

June, 1963

“WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS THERE IS
FREEDOM.”



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.

Parish Worker : Miss O. J. Lodge, The Flat, 15 Mill Lane, Old Marston.

Churchwardens : Dr. C. W. Carter, Eaglesfield, Jack Straws Lane, Oxford.
Tel. : Oxford 41167.
Mr. B. G. Oliver, 13 Jack Straw's Lane, Oxford.
Tel. : Oxford 47997.

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

SERVICES :

Sundays : Holy Communion 8.0 a.m.

Also on First Sunday of the month, 12 noon.

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

Matins : 11 a.m.

Evensong : 6.30 p.m.

Saints' Days : Holy Communion — 7.15 a.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.

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).

Children's Instruction : Senior Catechism : Sundays 10 a.m. in Church Hall.

Kindergarten and Junior : Sundays 11 a.m. in Church Hall.

Nursery : Sundays 11 a.m. in the Village Hall.

Mothers' Union : Every fourth Wednesday of the month at 2.45 p.m. in the Church Hall.

Men's Forum : As announced.

Youth Fellowship : First Sunday : Holy Communion and Breakfast .

Third Sunday : After Evensong.

Friday : 7.30 p.m. in Church Hall.

Brownies : Wednesdays at 5.30 p.m. in Church Hall.

Girl Guides : Tuesdays at 7.00 p.m. in Church Hall.

Cubs : Mondays at 6.15 p.m. in Church Hall.

Scouts : Thursdays at 7.15 p.m. in Church Hall.

CHURCH PARADE : Once each quarter.

WEEKDAY SERVICES :

Matins — 7. 15 a.m. (Daily except Saturdays)

Evensong — 5.30 p.m. (Daily except Saturdays)

Holy Communion — Wednesdays and Saints Days at 7.15 a.m. (in place of Matins).

Holy Communion — 10.30 a.m. every second Friday in the month (with Service of "Laying on of hands.").

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 parish. The design is by Mr. Brian Cairns.

My Dear Friends,

Behind the Church a new house is being built. The builder was waiting for me as I came out of church a few days ago. He wanted some water to mix the concrete for the foundations. "They should be good foundations if they're made with water from the Church," he said. I couldn't help thinking that here was a parable—"Water from the Church." For the Lord of the Church is He who said to a woman at the well: "The water that I shall give—will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." He offered to her his grace and power to cleanse and refresh her life that had become so sullied and stained through the sins of sex. But before she could receive all that he had to give she had to face up to the sham and the shoddiness of it all—and break down the facade of respectability that she raised about herself.

I have recently been reading a book by Basilea Schlink of the Ecumenical Sisterhood of Mary, Darmstadt. This community sprang out of a Bible study group, and grew up at a time when Germany was in the throes of defeat and despondency. It is a wonderful book, written with a naivety which is quite refreshing in these days of cynicism and apathy. Here is a Community who takes God at His Word and acts upon it. They believe that God is intimately concerned with all the problems of building, food, care for the sick, and creating beautiful works of art. The foundations of their community life are indeed the Water of Life that the Church has — and their longing and prayer is to share it with others.

But the spiritual growth of the Community—its major advances, have only come through a deep and penetrating repentance; when a Sister has faced up to and admitted some resentment, or blindness in her life that has blocked and stopped the blessing of the Holy Spirit to them, and through them to others.

As we come to the end of Christian Family Year, and approach the Festival of the Holy Spirit—Whitsuntide—think again of the words of the builder. The foundations of our Christian homes, of our Church and Community life will only be sound if they're made with the Water of Life which Christ alone can give.

Yours sincerely,



PARISH CALENDAR : JUNE

- June 2. **WHIT SUNDAY**
8 a.m. and Noon. Holy Communion (Y.F. Breakfast).
11.0 a.m. Matins.
3.00 p.m. Holy Baptism.
6.30 p.m. Evensong.
3. Monday in Whitsun Week
9.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
Marston Players Coffee Morning, Village Hall.
4. Tuesday in Whitsun Week.
7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
5. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
Diocesan Conference.
8. Saturday. Diocesan Youth Festival : High Wycombe.

