

FEBRUARY 1960

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Halsall Parish Magazine



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ST. CUTHBERT'S CHURCH, HALSALL

LENT 1960

HOLY COMMUNION EVERY SUNDAY at 8 a.m. and 11-30 a.m.

HOLY COMMUNION EVERY TUESDAY at 10 a.m.

ASH WEDNESDAY, 2nd MARCH

10-0 a.m. MATTINS AND COMMUNION SERVICE.

10-30 a.m. LITANY AND HOLY COMMUNION.

7-30 p.m. RELIGIOUS FILM SERVICE.

SUNDAYS:

8-0 a.m. HOLY COMMUNION.

10-30 a.m. MATTINS AND SERMON.

11-30 a.m. HOLY COMMUNION.

6-30 p.m. EVENSONG AND SERMON.

TUESDAYS:

10-0 a.m. HOLY COMMUNION.

WEDNESDAYS:

7-30 p.m. RELIGIOUS FILM SERVICE.

THE FOLLOWING RELIGIOUS FILMS WILL BE SCREENED

IN CHURCH ON WEDNESDAYS IN LENT at 7-30 p.m.

(SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE P.C.C.)

WEDNESDAY, 2nd MARCH: "TAMMY" (Colour).

WEDNESDAY, 9th MARCH: "THE WAY HE SHOULD GO."
& "DAYBREAK IN UDI"

WEDNESDAY, 16th MARCH: "THE FLICKERING FLAME" and
"CHALLENGE OF AFRICA."

WEDNESDAY, 23rd MARCH: "THIS WAY TO HEAVEN."
& "LAND OF OPPORTUNITY"

WEDNESDAY, 30th MARCH: "MARTIN LUTHER."

WEDNESDAY, 6th APRIL: "WHAT PRICE FREEDOM?" and
"BEYOND OUR OWN."

WEDNESDAY, 13th APRIL: "THE POWER OF PRAYER."

GOOD FRIDAY, 15th APRIL:

7-30 p.m.

"I BEHELD HIS GLORY"

THE MOST OUTSTANDING AND SIGNIFICANT RELIGIOUS FILM

IN THE LAST 25 YEARS.

Leighton House,
Orrell Road,
nr. Wigan.
20th January, 1960.

My dear Friends,

It may seem a little too early to write about Lent, but as this important season will have begun when you receive our next issue it is desirable that I should make some reference to the season here. We have kept the feast of Christmas well and truly, let us therefore prepare to keep the fast of Lent with like sincerity. Amongst other things it is a time for spiritual stocktaking—a time for careful thought—a time to examine our sense of values, and to correct where necessary our sense of proportion.

Our example and inspiration is Christ in the wilderness during the forty days in which His mission in life took shape in His mind and all contrary and conflicting courses were rejected. From that time He knew what He had to do, and He was possessed of the courage to do it. It is likewise good for us to withdraw from the distracting round of current events, and spend time in meditation and straight thinking. We cannot withdraw ourselves in any literal sense, and live apart in the hills, but we can withdraw our attention from immersion in things of the passing moment, and from our perennial worries and obsessions. We can turn our attention to questions which concern our spiritual selves, in fact to questions very similar to those with which Christ concerned Himself during those forty days. What purpose in life does God wish me to fulfil? How must I set about fulfilling it? How far, if at all, up to the present time have I been following a course of life in accordance with any purpose acceptable to God? In what ways can I improve?

Only in communion with God, by meditation thought and prayer can these problems come anywhere near solution. I hope we shall all endeavour to use Lent for this purpose.

A crowd of extra services have not been arranged. It is my hope that the ordinary Sunday by Sunday worship offered at St. Cuthbert's will be used by everyone to the fullest extent. A great improvement in attendance at the Holy Communion Service will be an indication that we are trying to keep a good Lent. In the midst of all our tasks and efforts, let us not fail to discharge our duty to God with fervency and zeal.

Your sincere friend,

W. HERBERT BULLOUGH

A SHORT GUIDE TO THE DUTIES OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

issued by the Archbishops of Canterbury and
York at the request of the Church Assembly.

All baptized and confirmed members of the Church must play their full part in its life and witness. That you may fulfil this duty, we call

upon you:

To follow the example of Christ in home and daily life, and to bear personal witness to Him.

To be regular in private prayer day by day.

To read the Bible carefully.

To come to Church every Sunday.

To receive the Holy Communion faithfully and regularly.

To give personal service to Church, neighbours, and community.

To give money for the work of parish and diocese and for the work of the Church at home and overseas.

To uphold the standard of marriage entrusted by Christ to His Church.

To care that children are brought up to love and serve the Lord.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

FEBRUARY 14th

This day has nothing to do with church matters these days, but long ago it had. Like so many of our customs the background of St. Valentine's Day lies in pagan times. It was part of the long February festival of pagan Rome called the "Lupercalia." About the middle of the month the names of willing young ladies were put in a box and shaken up. Young men then drew out a name each. The girl drawn by each man was to remain his companion while the gaieties of the long festival lasted.

