

marston news

parish church of st. nicholas

No. 166

Price 3p.

DECEMBER



ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH — OLD MARSTON

Vicar and Rural Dean of Cowley : Rev. Paul N. Rimmer, M.A.
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Cuddesdon.

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Tel. : 61116.

People's Warden : Mr. A. W. Sidebottom, Melandra, Old Road, Shotover,
Oxford. Tel. : Oxford 62654.

Secretary of the P.C.C. : Mrs. M. Harlow, Fir Tree House, Old Marston.

Organist : Mrs. E. A. Garner, "Barn Gates," 31 Oxford Rd., Old Marston.
Tel. : Oxford 41888.

SUNDAY SERVICES

Holy Communion : 8 a.m.

Parish Communion : 10 a.m. New Communion Service (followed by Coffee
in Church Hall).

Evening Prayer and Sermon : 6.30 p.m.

Holy Baptism : Second and Fourth Sundays of the month at 3 p.m. unless
otherwise announced. Notice must be given.

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

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Holy Communion : Wednesdays and Saints Days at 7.15 a.m.
3rd Friday at 10.30 a.m. with Laying on of Hands for sick.
And at other times, as announced. (See Notice Board).

The Daily Services of Morning and Evening Prayer are usually said each day
at 7.15 a.m. and 5.15 p.m. (except on Saturdays). Wednesday :
Morning Prayer is at 9.15 a.m. but it is **advisable to consult the
notice board in the Church Porch.**

CHURCH ORGANISATIONS AND MEETINGS :

Children's Instruction : Confirmation School and Crossbearers, 10 a.m. in
Church Hall. 1st Sunday in month - Parish Communion.
K.G. and Juniors : Sundays, 11.15 a.m.
Nursery : Sundays, 11.15 a.m. in Mortimer Hall.

Mothers' Union : 4th Tuesday. 7.45 p.m.

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

Bellringers : Practice Night — Friday nights, 7.45 p.m.

Brownies : Monday, 6 p.m. in Scout Headquarters.

Girl Guides : Monday, 7.30 p.m. in Scout Headquarters.

Cubs : Tuesday & Thursday, 6.15 p.m. in Scout Headquarters.

43rd St. Nicholas' Scout Troop : Friday, 7.15 p.m. in Scout Headquarters.

**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.**

PARISH CALENDAR : DECEMBER

- Dec. 1. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
 " 2. Thursday. Prayer Group meets in Church, 8 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.
 " 3. Friday. Preparation for Christmas Bazaar, 7.30 p.m. onwards.
 " 4. SATURDAY. CHRISTMAS BAZAAR, 2.30 p.m. in SCOUT HUT.
 Teas served in CHURCH HALL from 3 p.m. onwards. All proceeds
 in aid of the Work of the Church Overseas.
 " 5. **ADVENT II : BIBLE SUNDAY : PATRONAL FESTIVAL**
 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
 10.0 a.m. **The Parish Communion.**
 11.15 a.m. St. Nicholas-tide Toy and Gift Service for Parents and
 Children.
 6.30 p.m. Evensong.
 " 6. Monday. St. Nicholas' Day.
 " 7. Tuesday. 7.30 p.m. Induction of the Vicar of St. Andrew, Headington.
 The Rev. R. Jeffery.
 " 8. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
 Over 60's Club Christmas Party in Mortimer Hall,
 5 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.
 7.45 p.m. St. Nicholas' Wives Group meet in Church Hall.
 "A Christmas Cracker." Music, recipes, decoration and
 preparation for Christmas.
 " 12. **ADVENT III.** 8 a.m. Holy Communion.
 10.0 a.m. **The Parish Communion.**
 3.00 p.m. Holy Baptism.
 6.30 p.m. Evensong.
 " 15. Wednesday. Ember Day. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
 " 16. Thursday. "The Hollow Crown" — Anthology on the Kings of
 England — Presented by the Marston Players.
 " 17. Friday. Ember Day. 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
 " 19. **ADVENT IV.** 8 a.m. Holy Communion.
 10.0 a.m. **The Parish Communion.**
 6.30 p.m. Evensong.
 " 20. Monday. 10 a.m. Decoration of Church for Christmas.
 (All helpers welcome!)
 " 21. **FESTIVAL OF ST. THOMAS, Apostle.**
 " 22. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
 6.30 p.m. **FAMILY CAROL SERVICE** by Candlelight (families with
 small children are particularly invited to this Service). Coffee with
 Mince Pies will be served in the Church Hall after the Service.
 Admission to the Service will be by free ticket only owing to limited
 accommodation.
 " 24. **EVE OF CHRISTMAS.**
 11.30 p.m. **MID-NIGHT HOLY COMMUNION.**
 " 25. **CHRISTMAS DAY.** 8.0 a.m. Holy Communion.
 11.0 a.m. **FAMILY SERVICE** to be Broadcast on Radio Oxford.
 5.30 p.m. Evensong (said with no sermon).
 26. **ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.** 1st Sunday after Christmas
 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
 10.0 a.m. **The Parish Communion.**
 3.0 p.m. Holy Baptism (after previous arrangement).
 6.30 p.m. **CANDLE & CAROL SERVICE** (admission by free ticket
 only owing to restricted accommodation).
 " 27. Monday. **Festival of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist.**
 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
 " 28. Tuesday. Holy Innocents' Day.
 " 29. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.

HOLY BAPTISM

- Oct. 24. Mark Anthony Cheesman, 17 Cavendish Drive.
 Neil Clive Maund, 28 Wenrise Drive, Minster Lovell.
 Melani Jane Pope, 23 Downside Road, Risinghurst.
 Jennifer Kay Pope, 23 Downside Road, Risinghurst.
 Martine Angela Pope, 23 Downside Road, Risinghurst.
 Nov. 14. Richard David Cartlidge, 16 Lewell Avenue.

