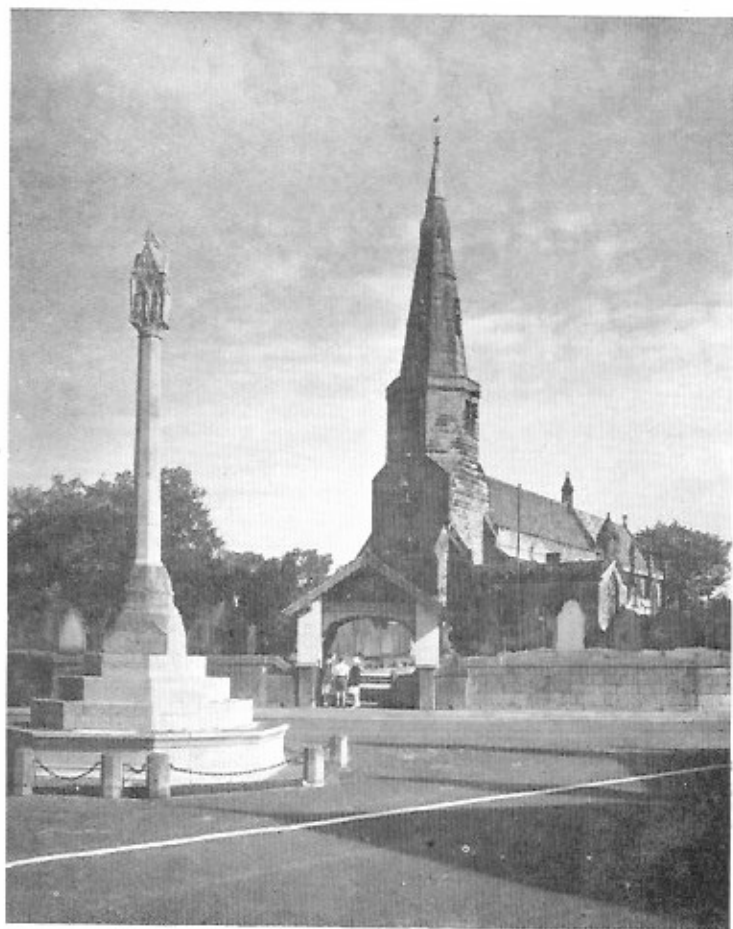


MARCH 1961

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The Rectory,
Halsall.

8th February, 1961.

My dear Friends,

A gentleman I used to meet regularly in committee said to me when last we met, "Well Rector, how are things at Halsall," I replied "Very encouraging, but you know there is always room for improvement." He then told me that both he and his wife had once been very regular "Churchgoers" years ago, but he doubted if they had been to Church half a dozen times during the last six years. I asked him if he could say why this was so and he said, "I'm afraid we've grown slack, we all need shaking up, of course I know we ought to go to Church."

How often and constantly do I hear such remarks; a sort of apology for a bad conscience.

Providing we are not out late on Saturday night; providing the morning is not too bad and bed not too tempting; providing we have had a good night's rest and feel like getting out of bed; providing there is no other encumbrance, then we will come to Communion . . . but if not, there is Mattins . . .

Providing we feel like it; providing it is a pleasant morning; providing there is nothing else which "must" be done; providing there is no person we "must" see . . . we may come to Mattins. But of course it is perhaps more original just to relax, or to do the odd job and satisfy our conscience with the explanation that we ought to be at Mattins, but it is not just what we feel like or can manage today . . . and we may go to Evensong . . .

Providing Sunday tea is over in good time; providing it is not "essential" we listen to the six o'clock news or some other programme; providing we "must" not go to some concert; providing we have no one to tea today; and always providing we feel like it, then perhaps we may come to Evensong . . . but if we miss this week, there will always be another Sunday. But the week comes and the week goes, and there is probably always some good reason why this time we cannot just manage it. Perhaps we have even reached the point where we no longer bother to give excuse to our conscience.

Do I write with bitterness? Let it be confessed, Yes. Perhaps a little, but certainly not too much. Rather, knowing myself, do I write with a sense of hurt. Hurt because for any Rector to battle with and war against this sort of thing is well-nigh impossible. Hurt, because of it many a good parson wilts and dies either mentally, spiritually or physically; many a young man turns away from ordination to some other calling (Oh yes I know, but not

every man can be a hero); hurt, because the Church, as a whole, is enervated by this situation; hurt because as we learnt in the Catechism some years ago, and as Jesus said, "the cares of this world, the pleasures and riches" are stifling the noble ideal and destroying our souls; hurt because the younger people, full of the desire to live the good life, see their elders, and the desire (heaven only knows how hard to live up to), finding little enough encouragement, withers and dies.

I suppose by straining and doing this and that (and some clergy try to do it) we could superficially revive interest in some people; we could try to make some of the Sunday services and sermons more of an entertainment. It is no cure. **The cure lies within ourselves, within our wills — to stop "knowing what we ought to do" and do it.**

"We know the paths wherein our feet should press,

Across our hearts are written thy decrees;
Yet now, O Lord, be merciful to bless
With more than these.

"Knowledge we ask not — knowledge Thou hast lent,

But, Lord, the will — there lies our bitter need,
Give us to build above the deep intent
The deed, the deed."

There is no doubt that our religious life has suffered, not because the Church asks too much, but because it expects too little. If we came to the three main services on Sunday it would involve us in no more than three hours out of a total of 16-hour waking Sunday, or three hours out of a total of 112 hours waking week. To my mind — and I am completely biased? — it is incredibly little to offer in our worship and obedience to God.

I wonder if you dare contemplate what it would mean to the life of the Church which I have no doubt the majority wish to see strong and vigorous? It would mean that our Churches would now be full; there would then grow up a new life and vigour; the atmosphere of decline would vanish. We ourselves would become conscious of our genuine membership. The self-discipline and purpose would invigorate our personalities. Our minds would respond to the awareness that we were doing our part to maintain the Faith in our midst. It would transform the clergy of our land.