9. **TRINITY SUNDAY**
 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
 11.0 a.m. Matins. Preacher: The Rev. M. Hare-Duke (Warden of Clinical Theology Centre).
 3.00 p.m. Holy Baptism.
 6.30 p.m. Evensong.
11. Tuesday. Festival of St. Barnabas, Apostle and Martyr.
 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
12. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
14. Friday.
 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion with "Laying on of Hands."
 Church Missionary Society Film — St. Aldate's.
- 14—15. Friday/Saturday: Diocesan Missionary Festival. (See Church Notice Board).
16. **TRINITY I**
 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
 9.30 a.m. FAMILY COMMUNION.
 11.0 a.m. Matins.
 6.30 p.m. Evensong. Preacher: The Rev. Dr. C. Hope, St. Michael & All Angels, New Marston.
 (Y.F. Discussion).
17. Monday. Outing for the "Over 60's Club"—Weston-super-Mare
19. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
22. Parish Barbecue — Vicarage Garden.
23. **TRINITY II**
 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
 11.0 a.m. Matins.
 3.00 p.m. Holy Baptism.
 6.30 p.m. Evensong.
24. Monday. Nativity of St. John Baptist.
 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
26. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
 3.30 p.m. Christening Party (Vicarage Garden).
29. Saturday. Festival of St. Peter, Apostle and Martyr.
 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
30. **TRINITY III**
 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
 11.0 a.m. Matins.
 6.30 p.m. Evensong.

HOLY BAPTISM

- Apr. 14. **EASTER DAY**
 Judith Carolyn Smith, 20 Windrush Tower, Blackbird Leys.
 Janine Carol Roberts, 54 Cherwell Drive.
 Sally Ann Jones, 52 Elms Drive.
 Catrinia Ann Posiewnicz, 33 Marsh Lane.
 David Paul Cox, 12 Cromwell Close.
 Claire Louise James, 63 Arlington Drive.
 Sharon Dawn Lewendon, 42 Elms Drive.
- Apr. 28. Richard Huw Williams, Marlborough, Wilts.
 Stephen Long, 59 Oxford Road.
- May 1. David William Reade, 8 Ouseley Close.

IN MEMORIAM

- May 2. Beatrice Alice Rodburn Weller — 79 years.

ALTAR FLOWER ROTA

- June 2. (Whitsunday). Mrs. Jennings.
 9. Mrs. Casterton.
 16. Mrs. Walker.
 23. Mrs. Bellingham.
 30. Mrs. Rimmer.

COLLECTIONS AND COMMUNICANTS

	£	s.	d.	Communicants
Palm Sunday	37	1	7	82
Easter Day	98	0	10	219
Easter I	24	4	1	67
Easter II	26	11	9	24
Easter III	29	9	1	85
Total Number of week-day communicants — 56.				

WEDDING PICTURES :

“Do you allow photographs to be taken?” is often asked before a wedding. Here are a few rules for photographers at weddings :

1. Don't hold up the bride and her father on the Church Path. The congregation are standing, and nothing is worse than having to listen to the Wedding March three times before the bride appears !

2. No photographs during the actual service please, and definitely NO flashlight pictures in Church. I have attended some weddings that have been more like the Battle of Jutland than a service !

3. As the registers are signed in the Nave by the Communion rails and not in the vestry (which is at the West end of the Church) it is not possible to take a photograph at this point.

4. A good view of the Church may be obtained from the gallery without disturbing anybody. Again, no flashbulbs please !

5. Don't begin to take your pictures of the wedding groups at the Church porch **before** the congregation has left. There is only one exit. Some photographers have been rash enough to shut the door and “trap” the congregation until they've finished. This is quite unpermissible.

6. Please remember that the Churchyard is “God's Acre,” and that the grave spaces should be treated with respect.

As a rule most photographers are considerate and reverent in their manner, but these points have been set down as a safeguard against those who have regarded the church as merely a photographers “backcloth,” and and have failed to appreciate that they are present at a service of worship and blessing.

P.N.R.

BROWNIE NOTES :

Congratulations to Jill Aries, Helen Doman, Nicola Berger North and Rosalind Starmer Smith on gaining the Needlewoman Badge. Our grateful thanks to Mrs. Walton for teaching them. Congratulations also to Helen Brough and Nicola Berger North on gaining their First Aid Badge. Helen has also been awarded her Thrift Badge.

We would like to say how sorry we are that Mrs. Baum who helped to test the Brownies for these badges, is leaving Marston. We thank her very much and send her our good wishes.

DIOCESAN MISSIONARY FESTIVAL :

This takes place this year in Oxford on Friday and Saturday, June 14th and 15th. Please try and attend one of its activities. The new C.M.S. film : “Journey into Nigeria” will be shown in St. Aldate's Church on the Friday night at 8 p.m. and is well worth seeing.

OLD MARSTON SECONDARY MODERN SCHOOL :

The school is having a mammoth fete on Saturday, June 15th. John Tregorran of the Archers will arrive by helicopter to open it. There will be stalls, sideshows, go-kart racing, a rifle range and helicopter rides.

PARISH BARBECUE :

Our Annual Parish Barbecue and Dance will be on Saturday night, June 22nd in the Vicarage Garden. We'll look forward to seeing you there. Tickets 2/-.