ALTAR FLOWER ROTa

Dec. 5th—Mrs. M. Harlow. Christmas Flowers—Mrs. Haynes.

VICAR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

December is an eventful month for the parish, beginning with the **Patronal Festival** on **Sunday, December 5th** and ending with the Christmas Festival.

Please make a special effort to come to our **Christmas Bazaar** on **Saturday, December 4th** in the **Scout Hall** at **2.30 p.m.** It is in aid of the **Church Overseas**, and in response to the special plea from the ten major missionary societies.

The **Parish Communion** at the **Patronal Festival, December 5th** at **10 a.m.** provides us with an opportunity to make a corporate act of dedication of our time and talents in the service of God. There is also the special service following at **11.15 a.m.** for **Parents and Children**, at which toys are brought for poorer children.

On **Christmas Day** **Radio Oxford** is broadcasting our **Family Service** at **11 a.m.**, and this will be followed by an informal link-up at the Vicarage afterwards.

Even though you may have been to the mid-night Communion on **Christmas Eve (11.30 p.m.)**, don't stay away to hear the broadcast, as a really corporate act of worship will make a wonderful spiritual impact on all who listen. Please try to be there by **10.45 a.m.** in order that an opportunity may be given for instructions before the service begins.

May I wish you every happiness this **Christmastide**, and may the real and lasting message of Christmas mean more to you than ever before.

Yours sincerely,



Vicar & Rural Dean.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR IN AID OF CHURCH OVERSEAS

Date : Saturday, December 4th. Time : 2.30 p.m.

Place : Church Hall and Scout Hut.

We shall be grateful for gifts of Plants for the Garden Stall. Cakes, sweets, home-made jams, etc. Toys in good condition. Bottles (filled) for the bottle stall. Clothes and books in good condition (NOT Jumble). Christmas gifts. Home-made knitted articles, etc. Records for the Choir Stall.

Any or all of these articles may be left at the Vicarage ; Mrs. Roberts, 54 Cherwell Drive ; Mrs. Lessiter, 63 Cherwell Drive ; Mrs. Westall, 95 Oxford Road ; B. G. Oliver's, Old Marston Road ; or Joyce's, Cherwell Drive.

WE RELY ON YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT

FOR THE CHURCH OVERSEAS.

The Bazaar will be opened by H.E. the Emir of Tabag (Regency States) who hopes to be in England at that time, and has graciously consented to be present, if at all possible. The Emir's uncle has been a personal friend of the Vicar for many years, and it is through him that this contact has been made. Tabag despite its remoteness and primitive surroundings is one of the most enlightened of the Regency States with a well advanced programme of social and medical reform. The Emir, who is a Muslim, has often expressed his personal gratitude for the help given by the West, and we hope that a representative gathering of parishioners will be present to welcome him to our Bazaar.

THE Window

Jim Ross wrote this article as he was waiting to enter hospital for a serious heart operation. On behalf of all our readers we wish him well.—The Publisher.

Christmas in the doldrums

by James D. Ross

I have spent some rum Christmases, but the one whose memory I am inclined to try and lose more than most is the Christmas I spent as a widower.

That was a grey and foggy sort of Christmas if you like, yet—yet, even then something of that elusive quality we so glibly call 'the Spirit of Christmas' managed to break through.

Bereavement is a bit like convalescence, and I was in an advanced state of convalescence that Christmas. The wife I had spent the previous seventeen Christmases with had gone—whisked away by one massive, totally unexpected heart attack in less time than it takes to smoke a cigarette. It was a bit like an amputation. One moment the limb was there—the next it was gone. One moment the wife was there—the next she had gone. In either case I suppose there is the same sort of feeling of deprivation—mutilation even. And with this mutilation comes emptiness—the most achingly real consequence of bereavement, and one which has to be dealt with. It is a chasm which stretches out from waking to sleeping, and which



Nativity stained glass window, Swanage.
photo: Keith Ellis ARPS

seems too formidable ever to be filled. Yet—it must be filled!

If the human spirit is to be true to itself, and especially true to the person who has just died, then the shock and emptiness must be faced and conquered. For most people this happens sooner or later. An unhappy few never succeed in emerging again into the immediate world of the living. That world which, for those with enough faith to look for it, embraces both the material world in which we exist from day to day, and the unseen world to which death is the only door.

For this is at the heart of bereavement, and this ultimately is the test of a faith: to stand firm in the desolation of human loss and say—'I know that I am not alone! I do not know how, when or where—such terms are meaningless—but I know that my Redeemer, and my love, is alive!'

This is the test of real, lasting recovery from bereavement—whether one can emerge a wiser, more adult person, or 'just get over it'. A lot of people do just that: they 'get over it'. The emptiness fills, after a fashion. The amputation heals, more or less cleanly. The pain dies, the memory fails, the face, voice and being which were once an integral part of one's whole life, blur and recede. They get over it—more or less.

Emotional tangle

That Christmas eight years ago I had more or less got over my own bereavement, but the prospect of facing Christmas was awful—frightening. It was sure to be the most fearful wallow in nostalgia. Self-pity lurked behind every card, every present, every window-display, every carol—Lord, carols were the end, they could really bring the fogs of gloom down with a thump!

And the devil of it is that you walk between two stools when you are in

this state of convalescent bereavement. Part of you knows that you must cover up emotions and feelings, because it's tough on family and friends for someone to keep on wearing their heart on their sleeve. Yet another part is inclined to resent—well, just about everything. If friends are 'normal', whatever that means, then they are heartless. If they are openly sympathetic then they are breaking through the Englishman's traditional crust of reserve. Heads I win, tails you lose: but one surely can get into an emotional tangle at times of personal crisis.

Especially at Christmas.

Gale of reality

I was warden of a retreat and conference house that particular Christmas, and a sort of bored melancholy settled on me early on Christmas Eve. My staff all deserved either medals or haloes for the way they coped with me—I couldn't have been easy, but they rode it. But a most un-Christmassy fog hung around the whole place.