With the coming of Christianity the Church felt bound to denounce this practice, but soon discovered that old customs die hard. The policy adopted was to alter it, and if possible to render it harmless. What the Church actually did will seem to us rather naïve. The names of saints were put into the box instead of the names of girls, and people were invited to draw out the name of a saint to whom they might offer their prayers. The day appointed for this was St. Valentine's Day. However, there never seemed much enthusiasm for this change. The old custom seemed much more attractive. "Did not the very birds choose their mates on St. Valentine's Day?" Centuries passed and still the lottery for girls continued, but the cruder practices of ancient Rome were gradually outgrown. The drawing out of names too, eventually disappeared. In 17th Century England the first man seen by a woman on St. Valentine's Day became her Valentine. (You will notice that the person was a Valentine and not a card or a letter). In those days people were very careful about whom was the first member of the opposite sex they met on this day. Samuel Pepys in his famous diary tells about his wife keeping in her room all morning "that she might not see the paynters who were gilding my chimney-piece." This was because she wished Sir William Batten to be her Valentine. The man



Analysing the returns from the parishes

Facts and Figures

WHAT sort of a noise do 46,848 bellringers, 24,898 organists, and 254,204 choristers make when they are all at work, which is roughly every Sunday? Such, at any rate, are the numbers of bellringers, organists and choristers within the Church of England in the provinces of Canterbury and York. We imagine it to be a very magnificent noise indeed. The numbers are staggering in their immensity. They are some of the fascinating statistics given in a deeply interesting booklet recently published by the Church Information Office called *Facts and Figures*.¹ (A few of these facts, incidentally, are referred to in the answer to a query on the Question Page of this issue.)

But there are others which cry aloud to be made known. About the clergy, for instance: how many are there, how are they distributed, are there enough? Here are some of the answers.

Their average age is 56. The number of men ordained in 1958 was 505, the highest figure since 1940. The average at ordination was 33½. The distribution of the clergy is, however, uneven. Thus in 1957, in the diocese of Birmingham, there was one clergyman to every 7,264 people, and in the diocese of Hereford one clergyman to every 1,054 people. And although the number of ordinations shows an increase, it is still not sufficient either to balance the wastage caused by death

or retirement, nor to keep up with the increasing population. In other words, we have not nearly enough clergy.

About young people, the number of pupils in Church of England schools just over two years ago was 932,988, representing 14·7 of the total school population in the country. The number of teachers in Church schools was 34,018. There are 279,398 boys and girls in Church youth organizations.

As regards marriages, the figures show that 496 out of every thousand people are married according to the rites of the Church of England. As regards Easter communicants the figure stands, or stood, two years ago, at 2,348,000, which represents a steady increase over recent years.

And now about money: the average parochial quota at the time these figures were compiled was £85; but there were 92 churches paying over £500. The total income of all the parochial church councils in the two provinces was £17,281,288, and of this £11,589,246 was contributed in church collections, subscriptions, and donations. The average contribution of each Easter communicant to

THE SIGN

Not ashamed to confess Christ crucified

No. 662

VOL. 56

FEBRUARY 1960

- 2 Tu. Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- 3 W. Anskar, B., 864.
- 5 F. Agatha, V.M., 251.
- 7 S. Fifth after Epiphany.
- 14 S. Septuagesima.
Valentine, B.M., 270.
- 21 S. Sexagesima.
- 24 W. St. Matthias, A.M.
- 28 S. Quinquagesima.

Days of fasting, or abstinence:

Fridays, 5, 12, 19, 26; Monday, 1;
Tuesday, 23.

the P.C.C. income was 1s. 10½d. a week.

And so it goes on. Perhaps the chief value of this book of facts and figures is that it gives for the first time some kind of a glimpse into the size, complexity and abundant life of our Church. Usually we see this Church of ours in its parts, rather than as a whole. But when we do see it as a whole, even through statistical tables, we get an encouraging picture of its strength.

And now for one more fact. We learn that 87·4 per cent of the parishes in the provinces of Canterbury and York have magazines of one sort or another, and that every month 3,145,661 copies of parish magazines are circulated.

SIGNET

The Divine Patience

Jesus... was moved with compassion toward them.—ST. MARK 6. 34

O THOU Compassionate, in whom is rest beyond the measure of the toil's increase; O thou Compassionate, in whom is peace beyond the limit of the thought expressed—

O thou, compassionate beyond the meed of man; O thou, divinely steadfast, yet indulgent of our failings when beset and quick to reassure us in our need—

O thou Compassionate, to whom we turn and find thee waiting, thou in whom we trust uncertainly until our faith has grown—bear with us, patient ever, till we learn; bear with us till we love thee as we must, secure, assured, adoring, thine alone.

D. Murrell Simmons

¹ From Mowbrays or any bookseller, 4s. 6d., post 9d.

As I See It . . .

By Rosamund Essex

ONCE you have fallen into the clutches of hire purchase, will you ever get out again? Is it one of the bad influences of these times? Or is it an excellent idea? I asked a probation officer, the other day, what he thought of hire purchase, and whether it was one of the things that helped to get young people into trouble. He gave me some rather remarkable answers.

First he said: 'For goodness sake, let us be realists. We have hire purchase. It has come to stay; it has even some good sides to it; so let us benefit by them.' He began speaking of the good homes, where the young growing lad is an apprentice with very little money in his pocket. What does he want? Nine times out of ten it is a bicycle.

The wise parent puts down the deposit money, and says: 'Now, son, it is up to you to pay me instalments regularly, and you can have your bike.' 'It gives the boy a sense of responsibility,' said the probation officer. 'He gets out and about; he sees places, and learns to appreciate the countryside; he plans out his little store of money. Above all, he does not get bitter about his friend who is an unskilled labourer, earns far more money and has had a bicycle for months already.'

Hire purchase also helps to set up a home for young people at times when prices are astronomical. It keeps them from being forced to live in cramped quarters with one of the in-laws.

Never, Never, Never?