NEW PARISH BOUNDARIES — IMPORTANT NOTICE :

In view of the Church Commissioners plans for the new boundaries of the parish, and the division of St. Michael and All Angels into a separate parish it is URGENT THAT ALL REGULAR WORSHIPPERS WHO

LIVE OUTSIDE THE PARISH SHOULD SEE THAT THEY ARE ON THE ELECTORAL ROLL. This is most important as it affects the question of christenings, marriages and funeral services taken in St. Nicholas' Church. Please pray for Dr. and Mrs. Hope, the P.C.C. of St. Michaels and All Angels at this important new stage in the development of the parish life.

SCOUTS AND CUBS :

It was a great pleasure to welcome to Marston the County Commissioner, Lt.-Col. H. de Grey-Warter, and other County and Local Association Officers of the Scout and Guide Movements. The County Commissioner formally opened the new Hall as the Headquarters of the Group and afterwards presented on behalf of the Scouts "Thank you" awards to Mr. J. Casterton, Mr. P. Sheppard, Mr. G. Tasker & Mrs. B. Chrich in recognition of their outstanding services to the Troop and Pack. The County Commissioner has since written complimenting the Group on its turnout and organisation on the occasion.

"Bob-a-Job" week has come and gone once more. We thank all those who employed us and trust the jobs were well done. It is on the money earned nationally during this week that H.Q. depend to meet expenses incurred in the general administration of the Movement.

Please make a note to come and enjoy yourself at our fete on Saturday, 22nd June, to be held on the Recreation Ground.

ST. NICHOLAS ART GROUP :

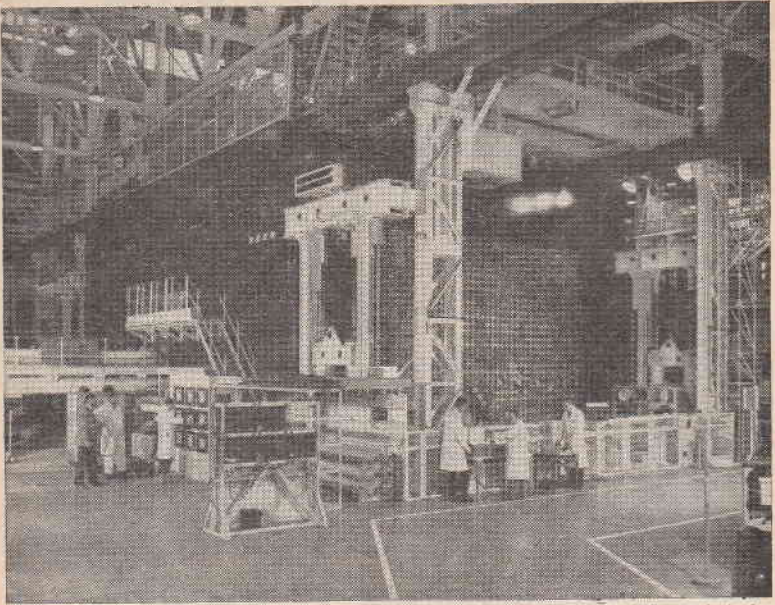
Mr. Peter Sheppard, who painted the two pictures which now hang in the Scout Hut, has sent us the following notes on this newly formed Group.

"We invite anyone interested in Oil Painting or Sketching, to join us on Friday evenings from 7 p.m.—9 p.m. in the New Hut, next to the Church Hall. We must emphasize that this is not an Art Class, but those of us who have done a little oil painting would be keen to help any keen newcomers, or learn from them."

CHURCH OVERSEAS NEWS :

The Rev. J. Nathanael, who wrote to us recently, reporting the baptism of a great number of tribal people in the jungle area where he is working in South India, has sent further news of their progress and a certain amount of opposition :

Spiritual Battle :—Soon after the New Year, persecution came from the Landlords who have been exploiting these Tribal people, and the Hindu Leaders jealous for votes and power, became very furious and created a lot of disturbance and agitation with regard to the baptisms. Some of the members of the 'Adi-Vasi (Aborigines) Association' in Gudalur have also joined hands, met the new converts in their huts, frightened them in so many ways, taken their thumb impressions on certain statements by threat, also warned these Converts and others not to have anything to do with me, but run away into the jungle when they see "the white cassock man." These statements were petitions against me "Padre Nathaniel has been going round the tribal villages, baptising them through compulsion and coercion and causing a lot of disturbance and nuisance." These complaints have gone on to the Madras and Central Governments of India. As a result three or four Government Officials called on me from time to time to get the necessary particulars about the recent baptisms. Since the Bishop baptised the first group of 109 persons, he had to submit a written statement to the Government, in which the Bishop very plainly said that "there was no need for us to baptise anybody through compulsion and force. On the very face of it the complaint was absurd. We are not interested in proselytization. If we baptise anybody through compulsion, the very basis of our religion will be at stake—All the families came with their children voluntarily and asked for baptism and no coercion or compulsion was used." The Bishop further mentioned "had you been present on that day with us, you, yourself would have seen how spontaneously the people came and offered themselves for baptism."



