

NOVEMBER

FREE

Marston times

PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS

FUNERAL FACE

OR CHRISTIAN FESTIVAL?

"Satty" had a small holding near our home. His real name was "Satterthwaite", but to us he was always "Satty" or "Funeral Face". We gave him the nickname, not only because of his lugubrious manner, but also because he used to be a coachman. This was in the days when funerals had all the panoply of horse-drawn carriages, (the horses decked with black plumes), and no mourner would have dared attend unless wearing black from head to toe. In some towns there were even paid mourners.

Today we are a little more enlightened, although Jessica Mifford's "The American Way of Death" is a horrifying commentary on the money and the effort spent in the U.S.A. to soften the fact of death, and to keep the morticians in business.

One might wish nowadays that money spent in providing wreaths which perish at the first nip of frost, was used for the benefit of the living, either in cut flowers for the sick and elderly, or providing funds for cancer research.

Psalms 23 to the tune "Crimond" and "Abide with Me" are still the most thumbled pages in the cemetery hymn-book, which is sad when one thinks of the note of Christian triumph in many

of our Easter hymns, which are seldom chosen.

November is the month of Remembrance. It is said that fewer and fewer people are inclined to remember those who have died in the wars. This is a pity. Remembrance Sunday, 12th November, can be a time when we all pray for peace, and determine to "live the idea" wherever we are.

Besides, November begins with the Festival of All Saints, when Christians are reminded of the Resurrection Hope, in which they share with those who have died. As the hymn "For All the Saints" says: "We feebly struggle: they in glory shine".

But the Christian battle is so very worthwhile. We believe that Death is not the End, but the Beginning of "life in a new dimension" and so we can sing with real meaning: "Yet all are one in thee, for all are thine, Alleluia".

James R. Kennedy

Vicar and Rural Dean.

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GO TO HELL!

How many times have we used that phrase to rid ourselves of an awkward situation or an unwelcome person? In my younger days the phrase was "Go to Timbuctoo". It was a place remote and far enough away in the middle of nowhere and it appeared that once there it would be impossible to come back. However, with the shortening of distance made possible by modern transportation - air travel - Timbuctoo is no longer inaccessible and it is just as easy to leave it as it is to wish someone (magically) there.

But Hell is different. For one thing no one can give a prosaic and accurate location to this place. One thinks of Heaven and looks upwards towards the sky, and one thinks of Hell and looks downward towards the bowels of the earth. The general impression given by the Bible is a place of fire and everlasting torment somewhere 'down below'. How true this is depends on your own beliefs and upbringing, but whatever our beliefs dictate we can be certain that, wherever Hell is, it is not a place to be sent to - even by the wishful thinking or utterance of those around us. As Timbuctoo was far away and inaccessible before the advent of air travel as we know it, so too, today, is Hell.

I would go so far as to say that Hell, like Heaven, is our individual concern and as such is felt, one way or another, very strongly by the individual. It is true to say that, even if Hell does not exist as per popular imagination, it does exist for large numbers of peoples on this earth. Many people during their life experience a mental and/or spiritual (and sometimes physical) Hell and this can be brought to pass by "walking along certain ways."

Unfortunately these ways are only too well-known and easy to travel upon. The following articles will unfold some of the more prevalent and seemingly innocent ways by which we do 'go to Hell' - wherever it may be. Envy, jealousy, malice, pride, other gods - these are such ways. All are very true and prevalent today as they were yesterday, and just as they will be tomorrow for we, unfortunately, are only too human.

M. G. Harris

Mr. Harris is a member of St. Aldate's Church and a Lay Reader. The rest of his articles will be published during 1973.

DATES

1st November - All Saints Day

Miss Lodge to be made Deaconess by the Bishop of Oxford at St. Nicholas Church at 12 noon.

Sunday, 5th November

Miss Lodge to preach at Parish Communion.

Sunday, 12th November

10.55 a.m. Remembrance Sunday Service. The British Legion will attend.

Tuesday, 21st November

Christian Aid Meeting in Regents Park College, Oxford.
Speaker: Canon David Edwards, Chariman of Christian Aid, Rector of St. Margaret's, Westminster.

Wednesday, 22nd November

7.45 p.m. Open Meeting on Christian Aid, sponsored by Marston Wives. Film "Out of Darkness". All welcome.

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1974 & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Re-organisation has for years been a subject for discussion, in Parliament and elsewhere, for Inquiries and for Committees, but no action has followed - that is until now.

