

“GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN, REJOICE!”

No. 46

DECEMBER, 1961

Price 4d.



THE MAGAZINE OF —
St. Nicholas Church, Marston

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH — OLD MARSTON

Vicar : Rev. Paul N. Rimmer, M.A., 11 Elsfeld Road, Old Marston.
Tel. : 47034.

Churchwardens : Prof. V. T. Harlow, C.M.G., M.A., D.Litt., Fir Tree House, Old Marston.
Mr. B. G. Oliver, 13 Jack Straw's Lane, Oxford.

Verger :

Organist : Mrs. E. A. Garner, "Barn Gates," 31 Oxford Rd., Old Marston.

SERVICES :

Sundays : Holy Communion 8.0 a.m.

Also on First Sunday of the month, 12 noon.

FAMILY COMMUNION : 9.30 a.m. on 3rd Sunday of month.

Children's Church : 11 a.m. in Hall.

Morning Prayer : 11 a.m.

Pathfinder Bible Class : 10.15 a.m., Sunday. (Hall).

Evensong : 6.30 p.m.

Saints' Days : Holy Communion as announced.

Holy Baptism : Fourth Sunday of the month at 3.0 p.m. unless otherwise announced. Notice must be given.

Holy Matrimony : Banns to be given in at the Vicarage.

CHURCH ORGANISATIONS AND MEETINGS :

(As the covers are printed in advance you are advised to consult the Notice Board in the Church Porch, in case of alteration of times).

Mothers' Union : Alternate Wednesday afternoons (2.45 p.m.), and Evenings (7.45 p.m.).

Young Wives' Group : Alternate Wednesdays in Church Hall, at 7.45 p.m.

Men's Forum : Monthly on Wednesdays at 8 p.m., as announced.

Youth Fellowship : First Sunday, Holy Communion and Breakfast, also Third Sunday after Evensong, and as announced.

Pathfinders : (Boys and Girls, 11—13 years), 10.15 a.m., Sundays.

Brownies : Fridays, 5.30 p.m. in Hall.

Girl Guides : To be arranged.

Cubs : Mondays, 6.15 p.m. in Hall.

Scouts : Thursdays, 7.15 p.m. in Hall.

THE COVER PICTURE depicts the Marston Chalice, reflecting on its bowl the spires of the University, the factory chimneys of Cowley, and homes with T.V. Masts—all symbolic of the life of our village. The design is by Mr. Brian Cairns.

"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY,
AND FOR EVER"

"REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR IN THE DAYS
OF THY YOUTH"

THE VICAR'S LETTER

My Dear Friends,

I'm sure that you'll all be coming to the special :

9.30 A.M. PARISH COMMUNION
ON DEC. 3rd. ADVENT SUNDAY

On this particular Sunday when we launch the Fellowship of St. Nicholas the 9.30 a.m. Service will take the place of the usual 8 a.m., 11 a.m. and noon Services. Please don't forget to bring your completed Pledge Card, in a sealed envelope, for dedication at this service.

I'm sure that if the Fellowship is going to mean anything at all, it will depend upon the extent to which all of us give ourselves completely to Christ our Lord, and allow ourselves to be possessed and guided by the Holy Spirit. The Fellowship can also be a "contact point" with many of those who are on the fringe of the Church. Pray about it! Talk about it! So many people are so static, and spend their time moaning about what ought to be done, and what isn't being done. The Christian Saint is a combination of the realist and the optimist. He sees things as they are, but he also has a vision of what they can become when we draw upon the mighty resources of the Spirit. And isn't that true too of the Christmas story? Here is a world sunk in sin, and riddled with men's hates and bitternesses. But God saw what men had lost, and what they could become. And in a small half-forgotten village, where the needs of an expectant mother didn't even soften men's hearts, God chose this as the place to reveal His glory. And so the light streamed through, and still streams through the broken timbers of a cattle shed, proclaiming to all of us that God loves us, and that even the gimmet place on this earth can be the place where men can discover the Light and the Love of God in Jesus.

A Happy Christmas to you all,



PARISH CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER, 1961

Dec. 3. ADVENT SUNDAY. PATRONAL FESTIVAL.

Please notice the change of times for this Sunday.

9.30 a.m. HOLY COMMUNION with hymns & address.

Inaugural Service of the Fellowship of St. Nicholas.

(Refreshments will be served in the Church Hall afterwards).

3 p.m. Children's Service for St. Nicholas' Day.

(Please bring good toys for poor children).

6.30 p.m. Festal Evensong. Rev. Michael Porteous.

(Curate of St. Mary the Virgin).

- Dec. 6. Wednesday. St. Nicholas' Day.
7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
8.00 p.m. Church Overseas Evening in the Church Hall.
- Dec. 10. ADVENT II.
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
11.0 a.m. Matins.
3.00 p.m. Holy Baptism.
6.30 p.m. Evensong.
- Dec. 13. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
7.45 p.m. Christmas Anthology (M.U. and Young Wives)
Church Hall.
- Dec. 17. ADVENT III.
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
9.30 a.m. Family Communion
(Hymns and Short Address).
11.0 a.m. Matins.
6.30 p.m. Evensong.
- Dec. 20. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
5 p.m. Over 60's Club Party in Church Hall.
- Dec. 21. Thursday. St. Thomas', Apostle and Martyr.
7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
- Dec. 24. ADVENT IV. Christmas Eve.
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
11.0 a.m. Matins.
3.00 p.m. Holy Baptism.
6.30 p.m. Candle and Carol Service.
11.30 p.m. MIDNIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE.
- Dec. 25. CHRISTMAS DAY.
8 a.m. and Noon. Holy Communion.
11.0 a.m. Family Matins.
- Dec. 31. 1st SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
11.0 a.m. Matins.
6.30 p.m. Evensong.