A nuclear reactor

Atomic Energy Authority

Unseen Power

ON the Berkshire Downs, not far from Abingdon, is an immense sprawl of buildings enclosed within a wire fence. Within the buildings work white-coated scientists and technicians engaged in research into the peaceful uses of atomic energy. For this place, Harwell, is one of the main centres of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment which, called into being after the war, devotes a great deal of time, brains and resources to increasing man's knowledge of his latest and strangest discovery—the atom.

Among the prominent features of Harwell are the reactors. They have strange names, these atomic piles or furnaces: Pluto, Bepo and so on. But

whatever the name, and whatever the shape of a particular reactor, the same kind of mystery is going on at the heart of it—a process of nuclear reaction which, although silent and invisible, can be made to be productive of immense power.

Invisible Enrichment

It is therefore possible for elements to be passed into these reactors and, after a time inside, to emerge the other side in radio-active form. In this way, among many other things, the radio-active isotope is created which can be of such immense benefit to doctors, especially in the treatment of cancer.

Here is a parable, surely. It is a parable of the power of the spirit—that spirit and that power which came upon the Church at Pentecost. For that also, like the power of the atom, is invisible, weightless, mysterious and vital. What is more, just as an element passed through one of the reactors at Harwell emerges quite different and with new power after having been in contact with a mysterious power within, so human life can be enriched and vitalized by contact with the Holy Spirit of God.

Once upon a time people used to find it hard to believe in things they could not hear, or see, or touch. And, therefore, it was sometimes argued that spiritual truths were not 'real' because they did not give evidence of themselves in these ways. But modern science certainly proves the falsity of that attitude. The scientists at Harwell cannot see, or hear, or touch the atom. But they do know its immense power, and they see its reality in its results. So it is, so it always has been with the Holy Spirit. 'I will pray the Father,' Jesus said, 'and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth. . . .' Invisible, mysterious, but yet showing its power in countless

THE SIGN

Not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified

JUNE 1963

No. 702

- S. 1 Nicomede, P.M., 1st century.
 S. 2 **Whitsunday.**
 M. 3 **Monday in Whitsun Week.**
 Tu. 4 **Tuesday in Whitsun Week.**
 S. 9 **Trinity Sunday.**
 Tu. 11 **St. Barnabas, A.M.**
 F. 14 Basil, B.D., 379.
 S. 16 **First after Trinity.**
 M. 17 Alban, M., c. 304.
 Th. 20 Trans. of Edward, K.M.
 S. 23 **Second after Trinity.**
 M. 24 **Nativity of St. John Baptist.**
 F. 28 Irenaeus, B.D., c. 202.
 S. 29 **St. Peter, A.M.**
 S. 30 **Third after Trinity.**

Days of fasting, or abstinence:

Fridays, 7, 14, 21, 28;

Saturdays, 1, 22.

5, 7, 8 are Ember Days.

God-directed human lives down the ages, this is the Divine Spirit which is as much of a reality now as ever.

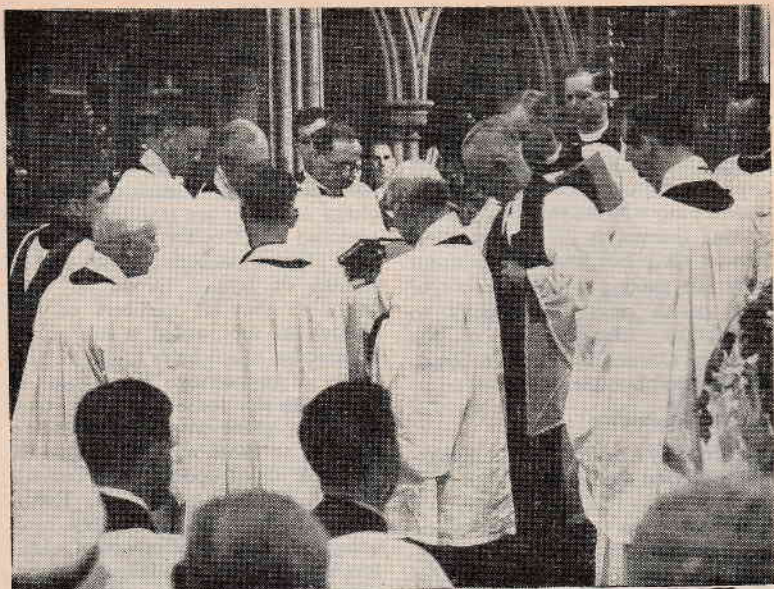
SIGNET

THIS IS MY BODY

*Beyond the Bread my eye shall see
 that Lord who once created—me;
 who, from the whirling aeons of space
 fashioned the features of my face;
 who, using but Eternity,
 gave me the living power to be.
 Who gave me sinew, nerve and cell,
 his works to do, his praise to tell.
 Go softly, rebel heart and soul—
 here, humbly sought, you'll find your goal.*

