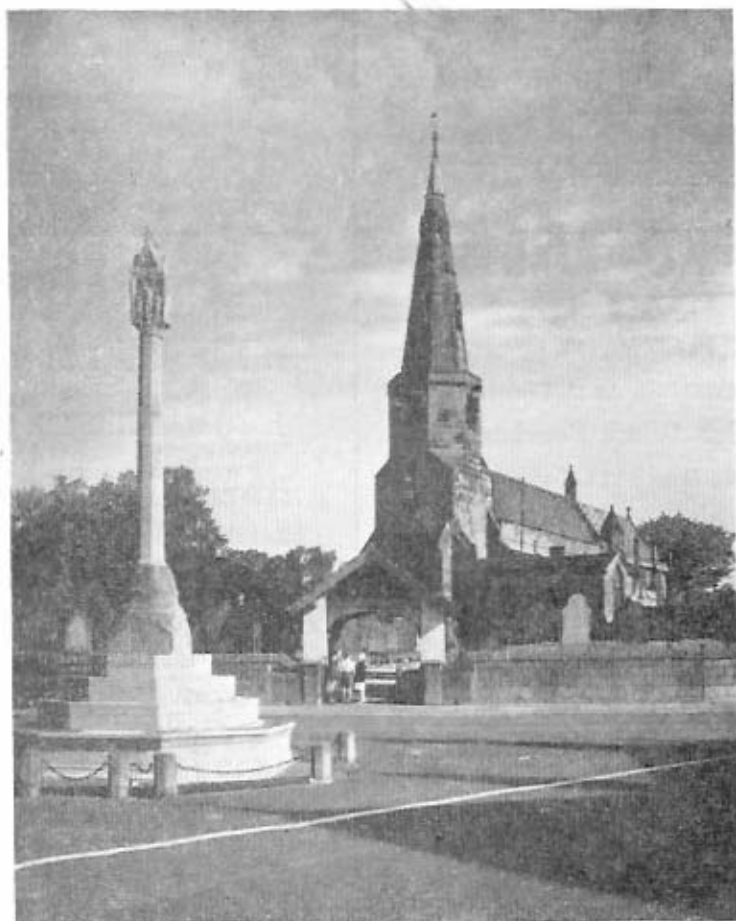


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My dear Friends,

I wish you all a very happy New Year.

At the start of the year we look forward into the future, but before we do this I want us to look back at the year 1960 because it is deserving of a little retrospect. At the beginning of the year I was still travelling backwards and forwards from Wigan. At the end of January we were able to occupy two rooms upstairs where we remained until the end of July. The many kindnesses we received during these difficult days will not easily be forgotten. During Lent we had our first Religious Film Services, well attended and enjoyed by all. Glorious Easter with our Church looking more beautiful than ever. Then we all worked hard for the Field Day and Rose Queen Ceremony and what a lovely day we had. A grand total of £200 was raised after paying expenses of over £75. Harvest Festival with the church decorated with such abundance and enthusiasm, and your former Rector as our preacher. On to the close of the year with the Christmas Bazaar, a wonderful effort resulting in a grand total of £344 7s. 3d. The many happy Friday nights in the School Hall where numerous charities have been supported so well. All these events have been enjoyed and give us happy memories, but overriding everything is the inspiration of worshipping in our beautiful church. What a thrill it is at any time to join in worship at St. Cuthbert's, that is of course when we can make allowances for the fact that the parson, or the choir, or even the boiler has an "off" day. I have only one regret and that is that more of our people do not come to worship God with us. This neglect of our duty should be the basis of our New Year thinking, especially in regard to our Communion. The excuse of distance, which I was prepared to accept when I first came to Halsall, is no longer valid in my mind because I have seen our School Hall crowded Friday after Friday on some very bad nights. Will you all give thought to this whole matter. Try to remember that we should not be picking and choosing whether or not we "like" the form of service but that at all costs we should worship God—that is the important point—at least once every Sunday.

To one and all for your splendid support of our efforts and for your sacrifices I say thank you.

Now about the future. My appeal for 1961 is very simple. It consists of five words—"Try to do it

again." What we achieved in 1960 in spite of rain we can most certainly accomplish again in 1961. "Do it again" then is our motto. I do want you all to understand that for the time being these methods are the only ones we can use to help to reduce our debts. I also want to make it quite clear that I do not like these methods of financing God's work in Halsall and I am not alone in this, but for the year 1961 your Finance Committee has decided—rightly—that this shall be the way to organise our finances. We hope by 1962 to be able to present you with a new Finance Scheme which will make it possible for us to hold our Field Days and Bazaars as purely social events without the burden of raising as much money as possible being placed upon them.

Finally, behind all our efforts let the worship of God in the lovely Church of St. Cuthbert be our inspiration and strength. There is the power to forge ahead. May we all find it, and may the Blessing of God be upon us as we step out with thankful hearts into 1961 determined that His shall be the praise and the glory and that to Him shall endless prayer be made.

Again, God bless you.

Again, a Happy New Year.

Your sincere friend,

HERBERT BULLOUGH.

WHAT IS WORSHIP ?

The aim of worship is to please God and not to please men.

Worship is Worth-ship—we put into the service what we think God is worth or worthy of.

Worship that makes no demands on the worshipper for his thought and attention—worship that is easy, a matter of routine, or worship that "makes you feel good," is not worship at all. A church service is nothing like community hymn singing.

A choir exists to help us all to worship—not to do it for us.

Everything in our worship should express to the stranger coming in some truth about God and the Gospel "so that falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is among you of a truth."—Cor. 14, 25).