After that, however, the probation officer seemed to stick a little. He admitted that hire purchase begins, in early life, to make the lad irresponsible. He thinks he can have what he likes, without effort, or saving, or planning.

The real hitch comes a year or two after marriage. The young couple often decide to get, not only the necessary furniture, pots, pans and linen, and the nearly necessary washing machine, but also the television set, the motor bike and sidecar, and the foreign holiday. Man and wife are in work, and a good income is ready to

hand; so they blithely pledge it away on hire purchase, right up to the hilt.

Soon the first baby arrives, and the wife is off work. Or illness comes. Or the man is put off work by a slump. Financial worries crowd in, and



quarrels ensue; the house, being hire-purchase-ridden, becomes a drag.

As I see it, it is no use pretending hire purchase is not there; or that it is not some benefit. But never, never, never let it get a strangle-hold on the house, on the family, and on its peace of mind. The probation officer had the last word. 'Hire purchase does not help a young couple to learn the idea of sacrificing themselves for anything; and you cannot be happy without self-sacrifice.'

Unwanted Children

You might have thought that there would be fewer unwanted children in England to-day. The Welfare State has wiped out poverty as once we knew it; nobody starves; almost nobody leaves a baby on the doorstep just simply because one extra mouth to feed is an impossibility. But babies are left on doorsteps all the same; or taken to the Church of England Children's Society, or to Dr. Barnardo's, or a local authority's. Why?

There are two main reasons. One is because of illegitimacy, and the shame that an unmarried mother may feel in her own child. She wants it adopted, sometimes for the good intention of giving it a decent home, sometimes for the bad intention of being free from an embarrassing burden. The second reason is the broken home, when neither parent wants the child.

I could write a great deal about unwanted children who are brought up by the State, or by the voluntary societies—lovely children, like the one in my picture, in the care of Dr. Barnardo's. But I will keep, this time, to the children available for adoption.

There are many problems about adoption that are little known, or disregarded. One is when to tell the child that he is adopted. Everyone with sense, I believe, tells a child at the first possible moment, so that never is there the shade of a lie between parent and child. I know one little boy who, at the age of four, went about saying proudly: 'I'm 'dopted.' He did not understand fully what he was saying, of course; but the idea grew up with him, and he learnt imperceptibly to understand. There was never that devastating, shattering moment when he had to be told (perhaps cruelly by a young companion) that he was not the child of his parents as other children are.

What is to happen to a whole family of children left destitute and homeless by a car accident, or by the death of parents through illness? If an offer is made for the adoption of one, leaving the others to live on in a 'home,' is that a good or a bad thing?

Heartbreak and Bitterness

To my mind it is wrong to separate brothers and sisters in this way. I heard lately of a cruel occurrence. Two children were taken by a married couple, with the idea of possible adoption later. In the end, the couple decided to keep one, and adopt her, leaving her brother to return to the organization from which they both came. You can imagine the heartbreak and the bitterness that resulted.

And one final mistake. Adoption is so often looked at the wrong way round. The really needful thing is not for childless couples to find children to adopt, but for the unwanted children to find parents, home and love.

The Man Who Waited

There was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon

ST. LUKE 2. 25

HE was very old, with the skin of his face much creased by time and weather, and his once bright body bent forward with the weight of years. His eyes, too, had faded somewhat. Yet still was in them that look, at once searching and tender, which comes into the eyes of those who by habit and discipline over many years have sought out the things of God. His name was Simeon.

A Holy Man

His religion was Judaism, that high and severe faith of the Jews which, when practised in spirit and in truth, produced great holiness of life. And the centre of Simeon's world was the temple at Jerusalem.

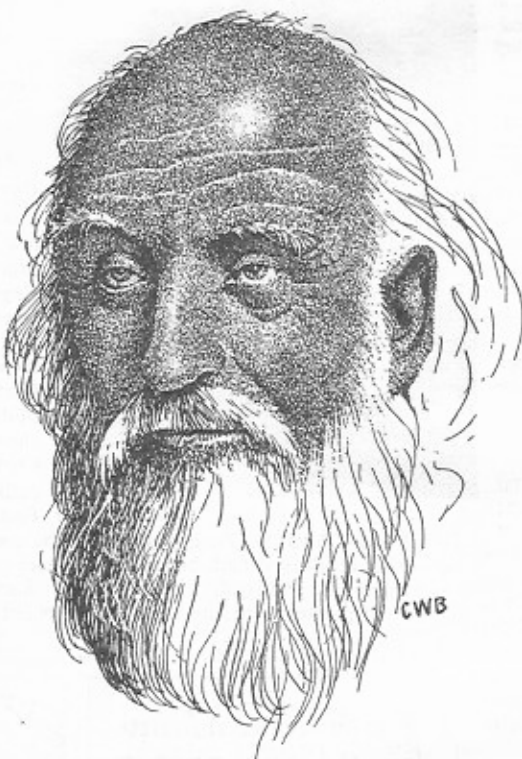
There, among the crowds, amidst the commercialism to which, by the beginning of the first century of the Christian era, the place had descended, Simeon moved—a figure devout and apart—to pray, to remain faithful to the Mosaic Law, and to wait: these were the concerns of the old man's life. And what he was waiting for was the coming of the Messiah.

He had waited a long time. It was an age-long expectation nurtured down the centuries. And then one day, guided by the Holy Spirit, he found what he had awaited for so many years.

