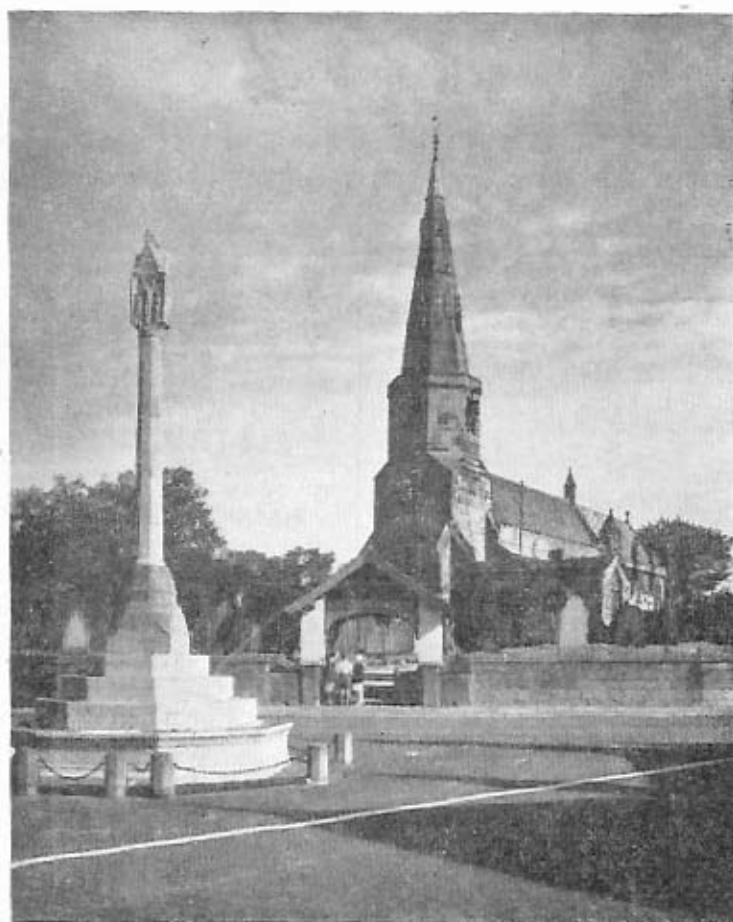


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My dear Friends,

My letter this month will be concerned purely with affairs on the "home front." First let me say how inspiring it was to see you all in your place for the Harvest Festival Services. I am sure you were all thrilled to see your Church crowded to capacity on the Sunday evening not forgetting the splendid turn up in the afternoon. It was a memorable day and all the more enjoyable because we were able to have with us many friends who live a considerable distance from the Church. The experiment of running a Church Bus was appreciated by all who used it, and we have had many requests for a repeat of this bus service. I am delighted to be able to inform you that the Parochial Church Council has decided unanimously to arrange for a bus to run from Shirdley Hill and Haskayne every Sunday evening, commencing on Sunday, 5th November. The bus will pick up in Shirdley Hill at 5.55 p.m. and at Haskayne at 6.15 p.m. You are no doubt aware that we are not allowed to collect any money in the bus. In order that any of our people using this bus service may make a contribution towards the cost there will be a "Bus Box" in the Church Porch, and contributions placed in that box will help to defray the cost of providing the bus service. Will you please pass this information on to the residents in the two areas concerned.

There is another matter which brings a real note of thanksgiving into our hearts and that is the wonderful sight of the ladders up the Spire of our ancient church. We rejoice in the knowledge that at long last all will soon be well and the Parochial Church Council has boldly decided to instruct the contractors to complete the work on the whole of the spire. I propose to hold a Gift Day for the spire on Sunday, 12th November, when I shall be in Church all day to receive your gifts. Will you all please make your gift a "thank offering" because we have been able to undertake this important work on the fabric of the church. Thank Offering Gifts may be brought or sent to church between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Sunday, 12th November. Please hand your gift to me, do not put it on the plate during the services. Our gifts must be quite separate, they are for the Fabric Fund.

Now about the "Christmas Bazaar." We must do everything we can to ensure the success of this effort. The date is Saturday, 2nd December and the Bazaar will be opened at 2.30 p.m. Many of our organisations have already held efforts to help in raising as much as we possibly can. This year more than ever owing to the heavy expenditure on the

fabric we need to do well. Will you all please help us in whatever way you can to ensure a successful effort on Saturday, 2nd December.

Finally a word about our new method of financing the work of the church in Halsall. You have no doubt read with much interest the various methods being used by so many parishes to ensure that the finances of the Church are on a sound businesslike basis. Wells schemes, and Stewardship Campaigns are now a feature of Church work from one end of the country to the other, with wonderful success. The Parochial Church Council has wisely decided to re-organise our finances along similar lines, but to do the job themselves in co-operation with our own people. You will all shortly receive a letter explaining in detail the new Finance Scheme for our Church. Read the letter very carefully and think carefully about your own share in the work of the Church. If we all resolve to play our part not only will success be ours but gone will be the old unbusinesslike methods of raising money to do God's work in Halsall. This will be a great day in Halsall when we each of us pledge our weekly support and the end of the money raising efforts has come.

I cannot close without saying how much I appreciate the support and service evident all around in the various departments of our Church work. This is particularly encouraging when I realise that I am now completely alone in that I have lost the services of the two lay readers. Mr. Ball who has served faithfully at Shirdley Hill, is required at Birkdale and Mr. Rimmer who served faithfully at Barton is needed at Tarleton—so now it is just "You and Me"—thank God for "You."

God Bless you all,

Your sincere friend,

HERBERT BULLOUGH.

GOD THE PROVIDER

Not so very many years ago, it was easy to offer up very real and very genuine prayers to God for a fruitful year on the land because most people lived in close touch with the land. Those who were not actually farmers or stockbreeders lived in villages and could not escape the constant awareness that, without the fruit of the land, we should all starve. Weather was important, good husbandry was important but, most of all, God's help was asked for and everyone knew that, without that help, life could not continue.