Adult Confirmation Talks :

As so many adults have been asking about Confirmation, there will be a Preliminary Talk on Thursday, January 11th, from 8 p.m. —9 p.m., at the Vicarage, 11 Elsfield Road. **IF YOU KNOW ANY BODY WHO IS THINKING ABOUT BEING CONFIRMED, PLEASE TELL THEM OF THIS TALK.**

Church Overseas Evening :

In view of launching the Fellowship of St. Nicholas, the P.C.C. decided against having a bazaar on December 8th for the Church Overseas. Instead there will be an Overseas Evening on

December 6th, Wednesday (St. Nicholas' Day) at 8 p.m. in the Church Hall. Please alter your Parish Programmes accordingly and, do make an effort to come along.

Water and the Church :

Thank you Mr. Webb, and all diggers who did such a magnificent job in laying on water to the Church. This has been needed for a very long time, and the voluntary help has saved the Church a great deal of money, as well as made us all proud of what the parish can do.

Visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury:

It was an observant member of the congregation who spotted the signature "Michael Cantuar. Lambeth" in our visitors book during August. A first reaction was : "I wonder if the Church looked clean and tidy." But as it is God's House, it is up to us to see that it is always presentable. It is a holy place and we must always do our utmost to preserve within its walls an atmosphere of reverence and peace. We count it a great privilege that our Archbishop has visited our church, and, hope, perhaps wishfully, that we may have the special joy of his presence and participation at one of our services at some later date.

Sunday School :

There will be no Morning Sunday School on Advent Sunday the 3rd December. Children's Service at 3 p.m. when all children are asked to bring a good toy for a poor child. The Senior boys and girls will be encouraged to come to the 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion Service on that day instead of meeting in the Church Hall at 10 a.m.

Christmas Parties :

Kindergarten and Nursery Departments : Friday, 5th January, 3 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. Junior Department : Saturday, 6th January, 4 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. O.J.L.

St. Nicholas County Primary School :

Breaks up for Christmas Holidays : December 20th. Re-opens after Christmas : January 10th.

Scouts :

Congratulations to the following Scouts : Christopher Highton and Richard Moss on being invested ; Stephen Wilkins, David Rathbone, Michael Bye, and David Bye on passing their Second Class ; Hedley Gunstone and Geoffrey Parker on becoming Senior Scouts.

We hope that soon the rumours about a Scout Hut may become a reality, but at present we are awaiting planning permission for its erection from the various authorities.

The Parents Committee have done wonderful work, and a special word of thanks must be given to Mr. Tasker, our Treasurer, for raising £18 through the sale of bulbs. The Garden and Coffee Morning raised over £7, and the campfire and barbecue nearly £6.

(N.B. This is a tribute to Scouts and Parents who raised the money by hard work and willing service — the Scout Way ! Editor).

Youth Fellowship :

Events of recent weeks have included a Moonlight Hike around Woodstock, (Thank you Mrs. Naunton for such excellent coffee at the end of it), a Bonfire Party at the Vicarage on Guy Fawkes Night, and a Discussion based on Nick Earle's Penguin Book : "What's wrong with the Church?"

November's 1st Sunday Communion Service was followed by a Continental Breakfast, designed to cut down washing up ! A good number of our members joined the party which went up to London for the Lee Abbey Re-union.

Bellringers :

On Saturday, 24th September, the Ringers held a half-day ringing tour in the form of a "Mystery Tour" in the Bletchley — Leighton Buzzard area. On this outing the ringers were joined by ringers from other Oxford Towers. Some very good ringing was enjoyed by all !

On Saturday, 7th October, members of this Tower attended the Autumn meeting of the Oxford Diocesan Guild which was held at Bletchley, Bucks. This meeting was marred by a car beraking down in the wilds of Buckinghamshire—one of the hazards of ringing !

Peals have been rung at St. Paul's, Culham, and at Marston. The Marston peal was rung as a welcome to Miss Olive Lodge, our churchworker, and as a wedding compliment to Miss Christine Woodward and Mr. Geoffrey Lanagan. A quarter-peal was rung for harvest festival.

Anyone wishing to learn to ring handbells should see Alec Gammon or come to the Church on Tuesday or Friday evening.

Our congratulations go to Miss Julie Chandler on ringing her first peal inside, to Noel Deam on ringing his 25th peal and to Roy Jones on ringing his 25th peal on St. Nicholas' bells.

At the Parish Party this year Miss Cozier played the clarinet, a team of ringers rung the handbells and the "Bach Choir" sang a ditty. Our thanks to all who took part.

During November a peal, conducted by Roy Jones, was rung at All Saints, Middleton Stoney for the Festival of All Saints.

This was the first peal in 19 methods by the Marston Band.

On November 5th a quarter peal in 11 methods, conducted by Noel Deam, was rung at Old Marston for the birth of a son to H.R.H. Princess Margaret and the Earl of Snowdon.

Congratulations to Andrew Dunkley on ringing his first peal on a working bell at Middleton Stoney.

N.B. The monthly register of baptisms, weddings and funerals has been held over until next month on account of space.

WORLD VIEW

NO. 4

1961



GROWING ROOTS

In the humid heat of a Nigerian afternoon a man strips off his shirt, takes up a machet and starts clearing the bush. An unremarkable event? Not in the eyes of the Africans who watched him doing it, and soon, catching his enthusiasm, joined in and helped.

The man was a missionary of the Church Missionary Society, an agriculturist. He was working, not for himself, but for the people of the village, making a *kraal* to keep their cattle from ruining the crops. His abandoning his shirt—that basic status-symbol — and wielding the machet with his own hands—that was what impressed them.

Introducing an agriculturist

C.M.S. has a number of missionary agriculturists in several parts of Africa. Here we introduce one of them—Peter Lillingston, who as well as being an agriculturist is also ordained.