It was broken Christmas morning. A neighbour—a big, burly Yorkshireman who never went to any church and whose religious beliefs, if any, I had never fathomed—barged into the kitchen where we were all drinking coffee.

He plonked a bottle of port (I loathe port) on the table, and slammed down a large Christmas cake (I abominate Christmas cake) beside it. Then he settled all eighteen stone in a chair and looked me up and down critically.

'Get glasses, lad,' he rumbled, 'And get dollop o' that down thee. Thar'll not go broody around here—tisn't good for thee, or us, or nobody. And if tha missus knew she'd belt thee!'

And with a gale of reality blowing through the kitchen, I got it down me!

POLLUTION OF THE MIND

by Dr. C. K. N. Bardsley,
Bishop of Coventry

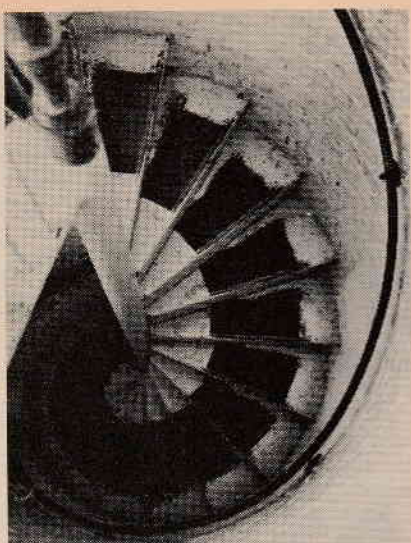
Much is said and written these days about the environmental problems the next generation will have to face as a result of growing urbanisation, and the spoiling and pollution of our countryside.

There is no doubt about the truth of this, but to my mind there is another problem facing youth which is more immediate: that of pollution of the mind by pornographic and obscene publications, films and plays and other deliberate attempts to debase and pervert all moral standards.

There are encouraging signs that a growing number of people are aware of these dangers, and are only seeking a lead to become articulate about them. Earlier this year I launched an attack on pornography and obscenity in an address to my Diocesan Synod, and as a result I have received a very large number of letters from people who applaud my words and clearly feel a sense of relief that I spoke as I did. The majority who wrote were parents, deeply concerned and anxious about the society in which their children are growing up.

The real enemy

It is most important that we are clear about who and what our real enemy is, so that we do not waste our time and energies on diversionary skirmishes which leave the enemy safely entrenched in his fortified position. If, as one radio listener has suggested, I was 'protesting about



The long descent photo: Ajax News & Features

advertisements for ladies underwear in the Underground', then I should be wasting my time, but fortunately I now have clear evidence that a very great number of people are no longer under-estimating the dangers to which I was referring.

To help in facing reality I commend a book which has been published since I spoke. It is a paper-back entitled *Trousered Apes*, by Douglas Williams, a Professor of Literature at Marshall University, U.S.A. The gist of the book is that when a man loses a sense of his own dignity or purpose, and he has no faith in anything, he is no more than an animal—and a dangerous one at that, for, unlike the rest of the animal world, he obeys no laws other than those of his own contriving. 'When men cease to aspire to the ideal, the good, to self-restraint—whether in the arts or in their lives—they do not just stand still, but actually turn the other way, finding self-fulfilment in self-indulgence, and in an obsession with those three ultimate expressions

of the totally self-centred life: sex, violence and insanity.'

What we see happening today is not just a passing phase. If it were, we would not need to be too anxious. The truth is that we have reached the bottom, the end of a long descent; but now, if we have the courage, we may begin to face facts and see the cause of our condition—the long process of decline since man first began to believe he could do without God.

Like animals

At the end of the descent is despair, and at this point those who have no faith, no belief in anything but man—that he is no better than an animal—hate those who possess faith, and that hatred manifests itself in glorifying what is base and degrading, and in ridiculing what is good and uplifting. They cannot rest until they have dragged down others to their own level. To prove their thesis that man is no higher than other animals they encourage him to behave as one, and to give full vent to all in him that is animalistic, and moreover to do so in the belief that this is the way to freedom and self-fulfilment.

To achieve their ends the perverters must capture the younger generation, and in this they are supported by those who are attracted by opportunities for making money. The drug pusher is one of the worst examples. Hitler showed the world how youth can be captured by persuading them that evil ends are, in fact, good. When the foundations of society are shaken—as they were in Germany between the Wars, and as they are in the Western world now—the resulting confusion can be exploited by those of evil intent, unless those who believe in honour, truth and the things of God hold fast and refuse to compromise.

When a man rejects established

standards and invents his own, chaos results; as it would if shopkeepers decided for themselves what constitutes a pound of butter or a yard of material. Without any commonly accepted standards, anarchy prevails.

Faced with such a situation we must take all possible steps to protect ourselves and our children, as far as we can, from these things which corrupt the mind and destroy the character of those whom they touch, by way of books, magazines, plays, films and other mass media. I have already taken steps to enlist the support of the Church in my diocese, at parish and diocesan levels, to combat those threats by channelling protests against activities calculated to debase or pervert, in particular, films, plays or publications exhibited or distributed in the place where we live; by making representations to local authorities and education leaders concerning those activities; and to make representations, if necessary, to Parliament through our elected M.Ps. To co-ordinate this I have set up a committee of men and women who, as parents, teachers and youth leaders, are concerned about our young people and want to give them a chance to live a creative and healthy life.

Overcoming corruption

Finally—and this is vital—we must, each of us, constantly maintain our own Christian standards, revealing in our private and public lives our belief in the pledged word, in honest dealing, in generous giving to those in need, in devoted service, in tolerance to people of other races or faiths, in a refusal to live just for self-indulgence or personal display. Above all, by living in dependence on God and trusting him so that we know him by experience and not as a wishful dream.