This, of course, is as true to-day as it ever was—but such vast populations live in Towns that its truth is not realised or even appreciated by many millions of people. They don't realise that the stuff they pour out of cardboard cartons and which goes snap, crackle and pop while they fumble for the

free-gift toy is, in fact, the produce of the land—of good husbandry and of God's beneficence to us all.

And not many people, when they open a tin of some concocted meat product, realise that without the cattle farmers of the world, that tin could never have been filled. Again, when you buy frozen fish-fingers, do you consciously think of the men who go down to the sea in ships and have their business in great waters? I know I don't, unless I make a real effort to do so.

This is not our fault. We don't **consciously** ignore the fullness of God's providence for us—but we live a life different from those who first heard Him speak.

Because of this, I think we must expand our prayers and our gratitude to God. We must make a conscious effort to realise how utterly dependent we are on the produce of the land and of the sea and what a terrible fate would be ours if it were not for God's blessing on the seed-time and the harvest. Yes, we must talk to God about this in our prayers and try particularly hard to do so sincerely—not superficially. It's so easy to be superficial about these things when, for all practical purposes, wheat, corn, barley, beef, mutton and fish come, not from God, but from the shop on the corner, neatly packed up in handy-sized cartons.

God gave men brains and, myself, I don't see anything incongruous between the will of God and progress. There are those who say that all progress is contrary to the will of God—and point to the atom bomb as proof. I don't believe this. If God had not wanted civilisation to progress and had condemned new inventions, then I don't think he would have given mankind the capacity to go forward and invent things. After all, brains and reasoning power must be either the gift of God or they must flow from the original evil in each one of us. They can't be both.

I'm sure God meant man to have brains, to use them to reason with and to devote reasoning and inventive powers to bring God's kingdom closer here on earth. There's nothing wrong in an invention that makes life easier, less painful, which assists to sustain life or even which makes life a bit more comfortable. To the extent that man devotes his God-given brain to this end, I believe he's doing just what God wants.

But, there is nothing wholly good in this imperfect world. In mankind and in all that mankind produces, there can be an element of evil. Food, drugs, the very wine which Our Lord Himself took can be abused if they're consumed without moderation. So with inventions. Atomic power is already on the way to bringing a new and higher standard of life to countless under-privileged races throughout the world—yet the basic invention behind the mysteries of atomic power is that which created the bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The aeroplane used by the Flying Doctor service in the outbacks of Australia is fundamentally the same machine which showered bombs on Coventry.

God gave man the power to progress materially as well as spiritually but he also gave him free will to that, if he chose, man could abuse this gift.

Someone once said "God will give you anything you ask for—provided that you pay the price." If mankind continues to abuse the gift of inventive powers, he will destroy himself. I'm quite sure of that.

The trouble is that the capacity for misuse and abuse of inventive powers is vested in the hands of a few, a very few, people who, if they go far enough, may not only destroy themselves but also bring untold misery to countless millions who want nothing more than to work for a comfortable standard of life and live inoffensively with their neighbours.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1960.

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General	12	10	1
Aughton:			
St. Michael	113	6	1
Christ Church	42	6	10
Bickerstaffe	130	12	0
Burscough, St. John	213	11	2
Dalton	46	16	1
Halsall	63	10	0
Lathom, St. James	163	7	3
Lydiat, St. Thomas	41	0	0
Maghull, St. Andrew	248	18	4
Melling	10	0	
Newburgh, Christ Church	32	10	0
Ormskirk, Parish Church	269	19	11
Lathom Park Chapel	57	16	11
Scarisbrick, St. Mark	86	1	8
Skelmersdale	17	19	9

THE CHURCH IN GERMANY IN PRAYER Another Poverty

Here is a fine prayer from Germany, which has many applications.

This is our poverty
That we do not belong to each other
Nor serve one another,
We go each his own way
And do not care for our neighbour.
We pray Thee, O Lord:
Redeem us from this estrangement,
Redeem us out of this loneliness.
Deliver us from the sin that divides us.
Join us closely in true love.
Have mercy upon all Thy children.
Lord, we believe; help Thou our unbelief.



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THE SIGN

*Not ashamed to confess the
faith of Christ crucified*

No. 683

VOL. 57

NOVEMBER 1961

- 1 W. All Saints' Day.
- 2 Th. All Souls.
- 5 S. Twenty-third after Trinity.
- 6 M. Leonard, C., c. 559.
- 8 W. Saints, Martyrs, and Doctors of the Church of England.
- 11 S. Martin, B., c. 397.
- 12 S. Twenty-fourth after Trinity.
- 13 M. Britius, B., 443.
- 15 W. Machutus, B., 627.
- 16 Th. Margaret of Scotland, Queen, 1093.
- 17 F. Hugh, B., 1200.
Hilda, Abb., 680.
- 19 S. Twenty-fifth after Trinity.
- 20 M. Edmund, K.M., 870.
- 22 W. Cecilia, V.M., c. 230.
- 23 Th. Clement, B.M., c. 100.
- 25 S. Catherine, V.M.
- 26 S. Next before Advent.
- 30 Th. St. Andrew, A.M.

Days of fasting, or abstinence:
Fridays, 3, 10, 17, 24; Wednesday, 29.

Do Missions Matter?

LET'S be honest: most of us wonder about this sometimes. Most of us at any rate have the occasional stray doubt as to whether the mission work of the Church really has got much to do with us. It is quite possible to become so concerned with our own affairs, with our own Church at home, as to forget that the spreading of the Gospel is a necessary part of believing the Gospel, and that the mission work of the Church lies at the very heart of things.

In such moments it is good to look at such pictures as that on this page. Such pictures can powerfully remind us that the mission work of the Church can often mean the remaking both in body and soul of human beings. They remind us that the mission work of the Church really can and does bring people out of darkness into light.