The Holy Family

Among the crowds, not distinguished in any way from the others except to the eye of faith, Simeon saw a young Jewish countrywoman carrying a baby. With her was her husband, in manner and appearance a simple Galilean. Simeon knew at once what had brought them to the temple. The spectacle of parents bringing a new baby there was common enough. For in addition to circumcision eight days after birth, the Mosaic Law required of all the devout that the child should be presented in the temple, and there presented to the Lord in obedience to

the command, in the thirteenth chapter of Exodus: 'Sanctify unto me all the first-born.' Thus in commemoration of that night in Egypt long ago, when



the first-born of the people of Israel had been spared the destruction which had fallen upon the rest, infant boys were presented to the Lord in token of this ancient debt, and then redeemed, or bought back, by an offering of five shekels. The mother also attended in the temple for her purification, when she also offered a sacrifice, often, for those of modest means, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.

The Age-long Custom

It happened every day. Mary and Joseph—for it was they whom Simeon saw among the crowds—were thus following the age-long custom of their people in bringing the infant Jesus to the temple which was the focal point of their faith.

It was a great day for them, united

as they were in joy over the child, and looking forward in simple awe to the supreme moment of presenting him to the Lord. These, then, were the pair which the old eyes of Simeon picked out among the throng.

He made immediately towards them, his face alight with the inner revelation which at that moment came upon him. It was the child, the baby in the arms of the Jewish girl, upon which his burning gaze was bent. With the utmost reverence, and yet with such gentleness that the young mother without hesitation surrendered the child to him, he took the infant in his arms. And then, looking down into that tiny face, he uttered the wonderful words which have been said and sung down the ages since:

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:
According to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen:
Thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared:
Before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the
Gentiles:
And to be the glory of thy people Israel.

The long wait of Simeon was over. He could end his life in peace, knowing with certainty that he had indeed and in truth looked upon the Messiah. Softly, he returned the child to his mother. Then, as Mary and Joseph gazed in amazement, he turned to Mary with these words; words full of strangeness, perhaps, to her, and yet stirring in her mind secret memories of those of the angel who had come to her nine months before, saluting her, and saying she would become with child by the Holy Ghost. Simeon said: 'Behold, this child is set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea, and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.'

Prophetic Insight

It was to be a good many years yet before the mother of Jesus, weeping at the foot of the Cross, was to know the reality of that sword piercing through her soul. But, in that moment of prophetic insight in the temple, it was revealed to Simeon, the man who had waited so long for that very thing.

If you ask me . . .

ABOUT DEATH

Bishop Bernard Heywood

IT is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the Judgement.'

To most people the subject of Death is a subject to be avoided in conversation. Indeed, when reference to the subject has to be made, the word itself is often carefully avoided. Rather than say 'If I should die,' people say 'If anything should happen to me.' Or if someone is very seriously ill and unlikely to recover, they may say: 'The worst is feared'—and so on.

In fact, it is a fairly general instinct to shrink from the thought of death. And maybe this (like other instincts) is 'natural,' i.e. implanted in us by nature for the preservation of life. Similarly, the instinct of hunger bids us eat—to preserve life.

But it will be useful to go further into the matter and to consider specifically the causes of this human shrinking. Thus, some people fear the actual experience of dying.

Or the reason for fear may be that to die is to pass into the Unknown; for little has been revealed to us of what immediately follows our departure from this world. When children say that they are afraid of the dark, it is not really the darkness that they fear: for darkness is nothing but the absence of light. They are afraid because they don't know what may be in a room that is shrouded in darkness. Theirs is a fear of 'the unknown.'

In such cases we must rely upon the Word of God. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me.'

Once more there are those who fear extinction.

T. H. Huxley, writing in the last century, said: 'It is a curious thing that I find my dislike to the thought of extinction increasing as I get older and nearer the goal. It flashes across me at all sorts of times with a sort of horror that in 1900 I shall probably know no more of what is going on than I did in 1800. I had rather be in hell a good deal.'

No believing Christian need share Professor Huxley's foreboding.

Finally, our endeavour must be to

look forward in hope, reverently turning to the assurances given to us by



Kent Messenger

our Lord—'Who (St. Paul says) hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light.'

To the penitent thief he said: 'To
The Story of the Early Church

Letters between Pliny and Trajan written about 112 AD. reveal the attitude of the Roman Government towards the Christian Church.



They tell him of the Christians' weekly celebrations of the Eucharist

day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' And to all his disciples—ancient and modern: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life,' and 'In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.'

Remember, too, that his own Resurrection was the Resurrection of one who shared, and for ever shares, our human nature (allied to his divine nature) so that he is 'the first-fruits of them that are asleep.'

The Christian can say, quite sincerely: 'Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

And now, by way of footnote, a short epilogue.

A most notable book published a few years ago has the simple title: *Margaret*. She was a high-spirited English girl, fifteen years of age; and was stricken with a fatal form of cancer. With complete courage she faced death and learnt the love of God. Lying in bed, in pain, she said: 'I would not have anything changed.' The end came soon after Christmas, and a week or two earlier, looking on to the Great Festival, she could say: 'It will be the happiest Christmas that I've ever spent.'

Such was this noble girl's triumphant faith.



Pliny, governor of Bithynia, writes to the Emperor Trajan about Christianity



Trajan replies that those accused of Christianity must be punished

ANIMALS OF THE BIBLE PUZZLE COLUMN

By Richard Tatlock

37. The Ostrich

THE ostrich features in only two passages in our Authorized Version, though the same Hebrew word is rendered as 'owl' in a number of other verses. Scholars now agree that the proper translation in all cases is probably ostrich, a bird that was common in Bible lands in early times, though today it is known mostly as a bird of the open country of Africa, with just a few in Arabia. The cock ostrich, with its conspicuous black and white plumage, may stand up to eight feet high and weigh 300 lb. The hen is grey and smaller.