*Go swiftly, feet, yet softly go,
 to that Creator whom you know;
 bend humbly, knee, before your King
 who fashioned you for worshipping;
 and, hands he made for praise and prayer,
 be gentle when you seek him there;
 beat softly, heart, when now you greet
 the One who timed thy measured beat;
 and, eyes, look up as lovingly
 as he looked down from Calvary.*

MARY ANDERE



An Ordination

Church Information Office

Men and the Ministry

by Canon W. Warren Hunt

In the files of the Central Advisory Council for the Ministry there now lies a letter which tells the story of the effect upon one man, at any rate, of reading a poster issued by the Council a year ago. The wording of the poster was: 'Pray for your Clergy, pray for more Clergy.' These words were taken to heart by the man who subsequently wrote the letter. He prayed for his clergy, he prayed for more clergy. He then suddenly discovered, much to his surprise, that he had to offer himself! Thus in one life did the campaign for more clergy, of which the poster was a part, make its impact.

What has its impact been over a wider field? Of course, it is difficult

and probably fundamentally wrong to try to assess in statistical terms at any time the effects of prayer. None the less, there are certain facts regarding the response to this campaign which can be recorded. Have there, for instance, been more inquiries about ordination going directly to the offices of C.A.C.T.M., or to the clergy, or to those in various dioceses who are responsible for ordination candidates? The answer is yes. From July 1962 to December 1962 there were 242 more inquiries than in the same period of 1961. How many other men have been made to think about ordination, but have not yet taken the step of asking anyone about it, or of writing to

C.A.C.T.M.? Who knows? However, if the law of averages means anything, we can assume that behind this considerable increase in the number of inquiries lies an even larger number of those who have been stirred in their minds but have not yet got around to writing a specific inquiry. If there are any who are wondering about offering themselves for the Ministry, then let them not hesitate a moment longer in making inquiries either of their parish priest or directly to C.A.C.T.M. The address of the Advisory Council is 9 Tufton Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1.

Greater Numbers

It is clearly a matter of great thanksgiving to God that so many men have been roused in this way. Never, as I have said, have there been so many inquiries in such a short time. Indeed, the number has been so great that the staff have been almost overwhelmed.

This is not to say that the campaign is over. As a matter of fact, this is just the beginning. The shortage of clergy throughout the country is obvious to everyone who cares to look at the position. So let there be no mistake: prayers that we may have more clergy must continue. Of course, not all of those who offer are in the end chosen. That is an inevitable result of the whole process of careful selection. The final decision over ordination must always lie in the hands of the bishops, as it has done from the earliest times. But the tremendous work of the Central Advisory Council for the Ministry does help the bishops in the making of their final decision.

All any man can do is to offer himself to the Church; to ask if he is required for ordination; and then to rely upon the Church to make its choice, as it does, invariably, with every care and always in prayer.

At the three-day selection conferences which C.A.C.T.M. arranges all concerned put themselves into the hands of the Holy Spirit. This includes those who are interviewing as well as those who are being interviewed, for the aim of these conferences is to find the will of God for each man. Both clergy and laity are involved, for the so-called selectors are not all clergymen. It is a deliberate policy that a layman or laymen should be with them, so that all members of the Church are represented in this group of selectors which helps to choose the clergy of to-morrow. Here, then, is something else for our prayers—that God may grant wisdom and understanding to those who, from time to time, are called upon to be members of such selection committees. Every week of the year, with very rare exceptions, such a conference of selectors is being held. Essentially, one of the answers to the second request on the poster, 'pray for more clergy,' is that men should open their hearts and ask themselves whether they should offer themselves for ordination.

As to the first request on the poster, 'pray for your clergy,' it almost seems an impertinence to comment upon it. After all, many people all their lives have prayed for their clergy, and the campaign, if one can use such a word, in 1962 was an attempt to strengthen those who said their prayers regularly. It was also an attempt to ask those, who perhaps never had done so, to begin. So thousands of prayer cards which were prepared for the campaign were distributed throughout the country to help. Ultimately, of course, it is only individual clergy who can say what the effect has been on their own lives. Only a personal answer is possible here, and so I will give one myself. I am conscious every day of the prayers that are said for me in my

Continued on page 92

Question Page

God and the Subnormal

How is a God of mercy and love compatible with the birth and life of subnormals such as mongols and cretins?