The true heritage

by the Editor

Last year it was reckoned that £x per man, woman and child were spent on Christmas preparations and celebrations. This year, despite rising prices and unemployment, it will probably be greater.

A 'Happy Christmas', supported on the shoulders of a flood of food, drink and presents, seem to be the lot of the majority. Blessed are the 'Haves', for their bellies shall be filled.

Tucked away among this mass of affluence, heart-breaking and hidden—except among the high unemployment areas—is the minority of those who will certainly not be able to spend £x on their Christmas preparations, or, indeed, even y pence!

They will not have turkeys and scotch, yule logs and swish gifts from their fond husbands and families, because some of them have no families and all of them have very, very little money.

Growing army

They are the 'Have-nots' of our society: the old-age pensioners; the social and economic failures; the outcasts, the unwanted and the lonely whose one shelter will be a Salvation Army hostel. And the unemployed. That army of ordinary citizens which monthly grows into a greater army.

These, and many others, will not indulge in the seasonal spending orgy, will not plan parties, will not



The feast will pass him by photo: S.C. Sedgwick

receive masses of presents, and will not plaster their cheerless living rooms with dozens of Christmas cards.

Their Christmas will be rather quieter, infinitely less ostentatious, and, I believe, ten thousand times closer to the heart of God than the more sumptuous Christmas which most of us will have.

They, and their like throughout the world in a score of different countries, may lack much which, God forgive us all, they should not lack. But one thing they will not be without, whether they know and care about it or not; while we, immersed in our Christmas busyness, may miss it altogether.

Their's will be the true heritage from that first Christmas morning: the Spirit of God which entered our mortality in poverty, in a stable, to become one of the under-privileged have-nots.

Brickbats and bouquets for a new biography

Kevan Tailby reviews **MEMO FOR A MOVIE, A SHORT LIFE OF DIETRICH BONHOEFFER**, by Theodore A. Gill, Sun Press, £1.75.

The life and theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer continue to interest and fascinate many people, and will surely do so for many years to come. Mainly, I think, because what we do know of his thinking, particularly towards the end of his life, is so sketchy. Many will conjecture, puzzle and suggest what Bonhoeffer really meant by such phrases as 'religionless Christianity' and 'non-religious interpretation of Christianity'. These statements still remain enigmas.

And here is where this book is unsatisfactory. On the whole Dr. Gill opts for the 'secular' understanding of these fragments, but I cannot help thinking that this is the wrong approach, and will be shown to be so when 'the secular approach to the Gospel' is no longer fashionable.

Theodore Gill is very dependent on the biography of Bonhoeffer by Eberhard Bethge, and naturally so, it being so monumental and definitive. But no mention is made of the book by Mary Bosanquet who suggested that Bonhoeffer was 'made whole, made single, finally integrated into Christ'; and that this was the source of his extraordinary serenity in those last terrible days. Unfortunately Dr. Gill does not suggest this possibility.

These strong criticisms having been recorded, nevertheless an excellent book remains, one which will contribute much to our knowledge of the entire Bonhoeffer family. It makes exciting reading: imaginative, well-

written, unfolding like a film story and, as the author himself writes: 'This Memo for a Movie was written specifically to introduce movie producers and directors to the fascinating figure of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in the hope that an artist among film makers might be moved to make a true picture of the man and his significance.'

Some readers may find the unusual style of *Memo for a Movie* difficult, but after a few pages the story grips so much that the departure from a straight biographical style does not offend.

It is an excellent book in the line of biographies on Bonhoeffer, and one which makes a useful addition to the works by Bosanquet and Bethge.

We certainly need to read, and be encouraged by, great modern Christians, and to be stimulated by the quality of their life and way of thinking. Here is one of those Christians.

LOOKOUT ON FAITH

No. 27: ANNUAL REMINDERS

by Preceptor

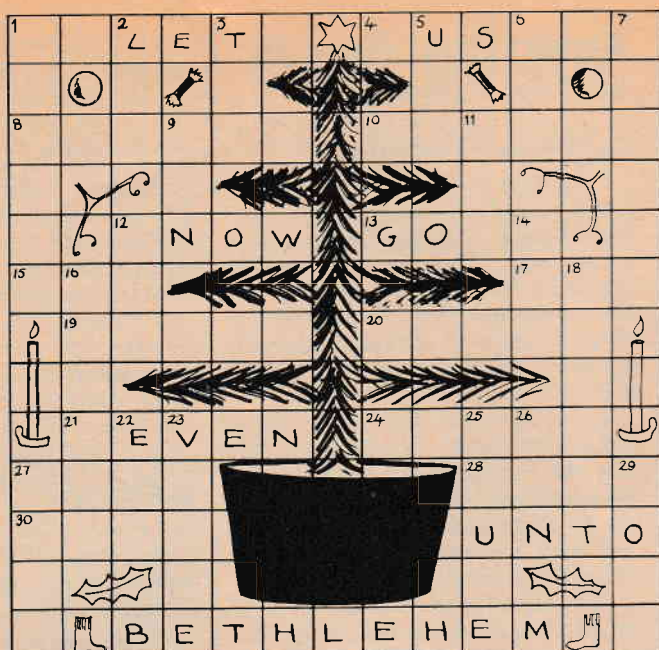
The faith of Christians is founded on knowledge of what Jesus did on this earth in the first century AD. So that we shall never lose sight of this work, the Church has arranged for us to have a special Calendar. This Calendar mentions the chief facts about Jesus every year, and gives the service of the Church a special emphasis as the time comes round for each fact to be stressed.