What shall we do as we begin this season of Lent? Shall our bad conscience be replaced by a new desire, a new vitality? Or shall we just continue to drift?

It depends entirely on each one of us.

God bless you all.

Your sincere friend,

W. HERBERT BULLOUGH

THE MOTHERS' UNION AND YOUNG WIVES

The next meeting of the Mothers' Union (Young wives included) will be held on Tuesday, 14th March, in Church at 2-30 p.m., the preacher will be the Rev. Eric Eaton (Vicar of St. James', Poolstock, Wigan). I hope very much that the attendance will be much improved on the last two meetings.

On Mothering Sunday there will be a special service in Church at 2-30 p.m. and I sincerely hope that all members of the Mothers' Union and Young Wives will be present with their children — no matter how old they are. I would like the M.U. Banner brought up during the service. A special form of service will be used and all children will receive a gift card to take to their mother in Church. Let this be the occasion of the whole family gathering for worship. The service is of course open to all, and I look forward to seeing you all in your places on this occasion. **Mothering Sunday is 12th March.**

H. B.

EASTER DECORATION

We once again appeal to all for a small contribution towards the high cost of flowers for Easter Decoration in Church. If we all play our part as last year the Church will look more beautiful than ever.

GOOD FRIDAY, 31st MARCH

You must not miss the greatest religious film ever made—**THE DAY OF TRIUMPH**—on Good Friday evening at 7-30 p.m. in Church.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Thank you very much for the way you are using the two pedestals. The flowers have been beautiful.

April 2 (Easter Day)—The Congregation.

.. 9—Mrs. R. Heaton.

.. 16—Mrs. J. Morris.

.. 23—Mrs. Knowles and Mrs. Swift.

.. 30—Miss Mawdsley and Mrs. Parker.

SIDESMEN'S ROTA

Feb. 26—10-30 a.m.: J. Cheetham, E. Battersby.

6-30 p.m.: W. Jenkinson, T. Sismey.

Mar. 5—10-30 a.m.: H. Serjeant, T. Swift.

6-30 p.m.: J. Serjeant, J. Banks.

.. 12—10-30 a.m.: H. Prescott, H. Gaskell.

6-30 p.m.: R. Lewis, R. Dutton.

.. 19—10-30 a.m.: E. Grimshaw, R. Brett.

6-30 p.m.: C. Aindow, T. Forshaw.

.. 26—10-30 a.m.: E. Serjeant, H. Guy.

6-30 p.m.: J. Huyton, S. Parks.

ALTAR ROTA

8-0 a.m.

10-30 a.m. or 11-30 a.m.

Mar. 5—Anthony Grimshaw

Stanley Marshall

.. 12—Ian Ainscough

Harold Grimshaw

and Peter Balmer

.. 19—John Gaskell

John Davies

.. 26—Peter Balmer

Harold Grimshaw

and Robert Gaskell

April 1—Arthur Gilbert

Harold Grimshaw

7-0 a.m.

and John Gaskell

.. 1—Louis Hansen

HOLY MATRIMONY

"Those whom God hath joined together"

Feb. 11—Raymond Brookfield, of 6, Essex Road, Birkdale.

Barbara Haldane, of 44, Summerwood Lane, Halsall.

HOLY BAPTISM

"Entered into the family of Christ's Church"

Feb. 19—Derek, son of Raymond Francis and Anita Mary Culshaw, 86, Carr Moss Lane, Halsall.

BURIAL OF THE DEAD

"In sure and certain hope"

Feb. 4—Ellen Prescott, aged 78 years, Hodges Farm, Heathey Lane, Halsall.

.. 7—John Robert Abram, aged 79 years, 49, Carr Moss Lane, Halsall.

Feb. 13—John Gerard Jenkinson, aged 62 years, 82, School Lane, Haskayne.

THE CHOIR

We are greatly in need of more boys in the Choir. The Organist and Choirmaster has asked me to appeal also for the help of young ladies who could assist us with the choral work. Any girl who has turned 14 years of age and has a reasonable voice will be most welcome. It will cost £7 7s to robe the newcomers and in order to raise the money required there will be a Bring and Buy Sale and Coffee Evening at the Rectory on Friday, 10th March, from 7-30 p.m. to 9-30 p.m. We hope for the full support of the parish on this occasion, all are welcome. A further effort for choir robes will be a Jumble Sale on Saturday, 18th March, at 2-30 p.m. We should be glad to receive parcels of Jumble at the Rectory for this Sale. If we all find a parcel, the Sale will be a success. Please help us.

It is hoped to have several young ladies robed and trained for the services on Easter Day.

W.H.B.

HALSALL AGRICULTURAL DISCUSSION GROUP

The next meeting for Farmers and Agricultural Workers and their wives will be held on Friday, 17th March, at 7-30 p.m. in the school. The subject will be "Seedtime and Harvest." The speaker will be Mr. G. Clarke. All are welcome. Those who missed our last meeting on "Soil" missed a treat.

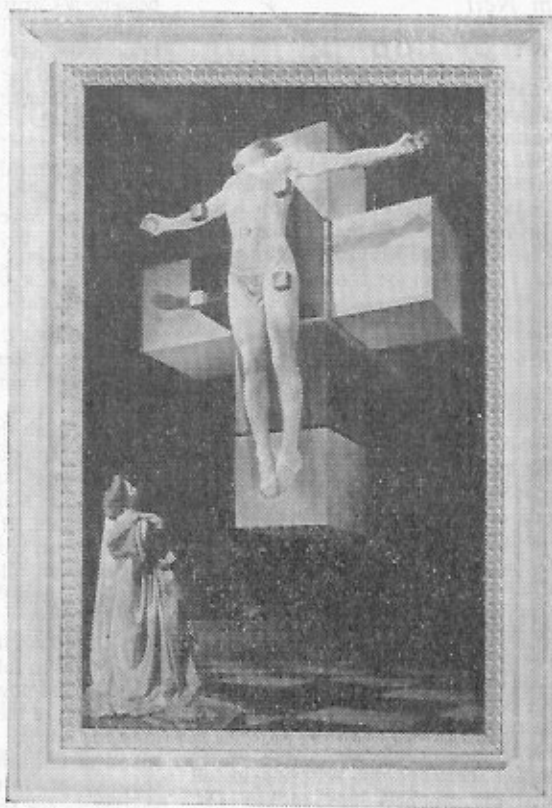
Not so Good Friday

RECENTLY, in one of our great cities, a priest whose special concern is the spiritual welfare of West Indian immigrants was questioned about the impression which life here made upon them. The reason for the inquiry, of which this question was a part, was concern at the number of West Indians who, often when they had been active members of their church at home, tended to lapse when they came to Britain. His reply was that frequently they were discouraged at not finding here some of the things which they had been used to at home. Among these was the observance, or rather the lack of observance, of Good Friday.