It is not so long since the high tide of missionary vigour was carrying our forebears into Africa. They found it a dark continent. We live in times when it is emerging stormily in its

separate nations and states, into what will be a most important part of the human family in time to come. Let the tremendous part which the Church had in all this, and still has, never be forgotten.

TOPIC FOR THE MONTH

The work of missions is not less, but more important and pressing now than ever. The challenge is not less urgent but more urgent. But we have

to keep up to date in our ideas of what this work in fact is, for the enemies which face the work of doing it alter from age to age. Among those enemies nowadays are the passionate nationalisms of Africa and Asia, which make many suspicious of anything coming from the West. Herein lies the tremendous

importance of handing over as much as possible the work of the Church in Africa to Africans. And then, too, there are the enemies of materialism and indifference active overseas just as much as they are here.

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

SIGNET

All Souls' Day

There are many dwelling-places in my Father's house; if it were not so I should have told you.—ST. JOHN 14, 2

HOW may we serve them best, whose souls have flown Beyond the fragile veils of mortal span,
Who dwell within the vast unseen, unknown
That mystifies the shrinking mind of man?

How shall we dare presume to enter there,
Where they, the chosen ones, have found their rest?
We can but intercede, through shafts of prayer,
That their repose is by his presence blest.

Joan B. Howes

Situation Vacant

By Rosamund Essex



WHEN Victorian Mary gave up her life to look after crotchety old Aunt Maria, she did not attend a training course. She did the job, I suppose, by the light of nature, by stern self-discipline, often by loving devotion and generally by a strong sense of duty, that was paramount then, but either misunderstood or out-and-out condemned now.

I wrote a little time ago about old people in Homes. At the time, I received a letter saying that it was not the old people about whom I should be writing but about the hard-worked people who looked after them. Now that a hand-out from the National Old People's Welfare Council has reached me, I believe my correspondent was right. It is quite a story.

Gratitude!

I will begin with a tale told by a matron humorous enough to laugh at herself. It concerns an old dear in a Home who had been ill. The matron had done everything for her—meals in bed, calls in the night, poultices, bed-making, flower arrangements, reading aloud, the lot. Then the old dear got better. The matron tucked her up and crept off to a well-earned night's sleep. At 12.30 her bell was rung. She hurried to the familiar bedside, anxious lest the old lady had taken a turn for the worse.

In fact, she was sitting up in bed, her eyes bright. 'I rang, Matron, because I feel so much, so very much better,' announced the old lady happily. 'I thought you would like to know, after all you've done for me!'

There you are! Unpredictable, old, sweet or selfish, just as you choose to judge it. The Homes for the old to-day are modern, well equipped. The workers are trained and decently paid. There are cooks and attendants, and sometimes a handyman or a night duty-attendant in tow. Why is it then that senior staff is so difficult to come by?

I have been looking through the training courses for matrons and assistant matrons. It is fascinating. It includes simple medical knowledge such as how to deal with bad hearts or diabetes; how to give hypodermic injections; what to know about crutches and first aid boxes; how to treat burns and prevent falls; how to avoid slippery floors and steep paths. But the most interesting part of the course is the discussion of 'the psychology of the ageing.'

Natural Tendencies

This is something that has to do with us all: for all old people are not in Homes. Have you ever thought that in old age particular characteristics come out more strongly? In the business

of life, natural tendencies have constantly to be kept in check. When you have to hold down a job, you have got to get on with your fellows. It is no good flying into a temper, or being morose for days, or talking people's heads off, or nosing into other people's business. You would get the sack if you did, man or woman. But in old age there is no such tendency to conform. The old feel that they have a right to let themselves go, and natural tendencies come out with a bang. (It would not do any of us any harm to remember this danger as we grow older.)

So the training course helps the matrons and assistant matrons to understand and cope with original sin: and another part helps them to preserve the dignity of the old. Like children, they may be, in one way. But to be treated always as children is an insult that is borne with fury, silently or otherwise. I am thankful to find that the courses take note of this.

Mental Confusion

Finally, part of the training is for matrons who have to be responsible for those who are senile—a word, by the way, that is quite taboo and has been superseded by the words 'confused in mind.' There are some Homes designed entirely for such people, but not enough. A snag in the existing Homes is the proportion of the mentally confused that can disrupt the life of the house.

To give a simple example. A mentally confused old man may get up while television is in progress and take a cushion carefully from one room to another. He wanders back in front of the viewers and forgets where the cushion is. It worries him. He moves restlessly here and there before the screen and will not be comforted about the cushion even when it is found. A small matter, you may say, but large in a small enclosed and intensely individualistic and self-absorbed community. Matrons are trained to cope with it all.

More matrons are wanted: and particularly more assistant matrons, between thirty and fifty-five. The pay is good. The job is a vocation. And it needs people who are not only devoted like Victorian Mary, but are women of character, skill and (if possible) endowed with good Christian gump. In my view a pinch of sanctified common sense is worth a whole heap of sentimental sloppiness. I believe many more women would come forward if they knew of the possibilities of a fine job of work.

A New Look at the Old Testament

By William Neil

11. WHEN MESSIAH COMES

MAY I remind you of last month's article? In it we were thinking of that unique and glorious gift of God recorded in the Old Testament scriptures, the faith of Israel. We saw that no human brain could have reached the astounding conclusion that behind the world that we see around us, controlling it and guiding it, is not some omnipotent dictator, blind fate, vague life force, or nothing at all, but a holy, just and merciful Being who is best described as a Father of his children or a Shepherd of his flock. Not only that, for it is also equally part of Israel's unique faith that it is the will of the God whom she had come to know through prophet, priest and psalmist, to bring the whole world into the right relationship to himself with Israel as the instrument of that purpose.