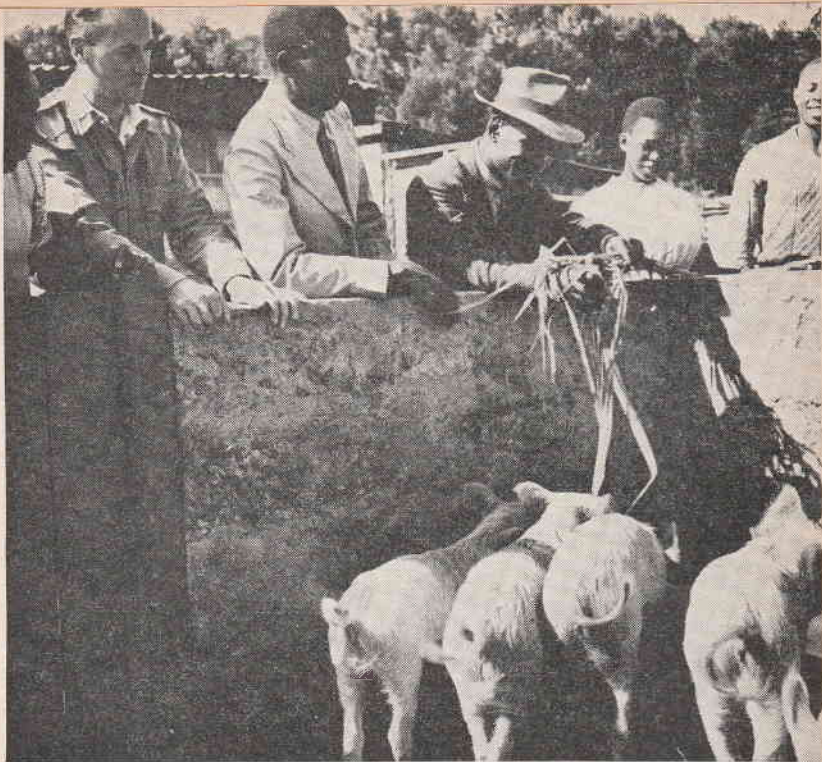
This good-looking, rather shy young man has been working recently among the Egbu people in the Diocese of Owerri, in Eastern Nigeria.

Many problems

The problems facing these people were many. One village would have plenty of land, but very little idea of

Thinning out pineapples at Asaba Rural Training Centre





The Rev. Peter Kiddle, C.M.S. agriculturist, instructs students in Kenya in pig-breeding.

how to make use of it. Another would be finding that the growing of yams, the traditional food-crop, had become uneconomic, and they would want advice.

Many villages too are concerned about the number of school-leavers who are roaming the streets purposelessly and without a job.

“To DIG I am ashamed”

The aim of the young educated Nigerian today tends to be to get ahead in the towns. This seems the progressive way. To return to the

land strikes him as a waste of education and opportunity. Digging is for illiterates, according to his view. And yet the economy of Nigeria still depends largely upon her agriculture.

“The biggest problem facing the Church in Nigeria,” says Peter Lillingston, “is how to guide the ex standard VI scholar into useful employment, and to show him how to build up his home and village life, and how to accept that life as a vocation.”

Foraging

Surrounded by these problems, how did Mr. Lillingston set about his task?

His work, he says, came under three heads; firstly 'foraging', that is, going out looking for the opportunity to do something. Then came instruction, either on the spot or at the Rural Training Centre at Asaba, and lastly demonstration, back in the village itself.

The 'foraging' was done in a great many ways, from making public addresses before synods and meetings to the following up of a casual remark.

"Nearly always the most helpful contact in a village was a Christian," says Mr. Lillingston. "He might be a district councillor or a headmaster. It was through him that I was able to make contact with the village as a whole."

Trio makes good

He tells this story of a successful contact and what followed from it: "A district councillor spotted me talking to a group of school-leavers. He listened, and afterwards offered me three boys from his village for a four-day course of instruction at the Rural Training Centre.

"During these four days we had morning and evening prayers together. The subject of our prayers and talks was stewardship.

"Back in their village the trio set about clearing lines for cocoa-planting in their ju-ju bush, which no pagan would have dared to enter, let alone cut and plant. They have now formed the nucleus of a young farmers' club in their village.

"This particular trio had been thoroughly dissatisfied with village life, and if they could have found a job elsewhere they would have left. Since their course at the Training Centre they have found their roots."

So through this missionary's work the attitudes of three here and two there are changed and their lives made purposeful.

No flashy projects

Three here and two there. Do the results seem too slow and insignificant to be worth while? Peter Lillingston thinks otherwise. "The success of agricultural missionary work must be looked for, not in big undertakings or flashy projects, but in the slow drip, drip, drip of personal witness to a new concept of stewardship, where the land is seen as God's gift to man, which man uses in joyful expectation that God will bless his labours and supply all his needs."



If you would like to read more about C.M.S. work in the Church overseas, why not take Outlook, the well-illustrated C.M.S. monthly maga-

zine, price 4d. Available from your parish Magazine Secretary or from the Manager, C.M.S. Publishing Department, at the address below.

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY : 6 SALISBURY SQUARE : LONDON E.C.4

Getting Ready for Christmas



By H. A. L. RICE

ABOUT this time of year certain people have a regrettable tendency to ask one whether one is "getting ready for Christmas." When this kind of question is put to me, I find it extremely difficult to know how to answer it. My kind of Christmas, in the sense usually in the questioner's mind, takes very little "getting ready" for. There are no gargantuan meals to be planned and provided for, no inordinate quantities of alcoholic refreshment to be laid in, no Christmas trees, holly or mistletoe to be imported. True there are presents and cards to be bought and sent, but one does not "get ready" for this annual terror; one puts it off as long as may be and then, urged on by conscience and high-pressure advertising, indulges in an eleventh-hour orgy of panic purchasing.