HUMOUR

"Charity shall cover the multitude of sins." So writes St. Peter in his first Epistle. A sense of humour goes a long way towards achieving the same result, for where there is real humour there is also charity. I know we are frequently humorous at somebody else's expense, but unless we can take it ourselves in return, our humorous sallies will soon pall on our associates. The man who takes himself so seriously that he cannot accept a laugh against himself, is a man who is also devoid of charity; so is the man who tries to hand out more than he likes to take. Our sense of humour is a very sure guide to the assessment of the degree of charitableness which we possess. Indeed, a good sense of humour is surely one of the major virtues. It breeds good comradeship and preserves it. Amongst men with the gift of humour there is rarely unresolved enmity.

Humour smooths out the hard lines of false pride, and anger, and "touchiness." The man without it is almost certainly a fellow with an intolerably good opinion of himself; a hard-natured fellow incapable of give and take; a fellow who puts a damper on the party the moment he appears, and one in whose make-up, charitableness, comradeship, does not appear. But where humour prevails warm-hearted charity is ever around.

PAST AND PRESENT

"Be cheerful, sir." "Be of good cheer." For though the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." It was this knowledge that gave the early Christians their undaunted courage. Justin Martyr, writing to the Roman Emperor, says, "When you hear that we look for a kingdom, you thoughtlessly suppose that we mean a human kingdom, while we mean a kingdom with God. This is evident from the fact that when we are examined by you we confess that we are Christians, though we know that death is the penalty of confession. If it had been a human kingdom for which we look, we should have denied to save our lives and have endeavoured to remain undetected; but since our hopes do not rest upon the present order, we do not heed those who take our lives, since in any case we must die."

"Since our hopes do not rest upon the present order." Is not this the charge so often brought against Christians and Christianity, that their dreams of future bliss have sucked all the life out of their earthly existence, so that they do nothing to make

this world better and promote human progress? The true answer, though it is not a very popular one, is that the advance of civilisation is in truth a sort of by-product of Christianity, not its chief aim; but we can appeal to history to support us that this progress is most stable and genuine when it is a by-product of a lofty and unworldly idealism. It is not quite certain that Christianity either requires or promises what we commonly mean by the progress of humanity. Personally, I hope for it, as a matter of reasonable faith, not so much from a study of history which shows us life becoming ever more complex, but not much better or happier; but rather because if the life of humanity has any unitary purpose and meaning in the mind of the Creator, it must, one would think, be intended to exhibit the same kind of advance which we can trace in individual lives which are well lived. But the progress of humanity, if there is any, is very slow and always precarious; and it cannot go on for ever.

However, nothing can be more untrue than to suppose that the progress of the kingdom of God upon earth is not a matter of deep interest for true Christians. When Christ said to His disciples, "I have taken you out of the world," He certainly did not mean that He had taken them out of human society, with its duties and obligations. Heaven is not a far-away place to which we hope to go; it is the presence of God in which we ought to live. The Christian soldier is no recreant, tarrying behind at the base and leaving others to go into the fighting line. And here comes the partial truth which, as I said, is mixed with much error in the popular cult of the corporate idea. We do not need another co-operative society to combat the society of co-operative guilt which the New Testament calls the world . . . We must help each other to make the right life possible in society. This is the true office of the Church, the bonds of which Christ meant to be mutual love and willing service. In this sense, we do need to make Church life much more of a reality. In the first century, and still more in the second, while the persecutions exercised an artificial selection and kept the Church pure, there was a band of brethren of this kind, an anti-worldly society.

In the difficult times which are coming, Christians must above all things be true to their Master's teaching and methods. The results are not likely to be outwardly very striking; but an earnest and steady witness to the Gospel of Christ, even on the part of a few persons, will be of immense value. For the world even in the bad sense, is not wholly bad. It has a conscience, and it is not satisfied with itself. The hidden man of the heart in each man longs to play traitor to the prince of this world, and takes courage when he sees that he is not alone. So it is that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump; and so it is, too,



Trevor Huddleston, the new Bishop of Maseru, meets three Russian priests visiting London

Central Press

THE SIGN

Not ashamed to confess the
faith of Christ crucified

No. 673

VOL. 57

JANUARY 1961

- 1 S. Circumcision of our Lord.
- 6 F. Epiphany of our Lord.
- 8 S. First after Epiphany.
Lucian, P.M., c. 312.
- 13 F. Hilary, B.D., 368.
- 15 S. Second after Epiphany.
- 17 Tu. Antony of Egypt, Ab., 356.
- 18 W. Prisca, V.M., 265.
- 19 Th. Wulfstan, B., 1095.
- 20 F. Fabian, B.M., 250.
- 21 S. Agnes, V.M., c. 304.
- 22 S. Third after Epiphany.
Vincent, Dn.M., c. 304.
- 25 W. Conversion of St. Paul.
- 26 Th. Polycarp, B.M., c. 155.
- 27 F. John Chrysostom, B.D., 407.
- 29 S. Septuagesima.

Days of fasting, or abstinence:
Fridays, 6, 13, 20, 27.

Wheat Among the Tares

IN Soviet Russia to-day there are 220,000,000 people. How many of them are Christians; how many of them go to church? The popular answer to both questions in the West is 'Very few.' And behind this answer lies the belief that the Bolshevik revolution of forty-four years ago swept away all traces of Christianity from that vast land, leaving it a godless State. It is all the more startling now, therefore, to discover how entirely wrong these beliefs are.

Let's have some figures. They come from a remarkable paper¹ written some little time ago by Mark Tweedy, a member of the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield, and are based on the observations of a number of Anglican priests who have visited Russia in recent years. Thus it is estimated that out of the 220,000,000 in modern Russia some 25,000,000 are members of the Orthodox Church, and that there are about five million Christians of other denominations.