The Church Calendar is built round

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Christmas Crossword

Entry date for Christmas Competition is December 31. The first correct, neat entry opened on that day will receive a Book Token for £1. Send to the Editor, The Window, c/o A. R. Mowbray & Co Ltd, The Alden Press, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0EG



ACROSS:

1. Son of Jonathan (6)
4. One that worshipped God (6)
8. Large one written by St. Paul (6)
10. He took the child Jesus in his arms in the temple (6)
12. 'He giveth — like wool' (4)
13. The Lord is greater than all of them (4)
15. Son of Gad (3)
17. Jesse took one laden with bread (3)
19. 'Strive to — in at the strait gate' (5)
20. Another son of Gad (5)
21. Number of men of honest report (5)
24. River (5)
27. Let it be without dissimulation (4)
28. '... which — him ten thousand talents' (4)
30. Abram confederate (4)

DOWN:

1. He scourged Jesus (6)
2. He sat in the gate of Sodom (3)
3. '... heart, and — them about thy neck' (3)
5. Father of Geber (3)
6. Great one of the right foot (3)
7. Exercised to discern both good and evil (6)
9. Number of Commandments (3)

11. 'Have I need of — men' (3)
12. 'The sting of death is —' (3)
14. The spirit of Ahab (3)
16. 'Come now, and let us — together' (6)
18. It had engravings (6)
22. Wife of Adam (3)
23. Sung in church (5)
25. In which the Wise Men gave their gifts to the Christ-child (5)
26. 'He came unto his —' (3)
27. Omega (4)
29. 'I am the —' (4)

Solution to Prize Crossword No. 9

Across: 1. Jehu; 3. Phinehas; 7. Patmos; 8. Amos; 9. Satan; 11. Hamath; 12. Hannah; 14. Haggai; 17. Burden; 18. Dream; 21. Able; 22. Levite; 23. Almighty; 24. Tell. Down: 1. Jephthah; 2. Hate; 3. Pisgah; 4. Isaiah; 5. Hammon; 6. Susi; 9. Stead; 10. Nahum; 13. Hananeel; 15. Gallim; 16. Irijah; 17. Barley; 19. Cana; 20. Mite

The winner of Prize Crossword No. 7 was Miss E. M. Hill, 8 Somerset Hospital, North Street, Petworth, Sussex. Miss Hill receives a Book Token for One Pound.

Report from Fleet St.

by Dewi Morgan

Conferences or cabals?

'The days of mammoth denominational gatherings like Lambeth Conferences and Anglican Congresses is surely past. They are ecclesiastical dinosaurs, too slowly moving for the temper of the time and quite unable to adapt to a totally new environment,' wrote Bishop Ralph Dean in *Canadian Churchman*.

There is little doubt that major conferences have for the most part lost the freshness which was one of their virtues. Equally there is no doubt that rising prices (and when will they stop?) have inflated the cost of such gatherings beyond all reason.

The onus for proving the value of any such gathering in the future must be laid upon those who organise them.

LOOKOUT ON FAITH from page 182

five main events: the birth of Jesus (Christmas), his suffering and death (Passiontide and Holy Week), his resurrection (Easter), his return to heaven (Ascension Day), and his sending of the Holy Spirit to guide, inspire and strengthen his friends for all time (Whit Sunday). Each of these five events has special Bible teaching given in the church services at the appropriate time.

This Bible teaching is not only about what happened nearly two thousand years ago. It is also about the influence that Jesus can have in the lives of all who believe in him. The Calendar begins with Advent, which not only leads up to the Christmas story but also reminds us of a future coming of Jesus to judge us all. Christmas is followed by Epiphany, which not only shows how Jesus became widely known in the first century AD, but also encourages us

BUT... let us firmly resist the suggestion that they can be replaced by cosy little cabals.

A vital man

Recently I saw a list of Australians who have made a mark in this country.

There will be one more to add to them before long. Bishop Ian Shevill, who left his vast assignment in North Queensland to become General Secretary of USPG, has already made his mark in quite a number of places.

In America, as a missionary for example. He has a wide reputation there. In any number of missionary areas, starting with Japan immediately after the War, he has proved a valued observer and counsellor.

And now, with quite a lot of years before retirement, he is in Westminster.

He arrived at a vital moment. But he is a vital sort of man.

to make him known now.

Lent leads up to Holy Week with Good Friday as the climax, but it does far more than stress the prayer and sacrifice which Jesus undertook. It also urges us to show the same kind of devotion and unselfishness that Jesus did. Easter not only speaks of the rising of Jesus from the dead, but also of his offering new life to men for ever.

Similarly, Ascension Day and Whitsun not only remind us of events connected with Jesus centuries ago, but also of our eternal destiny in heaven, and of God's daily help as we try to live as Christians.

So the Church Calendar is a strong aid to the faith of Christians. It serves as an annual reminder not only of what Christ did once and for all, but also of what he can do for Christians and through Christians here and now when the Holy Spirit is let loose in their lives.

Time off for stocktaking

by Brian G. Cooper, lecturer in Special Studies at the Rush Green Technical College, Romford

I have always regarded Christmas as an apt time for stocktaking. Not in the grocer's sense of counting my wares or listing my personal possessions, but in the proper Christian sense of looking back over the past twelve months to see where I have come—and how God has led me.

Of course, it is a fitting thing to do at this time of the year, with the 1971 calendar about to vanish forever into the waste-basket. Indeed, that is just how it all began—stocktaking, Christmas and the Church, I mean. The first Christmas happened because God had taken stock of the situation on our planet and decided a new divine initiative was called for. Looking back over his somewhat stormy relationship with the chosen people of Israel, and assessing the wider prospects for the whole human family, God concluded the old calendar had outlived its usefulness.

New time-scale

So he threw it away, and put a new time-scale into man's history: the year of our Lord.

Likewise in our own lives: charting the way we have come and seeking God's new calendar for us, should be a pattern woven into the very texture of our Christian discipleship. Easier said than done, of course, though many Christians rarely care to admit it. At this point we all too readily fall prey to glib phrases and pious clichés, in a desperate attempt to camouflage a deep sense of uncertainty we may experience. Stocktaking means being

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A look back

photo: A. L. Vincent

absolutely honest with oneself. No shopkeeper ever did his trade any good by advertising goods he did not possess. Jesus always accepted people quite realistically, as he found them.