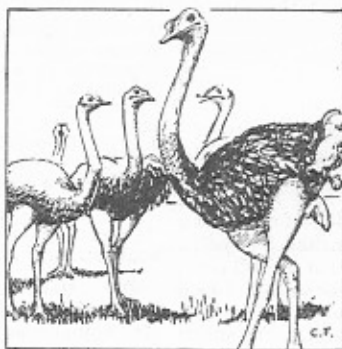
In the context of some of the passages, especially in the Prophets, there is little information which might help in identifying it exactly, but the Book of Job has a passage which is well worth reading (Job 39. 13-18), though it is too long to quote in full here. Remember that it is in poetical language and realize, also, that we turn to the Scriptures for instruction in moral and spiritual matters rather than to find the sort of detailed natural history that we expect to-day.

Let us just note a few points which make it clear that it is indeed the ostrich that is being described. Verse

13 mentions its 'wings and feathers.' Since Ancient Egyptian times the plumes of the ostrich have been used as ornaments, and this is the only purpose for which ostriches are kept in big farms to-day. Verses 14-16 suggest that the hen ostrich is careless of both eggs and young, leaving them in the sand where they might be crushed.

The truth is that they often make communal nests, where several hens eggs are by no means fragile, and it would take a heavy animal to crush them accidentally. Finally, in verse 18 we read that 'she scorneth the horse and his rider' for the simple reason that she can easily outstrip them!

GEORGE CANSDALE



3. JUMPING JACK (open to all)

In this month's puzzle you are required to make words from the letters in the pattern below.

The method is as follows: Having selected a starting letter, select your second, third, fourth letters, etc., by jumping diagonally, vertically or horizontally over any adjacent square; and keep on until you have a complete word. But never use adjacent letters. Always jump. Letters can be used over and over again, provided there is always a jump between any two letters of any word. Words of any length will qualify.

But it's February—the month of the Feast of St. Matthias, and we are only interested in the words you construct which can also be found in the Epistle for St. Matthias's Day.

Send your list of words on a post card please. Three 7s. 6d. book tokens will be awarded for the three best results first examined.

4. WEDGEWORDS (age limit, 13)

Here is a new puzzle: *Wedge words*. The idea is to choose a word, and then make a wedge by using the letters of the word to be the first letters of other words of increasing length. The first letter does not count; the second letter will have a word of two letters; the third of three; and so on.

Examples:

- | | |
|-------|------|
| 1. A | 2. A |
| NO | BE |
| GET | BUT |
| EASY | ABLE |
| REACH | |

Notice that the leader-word in No. 1 is *anger*, and that the other words, *no*, *get*, *easy*, and *reach*, gradually increase in size.

We want you to make a *Wedge word*. The leader-word can be any length—three or more letters. And, of course, the longer it is, the harder the puzzle. And now the snag! All the words you use (except the leader-word, which can be any word) must come from St. Mark's Gospel, chapter 4.

Send your entry on a post card, give the verse numbers where your words can be found, and don't forget your name, age, and address.

Warning: Be sure that each word is always one letter longer than the word before.

Three 5s. book tokens will be awarded for the best entries. Age and neatness will be taken into consideration.

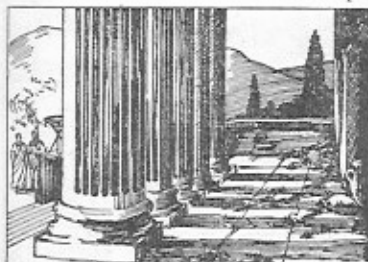
Entries for both puzzles should be sent to The Puzzle Editor, THE SIGN, 28 Margaret Street, London, W.1. Closing date: February 15th.

November winners:

No. 19. I. T. Pallison (Worcester).

No. 20. J. P. Cameron (Westacre), Marion Thurling (Downham Market), Michael Saurin (Portchester).

The Emperor Trajan. A.D. 98 to 112



The local temples are, he reports, deserted.



He questions two Christian women.



As a result, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch is taken prisoner.



Christians greet him as he journeys to Rome to be martyred.

Question Page

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

4067. I find it difficult to repeat Psalm 51.5: 'Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.' Does the Church really believe this?

Many of the Psalms are extremely ancient, and although successive generations have found their words unmatched as a means of expressing religious feeling, the meaning of those words has, from time to time, to be interpreted afresh. Most of the Psalms have been used in at least three senses. They were used in sense by those who originally composed them, in a different sense by the Jews of our Lord's time, and in yet another sense by the Christian Church. Thus, when in the Psalms we pray for the destruction of our enemies, or their children, the Christian interpretation is **not** human enemies, but rather 'all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul.' The Church does not teach that the conception of children is sinful, but, on the contrary, that marriage 'was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name' (*The Marriage Service*). The Christian interpretation of Psalm 51 is that we are conceived in a sinful world in which it is almost impossible to live without becoming tainted. We cannot praise God, as we should, of our own accord. We must first ask God to cleanse us and to open our lips.