But what sort of Christians are they, as measured by the vigour of their Church life? Here the evidence is even more unexpected—and it is evidence substantiated from other sources also. The picture is of, in Father Tweedy's words, 'a Church alive and flourishing exceedingly; quite free to carry on its worship and in-

¹ *Wheat Among the Tares*, 1s. 6d., post 4d.

struction of the faithful so long as this is done inside the service times; able to train young men for the priesthood.' He speaks too of a town in the Ukraine where about 2,000 people are ready to spend well over an hour in church every Friday morning before they go to work. 'These Russian

Christians are not now persecuted,' he adds; 'the State has tried persecution and failed: the only result has been an extraordinary revival of spirituality in the Orthodox Church, which appears to be more alive and up to date to-day than it was fifty years ago.'

One further fact is the most surprising, and the most conscience-stirring, of them all. It is that, in the words of yet another writer, a Professor Schlink, 'Despite all obstacles, in proportion to the population, church-goers on Sundays in the

U.S.S.R. are at least as numerous as they are in Western Europe, and they are indeed far more numerous, both absolutely and in proportion, than regular church-goers in England.'

Of course, this is by no means the whole of the picture. It is still true that the Church has to live in Russia under official disapproval. It is still true that the law of the land forbids the giving of religious instruction to children under eighteen or for the making of religious propaganda outside the churches. Yet surely these facts render all the more remarkable and praiseworthy the tremendous recovery which the Church in Russia has made in the last fifteen years. 'In 1943,' says Father Tweedy, 'there can hardly have been a monastery open in the land. To-day there are about eighty religious houses comprising over a thousand monks and three times as many nuns.'

SIGNET

A Prayer for the New Year

Be thou also my guide, and lead me.—PSALM 31. 4

GIVE us the wisdom, please, oh God,
To know what we should do,
To find the way that we should go,
The task we should pursue.

Give us—for this must move us first—
The impulse and the urge
To want to do thy will, to train
Our minds with thine to merge.

Give us the growth to shape ourselves
As thou wouldst have us be,
And when the task is there to find
Give us the eyes to see;

And give us all thy love and power,
Wholeness in every part,
Right worthily to do that task
With soul and mind and heart.

C. H.

A New Look at the Old Testament

By William Neil

1. THE FRAMEWORK

IT is not so very long ago that quite sensible Christian people felt that they had to apologize for the Old Testament. So much of it seemed to be in conflict with what the scientists were saying, so much else seemed to be far below New Testament standards of faith and behaviour, and the whole atmosphere of a small oriental peasant community seemed so remote from modern civilization that it was difficult to see what relevance most of the Old Testament could have for twentieth-century Europeans.

Many people still feel uncomfortable about the practice of reading an Old Testament lesson side by side with a New Testament lesson at Morning and Evening Prayer. This is not only because often they find the first lesson unintelligible, but also because only too often when they do understand it, it seems to be saying nothing to them.

Does this mean that the Prayer Book is wrong to include a daily lesson from the Old Testament and to encourage us to read through from Genesis to Malachi in the course of the year? Far from it. Indeed, many of us are just beginning to realize how little we can understand the New Testament without first coming to grips with the Old Testament. For the Bible is one book and not two. It does not consist of a Jewish part and a Christian part.

This does not mean that the Old

Testament does not present us with more difficulties than the New Testament, and if we really want to see what it is saying to us it is quite indispensable that we should begin by getting hold of a modern translation such as Moffatt's or Knox's. It is far more important that we should understand what we are reading than that we should be exhilarated by the literary beauty of the Authorized Version. Once we have found out what the Old Testament is talking about by reading it for ourselves in our own language we can go back and read the Authorized Version with new appreciation.

New Knowledge

Month by month in this series of articles we shall be trying to see how an ordinary Churchman can make the Old Testament come alive, both by making use of the new knowledge and insights which God has given to us in our time, and also by seeing what light the Old Testament has to shed on the great seasons of the Christian Year.

But let us begin by recognizing the fundamental truth about the Old Testament that it is, as the Christian Fathers maintained, the preparation for the gospel, or, as Luther called it, the 'swaddling clothes in which Christ lies.' Let us, therefore, think of the whole Bible as a drama of the Acts of

God, with a prologue, three acts and an epilogue.

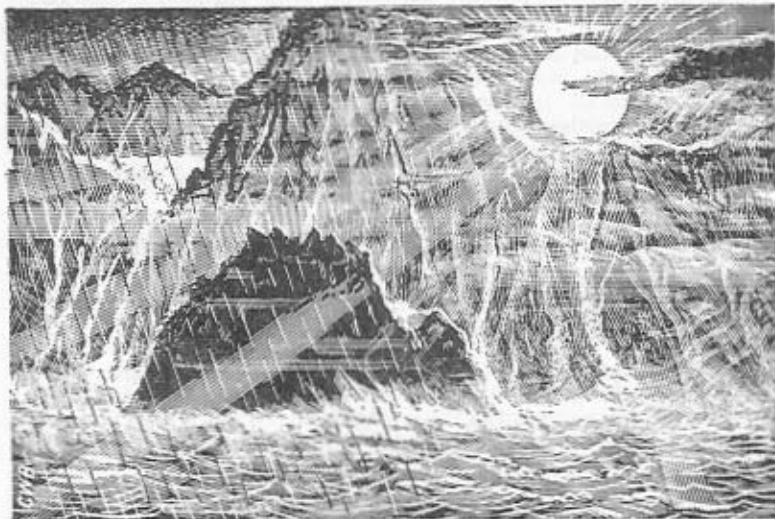
The prologue, which is the first eleven chapters of Genesis, tells of God's creation of the universe and of his purpose that man should master the created world and at the same time find his proper place under God's authority and establish the right relationship with his neighbour. The prologue also shows us that man's failure to recognize the sovereignty of God and his unwillingness to respect his neighbour's rights wrecks God's plan and brings about a gulf between the Creator and his creatures.