Quietly rejoice

If you can look back over the past year and mark with absolute certainty where God has guided your life, then quietly rejoice: for some Christians it is so. For others it is not always like that, and perhaps but rarely so. Is stocktaking then an empty exercise, a self-deception, even a hollow mockery?

At this point a clergyman sometimes steps forward flourishing a Bible text to make us feel happy-ever-after-in-spite-of-everything. Or a theologian triumphantly announces his latest brand of the doctrine of Providence—cut-price and off the peg. Frankly, I am not particularly impressed. Life usually isn't like that, and the Bible certainly is not. No instant-quick, ready-to-serve answers there!

Always with you

Indeed, I am more than a little suspicious of those church folk who can see God's hand at work everywhere, in their own and other's lives, so readily and so easily. They appear to have their own key to the divine map-room—or, rather, prefer to devise their own holy chart and put God's trade-mark on it without consulting him.

I do not find anything in the life of the man of Nazareth or the whole Biblical narrative to warrant such presumption on our part. Rather I find clear-cut, but awkward phrases like 'Follow me', and rock-like, but not at all cosy assurances like 'I am with you always'.

Here I find the clue to proper Christian stocktaking, at this or any

other time of the year. The Christian vocation is to follow in the knowledge that God is with us, even if at a particular time we do not feel his presence (and feelings, as we all know, can be very uncertain guides), and clearly read his map.

For myself, I have thought a lot about God's providence, and how we discern it, over the past year or so. A succession of changes, disappointments, difficulties and problems in my own life made me face this question as never before. Ill-health, worries over work, bereavements and other sudden breaks in human relationships, all made me wonder whether God was redesigning the map of my life, or had simply lost it for a while. For me, the sense of uncertainty was a new, and frankly distasteful experience, yet it comes to many Christians at one time or another.

The next stage

Such moments—and they can last agonisingly, apparently with no end in sight—only make sense if we realise that God's pace is not our pace, his time not our clock-conscious time, his scale not ours. I believe that at those very times we think God has most forgotten us, he has in fact gone ahead of us and is busy preparing the next stage in our lives. Certainly I have found it so, doing my own stocktaking, and some of my closest Christian friends have had like experience.

Suddenly, a new sheet of the map one previously knew existed is unrolled, and the tortuous bye-ways of the past days fall into proper perspective.

Isn't that precisely what happened with God's stocktaking, and his launching of the great Christian adventure with the birth of a Bethlehem baby?

Emmeline Christie's page

But for the grace of God

It was Christmas Eve.

Steadily shuffling along in the darkness on the road from Birmingham was a shapeless form which, in the light of passing car headlamps, could be seen to be that of a man.

No one stopped to offer him a lift. Some reduced speed momentarily, and then, seeing the figure more clearly, went on again, leaving the lonely man in the darkness.

He held his head low against the biting wind; he carried no bundle and his hands were thrust deep into the pockets of an old Army greatcoat tied at the waist with string. He had, in fact, nothing.

As he neared the little town and the street lights beckoned, he seemed to move a little faster. Each year he planned to arrive here, at this time on Christmas Eve. He trudged along the Highstreet, glancing neither to right nor left, past the old Cross, along by the Guildhall. He heard the clock chime—nine, ten, eleven. He slipped into the porch of the church like a shadow, and sank onto the stone bench in the dark interior.

Presently the inner door opened, light streamed out, and warmth came to him. He raised his eyes and at the far end of the church he could see the cross shining. He leaned forward—yes! The tree was there, gay with lights, bells, stars and be-ribboned packages. And away to the side he should be able to see the Manger with the animals and the figure of the Christ-child. He nodded to himself: yes, it was there. He leaned back, drinking in the warmth, realising again how hungry he was, physically and spiritually.



Years ago, he remembered, he had gone through the inner door and, sitting with the townsfolk inside, had accepted the ritual as part of his daily life. Had knelt with them, murmured with them, sung the Christmas songs, taken the bread and wine, and received the blessing. And yet, it had meant very little to him then. He could take it or leave it in those days.

A hand fell on his shoulder and he looked up. A policeman was looking down at the dark figure, who seemed vaguely familiar. Had he seen this derelict before, he wondered? Anyway, he must be moved on; the people would be coming any minute now for the midnight Communion. He bent down: 'If you walk back a bit mate, turn up by the fire station and say I sent you—something to eat and a bed. . . .'

The man nodded, and stood silently. He knew the way. He gave a last look back through the open doors of the church—the church that meant so much more to him now than it had in

EMMELINE CHRISTIE from page 187

the old days when he had felt free to go through those inner doors.

The policeman watched him sham-ble off, a look of amazement settling on his face. No one else was in sight; the words he had heard spoken in an educated voice must have come from

the bundle of rags moving off in search of food and rest.

'God bless you,' it had said.

* * *

Christmas pudding

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The Rev. Peter Croft tackles your questions

Love and baptism

I have always thought that everyone at death passed into a spiritual state, but it seems from these Biblical quotes that this is not so: Joshua 11. 11, Ezekiel 18. 4, Psalm 146. 4, Ecclesiastes 9. 5-10. To be saved one must enter in at the Straight Gate: Luke 13. 23-24, Matthew 7. 13-14. Nowhere does Christ or the early disciples mention the baptism of infants—faith, baptism and love are needed to inherit eternal life: Galatians 3. 27, 1 Peter 3. 21, Matthew 3. 13-15, Mark 16. 16.

If one takes these quotes seriously does it mean that all my dear family and friends who have passed over, without total immersion, cannot have eternal life? I find it hard to believe this. And what of all the dearly loved young children who were too young to understand the need for baptism?