Yet, Christianly speaking, there is a sense in which even those of us who live alone ought to consider "getting ready" for the sacred feast of our Lord's Nativity.

The Preparation Period

The Church has always realised that, since variety is the spice of life, times of high rejoicing and festivity are best appreciated and benefited from when they are preceded by periods of plainness, penitence and

fasting. So, Easter has its forty days of Lent and Christmas its four weeks of Advent. It is by keeping these seasons of sombre self-discipline as our Church intends them to be kept that we can best prepare ourselves for the feasts which follow them.

The Second Coming

Advent has many things to remind us of. It bids us remember that, as we say in the Creed, "He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead." It bids us watch and pray, for no man knows the day or the hour. It bids us put aside the weight of sin which doth so easily beset us, that by penitence and forgiveness we may render ourselves ready at any time to go forth to meet the Bridegroom. It reminds us that Bethlehem was not an end but a beginning; that it is meaningless to sing *Adeste Fideles* around the Crib unless we are prepared to follow in the steps of the Master to Calvary and beyond.

Thorns or Roses?

There is a legend that an angel appeared to the Christ Child in His infancy bearing in one hand a crown of roses and in the other a crown of thorns. Eagerly the young Child stretched out His hand to take the



Bethlehem

Photo: David Brewster

fragrant floral cirlet; then paused, hesitated, and finally chose instead the crown of thorns. That is symbolic of the Incarnate life of the Son of God. It should be symbolic, too, of the lives of those He calls to His service.

They will be "getting ready for Christmas" during these weeks of Advent, not by anticipating the joys

of Christmas by premature carol singing, nor by overmuch concern with its material aspects, but by earnestly striving after inward perfection. So they will prepare themselves to greet their Lord on the yearly remembrance of His nativity and also in that day when He cometh to make up His jewels.



A Christmas Carol

Cradled in a manger,
Lord of heaven and earth,
All Thy glory hidden
In a baby's birth.

God brought into focus
Of humanity,
Angels watch in wonder
Thy humility.

God in man; such glory
Stills all human thought,
As the spirit quickens
With the power thus brought.

Holy Babe, dwell in us;
Give us grace to grow
In pure love and beauty,
Christlike—as we go.

L. F. BROWN

★
A CHRISTIAN'S
CALENDAR—
DECEMBER
 ★

IN the last of these monthly articles, we reach the first month of the year whose immediate association is Christian. For most of us, December conjures up Christmas; and that means the Incarnation of the Son of God.

Incarnate is a long word, with a simple meaning: "made flesh". Though the meaning of the word is simple, the meaning of the event baffles the understanding of the wisest and greatest. By means of the Holy Spirit, God's Son entered His own creation, was born in the flesh, suffered and died in the flesh, and took His human body back into the presence of His heavenly Father.

In the endeavour to understand this, many learned men have fallen into one of two groups of false beliefs. Some have said that Jesus was not really man, but that the God in him, so to speak, swallowed up the humanity; others that He was not really God, but just a very good man, or a kind of demi-god.

It is terribly important to have a right belief in the Incarnation, for it affects our understanding of things which at first sight seem to have little to do with it.

What is the right view? It is that Jesus Christ is "perfect God and perfect Man . . . yet he is not two, but one Christ . . . one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person."

Those who, perhaps unconsciously, exalt the divinity of Jesus and under-rate His true humanity, or vice versa,

will hold wrong beliefs about many other things.

For instance, about the Church—in another sense also the Body of Christ. Some believe that God so overrules man's sins and shortcomings that, in certain circumstances, the Church cannot err. Others exalt the individual human conscience against the tradition and authority of the Church. Both fail to give full weight to the indissoluble connection of the divine and the human in Christ's Body. By means of the Holy Spirit God uses, works through, transforms the human; He does not destroy or overrule it.

Again, about the Blessed Sacrament—in yet another sense the Body of Christ. Some hold that the material elements are entirely destroyed in favour of the divine; others that the elements remain unchanged. Both fail to hold a true doctrine of the Incarnate Body. The Holy Spirit takes up the material and transforms it; He does not destroy it.

Lastly, about the Bible. As Christ was the Word of God, so, in another way, is the Bible. Some will hold that every word of it is quite literally divinely inspired, as though God Himself had held the writers' hands. Others exalt the human element, pick out the scientific and historical impossibilities, and deny the inspiration. But in this as in that other Word, the Holy Spirit works THROUGH humanity, not destroying, but using and transforming it.

Jesus is God and Man, divine and human; in Him both are perfect. The Church also is divine and human; the Sacrament is divine and human; the Bible is divine and human—and in these the human is less than perfect, for sin enters in. Nevertheless, in all three, God by the Holy Spirit takes up and transforms the human element and uses it for His own purpose.

PATRICIA SPENCER, S.Th.

◇

Church Notes and Views

◇

Coloured Clock Faces

I WAS interested in your correspondent's remarks about Yorkshire churches with coloured clock faces, in the June *Church Notes and Views*.

My husband is the vicar of four country parishes, and one of the churches, Binton (five miles from Stratford-on-Avon), has a blue clock face. The church was re-built on the old site about 100 years ago, so I suppose the clock was put in then.

Binton church is famous for the Scott Memorial window, since Capt. Scott of the Antarctic had married the sculptress sister of the Rector of those days, the much-beloved Mr. Bruce. Their little son, Peter, used to play about in Binton, when visiting his uncle, and at one time he attended the village school (now transformed into a gem of a village Hall). In his last letter to his wife, written in the tent as they lay waiting for the end, Captain Scott wrote that he hoped his son would study Natural History, and how thankful we can be that his wishes have come true, when we think of all Peter Scott has given us in his "Look" programmes.—JOAN M. BROADBENT (TEMPLE GRAFTON, ALCESTER).