The three acts of the drama describe the steps God has taken to rescue man from his plight and to bring the world back into the right relationship with himself. Act I of the drama, which is the Old Testament from Genesis 12 to Malachi, tells the story of how God chose a particular community, beginning with Abraham, to be the means of saving mankind. To them disclosed his purpose for the world, and revealed himself as a God of justice, truth and love.

The failure of this community, Israel, to respond to the God who had chosen them made it necessary for God himself to enter the human scene in the person of Jesus Christ. Act II of the drama, the gospels, tells how God came down to man to lift man up to God, to do for him what he could not do for himself.

Act III, the rest of the New Testament, tells how the new Israel, the Christian Church, inheriting the legacy of old Israel's moral standards, wisdom and piety, but empowered by the new gift of the Holy Spirit, accepted the task, which still remains, of being God's instrument.

But all this is not merely a record of something that happened long ago. For the drama is contemporary. The characters in the prologue such as Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, are you and I. Their plight is our plight. So in Act I, the story of the Old Testament is our story. Israel's mistakes and aspirations, its hopes and needs, are still ours to-day. On this tiny stage we see ourselves, and God teaches us through the experiences of the men and women of the Old Testament the fundamental lesson of life—our need of a Saviour.



And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together, and the dry land appear; and it was so.



Keystone

As I See It . . .

TOUGH PROBLEM

By Rosamund Essex

WHAT happens after Christmas? It is then that we have to face the problems of life, and for some the problems are far tougher than for others. Christmas is indeed the time to think of all children with love—but not with sentiment. When you come to the reality of the cold stable, the days after the first Christmas must have been bitter hard for Joseph, Mary and the Child.

'So don't be sentimental, please,' said the headmistress. 'I so often meet with sentimental "goo" from writers who come here.' I looked over at her. Not sentimental: no. But kind: understanding—the sort of woman anyone with a problem might go to confidently.

We were looking over a smooth lawn. A 'Wendy house' where children can play 'mothers and fathers' was opposite. Under a tree, ten or twelve little boys sat round a camp fire. There were girls on tricycles or sitting in the sun. All of them were what the ignorant (and that included me) call 'spastics.'

In telling this story, I am not going in for any sloppy goo: I dare not since I have talked with the most practically kind headmistress of my acquaintance. With her staff, she is faced with situations which must sometimes be bitter hard, and yet are a challenge to devoted care.

The children in St. Margaret's School, South Croydon, are from five to fifteen. Many wore callipers on their legs. Some could walk with a stiff roundabout movement; some were strapped in wheel chairs. Those less affected could talk together; those more severely affected lolled in chairs, their arms flaying or drooping, and incapable of plain speech.

I promised the headmistress that I would give some hard facts, and I will. The proper name for the disease is infantile cerebral palsy: because it comes in infancy; is caused by brain injury; and affects the usual pattern of movement. Apparently there are forty-six varieties, but the school deals with only two of them—the atheroids and the spastics. Children who are atheroids have the whole movement of their body disturbed and cannot control it. Spastics (the word which we loosely use for the disease itself) are only affected in special parts of the body—it may be legs or arms or head or eyes.

No One Understood

In old days, children suffering from cerebral palsy were left to do the best they could in ordinary schools; or if they were badly affected they went to 'handicapped' schools; or were even popped into mental homes. But the terrible thing was that, though they

could not express themselves, many of them were intelligent. Only no one understood.

At St. Margaret's School all that is changed. The children learn to move, to speak and to cope with lessons for which they are fit. Those who can write, do. Those who cannot, learn by heart. Nearly all those on the staff are people of true religious convictions, many belonging to the Church of England. So the children learn pieces of the Bible—the Psalms, the Song of Solomon and many of the sayings and promises of the Lord Jesus. 'They will have so many leisure hours later on,' I was told. 'It will comfort them to know lovely pieces of the Bible by heart. They must grow to have good manners and pleasant characters too. For that will help when the contortions and grimaces which they cannot help tend to put people off.'

The Sunday Eucharist

On Sundays most of the children go to the Children's Church at St. John's, Selsdon. When there is a Eucharist those who are confirmed walk in their callipers to the altar of God if they can; the Communion is brought to those who must stay in their chairs.

Only just recently one of the proudest boys in England was invested in his surplice as a new member of the church choir. William—I will call him that—had a tough time when he first came to St. Margaret's. He was a spastic proper and older boys chipped him because of his speech and his manners. But William was one of those boys you just can't down. He was brave and determined and good-tempered, and he won through to find a place of friendship with everyone.

His way to the choir needed every bit of courage and effort. He was not allowed to join unless he could move well enough not to impede the other choirboys. So he practised and struggled, till the splendid day came. He walks in with the choir now, rolling his body a bit from side to side, of course, because the rigid callipers make him do that, but competently enough. In his place in the stalls, he unfastens the callipers at the knee, so that he can kneel. And when he stands, there isn't a straighter boy there to sing the praises of God.

Did I see him? Of course. He'd just come in, his face smudged and puckish, his shirt out at the waist, his hair tousled like any other choirboy on the loose, but with the friendly manners all the children of St. Margaret's have.

QUESTION PAGE

4129. Does the fifth Commandment mean that the third and fourth generations of children must suffer for their forefathers' misdeeds?

We must remember that the Old Testament is a record of the gradual revelation of God to his people. It is clearly true in practical experience that children suffer for the misdeeds of their parents, but it does not follow that the writer of Exodus was correct in his assumption that this was God's will. We find a fuller revelation in the New Testament, and in St. Matthew 5, for example, we find our Lord saying again and again, 'Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time... but I say unto you...' Our Lord's teaching regarding children is to be found in St. Matthew 18. 1-6.