In the industrial centres to which most of them gravitate, the fact that it was generally regarded as a working day struck them as extremely surprising, to put it mildly. In many cases they found it more than surprising: they found it shocking and discouraging.

There is, of course, truth in all this. The observance of Good Friday as a sacred day has been declining for some time, and continues to do so. This is not to say that individual churches and many individual Christians do not do their best to be in heart and mind with the Lord on that day. But it is certainly the case that this Christian witness seems to make progressively less and less impact upon the life of the nation as a whole. Good Friday is a working day; it looks like a working day; and it ought not to be a working day. There would very soon be an outcry if the day of our Lord's birth were to be decreed a working day. It seems all the more strange, and indeed ironical, that the very same people who would regard such a suggestion

as an outrage should regard it as peculiar and unnecessary when the Church emphasizes the equally sacred



nature of the day upon which he went to his death.

What can be done about it? The need is to keep Good Friday good; to make it plain that this is a day upon which the followers of Christ wish to follow him to his Cross, as the little handful of his friends did on

that fateful day so long ago, while the crowds mocked and the great world went unthinking about its business. Here is an opportunity of personal witness, if ever there was one. The Cross still stands on Calvary. The place for the Christian

TOPIC FOR THE MONTH

THE SIGN

Not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified

No. 675

VOL. 57

MARCH 1961

- 1 W. David, Abp., 6th century.
- 2 Th. Chad, B., 672.
- 5 S. Third in Lent.
- 7 Tu. Perpetua and her Companions, MM., 203.
- 12 S. Fourth in Lent.
- Gregory the Great, B.D., 604.
- 17 F. Patrick, B., 461.
- 18 S. Edward, K.M.
- 19 S. Fifth in Lent. (Passion Sunday)
- 20 M. Cuthbert, B., 687.
- 21 Tu. Benedict, Ab., c. 540.
- 25 S. Annunciation of the B.V. Mary.
- 26 S. Palm Sunday.
- 27 M. Monday before Easter.
- 28 Tu. Tuesday before Easter.
- 29 W. Wednesday before Easter.
- 30 Th. Maundy Thursday.
- 31 F. Good Friday.

Days of fasting, or abstinence:
All weekdays in Lent.

on Good Friday is at the foot of it.

What does that mean in practice? It means two things: first, that we should not be hesitant in making known, at home, at work, and everywhere we meet others, that Good Friday is for us a sacred day, and that we mean to keep it as such. And second, it means that we shall see to it that we are in church worshipping on that day, and making our personal witness to the truth of the Cross.

SIGNET

The illustration to our Topic is the 'Corpus Hypercubus' by Dall. It has been taken from the Pallas Gallery collotype print, which is available in two sizes: 28" x 17½" at £4. 2s. 3d., and 14" x 8½" at £1. 1s. 10d., including purchase tax.

'AND SITTING DOWN THEY WATCHED HIM THERE.'—ST. MATTHEW 27. 36

PERHAPS resignedly? An hour or so To wait until this madman breathed his last. Impatiently they muttered, chafed to go— The garments had been shared, the lot was cast.

But was there also one man, half afraid, As recognition slowly dawned and grew, Sword-pierced within his heart, who, echoing, prayed 'Forgive us, Lord. We know not what we do'?

Margot Crosse

A New Look at the Old Testament

By William Neil

3. THE SERVANT OF GOD

WHEN we look at the Old Testament lessons for Good Friday we find two tableaux which form part of this wonderful biblical pageant, which point us forward to the 'green hill far away without a city wall' and which marvellously illuminate for us the meaning of what the gospel tells us of the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

In Genesis 22 we read the story of Abraham and Isaac. Abraham is then a man well on in years who has been promised that a son will be born to him whose descendants will grow into a people who are to be God's instruments in bringing a wayward and blinded world back to himself. Yet the incredible command comes to him, as he thinks, from the same God to offer this only son as a sacrifice. But for Abraham the first rule of life is the obedience of God and his faith is strong enough to believe that if need be God can bring his son back to life so that his purpose for the world may be fulfilled.

The Church has always seen in this story a foreshadowing of the Cross and the Resurrection. The father who willingly surrenders the dearest thing in the world (God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son—

St. John 3. 16), the son who is utterly obedient to his father (obedient unto death, even the death of the cross—Phil. 2. 8), the alternative sacrifice provided by God, the ram caught in the thicket (Behold the Lamb of God—St. John 1. 29) and the parable of the Resurrection in Abraham's faith (Heb. 11. 17-19)—all these varied aspects of this vivid story are luminous arrows pointing to the gospel of Eastertide.

The Suffering Servant

The Old Testament lesson for the evening of Good Friday is even more significant in helping us to understand the meaning of Lent and Easter. No part of the early Church's proclamation of the gospel seems to have been more fundamental than the claim that Christ died for our sins 'according to the scriptures' (1 Cor. 15. 3). When the risen Christ joined the two despondent travellers, bewildered by the events of Good Friday, on the road to Emmaus late on Easter Day, his talk with them was of his suffering and death as the necessary prelude to his exaltation and glory, and he rebuked them for not believing in 'all that the prophets have spoken' (St. Luke 24. 25). When St. Philip found the Queen of Ethiopia's chamberlain

puzzling over the meaning of an Old Testament passage as he drove along the Gaza road, it was the evangelist's exposition of this Good Friday lesson from Isaiah 53, which deals with the Suffering Servant of God, which convinced the chamberlain that he must become a Christian.