There are two ways of considering your question. First, it may equally be asked how God's mercy is compatible with sickness and death. The Christian answer is that man's present state, including the existence of mental sickness and deformity, is due to sin; that is to say, to the collective disobedience of mankind to God. It is the Christian message that all these evils have been overcome by the power of the Cross. Second, mental subnormality is relative. A mongol who is required for a short time to take charge of an idiot will regard himself as a responsible person and will forget his abnormality. There is, indeed, no sharp dividing line between the normal and the subnormal, but rather an infinite graduation. Every one of us is in need of God's mercy and love.

4276

Fasting and Conscience

What is the rule and practice in the Anglican Church on fasting before Holy Communion?

The Anglican Church is reluctant to lay down precise rules on matters such as fasting, where much must depend on individual circumstances. The 1928 Prayer Book states: 'It is an ancient and laudable custom of the Church to receive this Holy Sacrament fasting. Yet for the avoidance of all scruple it is hereby declared that such preparation may be used or not used,

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according to every man's conscience in the sight of God.' A healthy person who does not normally go short of food may well follow the custom of the Orthodox Church, of fasting from the previous midnight; those who are elderly, or whose diet is just sufficient for their needs, may well follow a less rigorous rule.

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See and Diocese

What is the difference between a See and a Diocese?

A see is the 'seat' of a bishop in his cathedral church, and hence the term is applied to a bishopric. A diocese is that portion of the Church over which a bishop exercises jurisdiction, and the territory committed to his charge. A bishop has the same relationship to his see as a sovereign to his throne, or a professor to his chair. In each case a word which formerly signified a material object now signifies jurisdiction.

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Counting the Years

When and by whom was established the custom of reckoning dates as B.C. and A.D., and when was it discovered that Jesus was not born in A.D. 1?

Our system of reckoning dates in the 'Christian Era' was introduced by Dionysius Exiguus, a monk who lived in Rome about A.D. 500-550. It is now generally agreed that Dionysius was a few years out in his reckoning, and that Jesus was probably born between 8 and 4 B.C. Herod the King died in the spring of 4 B.C., and we know that Jesus was born before then. Matthew 2. 16 implies an interval of between one and two years before the massacre of the innocents, and there seems to have been a further interval before Herod's death. The date of King Herod became generally known in the West when the works of Josephus and other ancient historians were published in Latin in the sixteenth century.

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Each day letters regarding the faith and practice of the Church of England reach Question Page from all parts of the country. Only a few of the questions can be printed, but all are answered by post when a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed. Our address is: Question Page, THE SIGN, 28 Margaret Street, London, W.1.

The voice of the prophets

by William Neil

6

JEREMIAH: FATHER OF THE SAINTS

THE two most interesting Old Testament prophets are undoubtedly Jeremiah and Ezekiel. We know much more about them than about any of the others—in the case of Jeremiah, thanks largely to the fact that he had a secretary who not only records the prophet's words but tells us a good deal about what kind of a man he was and what happened to him.

A Reluctant Decision

Someone has described Jeremiah as being 'cast in brass, dissolving in tears.' Both sides of this fascinating personality emerge clearly from the book that bears his name. He did not become a prophet as a result of some dramatic experience, like Isaiah, but after much heart searching and with the greatest reluctance. Jeremiah was perhaps no more than twenty when he became conscious of an insistent and eventually irresistible demand upon his conscience to become one of the long line of spokesmen who from the time of Moses had without fear or favour proclaimed publicly the insights that came to them in their private communion with God.

For a shy and sensitive youth like Jeremiah the prospect was appalling. He knew that to become a prophet was to court unpopularity, misunderstanding, opposition and personal unhappiness. He was to find that it also involved him in physical danger and suffering of body as well as of mind. But the call was too strong to go unheeded.

Doubtless one of the factors that influenced his decision was that at this time—about 626 B.C.—church and state were such a travesty of what they ought to have been that there was a clear challenge to any prophet's reforming zeal. A few years later, however, came young King Josiah's religious reformation, and it seems that Jeremiah hailed this as the sign of a new day of national revival.

He was, however, quickly disillusioned. The ecclesiastical reorganization had left the people unchanged. From then on for the next thirty years and more Jeremiah's life became a sustained protest—kings, priests and laity alike came under his condemnation for their failure to live and work in accordance with God's commandments.

As it happened, his ministry coincided with the last decades of Israel's existence as a nation. Twice within ten years Jerusalem was at the mercy of the armies of the new world power of Babylon. After the first attack, when many of the leading citizens had been deported to exile in Mesopotamia, Jeremiah made no secret of the fact that he believed that the future of the people of God lay among the exiles.