4130. What is the difference between a vicar and a rector?

In the Middle Ages the rector of a parish was the person to whom tithes were paid. This was normally the parish priest, but sometimes tithes were paid to a monastery which supplied the priest to look after the parish. A priest of this kind, who did not himself receive tithes, was known as the vicar. Nowadays there is no difference at all between a vicar and a rector.

4131. Both our Lord and the Old Testament foresaw the Crucifixion. Where, then, is the guilt of Judas and Pilate, if it was arranged even before their births?

The Old Testament does not foretell in

Question of the Month

4128. (From a reader aged 8.) Why does not the Church of England make saints?

The Church of England has produced many saints, but it does not make a fuss of them.

There are two reasons for declaring a person to be a saint. The first is to do him or her honour. The second is rather more complicated. Not so long ago many people were really rather afraid of God. They did not like the idea of praying to Jesus, and so they wanted to pray to the saints instead; and so this question of making saints became very important. Nowadays we know that we can always pray to Jesus himself. It is important to know about the saints because they were great and good men and women, and we should try to be like them. It does not matter so much about making new ones. There are saints to-day. God knows who they are, and that is what matters.

detail the happenings of the New. Pilate and Judas possessed free will, and there is nothing in Holy Scripture to lead us to

suppose that they were predestined to play the parts they did. We can foresee that there will 'inevitably' be a certain number of murders in this country next year, but this fact does not exonerate any one of the individual murderers.

4132. Why are prayers in some church services intoned and not said in a normal voice?

Music is used in church for the same reason that colour is used in pictures. It helps to bring beauty and variety, as well as richness of expression. For this reason some prayers in church services are said and some are sung.

4133. Why do clergymen, when pronouncing the Blessing, sometimes say 'Unto God's gracious mercy and protection we commit you,' and not 'I commit you'?

The form of blessing which begins 'Unto God's gracious mercy and protection we commit thee' comes from the Prayer Book in the Service for the Visitation of the Sick. The plural 'we' appears to be used because the priest is speaking in the name of the Church, or of those present at the bedside of the sick person. On other occasions 'I' may be more suitable than 'we,' but it is not difficult to understand how the set form has come into general use.

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

These notes are the first of a series which will be contributed by Elizabeth Gundry, Editor of SHOPPER'S GUIDE, the magazine published by the Consumer Advisory Council. SHOPPER'S GUIDE tests all kinds of goods bought in shops, and reports the results, with comparisons of different brands. Some of the inside facts revealed by these tests will be described by Miss Gundry each month.

What does 'A.1' mean?

First class? Well, sometimes—but not invariably. Because it's a term with no very precise meaning, it can be used in a misleading way.

For instance, on silver plate. There was a time when an A.1 mark was some assurance of superior quality, and most people who thought that 'A.1' plate would last twenty or thirty years were not disappointed. But now it is sometimes to be found on even the poorest quality plate.

Similarly with carpets. Sometimes notices in shops proudly announce 'A.1 Axminster,' which sounds as if it refers to the best grade of Axminster. In fact there are much superior grades to be had, and A.1 is a very ordinary quality. Originally, the term used was A.I., not A.1, for the initials were simply a contraction of the term 'Axminster Imperial.'

When trade terms are used as loosely as this, they can mislead the shopper badly. For this reason, the British Standards Institution has been trying to standardize commercial descriptions—particularly of fabrics and fibres—and to establish recognizable quality grades (for carpets, amongst many other products).

It has, in fact, already achieved graded standards for chromium plate, though, so far, not for silver plate, unfortunately. Where chromium is concerned there are now three recognized degrees of quality, and you may already have noticed labels appearing in the shops that show which is which. A red label shows the plating will withstand even severe usage; blue is for normal use; while green-labelled plating will be adequate only if kept away from steam and damp. The British Standards Institution has laid down appropriate thicknesses for the chromium and for the nickel that goes beneath it, and also test methods to check that the plating will stand up to corrosion and chafing.

Oil in troubled waters

After last winter's scare about radiant oil stoves, many factories came to an abrupt standstill—and this after several years when the popularity of

these heaters had been rapidly increasing. But so had the number of fires caused by them—largely due, as was first publicly revealed by a report in SHOPPER'S GUIDE, to the fact that a stiffish draught could cause them to burst into completely uncontrollable flames.

When this became known, manufacturers were persuaded to co-operate with the British Standards Institution in drawing up a new standard for oil heaters which requires them to be safe even in an 18 m.p.h. wind: a most stringent test. Throughout 1960, back-room boys were redesigning the stoves to conform to this and all the other strict requirements of the 24-page British Standard: stability when knocked, for instance; rust-free oil tank; fumeless combustion; and so on.

There are two things in the Standard which depend upon the user's co-operation, however. Every stove must carry on it instructions for use: but how many of us really do read, still less obey, such instructions? And every stove must incorporate the means of hooking it to the wall or floor so that it cannot be overturned.

But how to tell which heaters in the shops this winter are really safe? That should now be simple, for every one that has been tested by the British Standards Institution itself, and approved, bears the mark shown here.



BEN-HUR

A Tale of the Christ, retold by John Lastingham

PART I

IN the year of Rome 747, four years before the beginning of the Christian era, in the month of December, a solitary rider mounted on a camel made his way out of a mountain valley east of Jordan and headed for the tablelands of the desert beyond.

His frequent scanning of the horizon indicated that he was looking for something or someone to emerge out of the surrounding solitude. He continued upon his lonely way for two hours until the sun stood overhead at noon. Then, commanding his camel to halt and kneel, he dismounted and pitched his tent.

