheetham, E. Battersby.
 6-30 p.m.—W. Jenkinson, T. Sismey.
 „ 10 10-30 a.m.—R. Heaton, T. Swift.
 6-30 p.m.—J. Serjeant, J. Banks.
 „ 17 10-30 a.m.—H. Prescott, H. Gaskell.
 6-30 p.m.—R. Lewis, R. Dutton.
 „ 24 10-30 a.m.—E. Grimshaw, R. Brett.
 3-00 p.m.—C. Aindow, T. Forshaw.
 „ 31 10-30 a.m.—E. Serjeant, H. Guy.
 3-00 p.m.—W. Porter, S. Parks.
 Jan. 7 10-30 a.m.—W. Leadbetter, J. Balmer.
 6-30 p.m.—R. Gaskell, H. Baldwin.

SERVERS' ROTA

- | | 8 a.m. | 10-30 or
11-30 a.m. |
|--------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Dec. 3 | Peter Balmer | John Davies |
| „ 10 | Jim Heaton | Harold Grimshaw
and John Gaskell |
| „ 17 | John Davies | Peter Balmer |
| „ 24 | John Gaskell | Harold Grimshaw
and John Davies |
| „ 24 | 11-30 p.m.—Harold Grimshaw | |
| „ 25 | 8-15 a.m.— | |
| „ 31 | 11-30 p.m.—Peter Balmer | |

Coffee evening and bring and buy sale and beetle drive at Halsall House, Tuesday, 21st November. Balance sheet: Donations, £8 10s. 6d.; Draw, £20 5s. 6d.; Coffee, £3 6s.; Beetle Drive, £5 5s.; Stall, £34 2s. 10d. Total £71 9s. 10d. Proceeds to Church of England Children's Society, Quarry Mount, Ormskirk. Very many thanks to all.

CONFIRMATION 1962

The Confirmation Service will be held on Whitsun Day, 1962. Candidates must be 12 years old on 1st June, 1962. There will not be another Confirmation Service at Halsall until Whitsun Day, 1964. Candidates are asked to see the Rector as soon as possible if they wish to offer themselves for Confirmation next year. H.B.

HOW THE CHURCH COMMISSIONERS' INCOME (£15,765,157) WAS SPENT IN THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1961

	Amount spent £	Proportion of each £ spent s. d.
Towards stipends of 11,400 rectors and vicars	7,709,174	9 9½
Towards stipends of 2,400 curates	574,962	8½
Pensions for retired clergymen and provision for future pensions	1,111,702	1 5
Parsonages, including repayment of mortgages ..	550,000	8½
Towards stipends of bishops suffragan bishops and archdeacons	404,578	6½
Towards stipends of deans, canons and cathedral servants (and payments to cathedral bodies)	455,673	7
Additions to capital, mainly to add to gifts by the laity	419,703	6½
Church buildings in new housing areas	257,345	4
Church schools	50,000	0½
Other church property	124,593	2
Beneficiaries under particular trusts	180,223	2½
Reserves and sinking funds	400,525	6
General reserve for use for capital or revenue purposes	*1,519,005	1 11
Capital account, for re-investment	1,000,000	1 3½
Irrecoverable income tax ..	310,871	4½
Administration	696,803	10½
	<hr/> £15,765,157	<hr/> £1 0 0

*Of this sum £1,000,000 is to be spent on church building in new housing areas.

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