A Dickensian Church

As many of our readers very kindly, and very quickly, pointed out, the Church described and illustrated under this heading in the October issue of the magazine is Cooling, not Cliffe. We are extremely sorry for the error.—Editor.

An Island Church

THE only church in the Isle of Grain, now made famous for its oil refinery, is St. James's.

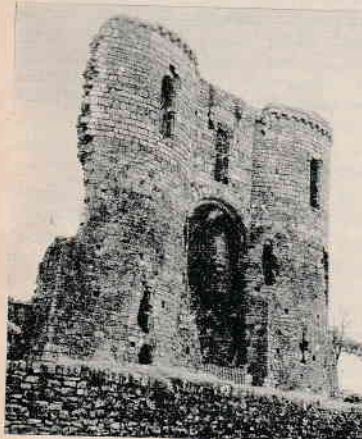
The tower of this 800-year-old Kentish church was restored with the help of King Edward VII, a prince, a duke, seven bishops, and the last German Emperor when a fund was started in 1901.

Once again money is needed for repairs.—C. T. SPURLING (MAIDSTONE).



Players and Pilgrims

WHILE watching the South Africans playing Somerset at Taunton, last summer, I was somewhat intrigued to hear wafting across the ground Bunyan's Pilgrim Hymn, played on bells at three-hourly intervals. After the match we made our way to the nearby church of St. Mary Magdalene and learnt that the church possesses fifteen bells. This is the largest number in any tower in the county. The tenor bell weighs 33 cwt. Although only twelve bells are mounted for ringing, the remaining three are used in the Carillon, which was installed as a thank-offering after the Second World War. Tunes are played daily at 9 a.m., noon, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. I heard them five times in all on successive days and each time it was Bunyan's Pilgrim Hymn, which rang out. I am wondering if any of your other readers have been inspired by it.—E. M. HOSKINS (IPSWICH).



Warning to Liars

AT Devizes, Wiltshire, there is a monument in the busy town centre, which records the fate of a woman in the Middle Ages. Ruth Pierce bought a carpet from a woman, and then said she had already paid for it. "May I be struck down dead if I am telling a lie," Ruth said, and next moment she was! From the dead woman's clenched hand a coin was removed.

Recently I heard a woman ask a shopkeeper if a certain item had been the same price all the week. "Certainly," the assistant confirmed. "Well, my boy charged me twopence too much then," the shopper remarked. It is a good thing that God has not always a thunderbolt handy for fibbers!—W. SMITH (HARROW).

Llwhaden Castle Gatehouse

THE medieval bishops of St. David's had seven residences from which to oversee their vast diocese. Of these one was strongly fortified: it stands in a commanding position above the river Cleddau which runs into Milford Haven and on which stands the parish church. It was first built by Bishop Beck (1280-93), but most of the remaining ruins are of the 14th century. The gatehouse has two drum towers; the chapel walls are fairly intact and there is a tall tower still standing near it. The castle was probably dismantled and abandoned by Bishop Barlow who also neglected the palace at St. David's: (1536-1547). Both have now been restored by the Ministry of Works.—M. W. (HEREFORD).

Nativity Pulpit Panel

THE little Parish Church of Wragby, near Wakefield, has the unusual dedication of St. Michael and Our Lady. Built in 1533 it has several interesting features including a number of beautiful wood carvings. Chief amongst these are its exquisitely carved pulpit panels.

In all there are five panels, each giving a scene from the Nativity or Passion of Our Lord. The central panel, the Crowning with Thorns, is 17th century Italian work, and the others, including the Adoration panel, shown in the illustration, are of German origin and dated in the 17th or 18th century.—K. I. P. ADAMSON (DONCASTER).

Weekday Pages for Women

CONDUCTED BY
MARION HURST

Monday—Washing/Cleaning

It is not always generally known that oil of eucalyptus is a wonderful cleanser. If you are unfortunate enough to get a stain or dirty mark on a light coat, dress or blouse, try the following method. Take a small piece of cotton wool and moisten it with a little oil of eucalyptus. Rub lightly over the stain and it will soon take away the soiled mark. This method will not harm silk and fine materials, and will often save sending the garment to the cleaners.—MRS. J. REEVES (WHITSTABLE).

Tuesday—A Sewing Hint

Much time may be spent searching for buttons to fix on dresses or coats and the following hint may benefit readers. Make a 'button box' out of a tin, with a slot made in the lid. Each time you have any spare buttons, or take them off discarded clothes, pop them in the box through the slot. This is a far better method than putting spare buttons, etc. into some vase or other where they are often forgotten. It is also a good idea to fix several of the same type of buttons together so that they are more readily available.—MRS. L. F. AMSDEY (WEALD, NR. SEVENDAKS).

Wednesday—Cooking

If you have some icing left over when icing cakes, use up the surplus by piping into rosettes and storing them when dry in an air-tight tin. These are then always ready for using to decorate small cakes, trifles, etc. and save time when preparing the table, when unexpected visitors arrive.—MRS. M. BROWN (BIRKENHEAD).

Thursday—Nursing

If you are nursing a patient who is a bad sleeper, and if he is not on a diet, try giving him a couple of teaspoonsful of honey before settling him down for the night. Honey is a natural food, and needs little digesting; it is also very soothing and relaxing.—MISS F. C. TOUT (WESTBURY, WILTS.).

Friday—Household

When making scrambled eggs, I was always spoiling saucepans and wasting egg into the bargain! So, I tried greasing a pudding basin, setting it over a pan of hot water, whipping up the eggs as usual, and putting them into the basin, stirring gently all the time. The result was good, with no waste and no burnt saucepan. The basin was much easier to wash than the usual saucepan method.—MRS. G. HERRINGTON (SALISBURY).