So the people of the Old Testament—or at least the best of them—are conscious of being chosen as God's missionaries, to set the rest of mankind an example of the kind of obedience that is essential if men are to live as God meant them to live, and also to enlighten them as to the true nature of God and his loving purpose for all his children.

The story of the Old Testament is to some extent a tale of failure. Israel as a whole found the task too much for her. She was unable to live up to God's demands herself and she was also unwilling to be a missionary people. It is not that she did not try or that she did not know how. It is just that like the rest of human kind the Israelites floundered on the jagged reefs of human nature—pride, self-centredness, envy, self-indulgence and the other weaknesses that we know to be true of ourselves.

The Lesson we had to Learn

But Israel had to learn the hard way that good intentions and high standards are not enough. We simply cannot fulfil them. Our twisted natures defeat us every time. This is one of the lessons that Israel had to be taught and her record is there for the rest of us to see. We are given this record in the

Old Testament not so much that we should profit by Israel's mistakes but that we should reach the same conclusion as the best of the Old Testament spokesmen reached; namely, that unless God himself provides the means to straighten out the twist in our natures, nothing we can do will ever come right. In modern terms, neither science nor education, social concern nor political action can bring about a wholesome society of men and women who live at peace with one another and at peace with the world at large.

God Must Provide a Way

So as time went on this became clearer and clearer to those in Israel who were most responsive to what God was saying to them, and most attuned to the divine mind. We notice in the Old Testament a growing recognition that the forces that are marshalled against the Godward march of humanity are too strong to be defeated by human effort. God must himself provide a way. Accordingly, tentatively at first, but with increasing conviction, the first notes are sounded of a theme which, by the end of Old Testament times, dominates the whole movement towards the gospel. God will send his Messiah, his appointed representative,

his ambassador, his deputy, to bring about the kind of society on earth that men are unable, through their own weakness, to create for themselves.

It is natural that when the Old Testament writers spoke of the Messiah he should not be as clear a picture in their minds as he is for us who know that when he came, he came as a carpenter of Nazareth who talked and acted like a King. Prophets and psalmists alike think of someone who will resemble David, the greatest of their monarchs, or of one who is supremely Priest and Prophet, a harbinger of peace and righteousness, a Messenger of God.

As we enter another Advent season, we can recognize that as always God acts more subtly than any human mind can foreshadow. Messiah came and Israel's hope was fulfilled. When he did come he made no attempt to reconcile all the differing views that the Old Testament writers had about him. He chose his own role and shaped his own destiny. But when God came into human life in the person of Jesus, for the first time man and God were one. The gulf between the holiness of God and the failure of men was bridged by one who proved that man need no longer be the victim of his own weakness.

The Advent Message

The glory of the Advent message is that in Christ we can now avail ourselves of a new power which the devil is unable to vanquish. It is this and this alone which enables us to offer to God the kind of obedience he demands and to live in love and charity with our neighbours.



And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.—MALACHI 3, 3

BEN-HUR

A Tale of the Christ, retold by John Lanningham

PART II. THE MIRACLE

BEN-HUR's first action, when he had sufficiently recovered from his grief at the knowledge that his mother and his sister were both lepers, was to search for them. But though he, in company with the faithful Malluch, looked far and wide, he was long unable to discover them. The only news that ever came his way of them was that they had been stoned from the city.

One evening a messenger brought him a message from Malluch bearing momentous news. A prophet, the messenger ran, had appeared whom some men said was Elijah. This prophet was saying that one greater than himself was coming. All Jerusalem was flocking out to see the prophet. To Ben-Hur this was the tidings long expected, and immediately he resolved to go alone except for an Arab guide, and to seek out this prophet for himself.

On the way, among the vastnesses of the desert, he was astonished to encounter none other than Balthasar mounted upon the white camel which Ben-Hur remembered from the Grove of Daphne, and Iras his beautiful daughter with him. Balthasar, it appeared, was on his way to the Holy City but, impatient to get there, he with his daughter had ridden ahead of the escorted caravan they were with. His sleep, Balthasar said, had been visited by dreams, and the dreams had told him that he whom he had long awaited was at hand—the King of the Jews. Ben-Hur showed him the message he had received from Malluch. When he read it the old man was shaking with excitement. He said simply 'This is he!' And then he looked thoughtfully upon Ben-Hur saying, 'You are going to meet a king of men, a savior of souls.' And then he went on to explain to Ben-Hur how all that he had thought and dreamt of the coming king was that he would be monarch of a spiritual kingdom, and not the ruler of a temporal power as Ben-Hur expected. The question was: how would they recognize him when they saw him? 'If you continue in your belief as to his character, that he is to be a king as Herod was,' Balthasar said, 'of course you will keep on until you meet a man clothed in purple and with sceptre. But he I look for will be one poor, humble, undistinguished—a man in appearance as other men. Only the event will make all plain to us.'

On the third day of the journey

they came upon a party of men who had themselves been to see the strange prophet. This prophet, one of the men explained to Ben-Hur, preached a doctrine of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. His name was



John the Baptist. He was to be found, the man added, at Bethabara beyond Jordan. On the following day Ben-Hur and his party came to that place.

And it was there that the amazing thing happened. First they saw the Nazarite, and strange indeed he was: a wild, shaggy man of the desert. If this man was indeed the herald of a king, then what kind of a king could this be of whom he spoke? Ben-Hur was soon to find the answer.

There was a man nearby who had been sitting by himself on a stone at the edge of the river. And now, as Ben-Hur looked upon John, this man arose and walked slowly up from the shore. The effect upon the Baptist was immediate. He pointed with his staff and cried with a loud voice: 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!' Upon the ears of Balthasar the words were overpowering. And as the Nazarite repeated them fell upon his knees crying: 'It is He, it is He!'

But Ben-Hur continued to look upon the man who was passing by. Surely, he thought, he had seen that

noble, unforgettable countenance somewhere, sometime! And then, faintly at first, the memory of a scene by the well at Nazareth came flooding back to him. This was the man who had given him a cup of water when he had been on his way to slavery in the galleys!