4068. Why is the Book of Job so difficult to understand?

The Book of Job is one of the great

Question of the Month

4066. Is there any place in the Bible which denounces gambling? How should a Christian react to it?

Gambling is not expressly forbidden in the Bible. Its morality has been much debated. Some hold it to be always unlawful, but the majority of Christians regard it as a permissible form of recreation, though highly open to abuse. Those who hold that it is allowable would agree that it must not be about an unlawful matter, thus one may not bet someone that he will not get drunk; that the stake must not be excessive; and that it must be for some end other than mere avarice. To sum up the argument, it cannot be said to be sinful to enter a football pool or to buy a premium bond; but it is not compatible with the Christian life to place one's hopes of happiness for the future on the winnings from either. A Christian must regard himself as the steward, and not the owner, of any money he happens to possess, and it is his duty to use it wisely.

epic poems of the world, and, like the poems of Homer or Milton, it is not easy to grasp at first reading. Our Authorized Version of the Bible makes it even more difficult by printing the poetry as though it were prose, and the book becomes easier to understand if it is read in a translation such as the Revised Standard Version in which it is set out as poetry.

A further difficulty is that Job is an extremely ancient poem, and some lines have been missed out or muddled up so that the Hebrew text makes nonsense. This in no way detracts from the value of the book if it is read with the help of a commentary, such as *The Book of Job in the Torch series*, by A. and M. Hanson (7s. 6d., post 6d.), a course which we would strongly recommend.

4069. How many churches does the Church of England have in this country?

In England there were, at the end of 1958, 12,397 parish churches and 7,892 daughter churches and other places of worship, a total of 20,289. These were served by 15,181 clergymen and 5,971 licensed readers. These figures come from a report published by the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England, which informs us also that there are 26,771,000 baptized members of the Church of England, of whom 9,691,000 have been confirmed; and, perhaps more encouragingly, that there were 1,307,662 children attending Sunday School under 101,330 Sunday School teachers.

My Garden in February

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

GET on with the making of gravel paths, the putting down of paving, and any other renovation work. Take care of tender plants and shrubs during frosty periods by covering them with protecting material. Directly the soil is ready, sow parsnips, and before the end of the month put in parsley and broad beans also, if the weather is right. Sow a round-seeded variety of pea in a sheltered border and plant out some shallots. It may be possible to work among the spring cabbage and to give them a sprinkling of fish manure to encourage them. If the soil is fit, hoe between the spring bedding plants.

A new hedge can be planted and I can strongly recommend two unusual kinds: (a) a Sloepink and (b) Purple Flash. These are most beautiful and useful. Patch and re-level your lawn. Give the Crown Imperials a top dressing with sedge peat an inch deep, and prune the autumn-fruiting raspberries down to soil level. Plant out some rhubarb crowns and particularly the variety Timperley Early. Pelargoniums which have finished flowering should be cut back hard and the stems

removed should be used as cuttings. Strike these round the edge of a 6-inch pot, filled with sandy soil. Cuttings of perpetual flowering carnations may also be taken this month and rooted in sand or Vermiculite.

This is a good time to prepare and plant a new herbaceous border. Consult the book *Enjoy your Gardening* for the special dwarf varieties that need no staking. This saves so much work. Think seriously of sowing grass seed beneath the apple and pear trees if these are more than 4 years of age. The grass will take up the excess nitrogen and will only have to be cut regularly. Chewing's Fescue is the best lawn seed for this purpose.



Dr. Shewell-Cooper takes a look under his rhubarb forcing pots

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

By Anne Proctor

THE three Sundays before Lent have queer names, Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima. The names mean seventy, sixty and fifty, and, roughly speaking, mean those many days before Easter. The Epistle for Quinquagesima is St. Paul's great chapter on the virtues, faith, hope and charity, especially charity. It is a word we do not like very much nowadays, but it means love, and charity was meant to be love-in-action, only, alas, condescension and pride often spoiled the effect. We use the word *love* very carelessly to-day, sometimes it only means that we like or enjoy something; romantically we use it to express that passionate impatience which will selfishly rush people into a hasty marriage or an elopement, as well as for the real thing. True love seeks only the good of others and to do the will of God. To love strawberries means no more than that we like eating them, real love can rise above mere likes and dislikes, to do right or to serve others whatever the cost. More than that, true love between a man and a woman is ready to wait and grows stronger for the waiting, as Father Andrew once put it: 'We shall never love anybody less by loving God more' and doing his will.

Good Bone Soup

Boil or pressure-cook bones to make stock. Use this in cooking together 4 carrots, cleaned and cut into small rings, 2 large onions chopped finely, 1 large tomato skinned and cut up. Season with salt and pepper. Slake a tablespoonful of plain flour with cold water, and add this to thicken, then add 1 teaspoonful of curry powder, a little Bovril, and a nut of butter. (Mrs. C. L., Sunningdale, Berks.)

A Cheap Meat Dish

Buy two or three breasts of lamb and ask the butcher to chop them up for you. Stew these in plain salted water till tender, or pressure-cook them. Drain off the water and keep it to use as stock for soup; the fat will harden and makes excellent dripping. When the pieces of meat have drained, either fry them lightly till golden brown, or put them into a fairly hot oven for about half an hour in a meat dish or tin. They become crisp and tasty little cutlets. Serve them with potatoes, or boil rice as for curry, drain it and add to the dish in the oven. I sometimes

use boiled spaghetti in the same way and add chopped tomatoes, too.

Baked Raisin Pudding

Grease a piedish, put a layer of breadcrumbs on the bottom, then a



layer of raisins, and repeat till $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of each has been used. Add a knob of butter to each layer (2 oz. in all). Beat an egg well, add 1 oz. castor sugar and then pour in $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of milk. Pour this mixture gently over the raisins and crumbs. Bake in a moderate oven for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. (J. G. B., Torquay.)