This great insight, which no human brain could have concocted but which God put into the mind of Isaiah, is the climax of four so-called Servant Songs in Isaiah 42. 1-4; 49. 1-6; 50. 4-9; 52. 13-53. 12. Read these together in a modern translation and marvel at how they light up the Easter scene. Remember where and how these words were written. The writer of Isaiah 40-55 was one of the Jewish exiles in Babylon, hoping against hope that the end of their captivity was at hand and that they would return and rebuild Jerusalem, the holy city of God, before many months had passed. Cyrus of Persia, the new world ruler, was for Isaiah the instrument of God who would conquer Babylon, release God's people, and see to the revival of Jerusalem's ancient glory.

So, indeed, it happened—up to a point. Cyrus came, Babylon fell, and the Jews were allowed to return home. But Cyrus paid scant attention to God and the Jews who returned to their holy city found too many problems on their hands to fulfil Isaiah's hopes of a renewed and powerful nation of Israel arising out of the ashes of the old and carrying out the will of God. So in a mood of disillusionment Isaiah wrote these songs. In them he declares that the future for Israel must not be one of world domination. She must never again try to be a nation like the rest. Her role is rather to be that of a servant who through her humiliation and suffering will bring men to the knowledge of the true God.

A Ransom for Many

But this was too high a vocation for Israel. She preferred to play at politics and become an exclusive, intolerant little community behind the walls of her mountain stronghold at Jerusalem. Only one Israelite—the one true Israelite—saw the vision that Isaiah had seen and made it his own vocation. When the Messiah came he chose to be neither a politician nor a stuntmonger, an empire-builder nor a revolutionary (St. Matt. 4. 1-11), but the Servant of God obedient unto death, offering his life for the Israel of God, both Jew and Gentile. When Jesus died 'he was wounded for our transgressions'

Continued on page 19



... a ram caught in a thicket.—GENESIS 22. 13

ARCTIC CHALLENGE

By Rosamund Essex

THIS time the title of my piece should be 'As I have never seen it,' for my travels have not yet taken me to the cold lands north of Canada—to the Arctic. But I have talked to the Bishop of the Arctic, and that is really something.

The bishop—he signs himself 'Donald The Arctic,' by the way—is a bit of sheer dynamic. He is Canadian born, and worked as a priest under the former bishop, the famous 'Archibald The Arctic.'

The new bishop talks fast and acts fast: when he was last in England he spoke at meetings 263 times in six weeks! As a matter of fact, that did daunt him a bit.

'I want men in the Arctic,' he began, and the words popped out like minor explosions. 'I want ordained men, and men who are prepared to be ordained. I have seventeen priests in my diocese, but I ought to have twenty-six. Some would serve Eskimos, some whites. We want to open new missions. We want to preach and teach and minister to our people, not leave them to be excommunicated most of the year because we have no men to reach them.'

I interrupted this first machine-gun burst to ask what kind of men the bishop had in mind. Must they be young, physically strong, courageous? It would be good if they were all that, he said, but not essential. There had been men in the Arctic who had started by being afraid of what was before them. And there was one missionary, who had been turned down on the score of health from being a missionary in India, who had become wonderfully famous for his ministry in the Arctic. 'Anyhow,' cried the bishop, turning a piercing eye on me, 'what about St. Paul? No selection committee would ever have passed him as a missionary.'

But fair is fair. Conditions are often hard in the Arctic, and need men of strength. A man may go out with a dog-team and sit on the sledge much of the time; but when it comes to rough ice, then the men have to work hard all

day long to travel not much more than a mile.

The Eskimos are lovable people, brought up in the hard school of life. They have received education from the missionaries: but as yet they have little



else to read than the New Testament, parts of the Old, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, some Sunday school lessons, and some mimeographed sheets run off by the mission for use of those in hospital. The people learn easily by heart—their minds are not clogged up as ours are by newspapers, TV, magazines, science fiction and what have you. One day a lad of eighteen was brought by a missionary priest as one likely to be a catechist. What work should he do in preparation for this task when he was far away from the mission in the winter? Let him learn the Gospel of St. John by heart, said the bishop. But the missionary priest laughed aloud. 'He did that when he was fourteen!' he replied.

Indeed, any candidate for Confirmation in the diocese must learn the whole of St. John's Gospel, all the parts of Isaiah which refer to Christ, some of the Psalms, some of the Proverbs and the Catechism before he is accepted.

All the people in this far northern

diocese go to church, where there is a church to go to and a priest or catechist to lead the people. One day a visiting priest went to Baker Lake for a mission, and he asked the head man how many people he might expect on a weeknight evening. 'Seventy-three,' was the reply. 'However do you know the exact number?' asked the priest. 'That's all the people who are on the post!' was the reply.

In fact, the head man was gloriously wrong. Ninety-six people came, the extra ones having travelled in from far outlying posts.

'A priest in the Arctic,' said the bishop to me, 'lives with the people, eats and drinks with them, suffers the cold and the hardships with them.'

What better postscript could I give to this piece than the words of Armand Tagooona, a young Eskimo just ordained. He was asked how he had heard God's call.

'As long as I remember, I believed about God and Jesus Christ the Son of God. I studied the Bible, the Word of God, more and harder, and prayed more. In my heart there was a saying "Watch for God's call, because God is calling some people to work for him." Then I wondered, "Am I one of them?" This went on for three years.

'Here I am now, one of God's workers in the Church. My wife and I are happy to be one of God's workers and have peace of mind. We want to thank those who help us to have more belief in God the Father, and the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.'

I believe that the bishop has not yet had more than two offers from men in England to go out to his diocese as priests. As I see it, the response deserves to be far higher. It is a call and a challenge.