Ben-Hur turned to a man at his side to ask: 'Who is the man walking yonder?'

The other laughed mockingly and replied: 'He is the son of a carpenter over in Nazareth.'

Some three years later, Simonides and his daughter Esther were in the summer-house upon the roof of the old palace of the Hurs in Jerusalem. The palace Ben-Hur had had put in order once again, although, for caution's sake, not in his own name. Balthasar and Iras lived in it. He himself was but an occasional visitor. Simonides and Esther had arrived but a few days before. They were speaking sadly together of the influence which Iras the Egyptian had contrived to exercise over Ben-Hur—an influence which was all the more sad to Esther because she was in love with Ben-Hur herself—when a messenger entered with a package. It contained a note from Ben-Hur to say that he was arriving that day, following in the train of the man who was proclaimed as King of the Jews and who was coming up to Jerusalem with some of his followers for the Feast of the Passover. Shortly afterwards Ben-Hur himself appeared and Balthasar and Iras, having heard of his arrival, came to join the company.

Ben-Hur had many strange tidings to tell them of the Nazarene. He had,

he told them, followed him much and seen him do many strange things. He had seen him turn water into wine; he had seen him feed a multitude on five loaves and two fishes; he had seen him perform many miracles; he had seen him even cleanse lepers by the power of his word!

Almost unnoticed during this discourse, Amrah, the old nurse of Ben-Hur who had remained faithfully by the palace over the years of tribulation, had stolen into the room. And now, as she heard these words of her master's she started, as at a sudden thought, and shortly afterwards stole away. She was about to set in train those events which changed life for Ben-Hur.

Early next morning, Amrah with her basket of provisions made her way towards the grim city of the lepers round the south hill of Hinnom. There, in that terrible place, the mother of Ben-Hur and her daughter Tirzah, now far advanced in the disease which held them in its grip, had lived as best they may. But this day, instead of keeping at a distance as was usual, the faithful Amrah drew near and grasped the hem of her mistress's tattered garment. 'There is a wonderful man,' Amrah told them, 'who has power to cure you. He speaks a word, and the sick are made well. I have come to take you to him!'

The mother and daughter thought the old nurse was mad. But they resolved to go with her to see this wonder-worker who was then said to be on his way from Bethany into the city. It was by the roadside that they met him.

A crowd, most of them carrying palm branches, and chanting 'Blessed is the king that cometh in the name of the Lord!' went before him. And then he himself was to be seen, bareheaded, clad all in white, and riding upon an ass. As he passed by, the mother of Ben-Hur, terribly disfigured as she was, came round from behind a rock where she had been hiding and as the crowd shrieked their dismay called to him: 'O Master, Master! Thou seest our need; thou canst make us clean. Have mercy upon us—mercy!' The man upon the ass paused, and looked down upon the woman and her daughter.

'Believest thou that I am able to do this?' he asked.

'Thou art he of whom the prophet spake—thou art the Messiah!' she replied.

'Woman,' he said, 'great is thy faith. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.'

He lingered an instant after, apparently unconscious of the presence of the crowd, and then he rode away.

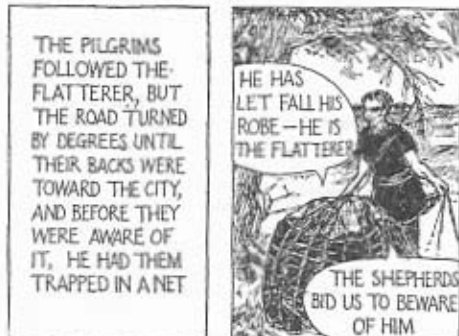
Within moments the women felt within themselves a strange, mysterious inflooding of new life. They were healed! When the crowd had passed by and the two women remained on their knees, a man who had witnessed

the scene drew near. It was Ben-Hur.

The next moment the three, so long separated, were mingling their tears in each other's arms.

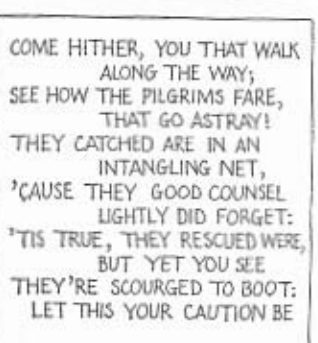
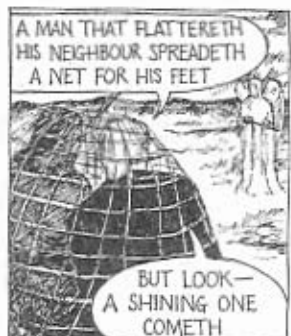
To be continued

The Pilgrim's Progress



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

The Flatterer



QUESTION PAGE

4180. Why does the Consecration Prayer refer to the bread and wine as 'these thy creatures'?

The word 'creature' is one of many which has changed its meaning since the Prayer Book was written 300 years ago. In the seventeenth century a 'creature' was anything which had been created, and hence it applied to things such as bread and wine as well as to living creatures. The difficulty is one which will remain until the Prayer Book is re-written in modern English.

4181. How many churches and cathedrals are there in the Church of England?

The latest return issued by the Central Board of Finance gives the number of parish churches as 18,048, and the Church of England has 2,241 other places of worship. There are 43 dioceses, but only 42 of these have cathedrals, the exception being Sodor and Man.

4182. Could you tell me when the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was first established?

The word 'Trinity' was first used (in its Greek form) by Theophilus of Antioch about A.D. 180. It is, therefore, not found in Scripture, but the conception is there both implicitly and explicitly. The mutual relations between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Paraclete) are brought out with great clarity in St. John 14. 20-26. During the first three centuries the theology was worked out as the Creeds were developed; and at the

Question of the Month

4179. A Nigerian reader writes: In St. John 14. 6 I read: 'No one comes to the Father except by me.' What, then, is the position of my forebears who never heard anything about Jesus Christ; for it was only about a hundred years ago that Christianity reached my part of Nigeria.