No sooner had he completed these preparations than, stepping out, he saw towards the east the dark speck on the face of the desert. And soon there came into full view a rider upon a beast like his own.

The newcomer was tall and gaunt. 'God only is great!' he exclaimed, embracing the man by the tent. 'And blessed are they that serve him!' the other answered. 'But let us wait, let us wait; for see, the other comes yonder!' And with that they looked to the north where, already plain to view, a third camel came careening across the desert like a ship. The two waited, standing together, until, in his turn, the newcomer arrived, dismounted, and advanced towards them. He also, in his turn, greeted them with joy. The names of the three were Balthasar, Melchior, and Gaspar. They were to be known to Christian history as the Three Wise Men. After a simple meal within the tent, they told their several stories.

Gaspar the Greek spoke first. It was a strange tale which he had to tell. He sprang, he said, from a learned family deeply versed in the teachings of Greek philosophy. But none of it had satisfied his soul. And then one day a shipwrecked man had come his way. He was a Jew, learned in the history and laws of his people, and he it was who had told Gaspar of how the

prophets had foretold that one greater than all of them should come to be King of the Jews, and that his coming was at hand. When the Jew had left him, Gaspar said, he had prayed that he himself should be permitted to see

walked in an orchard close by the Nile, he had prayed to know when the one true God would come and when he could see him. And at that moment one of the many stars above had seemed to burn more brilliantly than all the rest and to come and stand directly above him, whereupon he had heard a voice saying, 'With two others, from the remotenesses of the world, thou shalt see the Saviour.'

Thus the men who had met together rejoiced in their encounter and, when night was come, they set off together.

* * *



At this same time, early one morning in the teeming, multi-coloured city of Jerusalem, where Jew and Roman dwelt uneasily together, a man and a woman stood in a corner of a market at the Joppa Gate. The man held the leading rein of a donkey upon the back of which sat a very young woman. After a while a rabbi stepped aside from the crowd and accosted the man at the donkey's head. 'Are not you Joseph of Nazareth?' he asked. The other answered, 'I am so called.'

'The journey before you is long?' asked the rabbi.

'Only to Bethlehem,' was the answer. The countenance of the rabbi clouded as at an angry thought. 'I see,' he said, 'you were born in Bethlehem, and go there now to be counted for taxation.'

So Joseph and Mary came to the place where Mary's child was to be born. They found Bethlehem crowded with a great concourse of people who had gone there for the same purpose. Joseph, who was anxious for his wife, made straight for the portal of the kahn or inn that stood outside the village. There he immediately found his worst fears confirmed.

The gate-keeper pondered. At last, in his rough way, he came to a decision saying, 'Very well. You shall not lie out on the hills.'

It was a surprising place to which he led them. A stable, with the mangers still in position, and chaff littering the floor.

On that same night an extraordinary event overtook some shepherds. One of them, who watched while his companions slept, was astounded to see a light breaking round him, soft and white like the moon's. Even as he

the new King and to worship him. And one night he had seen a new star rise up in the darkness, and in his sleep that night he had dreamt that it was to be his destiny to follow that star.

Melchior, the Hindu, spoke next. He also, he said, had, after much thought, become estranged from the religion of his fathers. 'One night,' he said, 'I walked by the shores of a lake, and cried into the silence: "When will God come and claim his own?"' Suddenly a light had begun to glow out on the water; soon a star arose, moved towards him and stood overhead. 'With two others,' a voice had said to him, 'from far quarters of the earth, thou shalt see the Redeemer, and be a witness that he has come.'

When Melchior had finished, it was Balthasar's turn. He spoke proudly of the antiquity of the civilization from which he had come, the ancient religion of Egypt. He spoke, too, of how under a certain Pharaoh the Hebrews who dwelt among them had been persecuted as slaves and how the records told of one Moses who, in the name of the Lord God of Israel, had asked for their liberation and of how, through the power of that God, it had been brought about. One night, as he

watched, the light deepened; a voice spoke: 'Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord! And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.'

So, later that same memorable night, the shepherds made their way to the cave where the mangers were. And there, held by Mary, his mother, was a tiny newborn child.

Eleven days after the birth of the child in the cave, about mid-afternoon, the three strange men who had met each other in the desert approached Jerusalem by the road from Shechem. Of many of those whom they encountered upon the way they asked the same question: 'Where is he that is born King of the Jews?' At last they were taken before Herod.

The crafty king, within whose mind there lurked a ceaseless fear of being supplanted, spoke courteously and carefully: 'If, as I believe,' he said, 'O illustrious men, you are indeed heralds of the Christ just born, know that I have this night consulted those wisest in things Jewish, and they say with one voice he should be born in Bethlehem of Judaea. I say to you, go thither; go and search diligently for the young child; and when you have found him bring me word again, that I may come and worship him. Peace be with you!'

And so, a little before dawn, the three travellers who had come from so very far arrived at last at the entrance to Bethlehem.

The gate-keeper had to struggle with himself to answer calmly the questions which the newcomers put to him when they asked him whether this was not, indeed, Bethlehem of Judaea and whether there was not a child there newly born. And when he answered at last that it was indeed so, they pressed him to be let within. Many followed the three striking figures as Balthasar, Melchior, and Gaspar made their way to the cave at the rear of the kahn in the face of the cliff. The child was awake now in the lap of Mary his mother, his open eyes gazing at the light of the lantern overhead.

'Is the child thine?' asked Balthasar of Mary. She answered simply: 'He is my son.'

And with that the three Wise Men fell down and worshipped him.

To be continued

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

Richard Tatlock's Puzzle Page

1. SIXERS (open to all)

In 1960 our puzzles followed the events of the Church's Year. In 1961 our puzzles will concentrate on the shorter books of the New Testament. We begin the New Year with the Epistle of St. James.