Saturday—Children

If you have neglected your bicycle, and rust appears on the bright parts, here is a good way to remove it. Obtain some bath brick and grind a little on to a tin lid or an old saucer. Then add a small quantity of lubricating oil to make it into a thick paste. Rub the resultant paste on to the rusted parts and in a very short time the rust will disappear. Polish well with a dry duster and it will soon shine again.—JOHN COLLINS (LONDON, N.12).

CHRISTMAS EVE

There was a mother, long ago,
Whose Baby lay
Not deep within a satin cot,
But 'mid the hay.

And as she gazed, the mother's heart
Was filled with love
For Him, her darling little Son.
Then from above

A brilliant star shone bright and clear
O'er vale and hill,
While joyously the angels sang,
"Peace and Good-will."

EILEEN B. EDGE

Decorations for Church

A MOST unusual and attractive Christmastree I saw in a country church last year, was decorated entirely with fir cones, bunches of coloured berries, rosy apples, oranges, bananas, bunches of grapes, and all kinds of fruits, instead of the usual tree decorations made of glass. It was a huge tree and required a lot of filling, and someone with lots of foresight must have been collecting and drying the bunches of berries and nuts for quite some time. The fir cones had been dipped in whitening, or tipped with red sealing wax to add a bit of colour, and had been tied to the tree with black cotton. The bunches of berries and grapes were attached to the tree by their own stems. Some of the fruit had been made up into small bags of cellophane and tied to the tree for distribution afterwards, and single apples, oranges, bananas, etc. had been tied to the branches just for decoration. Ordinary small white tallow candles were



added, and the whole effect was delightful and striking, and would appeal to some people much more than the usual gaudy decorations which are sold in the shops.—M. H.

Do-it-Yourself Christmas Gifts

Home-made sweets make delicious and much appreciated Christmas presents, especially for those who "can't be bothered to make their own". Quite an assortment may be made from a basic mixing of almond paste, rolled out thinly and cut with fancy cutters into various shapes. Decorated with glace cherries, angelica, etc., they look delightful when placed in coloured paper cases which may be bought quite cheaply from stationers' shops. Pieces of dates, almonds, muscates, cherries, etc., wrapped in the marzipan, and rolled in coloured sugar look especially mouth-watering and add variety. Part of the almond paste could be coloured with cochineal and rolled in

finely chopped nuts to give the appearance of truffles.

When your collection has been assembled arrange them on a glass plate covered with a paper doily; cover with a piece of cellophane large enough to well overlap the edges of the plate. Make the top smooth and fix the edges underneath the plate with sellotape, and with a bright bow of ribbon added you will have a most attractive and acceptable present.

*** If you know of a good hint for our household pages, send it to the Editor, Women's Page, 11, Ludgate Square, London, E.C.4. We offer six 5s. prizes every month.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGES

The Meaning of Christmas

WE all know the Christmas story; and we know about the angels, the shepherds, the crowded inn and the stable with its manger. But because we are Christians, we must also try to understand why this wonderful event happened nearly two thousand years ago.

Only God knows the full story of why He sent His Son into the world to be born as a little baby at that first Christmastime, but we must try to understand part of its meaning.

At the time Jesus was born, the people thought of God as a great ruler, judge or mighty king. They did not understand the fact that God was a God of love. Only when Jesus came to earth and lived a human life did they begin to understand the sort of Person God was. For Jesus came to show us what God is like, and He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." So people began to see that it hurt Him when they did wrong things and lived bad lives; they saw in Jesus the sort of lives Christians ought to lead.

Jesus was not born in a grand castle like a human king might be, but in a poor stable where the animals were kept; and this shows us that we don't need to be rich or powerful to lead Christian lives.

So in the middle of all the excitement over presents and parties, and Christmas trees and decorations, let us remember the real reason behind it all. For if Christ had not been born in Bethlehem, there wouldn't be a Christmas at all

Reading the Bible Together

For our Christmas reading aloud, we will read together the story of the Angel Gabriel's visit to Mary. You will need someone to read the Angel's part, someone for Mary and someone to read the Narrator's verses. Turn to St. Luke, ch 1:

Narrator	v 26, 27
Gabriel	v 28
Mary	v 29
Gabriel	v 30-33
Mary	v 34
Gabriel	v 35-37
Mary	v 38





COMPILED BY PATRICIA HUNT

Look Out for Screens

In some churches you will find a screen separating the chancel and nave. Sometimes these screens are high and made of richly carved wood or they may be of wrought iron, or may consist of low walls of brick or stone. Some very beautiful carving was done on these screens—particularly in the 15th century—and they were often gilded and painted with pictures of saints, and like the stained glass windows, would help in teaching people who could not read.

Over the screen there was often a huge beam spanning the arch, and this was known as the rood beam. The word 'rood' means a cross, and on this beam would be placed figures of Jesus, His mother Mary and St John. The rood was often lit by a special lamp, and in some churches at festivals, such as Easter and Christmas, there would be lighted candles fixed on another beam in front called a 'candle beam.' In the days when there were no electric lights, the church would be very dim, and as the people came in, they would look up to the lighted rood,

and would be reminded of the God they had come to worship. Sometimes there would be a special window put in the roof, so that during daylight, the Figure of Christ would be lighted up. This lighted Figure would serve to remind people that Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world."

Christmas Prayer

Are you keeping a little book of your own prayers? Cut this prayer out or copy it into your book and use it in your daily prayers around Christmastime.

"O Lord God, we thank Thee for all the joy and happiness of Christmas-time. May we never forget what Jesus has done for us by coming into the world as a Baby; may we remember, too, that He lived and died and rose again for us, and that Thy Holy Spirit is with us always. O Lord, be with all people who are sad or unhappy at this time, and show us if there is anything we may do to help them. For Jesus' sake, Amen."



SHORT STORY FOR DECEMBER

Christmas Home-coming

By CLAIRE RITCHIE

LENA DAVIS set down the plate of savoury stew in front of her husband. "That's better than what you've had lately, I'll be bound!"