All men have consciences, a sense of right and wrong, and all men may be held to be followers of Jesus Christ if they seek to do the best that they know. In St. John 10. 16 we read how Jesus told his disciples that there were 'other sheep of mine, not belonging to this fold, whom I must bring in; and they too will listen to my voice.' In 1 St. Peter 3. 19 we read how, when Jesus was put to death, 'In the spirit he went and made his proclamation to the imprisoned spirits.' That is to say, the gospel was proclaimed to the departed as it is still being proclaimed to the living. Thus, those who died never having heard of Jesus Christ are by no means cut off from him.

Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 the doctrine was defined in the form in which it is accepted to-day.

4183. Why are processions held on certain Sundays?

Processions are a very ancient form of religious observance, and originated in pre-Christian times. They are of two kinds, festal and penitential. The basic object of a procession is to go somewhere: round the boundary of the parish, round a churchyard, or from the altar to the font and back. In the Middle Ages processions symbolized the Church going out like an army to conquer the powers of evil.

4184. Why do so many of the clergy hesitate after the word 'both' in the Second Collect at Evening Prayer?

It is necessary to make a slight pause after the word 'both' in the Second Collect at Evening Prayer if the meaning is to be made clear: that both (a) our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that (b) by thee. . . . If there is no pause, the words 'both our hearts' might suggest that we had more than one!

4185. I find it difficult to understand why the Lord's Prayer purports to measure God's forgiveness with that which we extend to 'them that trespass against us.' How can this be?

The passage is explained in St. Matthew 6. 14: 'For if you forgive others the wrongs they have done, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, then the wrongs you have done will not be forgiven by your Father.' See, too, St. Matthew 18. 23-35.

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

SOMETHING that should be taken with a grain of salt is salesmanship by television. A demonstration 'before your very eyes' seems convincing enough—but so does a conjuring trick.

Froth may really be stirred-up plaster; apparently luscious cream may be coloured instant whip, and beautifully firm ice cream may be mashed potato. The magically polished table top may be glass that has been dusted with fuller's earth. The cat food devoured with gusto may be undiluted fresh meat—hardly the contents of the tins on sale in shops! Upholstery that is cleaned so amazingly quickly may be plastic washed with water. And so on.

The producers of these advertisement films generally have technical reasons for the faking; often the real thing is unsuitable for effective photography. But that is not always the case. It is, for instance, not quite ethical to make a small domestic machine look impressively big by using an undersized demonstrator, and there can be no doubt that viewers should be as wary about television blandishments as they need to be about other forms of specious marketing.

Letter Boxes

When in a position to do so, have your letter box the right size and the right height—respectively not smaller than 8 in. by 1½ in. and between 2 ft. 6 in. and 4 ft. 9 in. from the ground. These are the measurements advised by the Council of Industrial Design, the G.P.O. and the British Standards Institution—the British Standard also specifies that the flap shall be sprung to withstand a 45 m.p.h. wind.

Not unimportant details—unless you don't mind having to answer a postman's knock, at an extremely awkward moment, to receive letters too large to go through a smaller box, or to tolerate draughts whistling through a rattling flap, or to brave the frowns of a postman made impatient by waiting.

Fire Extinguishers

During a recent SHOPPER'S GUIDE investigation, nine brands of fire extinguisher, all claimed by their makers to be suitable for use in the home, were tested—and all except two were found to be unsatisfactory. One was, in fact, positively dangerous because it could produce a poisonous gas when

used in a confined space and near heat; another failed to extinguish most kinds of fire even though it bore a British Safety Council seal of approval.

Because so many fire accidents (a sadly large proportion fatal) are reported every year, people are becoming more cautious, and consequently domestic-size extinguishers are in demand. When an occasion for use does arise there will be calamity if reliance has been placed on one of the 'dud' brands; they are all named in the GUIDE (No. 20) article. It should certainly be studied by anyone thinking of buying an extinguisher.

Coffee

The preparation of coffee is a process of extraction; flavour is in a volatile oil and is extracted when the coffee is in boiling water—though for perfection the temperature ought to be 10 deg. F. below boiling-point.

Extraction is quicker if the coffee has been finely ground, a point to bear in mind when shopping.

When the liquid is allowed to continue to boil after extraction of the oil, flavour is impaired, as at that stage bitter essences are infused.

Several types of coffee-making apparatus were examined in detail in SHOPPER'S GUIDE No. 9, and the article gives detailed performance tests, price comparison and an outline of the British Standard safety requirements.

HOME AND GARDEN

1. MY GARDEN IN NOVEMBER

By Dr. W. E. Shewell-Cooper

ONE of the most popular forms in gardening to-day is the flowering shrub border. This is because it takes the minimum of looking after. If you have such a border, or are thinking of planting one, remember that the secret is not to fork or dig it in the winter, but to apply fallen leaves as a top dressing. These will smother the weeds and provide the necessary humus that the soil is crying out for! Those who cannot get fallen leaves should add sedge peat as a top dressing and should apply it this month.

It isn't too late to plant Spanish, Dutch or English Irises. Blue Imperator is becoming increasingly popular, and this year I see the bulbs are selling at round about 21s. a 100. Wedgewood, the pale blue, is dearer at 25s. a 100; while Bronze Queen is selling at round about 30s. a 100. The Spanish Iris flowers about 10 to 14 days after the Dutch types mentioned above, such as *Cajanus*, the bright canary yellow, and *Gipsy Girl*, the unique and striking purple and grey.

Hoe among the roses with the idea of drawing the soil up slightly to the bushes rather than away from them. Those who have seen black spot in the summer should take the trouble to gather up the affected leaves and burn them. It helps if the bushes and

soil around are sprayed with Captan. In some sheltered gardens the dahlias have gone on until late, but they must now be removed so that the tubers can be stored in a frost-proof place.