Using the pattern below, make words of six letters according to this rule: In any word you make, the first letter must come from column 1, the second from 2, the third from 3, etc. Letters can be used repeatedly, provided that the above rule is kept.

Having made all the words you can, search through the Epistle of St. James and write out every text you can find where the words you have made can be found. Discard the remaining words.

Two half-guinea book tokens will be awarded for the best answers.

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

2. LEXICOGRAPHIC PUZZLE

(age limit 13)

A Lexicographer is a man who puts together a dictionary. And a Lexicograpuzzler (you won't find that word in any dictionary) is a boy or

girl who enters for this competition!

People often say that there are lots of words in the Prayer Book they do not understand because they are old-fashioned or unusual. This competition is based on that fact.

Below are ten words from the Prayer for the Church in the Communion Service. Remembering that the Prayer Book meanings may be different from the modern meaning, just suppose that you are a Lexicographer—and compile a dictionary of their meanings:

Adversity; Advocate; Comfort; Concord; Doctrine; Indifferently; Mediator; Oblations; Transitory; Vice.

You may do anything or ask anyone you like in order to discover the meaning of these words; and be careful, because some of these words are 'catchy.'

Neatness counts. Don't forget your name, age, and address. Three 5s. book tokens for the best answers.

Entries for both puzzles should be addressed to: The Puzzle Editor, THE SIGN, 28 Margaret Street, London, W.1. Closing date for both puzzles is January 16th.

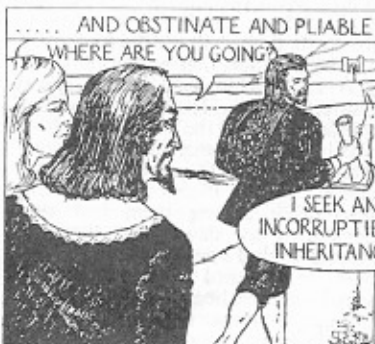
October winners:

No. 19. Richard Penman (Cambridge).
No. 20. Pat Pearsons (Sudbury), Douglas Readings (Cheltenham), Anne Hargreaves (Leeds), Paul Wanless (South Croydon).

The Pilgrim's Progress, by John Bunyan

THE
PILGRIM'S PROGRESS
FROM THIS WORLD
TO THAT WHICH IS TO COME

I DREAMED, AND I SAW A MAN WITH
HIS FACE FROM HIS OWN HOUSE,
A BOOK IN HIS HAND AND A GREAT
BURDEN UPON HIS BACK



Hot Dish for a Cold Day

By Hazel Macleod, of Leicester Domestic Science Training College

MANY people think that a stodgy meal is the ideal choice for cold winter weather. This isn't so, but at the same time I think it is wise to choose a main dish which is rich in bodybuilding material (meat, cheese, eggs and fish come into this category) and which also supplies plenty of heat and energy. Stew is a familiar dish which most people like—I suggest that it can be made more interesting in the following way:

Sea Pie with Tomatoes

1 lb. stewing steak, 1 rounded tablespoonful flour, seasoned with salt and pepper, 1 tablespoonful dripping, $\frac{1}{2}$ pt. water, 1 tin tomatoes (or 1 lb. sliced tomatoes), 1 teaspoonful golden syrup, 2 teaspoonfuls Worcester sauce, $\frac{1}{2}$ dried bay leaf, 1 carrot, 1 onion.

Cut the meat into cubes, toss in the seasoned flour and fry golden brown in the melted dripping. Add water, tomatoes, syrup and Worcester sauce and bay leaf. Slice or cube the vegetables, toss in any remaining flour and add to the stew. Cook slowly until the meat is tender (usually about

2½ hrs.) in a casserole in the oven or in a saucepan with a tightly-fitting lid.



Frank Sproston Studio

To make the meat go further ADD
1. Suet crust made with 4 oz. self-

raising flour, 1½ oz. suet, salt and pepper and cold water to mix to a soft dough. Roll out into a round not quite as large as your casserole or saucepan. Place on top of the stew and cook for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. If the stew is cooked in the oven, take the lid off the casserole to brown the crust.

- or 2. Your favourite suet dumplings.
- or 3. Scone mixture made from your usual recipe (4 oz. flour). *Naturally, you will leave out the sugar.*
- or 4. One of the prepared scone mixes which can be bought in a packet—useful for cooks with minimum time to spare.

My Garden in January

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

IF you wish to grow really large sweet peas it is best to dig a long trench and to bury in the bottom of it plenty of well-rotted organic matter. It is surprising what can go into the bottom of a sweet-pea trench; one successful grower, a butcher, always uses bad meat, blood and the like! The idea is to put all this organic waste at least a foot down; one can then fork into the top inch or so of soil a fish fertilizer with a 10 per cent. potash content at 3 oz. to the square yard, plus sedge peat, at a bucketful to the square yard.

By now, if the weather has not been too severe, some of the bulbs should start to be peeping through the soil. When this happens, a very light forking can be given. Put the tips of the tines of the fork into the soil 1 in. or so deep, in order to break up the cake surface. Do not, of course, damage any of the leaves of the bulbs when you are doing this.

Perhaps you did not plant any bulbs at all!—and this note reminded you of the omission; if so, you can still buy tulips, hyacinths, daffodils and anemones and plant them as soon as the ground is suitable, in the next few weeks. Plant in straight lines if you want them as cut flowers for the house—or in groups or drifts for the flower border.

If you planted various kinds of herbaceous perennials in November you may find it necessary to tread around these plants to make them firm. After the weather has been frosty, there is always a tendency for plants to rise out of the ground when the thaw begins.