The Local Government Bill, at present before Parliament is expected to receive the Royal Assent shortly. If it does then 1974 will see the proposed changes put into effect and the notes which follow relate to this area, since special provisions do apply to some parts of the country. County Councils are to continue in much their present form but Oxfordshire gains that part of Berkshire at present covered by the Abingdon Borough and Rural District, Farringdon Rural District, Wallingford Borough and Rural District, Wantage Urban District and part of Wantage Rural District.

On 31st March, 1974 the County Borough, Urban and Rural District Councils, to which we are all accustomed, cease to exist. No funeral rites are prescribed but the effect is just as final. Local Government will then be administered at two levels above parish councils, the new County Councils forming the first tier and new District Councils the second tier. The new Oxfordshire will have five of these District Councils, all of which will have equal status. Oxford City will be one and that in which the Bullingdon Rural District will be incorporated will include Henley Borough and Rural District, Thame Urban District and the Wallingford Borough and Rural District. It will be one of the largest in the country, having a population of 133,000 and an area of 170,550 acres, stretching from the outskirts of Oxford to Henley-on-Thames

and from Thame to Didcot. The geographical centre is Wallingford, where it is probable the new headquarters will become established. One current problem is to find a name for the new authority. Suggestions based on Wallingford, Chilterns and Thames have been considered - have you any ideas?

The authorities which lose most in the re-organisation are the County Boroughs since they cease to organise almost all their own affairs. Oxford City will lose to the County Council its Education, Social Services, main highways, libraries and some planning functions. The new district councils lose refuse disposal to the County Councils, but gain from them the local planning.

The reduction in the number of authorities in England and Wales is quite drastic, from about 1,500 down to about 500. A major upheaval is therefore unavoidable, yet if all goes well the man in the street will only notice a change of name on his rate demand, rent card or dustcart. The object of the exercise is, in the view of many, to bring Local Government up to date and to ensure that all authorities have the resources available to enable them to employ modern methods and equipment, and the necessary specialist staff. These are clearly beyond the means of some of the existing small district councils, some no bigger than your parish.

L. M. Garner, Clerk to the Parish Council

(The changes also affect the elected member and his position in the community. These will be the subject of another article in a later edition.)

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

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GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND

Are you interested in this Project? If so, the area organiser Mrs. Janet Robertson of 20 Cavendish Drive, would be very grateful for any TIN FOIL, MILK TOPS, PIE DISHES, etc.

OR, BETTER STILL, be a collector for this really worth while cause and get your neighbour to collect for you. Then when you have a good amount take it along to Mrs. Robertson. You can take it any time for there is a container in her garden specially for it.

Mrs. Robertson raised £12 from her last collection - well done!

BROWNIE GUIDES

The Brownie Guides are holding a Bazaar on Monday, 27th November, from 6.30 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Scout Hut and Church Hall. Proceeds will be divided between charity and Brownie Funds. Do come along and support them if you can.

Any Help?

Remembrance

Is there a motto for you amongst these, written by Rev. Hugh R. Thom:-

"The best thanksgiving is thanks-living".

"Name your blessings and forget your burdens".

"Don't drive your children to church - go with them".

"You are helping the world either up or down".

"Shadows fall behind you when your face is towards the sunshine".

"Sunny temper gilds the edges of life's darkest clouds".

"The best way to keep happiness is to share it".

Nothing to suit you? Then try Abraham Lincoln:-

"When you can't remove an obstacle plough round it".

"I do not think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday".

"God must like common people or He would not have made so many of them".

"Right makes right".

Or from a still earlier age, can Alfred the Great help:-

"Power is never good unless he be good who has it".

"A good name is better than wealth".

"Wisdom hath four virtues: prudence, temperance, courage and righteousness".

I doubt if anyone has seen the Commando Memorial at Spean Bridge quite the way I saw it. I was motor-ing south from Inverness late at night. Suddenly a dark shape loomed up. Vaguely I made out the three bronze figures of the memorial standing there in the howling night.

I got out of the car, unmindful of the rain, walked across, and stood gazing up at the figures.

I saw the rain stream down their unheeding faces. And I thought of all the nights during the war when men like these, men of flesh and blood, stood watch, regardless of rain, gazing into the cold hills.

Now every night when the wind howls and the rain drives against the windows, and I'm inside, warm and safe, I'll think of the three bronze Commandos - and all they mean.

A SWARM OF "B's"

B happy, B bright, B kind, B polite,
B courteous, B keen, B patient, B clean;
B cautious, B good, B temperate, B mild,
B careful, B wise, B sweet as a child;
B thoughtful, B loving, B prudent, B true,
B brave, B earnest, wrong thoughts to

subdue;
B honest, B faithful, B considerate -
And that, my friends, is the way to B great.

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