Those that have good lawns should now give them a raking with a Spring-



bok rake, with the idea of disturbing the moss. Where this is bad use the new mercurial treatment which completely eradicates it. Those who have difficulty in getting this should write to me for a free leaflet. This is an excellent month for planting roses. Don't forget the *Floribundas*, which make a show much longer perhaps than any other types.

Clear the runner beans the moment they've been touched by frost, but be sure and leave the roots in the ground

so that the nitrogen on the nodules will not be wasted. Lift some of the late beet, but be careful not to damage the roots and cause them to bleed. Once the tops have been twisted off carefully, store the roots in a clamp or bury.

2. A PUDDING FOR COLD WEATHER

By Hazel Macleod

I FIRST knew this recipe as Kentish Well Pudding many years ago, but the variation with lemon has never had a name as far as I know! The success of the recipe depends upon your suet crust pastry, which should be mixed lightly to a soft dough.

Suet Crust

8 oz. self-raising flour, 3 oz. finely-chopped suet, 3 oz. currants. Mix with cold water.

Thickly line a greased pudding basin with the suet crust pastry, reserving a portion for the lid. Put a lump of butter (3-4 oz.) in the lined basin and fill up with brown sugar. Put on the lid of suet crust, sealing the edges well. Cover with a greased paper and steam briskly for 2 hours.

To vary the recipe: leave out the butter but put in a whole lemon. Fill up the lined basin with golden syrup and proceed as before.

This pudding tends to collapse soon after it is turned out of the basin, so do not turn it out until you are quite ready to serve it. You should have a nice light suet crust with a butter-scotch or lemon sauce in the middle.

Richard Tatlock's Puzzles

21. MAKE A CROSSWORD

(open to all)

Our puzzles this year have been based on the shorter Epistles. Here is what might be called a 'Revision' puzzle!

Complete the crossword by using one word from each of the following verses from the Epistles here given at random:

1 Thess. 1. 8; 1 Tim. 3. 14; Col. 4. 10; 1 Tim. 3. 2; Col. 1. 24; Gal. 3. 20; 1 Thess. 2. 5; 1 Tim. 1. 5; Eph. 2. 2; Gal. 4. 5; Col. 4. 3; 1 Thess. 5. 1; Phil. 2. 4; 1 Cor. 14. 39; 2 Tim. 3. 1; 1 Thess. 2. 4; 1 Tim. 1. 19; 2 Tim. 3. 13; 1 John 3. 19; 1 Tim. 1. 2.



More than one solution may be possible, but any solution will be acceptable which fulfils the condition.

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

22. ACROSTIC

(age limit 11)

Here is an acrostic on a person's name:

My first is in Cloak, but not in Broke;
My second in Earl, but not in Girl;
My third is in Tease, but not in Seize;
My fourth is in Fight, but not in Kite;
My fifth is in Lane, but not in Gain;
My sixth is in Strong, but not in Long;

My seventh is in Priest, but not in Feast;

My eighth is in Hymn, but not in Limb;

My last is in Sore, but not in Four.

Say who you think the person might be, and give a reason for your answer. Then give the most important things you can discover about this person. You may get help to find out about the person, but you must solve the acrostic yourself.

Three book tokens for five shillings for the best answers, and don't forget to add your name, age, and address.

Entries for both puzzles should be sent to The Puzzle Editor, THE SIGN, 28 Margaret Street, London, W.1, to reach him not later than November 15th.

August winners:

No. 15. Elizabeth Copleston (Guildford), Miss M. Summer (Coseley).

No. 16. M. Edmonds (Wareham), Barbara Hannan (Solihull), Janet Key (Draycott).

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THE MOTHERS' UNION

By now you will all have received your programme for the next session. The opening service on September 5th was very poorly attended, similarly the Findus Foods Evening on September 28th. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 7th in the Vestry, when we shall welcome Mrs. Seal from Pemberton as our Speaker. Will you all make a special effort to support the meetings otherwise I shall feel bound to cancel the speakers and take the meetings myself. I do not feel justified in asking speakers to come from a considerable distance and then find only a handful of our members present.

Please note our Mothers' Union Bazaar Effort on Friday, 10th November. It is a Whist and Domino Drive but no dance.

On 23rd November you are invited to join us at the "Wedding Breakfast," when admission will be by Wedding Gift, minimum value 3/-. The gifts will be placed on the stall at the Christmas Bazaar. This is a Mothers' Union Bazaar Effort.

On Thursday, 2nd November there will be a General Meeting of members to discuss the future programme and the membership of the Committee. The meeting is at 7-30 p.m. in the Schools.

THE YOUNG WIVES

There will be a meeting at the home of Mrs. K. Gaskell on Tuesday, 14th November, to make arrangements for the Christmas Bazaar. The meeting will be at 2-30 p.m.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

Thank you one and all for the lovely flowers so beautifully arranged week by week.

Oct. 29	Mrs. T. Rimmer.
Nov. 5	Mrs. Ainscough.
" 12	Mrs. Hesketh and Mrs. Winstanley.
" 19	Mrs. Wilson.
" 26	Mrs. Neale.
Dec. 3	Mrs. L. Huyton.
" 10	The Guides.
" 17	The Sunday School.
" 24	The Congregation.

SIDESMEN'S ROTA

Oct. 29	10-30 a.m.—J. Sergeant, J. Banks. 6-30 p.m.—R. Heaton, T. Swift.
Nov. 5	10-30 a.m.—R. Lewis, R. Dutton. 6-30 p.m.—H. Prescott, H. Gaskell.
" 12	10-30 a.m.—C. Aindow, T. Forshaw. 6-30 p.m.—E. Grimshaw, R. Brett.
" 19	10-30 a.m.—M. Porter, S. Parks. 6-30 p.m.—E. Serjeant, H. Guy.
" 26	10-30 a.m.—R. Gaskell, H. Baldwin. 6-30 p.m.—W. Leadbetter, J. Balmer.