Handbag Repairs

The leather handle of a handbag often wears out while the bag itself is quite sound. Coloured strip leather is difficult to obtain, so buy a narrow plastic or leather waist-belt, thread it

twice through the metal strap-holder, and get a shoemaker to clamp it for you (he will only charge a few pence), or perhaps a friend who does leather work will have a tool to do this. Result: new life for your hard worked old bag. (Mrs. H. C., Budleigh Salterton.)

Marks and Scratches

For those who still have 'Utility' furniture which so easily marks and scratches, try painting it over lightly with 'Rentokil' woodworm killer, and then polish as usual. I recently spilled a newly-made cup of tea on my sideboard and it made a huge white patch. I immediately painted with 'Rentokil' and then polished; the stain is now barely noticeable. Incidentally, the woodworm killer will also protect the wood in other ways. (Mrs. M. A. S., Epsom Downs.)

Safety First

It is not advisable to paint household step-ladders as this hides any cracks or flaws that may be present in the wood. It is much better to use clear varnish as a preservative. In this way, any defect can be easily seen. (Mr. W. F. K., Hamilton, Lanarkshire.)

Fairy Whispers

These little cakes sound as if they might belong to a legend. Rub 4 oz. margarine into $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of self-raising flour mixed with 4 oz. sugar, a pinch of salt, and an extra teaspoonful of baking powder. Add 2 well-beaten eggs to make a stiff dough, adding a little milk if required. Roll out to $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thickness, and cut into rounds with a tumbler. Place a spot of jam in the centre of each, and bake at once in a hot oven for about fifteen minutes. (Mrs. E. B., Colne.)

The Man About the House

By VICTOR SUTTON

THIS is a month when I find plenty of jobs to do. I am in favour of a note-pad and pencil so that I have all the details of the items I want. This saves wasted time and loss on progress. There are many little jobs we can do. Some of these give much pleasure to the wife and we keep amused.

Under-cover jobs in this month keep the mind interested and alert. I cut down an old and very ornate picture-frame which I had in the loft. Making a small study, I wanted a fender and here I found it. The actual width of the moulding was quite 4 in. and the embellishments unique. Fortunately,

this part was sound, but a coat of thick size made this firm again, and then a coat of buff.

From the long end I cut the widest section and from the rest I picked the best for the sides. Now I have a very attractive fender which is much admired. It is a very good plan, in making this item, to line the underside with a piece of hardboard, $\frac{1}{2}$ in. wider each side than the frame. This improves the design and prevents any weakness on the corners. So if you are looking for jobs, look in the loft first, and you probably have quite a lot of junk which can be used up.

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always had to make a present to his Valentine, and Pepys records that Sir William Batten sent his wife "half a dozen pairs of gloves and a pair of silk stockings and garters."

But—as Laurence Whistler writes, "True Love had never cared for such games. True love had always employed the saint on a definite mission." There is still in existence a letter written by a girl in 1479 "Unto my ryght well beloved Valuntyne John Paston." Letters of that kind continued to be sent for the next three hundred years, until in the last century St. Valentine became commercialised, and a Valentine ceased to be a person and became a fancy and colourful card with sentimental verses printed on it. Even so it continued the practice of those who had sufficient skill, to draw and paint, and write their own cards.

In the year 1825 the G.P.O. handled 200,000 of these letters or cards. In 1882, 1,634,000. During the twentieth century the custom seemed to lose inspiration, until in 1935 the Post Office gave it a new incentive. The artist Rex Whistler was asked to produce a design for a "St. Valentine's Telegram" which could be sent from any Post Office. Some 49,000 were sent that year, and the success of the venture was maintained until the outbreak of war in 1939.

SMILE PLEASE!

THE BASS DID IT

An umpire at a cricket match was also a versatile member of the village church choir. Discussing the match afterwards with some friends, the umpire said: "You know we would never have won if it hadn't been for me. When Tom sent down the ball that hit the last man's pads, he was so flabbergasted he forgot to appeal. I had my wits about me. I said 'How's that?' in my tenor voice, and 'Out' in my bass voice."

EPITAPH

Here lies in a horizontal position the outward case of George Rontleigh, watchmaker, whose abilities in that line were an honour to his profession. Integrity was the Mainspring and prudence the Regulatory of all his actions. His Hand never stopped to relieve distress, so regulated were his emotions. He never went wrong. All knew his Key. His hours glided by till an unlucky Minute put a period to his existence. He died November 24th, 1802, aged 57. Wound up in the hope of being taken in Hand by his Maker, Cleaned and Repaired and Set Going in the world to come.

From a Devonshire Tombstone.

RESERVED SEAT

It was a long and boring sermon, on the prophets, and one particular member of the congregation, sitting in the front pew, was getting fidgety.

"And now, Nahum," said the ponderous preacher, "Where shall we put Nahum?"

"Tha con put 'im in my pew," piped up the long-suffering one in the front pew. "I'm off."

CAUGHT OUT!

Three absent-minded professors, standing together on a station platform, were so absorbed in conversation that it was only when the guard was about to wave his flag that they were aware that the train was in. They all made a dash for the train, two of them were successful, the third was left on the platform disconsolate. "Cheer up," said a passer-by, "two of you made it, anyway!" "Yes," replied the professor, "but they came to see me off."