Jim's glance was resentful.

"Can't you stop reminding me? I did wrong and I've taken my punish——"

"Ssh!" Her whisper silenced him, as Jill, their six-year-old daughter, came running in.

"Stew! Oh, goody!" she beamed at her parents. "Daddy, you're not going away again, are you?"

"No, Jilly. I'm going to work for Mr. Gould."

She sighed contentedly. "I *did* miss you when you were away so long!"

Lena echoed that sigh. All very well for the child! It's different when you have to live with the knowledge that your husband has just come out of prison. The fact that he was genuinely sorry for his wrongdoing—stealing money from his employer in order to bet on a 'cert' that had proved just the opposite—and now showed every intention of going straight, did not in Lena's eyes, minimise the disgrace, and she felt she could never forgive him.

"Mummy!" Jill asked. "Can I go to Church this afternoon?"

"Why? It's not Sunday." Neither Lena nor Jim had entered a church, except at Christmas, since their marriage, but the Derry children, a few doors away, went to Sunday-school, and, as Jill and Joan Derry were friends, they went together.

"We're going to get the Crib ready. There are the animals and shepherds and everything to put out. Won't it be a lovely s'prise for you and Daddy on Christmas Day?"

Lena said nothing. Christmas this year would be miserable. There was no hope of Jim's getting a Christmas-box from old Mr. Gould, who had only employed him to do the carpentering jobs he couldn't manage himself.

That afternoon, Jill and Joan ran gaily down the road. Inside the church, they found their Sunday-school teacher already unpacking the figures to be put in place in the model stable.

The children were not allowed to handle the figures, but when the Holy Family, the angels and the shepherds, had been arranged, Miss Forman allowed the two little girls to hand her the animals—a cow, a donkey, and three sheep.

Jill accidentally knocked Joan's

arm. The third sheep fell onto the tiled floor, and Joan said, in a horrified tone:

"Oh! His leg's broken!"

"You should be more careful, dear!"

"It was Jill's fault!" Joan said quickly. "She banged my arm."

"I'm sorry!" Jill's eyes filled with tears. "But he'll still stand up, won't he?"

But the little sheep promptly tipped forward on to his nose.

"No, I'm afraid we can't use that one. Will you go over by the font, Joan, and tell me if the light's in the right place?"

Jill looked sadly down at the broken sheep. Poor little thing! Now he couldn't share in the Christmas festival, standing with his friends in the straw beside the manger. He would have to go back into the dark box. On an impulse, she slipped him into her raincoat pocket.

Home again, she took the sheep out and looked at it. Then her face brightened.

"Daddy!" she said that evening, when Lena was washing up in the scullery. "Could you mend something for me?"

"If I can, Jilly." Jim roused himself from gloomy thoughts.

She fetched the sheep and told him about the accident.

"Could you put a new leg on him, so that he can stand by the manger and see the Baby Jesus?"

Jim turned it over. "I'll get a bit of wood and some glue and do it right away."

Jill watched intently as the mending operation began, and so Lena found them, when she came in and started on the mending. Patches and darns now, no hope of anything new!...

"Daddy's mending a sheep," Jill explained. "He's so clever, I 'spect he could mend anything!"

That's what you think! The cruel

words were on Lena's lips, but she checked them. Jill's mention of a sheep had reminded her of the old hymn.

'There were ninety and nine that safely lay

In the shelter of the fold.'

And one that got lost—

'Out in the desert He heard its cry,
Sick and hopeless and ready to die.'

She looked across at Jim's bent head. The Good Shepherd had taken the trouble to go out and find His lost sheep—

Then she heard Jim's voice. "There, Jilly! Your sheep's as good as new."

"Oh, thank you, Daddy! But it's not *my* sheep—it belongs to Jesus."

Lena wasn't the demonstrative type, but when Jill had gone happily to bed, she said timidly:

"We'll both go with Jill to church on Christmas Day, won't we?"

She saw the momentary hope in his eyes, then he shook his head. "You go. You won't want me with you."

"But I shall!" She laid her hands gently on his shoulders. "I want you with me—always. Oh, darling—I'm sorry!"

The barriers were down, and she was in his arms.

Next morning, Jill was anxious to be off to church with the little sheep, and Jim, who had a job to do at a house nearby, said he would walk along with her.

Lena watched them, Jill proudly holding her father's hand. She saw Jim smile and lift a hand in salute to a neighbour. There was a new lightness in his step, a straightness about his shoulders. A strange peace filled Lena's heart. There might not be expensive gifts or luxuries in their home tomorrow, but there would be happiness and trust and love, for two wandering sheep had been brought home to the Good Shepherd's fold.

Bethlehem

By Mary Collier



AS the year nears its end, the thoughts of the Christian world turn to Bethlehem.

This unspoilt little town, lying along the edge of an escarpment of the Judean highlands, has a tranquillity about it, an old-world air of leisure and timelessness, in spite of the bells that ring and toll at all hours of the day. On its eastern side, rocky terraces planted with figs, vines and olives, drop steeply to a great valley, and the flat-roofed houses of white stone, with the bell-towers of the convents and monasteries, look across the desolate wastes of the Wilderness of Judea to the Dead Sea, its farther shore backed by the long range of the mountains of Moab. It is a view that Holman-Hunt painted many times in his Biblical pictures.

The Souvenir Trade

The narrow streets, some little more than alleys, are lined with small shops and balconied houses, and in the main square are dusty little souvenir shops where the speciality is mother-of-pearl from the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Suez. It is made into necklaces, bracelets, baptismal shells, crucifixes, and brooches shaped like doves, and used in the inlay work of Oriental furniture. The population relies on the manufacture and sale of souvenirs for its livelihood. (Other things made locally are ash-trays of black stone from the Dead Sea, leather work and embroidery, pottery and glass, and articles of golden-brown

olive-wood, beautifully grained and polished. This wood makes a particularly handsome binding for Bibles and prayer-books.)