A New Look at the Old Testament (from page 18)

(Isa. 53. 5) and gave his life 'a ransom for many' (St. Mark 10. 45). In the Resurrection he saw 'the travail of his soul' and was satisfied (Isa. 53. 11), and two thousand years of history have shown the truth of Isaiah's prophecy that the Servant would be 'a light to the Gentiles' and 'salvation unto the end of the earth' (Isa. 49. 6). Isaiah's words have indeed been fulfilled.

BEN-HUR

A Tale of the Christ, retold by John Lasingham

PART 3. THE PRISONER



In the grip of his captors

BEN-HUR looked down into the street with horror as the chain reaction which the accident had triggered off began to develop. The crowds on the sides of the streets and on the bridges over it began to throw stones upon the troops. These, disciplined as ever, began without emotion and with ruthless efficiency to put down the disturbance.

Tirzah, the young sister of Ben-Hur, had not been able to see over the tall parapet these dread events below. Now, as her brother stepped back on to the rooftop where they were together, she looked apprehensively into his face. He said: 'Oh, Tirzah: what will become of us? I have killed the Roman Governor. The tile fell upon him.'

The girl's face grew white. 'I did not do it purposely,' said Ben-Hur; 'it was an accident.'

'But what will they do?' she whispered.

Instead of answering Ben-Hur mounted the parapet of the roof again and looked down into the street. There, the struggle between crowd and soldiery was still continuing, but, in the midst of it, he could see the bodyguard of the Roman procurator already assisting him to remount his horse. The sight brought fresh hope to Ben-Hur, so that his face was much more cheerful when he returned to his sister.

'He lives, he lives, Tirzah! Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers! Be not afraid. I will explain how it happened, and they will not hurt us.'

But in that assumption he was terribly wrong. Indeed, the two of them had scarcely crossed the roof on their way to the courtyard below when they felt the whole structure of the house shudder as tremendous blows rained upon the gate in the wall leading onto the street. Soldiers had beaten in the gate.

And then, above all the tumult, he heard the voice of his mother crying out. When he

reached the first of the courtyards below he saw her, long hair streaming over her face, struggling to tear loose from a soldier. She stretched out her hands towards him but, when he had almost reached her, he was seized. A voice, somehow vaguely familiar, pierced the mists of his anger and anguish. It was saying: 'This is he!'

Ben-Hur looked up and saw Messala. Beside Messala stood a Roman officer who looked at Ben-Hur in surprise.

'What!' he exclaimed, 'can this be the assassin! Why, he is but a boy.'

Coolly, Messala replied: 'It is indeed he. A man does not have to be bold before he can learn to hate. Here is the assassin, and that is his mother, and yonder his sister. You have the whole family.'

Held as he was in the grip of his captors, Ben-Hur spoke imploringly to his former friend. 'Help, Messala! Remember our childhood, and help, I pray you.'

But it was useless: Messala gave no sign of having heard Ben-Hur's words. Instead, he turned to his fellow Roman officer and said briefly: 'I cannot be of further use to you.' And with these words he withdrew, marching with firm steps across the courtyard and out into the street. Ben-Hur watched him go. And as he so watched a great and terrible resolve was borne within him.

'In the hour of thy vengeance, O Lord,' he murmured to himself, 'be mine the hand to put it upon him!'

* * *

For some time Ben-Hur stood there in the grip of his captors. Meanwhile, the ransacking of the house went on apace. At last, however, a trumpet sounded in the courtyard—the signal for the troops to withdraw. Out there in the street, Ben-Hur looked with anguished gaze for any sign of his mother or his sister. There was none. Yet, even as he gazed, he saw an astonishing sight. One of the bodies which had been lying in the dust of the street—that of a woman—sprang up and darted back to the gate of the house, beside which Ben-Hur was standing in the grip of his captors. He recognized the figure as that of Amrah, his faithful nurse. And she, seeing him, fell at his feet, waiting dumbly for a word from him. 'God help you, Amrah,' he said, 'for I cannot. But live, for my sister's and my mother's sake. Surely they will come back, and then—'

A soldier dragged her away. But at that instant she sprang from his grasp and rushed through the gateway and back into the empty and desecrated palace of the Hurs. When the soldier who had been holding her would have gone in pursuit, his officer commanded him to ignore the woman because, as he said, she would eventually starve.

So, for years to come, the former home of Ben-Hur stood as a silent witness to all passers-by of the fate which had overcome his family.

* * *

Some twelve days after these happenings in Jerusalem a strange event took place in a village called Nazareth. It was but a small place. It had just the one street along which sheep and goats often straggled.

It was just after noonday, and the life of Nazareth was at its drowsiest when the sound of a trumpet coming up the road from the south startled those living there. Some from their work, some from the noonday doze, hurried into the street, and looked in the direction whence the sound had come. They saw ten Roman cavalymen under the command of a non-commissioned officer moving towards them escorting in their midst a pitiable figure. Barefooted, bareheaded, half naked, his hands bound behind him and the thong fixed therefrom to the neck of a horse, he staggered along in the dust. He was streaming with sweat. Murmurs of sympathy rose from the villagers as they saw that he was but a boy. The cavalcade made straight for the village well. While the soldiers drank gratefully, their prisoner sank down in the dust of the road, exhausted. The

villagers, drawing timidly a little nearer, murmured among themselves. And then, even while they stood there, a man was seen coming down a by-road towards them. That he was a workman was shown by the axe and the saw which he carried with him.

'Good Rabbi Joseph,' cried a woman turning towards him, 'here is a prisoner; ask the soldiers about him, that we may know who he is, what he has done, and what they are going to do with him.'

The old man's face glanced first at the prisoner then to that of the officer. 'The peace of the Lord be with you,' he said gravely to the latter. 'Are you from Jerusalem?'

'Yes.'

'Your prisoner is young. May I ask what he has done?'

'He is an assassin, a Jew, the son of a prince of Jerusalem named Hur. His crime is that he nearly killed the noble Gratus by flinging a tile upon his head from the roof of his house. And now he is condemned to the galleys for life.'