A WARNING

That man of imagination, Dr. Alexander Whyte, once preached a series of sermons on the one text, "Lord, teach us to pray," and although the course stretched over a year, he held his vast congregation. Let any modern preacher dare such a venture, and he is likely to be met with the experience of the unfortunate who had to address a packed political meeting. He had the peculiarity of delivering his orations with his eyes shut. When he came to the end of his speech and opened his eyes, he noticed that one lonely person sat before him. "Hello!" what are you doing here?" he asked, only to receive the reply, "I am the next speaker."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful thanks to all those who assisted us in the decoration of the Church for Christmas by donations and the gift of flowers.

Grateful thanks to the donor of a purple Burse and Veil for the Barton Mission Church.

Grateful thanks to the donor of £5 for the purchase of Prayer Book for the Clergy Stall at St. Cuthbert's.

Grateful thanks for the gift of a new Linen Cloth for Shirdley Hill Mission Church.

THE CHURCH TREASURER

We would like to express our thanks to Miss Jordison our retiring Church Treasurer for all the help she has given to St. Cuthbert's during the period of time she has been the Treasurer. We are very grateful indeed to her for her great service and efficiency. We extend a welcome to Major R. Brett who has kindly offered to undertake the duty of Church Treasurer from January 1st onwards. May I express the hope that you will all see that he is kept "VERY BUSY."

W.H.B.

HOLY MATRIMONY

*"Those whom God hath joined together
let no man put asunder."*

16th January—Brian Heaton of Gettern Model Farm, Halsall, and Margaret Ivy Cheetham of 96 Park Crescent, Haskayne.

BURIAL OF THE DEAD

"In sure and certain hope."

21st December	Margaret Pendleton of The Bungalow, Plumpton Lane, Halsall, aged 75 years.
11th January	Robert Samuel Adams, died in Newsham General Hospital, aged 83 years.
12th January	Richard Craven of 86 New St., Halsall, aged 64 years.

SIDESMEN'S ROTA

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

7th February—	H. Dean, J. Balmer.	R. Gaskell, H. Baldwin.
14th February—	W. Jenkinson, T. Sismey, J. Cheetham, E. Battersby.	
21st February—	J. Serjeant, J. Banks.	H. Serjeant, T. Swift.
28th February—	R. Lewis, R. Rutton.	H. Prescott, H. Gaskell.
6th March—	C. Aindow, T. Forshaw.	E. Grimshaw, R. Brett.
13th March—	J. Huyton, S. Parks.	E. Serjeant, H. Guy.

CHURCH COLLECTIONS

Please Note:— Gifts received at 10-30 a.m. and 6-30 p.m. on Sundays are for Church Expenses. Gifts received at all services of Holy Communion are for the Sick and Needy.

F.W.O. Envelopes may be offered at any service and the money will always be for Church Expenses.

	F.W.O.	Cash
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Dec. 20th		
4th Sunday in Advent—		
8 a.m.		1 8 6
9 a.m. (Shirdley Hill)		19 0
10-30 a.m. and		
2-30 p.m. and 6-30 p.m.	6 5 6	8 8 4
Dec. 24th/25th		
Christmas Services—		
11-30 p.m. (Shirdley Hill)...		2 13 6
7 a.m. and 8 a.m.		15 0 7
10-30 a.m.	8 9 3	6 3 3
Dec. 27th		
1st Sunday after Christmas—		
8-0 a.m.		13 0
10-30 a.m. and 6-30 p.m.	4 2 6	5 17 3
Totals ...	£18 17 3	£41 3 5

1960

	F.W.O.	Cash
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
3rd January		
2nd Sunday after Christmas—		
8 a.m.		1 1 0
10-30 a.m. and 6-30 p.m.	6 5 0	6 1 5
10th January		
1st Sunday after Epiphany—		
8 a.m.	10 9	18 6
10-30 a.m. and 6-30 p.m.	6 9 6	7 4 2

17th January

2nd Sunday after Epiphany—

8 a.m.	13 6
9 a.m. (Shirdley Hill)	12 6
10-30 a.m. and	
2-30 p.m. and 6-30 p.m.	7 7 0 7 19 2
Totals ...	£20 12 3 £24 10 3

ALTAR ROTA

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

7th February—	Peter Balmer.	Harold Grimshaw.
14th February—	Norman Jenkinson.	Job Grimshaw.
21st February—	Alan Hanson.	Peter Balmer.
28th February—	Robert Gaskell.	Ronald Elliott.
6th March—	Peter Balmer.	Harold Grimshaw.

ALTAR FLOWERS

7th February	— Mrs. H. Dickenson
14th February	— Mrs. R. Heaton.
21st February	— Mrs. Morris.
28th February	— Mrs. Dean.

FESTIVAL OF QUEENS

I would like to thank all those who used their cars to transport my attendants and myself to the "Festival of Queens" at Farnworth (Jan. 16th), also those who came along to support us. A good time was had by all. Thank you.

JOAN DAVIES,

Halsall Rose Queen.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

Quarry Mount,
Greetby Hill,
Ormskirk, Lancs.
30th December, 1959.

Dear Mr. Bullough,

Thank you very much for the Gifts that we received from Halsall Parish Church at Christmas. We do appreciate them, and I should be glad if you would kindly pass on our thanks to all concerned.

Yours sincerely,

P. E. HOUGHTON.

MOTHERS' UNION

The Committee were pleased to hear from so many members how much they had enjoyed both the catering and social arrangements for the party. At this month's meeting at Barton, which is to be addressed by Mrs. Claxton, we are having a small Bring and Buy Stall. The following meeting on the 1st March will be in the School Hall at 8 p.m. The speaker is Mrs. Brice of Burscough.

I.G., Secretary.

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