An Unpopular Message

Separated by hundreds of miles from the fetishes of holy city and sacred temple, forced to reflect on why this disastrous end had come to the high hopes of an Israelite empire, the exiles might, with proper leadership,

reach a new understanding of God's purpose for his people and in repentance and renewal might fulfil their mission.

But, said Jeremiah, the stately homes and national shrine of the holy land were not worth defending. The life and witness of the people of God did not depend upon patriotic zeal or ecclesiastical tradition. Let the Babylonians have Jerusalem. This was to be God's judgement on a faithless Israel, but beyond the fall of the city and the end of the nation lay his merciful promise of recovery through the discipline of exile.

Needless to say this treasonable talk brought upon Jeremiah imprisonment and almost death. He lived to see his advice go unheeded, and after the destruction of the city and a second deportation he is last heard of in Egypt, ironically enough as an unwilling associate of the last remnants of Jewish resistance.

A Suffering Servant of God

'Cast in brass,' indeed. Jeremiah's public utterances of warning or denunciation were delivered with ringing conviction. Yet all the while this paradoxical prophet was privately

consumed with doubts and self-distrust. Had he indeed been called to be a prophet? Was he perhaps deluding himself that God was giving him this uncongenial role and prompting him to deliver such an unpalatable message? As he proclaimed his words of doom his love for his own people left him 'dissolving in tears.'

It is this deep compassion for his opponents coupled with his physical and mental suffering which has earned for Jeremiah the title of 'Father of the Saints' and which indeed brings him very close to the experience of our Lord. Many have thought that Second Isaiah's picture of the Suffering Servant of God reflects something of Jeremiah's afflictions.

The New Covenant

We cannot attribute to Jeremiah as we can to some other prophets the origin of any startlingly new conception of God, but he did enunciate a striking reinterpretation of an old theme. Since the days of Moses Israel had been the people of the covenant, bound in their allegiance to God by the terms of the Law. Jeremiah saw that this national contract must become personal commitment.

FROM THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

- 7 I have become a laughingstock all the day;
every one mocks me.
- 8 For whenever I speak, I cry out,
I shout, 'Violence and destruction!'
For the word of the LORD has become for me
a reproach and derision all day long.
- 9 If I say, 'I will not mention him,
or speak any more in his name,'
there is in my heart as it were a burning fire
shut up in my bones,
and I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot.

Jeremiah 23

OF all the plagues with which God had thus far afflicted the Egypt of Pharaoh, not one had directly threatened human life. But now the tenth and the final plague did so, and that to an unprecedented and terrifying degree. 'Thus saith the Lord,' Moses had said to Pharaoh, 'about midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of cattle. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there hath been none like it, nor shall be like it any more.'

What came upon the land, in fact, was typhus, the fearful, lice-carried pestilence which had scythed through human populations more than once in the history of mankind. It struck its victims without regard to rank. It felled them with a blinding headache, giving place rapidly to a high fever and then, by hideous stages, usually to death. So now in Egypt it befell as Moses had foretold. All over Egypt the killer struck. It took the workers on the land, the crowded populations of the towns. It took the servants and it took the masters and mistresses. It took, also as foretold, the eldest son of Pharaoh himself, a mere boy. Among all that crowded population in the Nile valley there was but one section which was immune: the Hebrews. It was as though some special sign upon their houses held back the touch of the plague from them.

Soon there was scarce a family in the whole of Egypt which had not been stricken, so that the cries of mourners

THE PILLAR OF FIRE

*The story of Moses
retold by John Lastingham*

echoed through the land. There came a time, therefore, when Pharaoh sent secretly by night for Moses and Aaron. Terrified attendants took them instantly to the royal presence and there, as they looked upon Pharaoh in the light of the torches which were held by him, both Moses and Aaron could see that he was a frightened man. 'Arise up, get you forth from among my people, both ye and the Children of Israel,' he cried, 'and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Take both your flocks and your herds, and be gone; and bless me also!'

The next day was a time of frantic activity for the Hebrews. For, wherever they were to be found, the Egyptians gathered about them, urging them, urging these slave labourers who had been among them so long, to get out as quickly as possible. For the Egyptian people, like their ruler, were terrified. So it came about that, neither for the first nor indeed for the last time, the Jews found themselves refugees, men, women, children, cattle and household goods, moving in a straggling, almost endless procession, out into the unknown.