A terrified murmur passed over the crowd at these dread words, and even the stolid-seeming man whom they called Joseph was moved to mutter 'The Lord help him!' as he eyed the young prisoner exhausted in the dust.

All this time there had been a youth in attendance upon Joseph—a youth of such quiet and unobtrusive presence that no one hitherto had noticed him. He was tall and lean and carried an axe which was apparently one of the tools of his carpenter's trade. Now, with the quietude which seemed to characterize all his actions, he went to the well, filled a pitcher of water and immediately carried it over to the prisoner, stooping low over him and holding the vessel to his blackened lips.

Ben-Hur, for that, of course, was the prisoner's name, was by this time almost unconscious. But at the touch of the water upon his lips and the hand upon his shoulder he awoke, and looked up into a face he never forgot—the face of one about his own age; a face lighted by dark blue eyes, at the time so soft, so appealing, so full of love and holy purpose, that they had yet all the power of command and will. The spirit of Ben-Hur, hardened and embittered by a sense of the wrongs done to him, became as a child. He drank long from the pitcher which was held for him in the hand of the other. Not a word passed between the two of them.

A few moments later, at the harsh command of the N.C.O. in charge, the troops took to their horses again, the prisoner stumbling between them. Ben-Hur continued down the road towards whatever was to await him in captivity. Only once did he, at some inner impulse, gaze back towards the village. He saw the young man who

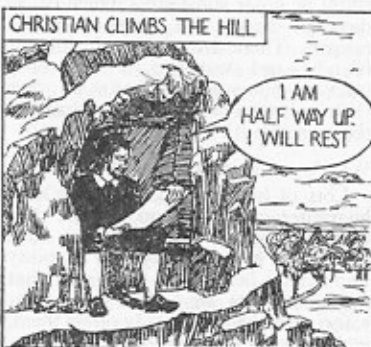
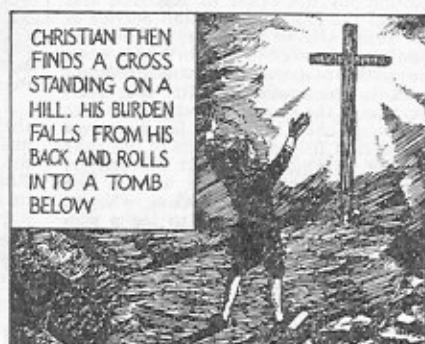
had given him the water still looking after him. Although he did not know it, Ben-Hur had met Jesus.

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.

The Pilgrim's Progress

By John Bunyan



QUESTION PAGE

4140. Why do we acknowledge, in the Nicene Creed, 'one Baptism for the remission of sins' when at the Consecration the priest says 'This is my Blood . . . which is shed . . . for the remission of sins'?

The word 'remission' means much the same as 'forgiveness.' The washing in water in baptism is the outward sign that God forgives all those that come to him. Furthermore, the purpose of the Crucifixion was that the sins of men might be remitted. As the hymn puts it: 'He died that we might be forgiven, He died to make us good.' When we are baptized all our sins are forgiven; but experience shows that we are constantly in need of forgiveness throughout our lives.

4141. On becoming a server I have been told always to kneel at the opposite side to the book on the altar. Why is this?

It has for many centuries been the custom for the priest to read the first part of the Holy Communion Service at the south side of the altar, and for the book to be moved to the north side when he reads the Gospel. It is usually brought back to the south side after the Communion of the People. Purely as a matter of convenience, it is usual for the server to kneel at the opposite side of the altar to that at which the priest is standing. He can then see at once whether the priest wishes him to do anything, whereas it is much more difficult to see a sign made by someone standing directly in front.

Question of the Month

4139. In 1 Corinthians 15. 44 St. Paul speaks of a spiritual body. Is this not a contradiction in terms? The word body seems to imply something material, which can be handled and seen.

In theological terms the body is that by which the spirit makes itself manifest. It does not necessarily imply something material which can clearly be handled or seen; for example, the wind, which our Lord used to illustrate the Spirit. If you will read 1 Corinthians 15 a little further you will find that at verse 51 St. Paul himself does not claim to explain the mystery. He sets out his understanding of it, and that is as far as we can go.

4142. Who is responsible for maintaining the Chapels Royal, and the Royal Peculiars?

The Chapels Royal are the private chapels of the Royal Family and are maintained by them in the same way as the other parts of the royal residences. Royal Peculiars are churches belonging to the Church of England over which jurisdiction is exercised by the Crown instead of by the bishop of the province. They possess endowments, but, as in the

case of other churches, these endowments are insufficient to meet the present-day cost of maintenance, and they therefore have to rely on the donations of those attending or visiting them.

4143. Please can you tell me why the number forty is mentioned so many times in the Bible?

In Hebrew usage the number forty represents not a precise quantity but a comfortably large number. In English usage we have the phrase 'I have done it dozens (or hundreds) of times,' with similar, although not quite parallel, imprecision. In Bible language a period of a generation or so in the wilderness is forty years. An individual who spends a month or so in the wilderness is away for forty days; and a king who reigns forty years has reigned as long as anybody can remember, and as long as God can reasonably be expected to allow anyone to do so.

It is always necessary to be careful with Biblical numbers, which give an impression of being precise when translated into English. In a recent book on St. Mark, Archbishop Carrington points out, for example, that 'on the third day' or 'after three days' is in Hebrew simply an idiom for 'very soon.' Thus neither the prophecy of Isaiah in 2 Kings 20. 5, nor of our Lord in St. Mark 8. 31, is an exact statement of time.

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

FASHION dictates lightweight shoes—therefore even styles that are called 'walking' shoes are often not really waterproof, and the Consumer Council gets quite a number of complaints as a result. How to tell which shoes are best?