N.O.D., HARTLEPOOL

EMMELINE CHRISTIE from opposite page

Ingredients: 8 oz suet (I use Atora); 8 oz flour (or 4 each of flour and breadcrumbs); 8 oz each of: large seedless raisins, currants, sultanas, dark brown sugar. 2 oz chopped almonds; 4 oz mixed peel; grated rind of one lemon; 4 large eggs; $\frac{1}{4}$ pint milk if needed; wineglassful brandy; $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon grated nutmeg.

Method: Put into basin—suet, flour/breadcrumbs, sugar, all fruit, salt, nutmeg, grated lemon rind, almonds, peel. Mix thoroughly; beat eggs and stir them into milk and brandy. Add to dry ingredients. Stir thoroughly. Get other members of family to stir and have their lucky wish!! Put into greased basins. Cover with greased paper and baking foil and cloth. Tie down tightly. Steam for five or six hours. On Christmas Day steam for another three hours if you can, the longer the better.

The short answer is—No, it does *not* mean that if you have not had total immersion you cannot have eternal life. God loves the world! He is not a cantankerous old codger who starts being awkward if you don't carry out a series of legal requirements.

Now having said all that by way of warning, let me deal with the substance of your letter. Baptism is a thorny issue today. But I believe the theme of the New Testament to be this—God loves the world, *not* just the baptised. He loves the baby in Pakistan who is too young to understand anything about the Moslem faith into which he has been born, and he loves the Archbishop of Canterbury—equally. And he goes on loving every individual no matter whether they love him, or hate him, or never notice his existence—this, to me, is what the cross is about, or one of the things it's about. There is nothing magic about baptism. It is a demonstration of this love of God, an attempt to put into visual form a statement about God's love, and as such it is very apposite that children should be baptised.

That doesn't mean I haven't a high



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Bill Bowden



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53 Tufton Street, London SW1

regard for the Baptists—I have. And I certainly think—as many Anglicans do—that there is a lot to be said for a really adult response to the love of God. We may be members of a family and our father and mother may love us, but if we never speak to them, if we refuse to take part in the family life, we're not only spoiling the family life, we are limiting our own growth. You only become a real member of the family when you decide to take an active part in its life: its joys and troubles. And you only become an active Christian when you

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decide to cooperate with the God who loves you, and respond to his love with love. This again ought to be demonstrated in an event—a commissioning. What form this takes is different in different churches, but the same idea is there.

Do you own any books published before 1950?

If so we could well be interested. We pay unrivalled prices for both antiquarian and relatively modern books. We buy single books and complete libraries.

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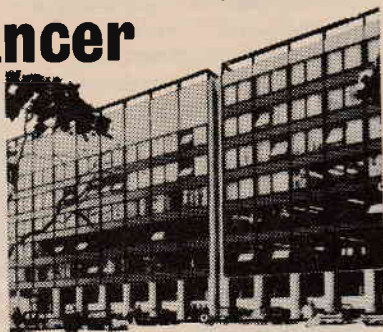
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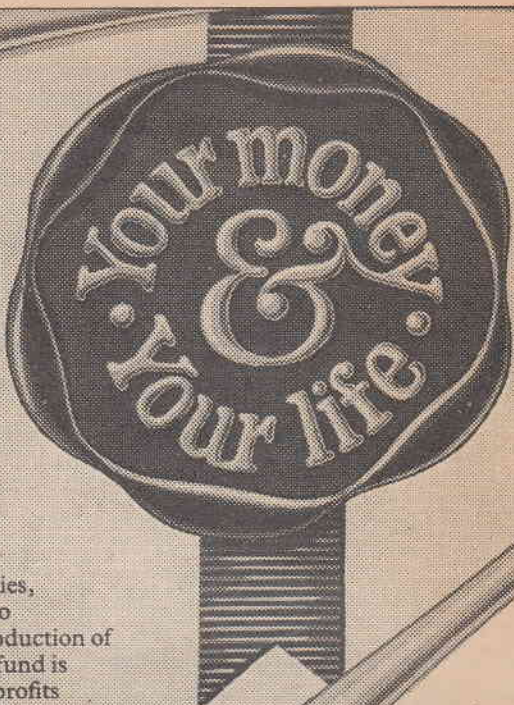
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WE WISH A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS . . .

- to ALL who read the Marston News at Home and Abroad.
- to ALL who help in its distribution in and beyond the Parish.
- to ALL who advertise in our Directory and who help to make its publication possible.
- to OUR Printers for all their help in its production throughout the year.

CANDLE AND CAROL SERVICES

This year the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols by Candlelight will be on **SUNDAY, 26th December** at 6.30 p.m. St. Stephen's Day (Boxing Day) and not as in previous years on the Sunday before Christmas.

There will be a Family Service with Carols on **Wednesday, 22nd Dec. at 6.30 p.m.** This will be mainly for families with young children.

SEATING IS LIMITED and admission to both these services will be by **FREE TICKETS** only. These will be issued after the Services on **SUNDAY, 12th December.**

CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH

(a) Annual St. Nicholas-tide Toy and Gift Service

This will be held at **11.15 a.m.** on Sunday, 5th December which is our Patronal Festival. We look forward to seeing the Church filled to overflowing with parents and children! Gifts of toys, games, sweets, etc. particularly for the older child will be offered at this Service and distributed by the County Children's Department who are always very grateful to this parish for their gifts. It is more helpful if these gifts are left unwrapped.

(b) Holiday arrangements

We shall hold our usual Sunday Instruction on **SUNDAY, 19th December** at 11.15 a.m. (Crossbearers and Catechism 10 a.m.) but there will be no **SUNDAY SCHOOL OR INSTRUCTION** on Sunday, 26th December or 2nd JANUARY. We shall resume our usual arrangements on **SUNDAY, 9th January, at 11.15 a.m.**

The **CHRISTMAS PARTY** for the **KINDERGARTEN & NURSERY CHILDREN** will be on **SATURDAY, 15th JANUARY** from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Please make a note of this date. We shall remind the children nearer the time.