SERVERS' ROTA

	8 a.m.	10-30 or 11-30 a.m.
Oct. 29	John Gaskell.	Arthur Gilbert.
Nov. 5	Peter Balmer.	John Davies.
" 12	Arthur Gilbert.	Harold Grimshaw and John Gaskell.
" 19	John Davies.	Anthony Grimshaw.
" 26	John Gaskell.	Harold Grimshaw and Peter Balmer.
Dec. 3	Peter Balmer.	John Davies.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND CHILDREN'S HOME, QUARRY MOUNT

Just to remind you that Mr. and Mrs. Brett look forward to seeing you on Tuesday, 21st November between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. at the Coffee Evening and Bring and Buy Sale. All proceeds for the Children's Home. Please come in large numbers.

Thank you.

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

On Monday, 27th November at 7-45 p.m. in the School Hall you are invited to join us at a Grand Film Show. The great film "HEART OF A CHILD" will be screened. This is a fine film suitable for young and old. You are all welcome. The film produced by the Rank organisation, stars Jean Anderson, Donald Pleasence and Richard Williams with "Rudi." Adults 2/-. Children 1/-.

HALSALL AND DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

On THURSDAY, 16th NOVEMBER at 7-30 p.m. we welcome Mr. A. H. Home, County Poultry Officer who will speak to us on the important subject of "POULTRY." Please come along and bring your friends.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Our new Archbishop was enthroned on September 13th with splendid and dignified ceremony in the wonderful York Minster. Dr. Coggan took his oath on the Anglo-Saxon copy of the Gospels, and was installed in an ancient chair which has for centuries been used on this occasion in the Minster. By all this the world must have been made aware of our ancient heritage and our links with the past.

One for the Clergy

But our Archbishop reminded us forcibly that we must live in the present and look to the future. There were parallels, Dr. Coggan said, between St. Paul's day and our own. We shared with St. Paul's contemporaries an uneasy peace, a mania for pleasure, a desire for security and the cynicism of an age which was losing its grip on the old faiths and had not yet grasped a new one adequate for its needs. Was the Church today preaching the Gospel relevant to the 1960's? This is a searching question for the clergy. How easy it is to produce quite acceptable sermonettes and to forget that it is our duty to proclaim the Word of God.

And one for the Congregation

But are you always eager to hear, or would you rather remain undisturbed in the pew? How easy it is to keep our faith to ourselves and quietly disown the title "Church Militant." Dr. Coggan went on to attack that presentation of the Christian faith which kept it to the confines of our own parish or our own race.

"If ever the folly of that viewpoint was apparent, it is so today. The world is on our door step, whether we like it or not. Colour-bar and race distinctions make no sense when the implications of the gospel are considered."

Equally Dear

"Christ died for all"; hence all are equally dear to God. We can, therefore, think no longer in terms of overseas missions as over against the work of the Church at home. This is one work, as there is one Lord and one faith and one baptism.

"It is much more important that the Christian task should be got on with in Africa than that my parish church should have a new luxury organ. It is urgent that the Church should make her voice heard and her influence felt to help the three to five hundred million people who go hungry even in normal times, even though this means sacrifice and a new pattern of Church life here.

Open-Air Witness

"This is the ordinary, humdrum, yet thrilling work of the Church. It is not the job of a few enthusiasts in each parish. To share vigorously in the missionary work of the Church is the bounden duty—as it is the high privilege—of every dedicated Christian.

"Go forth into the world" . . . says the bishop at the end of the confirmation service, echoing the last command of the Church's Lord. "Go forth . . ." Push on, and out, and forward.

WHAT MUST WE DO?

By the Bishop of Lincoln
(the Right Rev. Kenneth Riches)

On all sides there is evidence at the present time that our English way of life is in the red; the increase of crime, the decay of public standards of morality or their rejection by many young people, are indications that this is happening. At such times it is no good simply telling other people what they should do. Unless there is a definite belief about the nature and destiny of man's life the answer will be "Why should I do this or that?"

What does the Church do in such a situation? First, it must teach and preach a faith by which men can live bravely in a dangerous world. Unless we are a teaching and a believing church we become as salt which has lost its savour.

Secondly, the Church has a duty to treat men and women more seriously that they may wish to be treated. We believe men and women are created by God, meant to share in the fulness of the Divine life through Jesus Christ. The Church doesn't just disapprove, for example, of sexual immorality; it believes that sex is so important and God-given that to treat it as many people do is to make it trivial and meaningless and in the end a bore. In this and many other matters the Christian must be a champion of man. He knows what man was meant to be.

Thirdly, the Church has a duty to protect man against himself. At the present time when standards of conduct have declined, and human passions and instincts are often neither understood nor controlled, there are powerful commercial interests who will not hesitate to make profit out of vice and immorality. It is no argument to say this is what people want. Certainly men and women must be free to choose, but with the modern media of press and television in every home there must be some control. I have little patience with those who deplore the spread of crime and the breakdown of morality and at the same time take no action to control the agencies of press, film, radio and television which so often present and, at times, seem to applaud uncivilised and barbarous conduct.

HOLY BAPTISM

"Entered into the family of Christ's Church."

- Oct. 8—Yvonne Georgeson, 46, Summerwood Lane, Halsall.
Oct. 8—Robert Henry Beeton, 18, Prescott Road, Ormskirk.
Oct. 8—John Eric Sherman, 2, Renacre Lane, Halsall.

BURIAL OF THE DEAD

"In sure and certain hope."

- Sept. 25—John Henry Tinsley, age 71 years, 59, Pitt Street, Southport.
Oct. 7—George Frederick Greaves, age 51 years, 14, Alma Road, Southport. (Cremation)

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