Where soles are concerned, rubber or plastic will be more waterproof than leather—though some people do not like wearing them. The more substantial the leather, the better—and preferably lined. Suede is not a good buy in this respect, unless it has been waterproofed (with silicones, for instance): this applies even to snow boots. Perforations or heavy stitching on the uppers are another way in which rain can penetrate, and any fancy ledge or fold on the shoe will obviously provide a trap for water. In fact, the only shoe specifically designed to keep water out is the veldtschoen type with its elaborately-layered construction.

It seems many shoppers are unaware that new shoes should never be worn for the first time on a rainy day. It is better to wait till some days of wear have embedded a good deal of grit in the sole, which helps to keep the

leather protected from wet ground.

Mouse about the House

Unlovable though some people find rats, and even mice, they too have feelings—in fact, rats have a particularly sensitive nervous system. So, however imperative it may be to get rid of them, it's worth taking care to do it in the most humane way. Traps are variable in their results, and few kill outright, while rat lime is a vicious substance which traps by 'glueing' the wretched animal, limb by limb.

At present, the best method is to find a poison based on warfarin, which, although not entirely painless, is at least better than those made with red squill or other substances which cause days of agony till death provides release. There are plenty of different brands—and warfarin is not only humane, but more efficient than other chemicals (the Ministry of Agriculture recommends it).

What's a Guarantee worth?

Lots of household goods now have guarantee cards for you to sign. But is it wise to do so? Many say 'this guarantee is in lieu of any liability implied by law.' The trouble is that most shoppers have little idea what safeguards the law already offers them, which they may be signing away when

they put their name to a guarantee form of this kind.

It's worth remembering that, under the Sale of Goods Act, the seller (usually a shop—but sometimes the manufacturer if you buy direct) has to take responsibility for defects in the goods. What's more, his liability lasts for six years—not for one year or so which is the usual term laid down in a guarantee. And it covers all parts of the product, while a guarantee may exclude the valves of a radio, the strap of a watch, and so on.

As to those guarantee cards issued by manufacturers, they may indeed offer some additional safeguard to the shopper: it depends on the wording. Recently, SHOPPER'S GUIDE urged consumers to read all the small type before signing; to cross out any paragraph exempting the manufacturer from legal liability (and initial it); and only then to sign and return the card.

Toy Competition Results

We received a larger number of home-made toys than for many years past; indeed, it was difficult to find space for them all in THE SIGN office before they were sent to the Church of England Children's Society, where they brought much joy on Christmas morning.

1st Prize: S. Houghton of Hornsea.

2nd Prize: Miss R. Eyre of Bramhall.

3rd Prize: Mrs. Stanway of St. Asaph.

HOME AND GARDEN

1. A CAKE FOR MOTHERING SUNDAY

By Hazel Macleod

THE fourth Sunday in Lent has long been celebrated as 'Mothering Sunday' with its traditional gift of flowers. There was a time, some 300 years ago, when young people presented a cake as well as flowers, and though the recipe has changed considerably (the original was boiled rather like a plum pudding), we still find the 'Simnel Cake' in our cookery books. Many housewives like to make a modern version for Easter Day:

8 oz. plain flour, pinch of salt, small level teaspoonful grated nutmeg, small level teaspoonful cinnamon, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. currants, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. sultanas, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. raisins, 1 oz. peel, 6 oz. margarine, 6 oz. castor sugar, 3 eggs.

Almond paste: 8 oz. ground almonds, 8 oz. castor sugar, 1 small egg, a little lemon juice if liked.

Cake tin: 7-inch diameter.

Oven setting: 325° F.

Time to cook: about 3 hours. Turn down the oven if longer is required.

Mix the ingredients together for the almond paste. If the mixture is sticky to handle add a little more castor sugar. Cut off one-third of the paste and roll it into a round the size of the cake tin. Put the rest of the paste aside.

Sieve the flour, salt and spices.

Cream the sugar and margarine thoroughly, beat in the eggs. Fold in the flour and then the fruit. If the eggs are small add a little milk to make a dropping consistency.

Put half the mixture in a lined cake tin, smooth, then cover with the round

of almond paste. Place the rest of the cake mixture on top and bake as directed.



When the cake is cold:

Roll the rest of the almond paste into a neat round the size of the top of the cake. Cut out a round piece of paste $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide. Brush the cake with white of egg and press the ring of paste on top.

Roll the remaining paste into eleven little balls (I was once told that they represent the Apostles minus Judas Iscariot) and space them evenly round the top of the cake.

Cover the sides of the cake with a band of greaseproof paper (fill in the centre of the top as well). Brush the top with beaten egg and bake in a moderately quick oven until the paste is just coloured. Remove the paper and cool the cake. Fill in the centre

with a little water icing and decorate with cherries, angelica and crystallized ginger.

2. MY GARDEN in MARCH

By Dr. W. E. Shewell-Cooper

ONE is apt to forget the very late greens like the Purple and Green sprouting Broccoli, the Ormskirk late and Ormskirk very late Savoys and the delicious kales like Asparagus, Cottagers', Green Curled and Variegated. The seeds of all these should be sown about the 15th of the month. Take the precautions of forking fine sedge peat into the seed bed first and wonderful roots will be produced which will stand the plants in good stead later on. If you have difficulty in getting the correct sedge peat, write to me.

Most lawns want mowing for the first time this month. Southerners at the beginning of March and Northerners at the end of March. The lawns can then be treated with a dressing of sedge peat at a bucketful to the square yard and this will give them a wonderful start to the year. Weedy lawns will be watered towards the end of the month with Verdone. This hormone will take a little time to act, but it's very effective. By the way, don't let it drift on to plants bordering the lawn or it may kill them.

This is a good time to plant the bulbs of many lilies and the corms of the different gladioli like, for instance, the Butterfly types, in groups of eight or nine in the flower border or in straight lines in an odd corner for cut flowers. Slugs start doing damage this month to many plants and especially to delphiniums and pyrethrums. Apply Sluggit pellets to the soil.

stayed where they ought to be. The consonants (all the other letters) have been put in alphabetical order.