We hope to welcome a number of new children especially in the Nursery Department: which meets at the Village Hall at 11.15 a.m. each Sunday.

THANK YOU

Mrs. Bangs wishes to thank all the donors and collectors who helped in the House to House Collection for Dr. Barnado's which raised the grand sum of £33.50 — an excellent result.

THANK YOU also to all who gave blankets for the Indian refugees. The response was very good, and some 60 or so blankets were taken to Cumnor Vicarage, delivered to Heathrow, and flown out to India.

FUTURE OF MARSTON NEWS

At the P.C.C. Meeting on November 11th, it was decided to continue both the Marston News, and free broadsheet, the Marston Times. The House Group was congratulated on its work in producing the latter over the past year. It was felt that with the rise in costs, the Marston News would in future have to be 5p per copy — 50p per annum for those who pay in January.

RETIREMENTS

We send our warmest wishes to Mr. & Mrs. "Bob" Hayle as they approach retirement. The White Hart and the Village Shop have been in the Hayle family for over 45 years, and they are places where, through the Hayle family, one has always been assured of friendliness, courtesy and personal attention. We are glad to know that Mr. & Mrs. Hayle will be still in our midst, and we send sincere wishes to Miss Wendy Hayle who will in future be managing both the new shop and the Post Office. Both Julie and she are so much a part of our village life, we would not like them or any who have served us here to feel that we take them for granted.

So quietly did he move to William Street, many people were unaware that our faithful milkman Mr. Richard ("Dickie") Smith had handed on the business to his son John who, with his wife and family are now living in the village. We wish Mr. & Mrs. Smith Senior every blessing in the days ahead, and are glad to know that representatives of the family are carrying on the good work.

OVER 60's CLUB

The Club's Christmas Party will be held on a Wednesday this year, the 8th December in the Mortimer Hall. This will begin at 5 p.m. and any offers of help at 2 p.m. to prepare for the party and transport at 4.30 p.m. and 8.30 p.m. approx. will be much appreciated. Please sign the list in the Church Porch, or get into touch with Miss Lodge, 5 Elsfeld Road. Tel. No. 47956.

CHRISTMAS COMMUNION

Anyone who, by reason of sickness or age, is unable to come to Church to make their Christmas Communion, should get in touch with the Vicar or Miss Lodge. Arrangements can then be made for them to receive Communion in their own home.

STOP PRESS :

The Marston Players will present an Anthology on the Kings of England in Church on Thursday, December 16th at 8 p.m., entitled "THE HOLLOW CROWN."

CHURCH & LOCAL CLUBS, SOCIETIES, ETC.

CHURCH

Bell Ringers. Sec. : Mr. A. Gammon, 50 Oxford Road.

Brownies : Brownie Guider : Miss I. Read, 6 Cotswold Crescent -
Tel. 47370

Choir. Choirmaster : Mrs. E. M. Garner, 31 Oxford Road.

Cub Scout Leader : Mr. A. J. Roberts, 54 Cherwell Drive. Tel. 40879.

Girl Guides. Guide Captain : Mrs. Retter, 45 Campbell Road, Cowley.

Parish Magazine :

Mothers' Union. Enrolling Member :

Parochial Church Council. Sec. : Mrs. M. Harlow, Fir Tree House,
Oxford Road.

Scouts. Scout Leader : Mr. N. Lankford, 55 Crotch Crescent, New
Marston.

Group Scout Leader : Mr. W. Furber, 42 Cherwell Drive.

St. Nicholas' Fellowship. Sec. : Miss E. Warburton, Cross Cottage,
Old Marston.

Young Wives : Group Leader : Mrs. P. Prescott, 22 Ashlong Road.
Secretary : Mrs. D. Hall, 98 Oxford Road. Tel. 42352.

LOCAL

Allotment Association. Sec. : Mr. R. Bowen, 135 Oxford Road.

British Legion. Marston & District Sec. : Mr. F. Thompson, 5 Temple
Street, Oxford.

Marston Players :

Marston Residents' Association : Secretary : Mr. G. A. Hine,
21 Raymund Road. Tel. 40482.

Over 60's Club. Sec. : Mrs. J. Yates, 81 Woodstock Close, Woodstock Rd.
Treas. : Mrs. E. Weeks, "The Jack Russell," Salford Road.

Parish Council. Chairman : Mr. A. Gammon, 50 Oxford Road.

Parent-Teacher Association

St. Nicholas :—Mrs. B. Prescott, 22 Ashlong Road.

Harlow School :—Mrs. J. Hodgkins, 31 Elms Drive.

Women's Institute : Miss E. Warburton, Cross Cottage, Old Marston.

USEFUL INFORMATION

District Nurses, 6 Broughton's Close, Old Marston. Tel. Oxford 44417.

Health Visitor : Miss E. McDermott. Phone KIDLINGTON 3502.

Infant Welfare Clinic : The Village Hall, Thursdays 2—4 p.m.

Library : The Village Hall, Old Marston.

Monday and Wednesday — Closed.

Tuesday — 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. 5.30 to 7.30 p.m.

Thursday — 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

Friday — 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Over 60's Club. St. Nicholas Church Hall, Mondays at 2.45 p.m.

Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths : St. Nicholas' Church Hall,
Elsfield Road, Old Marston. Thursdays 4 to 4.30 p.m.

Village Hall. All Bookings to Mr. Tasker, 35 Mill Lane, Old Marston.

St. Nicholas' Church Hall and Committee Room. All Bookings to Miss
O. J. Lodge, 5 Elsfield Road, Old Marston. (47956).

Nursery School. All enquiries to.— The Village Hall during school
hours.

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 W. & A. G. Foote, Salford Stores, 15 Salford Road.....Tel. 43174

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