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Illustrated, 8/6



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From Personal Religion and the Life of Devotion by W. R. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's (published by Longman's, Green and Co., 1924).

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Aughton:			
St. Michael	157	4	4
Christ Church	41	13	1
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Burscough, St. John	189	16	8
Dalton	38	6	9
Halsall	29	9	10
Lathom, St. James	145	4	8
Lydiat, St. Thomas	27	0	0
Maghull, St. Andrew	158	15	0
Newburgh, Christ Church	30	0	0
Ormskirk, Parish Church	256	19	6
Lathom Park Chapel	45	6	2
Scarisbrick, St. Mark	72	6	0
Skelmersdale	13	0	0

MOTHERS' UNION

We are all looking forward to the Mothers' Union Party on Friday, 3rd February, in the School Hall at 7-30 p.m. The next meeting of the Branch will be held at Barton Mission on Tuesday, 10th January at 2-30 p.m. This will be a bring and buy sale.

Congratulations to the members of the Committee for an excellent Carpet Fund Effort.

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. Grimshaw	3	5	0
Mrs. Bullough	3	5	0
Mrs. Trower	6	0	0
Mrs. R. Gaskell	4	5	0
Mrs. Battersby	2	2	0
Mrs. Waterworth	1	15	0
Mrs. Ainscough	5	4	0
Mrs. Kniveton	2	0	0
Mrs. Bond	1	5	0
Mrs. Halsall	2	13	0
Mrs. Sumner	3	13	0
Mrs. Jenkinson	2	0	0
Mrs. Moorcroft	1	1	0
Rector	1	5	0
	£39	13	0
Whist, Dominoes and Dance (no raffle)	17	11	6
TOTAL (to Carpet Fund)	£57	4	6

BALANCE SHEET OF CHRISTMAS BAZAAR, 1960.

INCOME	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.
Donations (including £2 from Sunday School)	14	17	0	Hire of Hall	5	5	0
Mothers' Union Stall	26	3	3	Caretaker	2	0	0
Mrs. Bullough's Stall	25	0	0	Decorations	6	6	9
Mrs. Grimshaw's Bottle Stall	38	12	0	Prizes	4	16	8
Mrs. Sergeant's Linen Stall	10	9	6	Printing	3	8	6
Young Wives' Stall	34	17	9	Advertising	3	12	0
Produce Stall	46	10	0				
Men's Stall (Mr. H. Dean)	90	8	0				
Apron Stall (Mrs. Crooke, Mrs. Trower Mrs. Neale)	29	5	0				
Refreshments (Mrs. R. Heaton)	8	11	8				
Tombola (Mrs. Cheetham)	10	9	6				
Grotto (Mrs. Forshaw, Mrs. Halsall)	19	5	0				
Whist and Domino Drive	15	7	6				
	£369	16	2				
				Net Profit	344	7	3
					£369	16	2

The net profit of £344 7s. 3d. has been paid into the General Church Account.

THE ALTAR FLOWER ROTA

In publishing the rota for January may I first thank all those who have kindly furnished the altar each week with lovely flowers. We are all very grateful to you. I am delighted to acknowledge with grateful thanks the gift from Mrs. Victor Blundell and Mrs. Reginald Brett of two beautiful pedestals for the Sanctuary. This lovely gift, it is hoped, will enable us to arrange our floral decoration to much greater advantage. We hope to use one pedestal each week and both of them on the Festivals when we receive donations towards the cost of the flowers. I so often feel that your lovely flowers have not shown themselves as they ought to because they have been so near to our fine reredos. In due course we shall obtain two suitable vases for the pedestals. Again many thanks to all those who assist us with the decoration of our beautiful church. **W.H.B.**

ROTA

- Jan. 1—Miss Critchley.
 „ 8—Mrs. R. Heaton.
 „ 15—Mrs. T. Sismey.
 „ 22—Mrs. H. Gaskell.
 „ 29—Mr. T. and Mrs. W. Sutton.
 Feb. 5—Mrs. Sumner and Mrs. D. and Mrs. M. Dickenson.
 „ 12—Mrs. H. Dickenson.

SIDESMEN'S ROTA

- Jan. 1, 10-30 a.m.—E. Serjeant and H. Guy.
 6-30 p.m.—J. Huyton and S. Parks.
 „ 8, 10-30 a.m.—H. Dean and J. Balmer.
 6-30 p.m.—R. Gaskell and H. Baldwin.
 „ 15, 10-30 a.m.—W. Jenkinson and T. Sismey.
 6-30 p.m.—J. Cheetham and E. Battersby.
 „ 22, 10-30 a.m.—J. Serjeant and J. Banks.
 6-30 p.m.—H. Serjeant and T. Swift.
 „ 29, 10-30 a.m.—R. Lewis and R. Dutton.
 6-30 p.m.—H. Prescott, H. Gaskell.
 Feb. 5, 10-30 a.m.—C. Aindow and T. Forshaw.
 6-30 p.m.—E. Grimshaw and R. Brett.

SERVERS' ROTA

- 8 a.m. 10-30 and 11-30 a.m.
 Jan. 1—Jan Ainscough John Davies
 „ 8—Peter Balmer Peter Balmer
 Harold Grimshaw.
 „ 15—John Gaskell Robert Gaskell
 „ 22—Anthony Grimshaw Stanley Marshall
 Arthur Gilbert
 Feb. 5—John Davies Harold Grimshaw
 „ 12—Robert Gaskell Anthony Grimshaw
 Ian Ainscough

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	Mattins 10-30 a.m.
	Evensong 6-30 p.m.
Second and Fourth Sundays in month	Holy Communion 8 a.m.
	Mattins (Said) 10 a.m.
	Sung Eucharist 10-30 a.m.
	Evensong 6-30 p.m.

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