By consulting the Confirmation Service carefully, and rearranging the

B	E	C	F	I	F	F	G	H	E	H
H	M		N	R	I	R	S	I	S	T
O	T		T	T	V		Y	A	Y	O

consonants, first discover the phrase, and then write and explain the meaning of the first and fifth words. You must discover the phrase yourself, but you may ask your parents, teacher, or priest to help with the meanings.

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

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

December winners:

No. 23, Miss U. Potter (Truro), Miss E. Weller (Bury St. Edmunds).

No. 24, Peter Bielby (Bishop Monkton, Harrogate), Joan Horner (Chadderton, Oldham), Mary Wood (Coton, Whitechurch).

Richard Tatlock's Puzzles

5. WORDS AND NUMBERS (open to all)

This month's study-book is St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians.

In the pattern below and in the clues, the numbers stand for letters. The aim is to discover the Master Phrase by noting the clues and filling in the letters indicated by the numbers. 0 stands for any letter not in the Master Phrase. The clues are phrases from Colossians.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13

14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

Clues:

1. of his 13.16.11.0 Son
2. 0.6.7.15.0.22 in all wisdom

3. Anger, wrath, 10.11.0.8.7.16
4. Not with 16.22.16.18.16.0.0.6.7.16
5. Remember my 0.19.12.13.4
6. Spiritual 9.3.12.1.4
7. Wisdom in will 0.3.0.18.21.8.20
8. A 13.17.3.0 of utterance
9. Manifest to his 9.11.6.2.14.4
10. 0.8.5.14.16.0 against them

When you have discovered the Master Phrase, discover (by any method you like, if you do not know) what it means, and state its connection with the Epistle to the Colossians.

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

6. VOWELS STAY PUT (age limit 13)

The pattern below represents a phrase (a group of words) from the Confirmation Service.

Obviously something has gone wrong! What has happened is this: The vowels (A.E.I.O.U.) have all



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By Sibyl Harton

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SICK AND NEEDY

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Balance from 1959				79	6	8			
Collections at Holy Communion									
(Parish Church)	123	6	11						
(Barton)	9	8	0						
(Shirdley Hill)	15	15	3	148	10	2			
Donation				17	1		228	13	11
Commission and Sanctuary Expenses				20	19	9			
Welfare				79	15	5	100	15	2

CREDIT BALANCE £127 18 9

GENERAL ACCOUNT

Expenditure

	£	s.	d.
Heating	121	13	9
Lighting	42	12	7
Salaries:			
Verger	103	9	6
Organist	89	2	0
Choir	23	0	3
Cleaner	52	0	0
Bellringers	18	0	0
Insurances:			
Verger	17	14	9
Cleaners	2	0	0
Fire and Burglary	27	5	6
Magazine	78	0	0
Music	12	5	8
Printing and Books	49	18	2
Graveyard Wages	164	12	9
Schedule A Tax on School House	19	3	6
Choir Outing	19	16	0
Stationery	7	2	6
Day School Festival Collection	9	0	4
Diocesan Quota and Church Aid	439	16	10
Water Rate	1	0	4
Lent Films	40	5	6
Refund of Loan on Rectory (1950) repairs	29	13	8
Annual Subscriptions:			
Royal School of Church Music	2	0	0
Ormskirk Deanery	17	6	
Lancs. Change Ringers	5	0	
Stamps and Postages	1	15	1
Bank Charges and Cheque Books	4	12	6
Sundry Expenses	23	13	7
Special Objects	208	5	7
World Friendship House (Collection at Bishop's request)	12	5	5
Covenanted Payment to Fabric	25	0	0
Donations to:			
C.M.S.	62	10	0
S.P.G.	62	10	0
B. and F.B.S.	25	0	0
S.P.C.K.	25	0	0
Transfer to Fabric Account	200	0	0
Balance to 1961	195	17	4

£2217 10 7

Income

	£	s.	d.
Balance from 1959	177	1	7
Collections	522	14	11
Envelopes	406	1	8
Donations	7	9	0
Collections at Baptisms and Churchings ...	12	9	1
Church Rate	29	13	6
Field Day	214	9	4
Bazaar	344	7	3
1959 Quota Contribution — Barton	14	0	0
1959 Church Aid Contribution —			
Shirdley Hill	13	0	0
Magazine Sales	48	0	5
Carpet Fund Donations	200	5	3
Refund Schedule A Tax on School House .	19	3	6
Refund Overpayment — H. Core	2	9	6
Special Objects: —			
Moral Welfare	30	3	0
World Refugees	120	17	6
C. of E. Children's Society	57	5	1

£2217 10 7

GRAVEYARD

AVEYARD	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Balance from 1959	117 5 6	
Funeral Fees	142 10 0	
From General Account to cover wages	164 12 9	424 8 3
Legacy to Deposit Account	150 0 0	
Grave Excavations	110 11 11	
Graveyard wages, mower, etc.	164 12 9	425 4 8
	BALANCE OVERDRAWN	16 5

CHURCH FABRIC

	£	s.	d.	
Balance from 1959	148	12	4	
By sale of garage	45	0	0	
Donations	31	12	5	
By Fabric Box	14	9	9	
Covenanted Payment	25	0	0	264 14 6
<hr/>				
Legacy to Deposit Account	200	0	0	
Repairs	41	12	2	241 12 2
<hr/>				
CREDIT BALANCE				£23 2 4

RECONCILIATION

31st Dec., 1960.	Balance as per bank Statement	574	0	11
	Less unrepresented cheques	227	18	11
		<u>£346</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Sick and Needy Account	127	18	9	
General Account	195	17	4	
Church Fabric Account	23	2	4	
		<u>346</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>5</u>
Less Graveyard deficit	16	5		
		<u>£346</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT

Graveyard	950	0	0			
Interest	21	19	2	971	19	2
Church Fabric	400	0	0			
Interest	5	9	1	405	9	1
				£1,377	8	3

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J. H. GRIMSHAW, Churchwardens.

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60 WALLGATE

WIGAN

Phone 2370

166 DUKE STREET

ST. HELENS

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