Fair Skins and Blue Eyes

The women of Bethlehem are a source of wonder to the tourist, as many of them have fair skins and eyes blue as forget-me-nots. (Moreover, their faces are not eastern, but remind one of those seen in paintings by the Dutch masters, broad, placid, and unlined.) The married women wear a unique headdress that has caused much conjecture. It is a high cone, draped with an airy white veil that fastens under the chin and then



The bells of Bethlehem Photo by Courtesy of Bible Lands Missions' Aid Society

flows round the shoulders and down the back, like the pictures of fairytale princesses in children's story books. It is, in fact, a harkback to the Middle Ages and the days of the Crusaders.

The unmarried women carry a heavy chain of coins round their forehead, their dowry, covered by a plain white veil without the cone. All the women wear heavy, full-length red dresses, elaborately embroidered on the bodice and sleeves in traditional cross-stitch.

The 15,000 inhabitants, mostly

Christians, usually marry within their own boundaries, thus perpetuating their European strain.

On Christmas Eve the streets are congested with many thousands of people of all nationalities. Pilgrims and tourists, swarthy Syrians and Egyptians, Franciscan monks in brown habits and sandals, processions of children and demure nuns, rub shoulders with fierce-looking Bedouin from the desert and humble, shepherds in rough sheepskin coats. Threading in and out are unkempt, barefoot urchins with blue beads fastened in their black bushy hair against the evil eye, and all the balconies and rooftops are crowded with watchers.

The huge throng moves unhurriedly towards the great courtyard of the Church of the Nativity, where the horsemen of the Arab Legion are on guard, picturesque with their flowing red and white headcloths and fine mounts.

Fortress-like Church

One of the oldest in the world, the church has the appearance of a fortress; its interior is in the form of a cross, austere and vast. The main doorway is remarkable, only

Church of the Nativity (Interior)

Photo: David Brewster



Entrance to Church of Holy Nativity

Photo by Courtesy of B.L.M.A.S.

three and a half feet high, so that one has to bend almost double to enter. The original entrance was purposely made smaller to prevent Arab Moslem horsemen riding into the church and attacking Christians as they knelt at prayer.

Down a narrow stone staircase and under the choir is the Grotto, or Birthplace, with a silver star let into the floor, and a ledge of rock faced with marble. This is the traditional position of the manger, hewn out of the rock and not at all like the wooden crib one sees in pictures of the Nativity. The sides of the cave are hung with tapestries and paintings of the Madonna. Many silver lamps, belonging to the various Christian sects, hang down from the roof.

Up above in the courtyard a carol service begins at nine o'clock, and at midnight Mass is celebrated inside the Church. In the belfry the heavy bass bell tolls, deep and sombre. Presently it is joined by the light bass and the alto, the treble and the tenor, and together, uniting in a joyous clangour, over the rooftops and across the deep valley, echoing and re-echoing from the rocky hillsides, they ring out once more the Christmas message.

CHRISTMAS "DOWN - UNDER"

By GEOFFREY HUMPHRYS

HOW many of you can remember trudging through snow to return home from church on Christmas morning? If you can remember it, it has not happened very often, for although we think of snow-covered countryside as the traditional Christmas weather, there have only been eight white Christmases during the past century. It has, however, snowed ten times on Boxing Day during this period.

Most readers will most likely remember at least one white Christmas, and each year they will have seen snow and ice scenes on our Christmas cards. Our Commonwealth cousins "down under" in New Zealand and Australia also see these cards and associate Britain with snow at Christmastime. They, of course, have never seen snow on the ground at Christmas. Even so, the festive season in these two Commonwealth countries is closely related with the traditions of the home country, with the exception of the weather. In New Zealand, Christmas is the hottest time of the year, towns are short of water and the hills brown with drought.

Father Christmas has to wear lightweight robes, for the temperature is usually well into the nineties. He appears in shops displaying cribs and Christmas scenes, using artificial holly, cotton wool snow and bright paper decorations. The fern leaves of the New Zealand national emblem are also used to provide a touch of real homeliness.

Popular Christmas presents among the children are swimwear, sun glasses, beach toys, surf boards and underwater fishing tackle. The hustle and bustle of shopping is so

intense that on Christmas Eve the main streets are sensibly closed to traffic.

After the Christmas church service, children in New Zealand return home in blazing sunshine. They eat a Christmas dinner of all the good things we enjoy, then spend the afternoon playing and sunbathing on the warm beaches. Most business firms have their annual holidays at Christmas and the children have their longest holiday of the year from school. This provides an extra zest to the festivities, and the wearing of paper hats and the pulling of crackers often takes place on the beaches. There are very few New Zealand towns which are not beside the sea, a river or a lake. On Christmas night, parties are held in the homes and gardens, but even these often end up with a moonlight bathe.

People in Australia celebrate Christmas under the same weather conditions as their New Zealand neighbours. They also try to capture something of the home country atmosphere with traditional dishes and decorations. Last year tens of thousands of artificial Christmas trees were imported from Britain. Australia has very few fir trees, so the artificial trees with wire branches and pine needles made of cello straw are used in place of the real thing.

The trees range from 12 in. to 7 ft. 6 in. in height. Whilst they are usually supplied with green foliage, vividly coloured trees of red, blue and yellow are ordered for display in large shops. As most Australians hold their Christmas festivities out of doors, the favourite place for the family Christmas tree is in the centre of the lawn!



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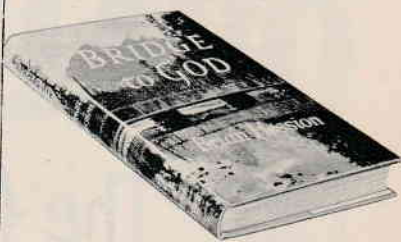
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