This was a testing time for the leadership of Moses. Where should he take these people? The choice of a route, let alone of a destination, was of the first importance. The obvious way out of Egypt was eastwards along the road to the land of the Philistines, as it was called, a route which lay parallel with the Mediterranean shore at the north-east exit from Egypt. But, if he were to take so undisciplined, unarmed and frightened a rabble as the Jews now were along that way, they would meet disaster at the hands of the people of Canaan whom they were bound to encounter. A similar objection applied to the route from Lake Timsah eastwards across to Shur. So he took them south-east instead, from Raameses to the southern end of Lake Timsah and thence south again along the westward shore of the Bitter Lakes. And it was there, as the people, with all their pathetic household goods gathered around them, encamped after a four-day journey, that a supreme moment in their history unexpectedly arrived.

There were frontier fortresses scattered through that territory. It may well have been that the commander of one of these, seeing the multitude of Hebrews pass by his post, had sent messengers to Pharaoh to say that

they were passing out of Egyptian territory. It was news which made Pharaoh change his mind. The terror of the plague had subsided as the Jews had gone. But they had left behind in the minds of Pharaoh and his officials the memory of how valuable they were as a reservoir of labour. Was it not wrong, after all, that they should escape altogether? Pharaoh gave an abrupt order, sending a flying column of troops, heavily armed foot and horse with chariots, in pursuit of the Hebrews. They were to be taken, attacked and massacred if necessary, and the survivors placed under guard.

The news that such a column was in pursuit was brought to Moses at evening. It had a terrifying effect upon all who heard it, and the wailing rose up over the encampment. What hope could they have, unarmed, encumbered with their women and children and animals as they were? In their fear the people reproached Moses bitterly, crying out: 'Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Is not this the word that we spake unto thee in Egypt, saying, let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it were better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.' But Moses stood firm.



Egyptian soldiers of 1250 B.C.

'Fear ye not,' he said, 'stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord which he will work for you to-day. . . . The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.'

It was observed, when the people set off next day, making now for the crossing of the Sea of Reeds at its narrowest point to the south of the Bitter Lakes, that the pillar of cloud, which hitherto the Lord had sent before them, now stood behind them, between the Egyptians and themselves.

The crossing itself, when the people reached the place, was a wide expanse of mud, since the waters, as not infrequently happened, had been driven back by the wind. Even so, it was a treacherous place, where anyone lingering was liable to be overtaken by the waters which moved with a strange inconsequence. Even so, Moses was able to bring the great column of his people across to the eastern shore without mishap. And then, when they had reached it and turned, a terrifying sight met their eyes. For there, on the other side of the expanse of mud, was a host of Egyptian troops, the sun

catching their weapons and their horses' heads towering over them. A wail went up from the people. They felt they were doomed.

But Moses knew otherwise. Slowly, majestically, as he had been commanded by God, he stretched out his hands over the sea bed and waited for what he knew would come—a deliverance.

The Egyptian armoured column, with its chariots in the midst, was almost exactly half-way over the crossing when the waters, which hitherto had been pent up, now came rushing forward with terrifying speed. The foot soldiers might have saved themselves. But for the charioteers, with the wheels of their vehicles biting deep into the sucking mud, the situation was hopeless. Before the very eyes of the waiting Hebrews on the eastern bank the whole mass of soldiery was engulfed, disappearing into the flurry of the muddy waters with shrill cries of terror which carried across the mile or so which separated them from Moses and his people. So it befell that God had triumphed again.

To be continued

Quo Vadis?—a story of ancient Rome



Have you read . . . ?

By Canon H. G. G. Herklots

READING in silence is said to be a comparatively modern accomplishment. In former times people read aloud. When Philip asked the Ethiopian official, "Do you understand what you are reading?" it was because he overheard him reading from the scroll of Isaiah which he had bought on his visit to Jerusalem (*Acts 8. 30*). The letters of St. Paul were intended to be read aloud by the assembled Church; and read through at a sitting. Now that we have modern translations this is an easy and rewarding thing to do among a group of Christians.

Reading aloud had a place in Victorian homes which it can hardly have to-day. There are so many other attractions for ear and eye. Yet

children still clamour to be read to; and this is an opportunity to be used by Christian parents. I have before me *The Story of St. Matthew*, *The Story of St. Mark*; and of *St. John*; and of *Hosea*; each by Joyce Cosgrave, published jointly by the National Society and S.P.C.K. at half a crown each. The language is simple—yet the accounts show evidence of good scholarship—and each booklet is illustrated with many small pictures in black and white, over which many a child will want to linger. They are the very thing for reading aloud.

Reading aloud also takes place at school prayers, usually from the Bible. Eileen Scott has had the idea of compiling a series of *Stories for School Prayers* (from the same publishers, at 5s.). There are forty stories about saints and heroes of the faith, of the past and of the present, each intended to be read at a school assembly. (They are not, of course, intended to be read every morning until they are finished, but from time to time.) Suitable Bible passages and hymns are also suggested; and there are short notes—in case the teacher is asked questions!



MEN AND THE MINISTRY

from page 84

Already in this column I have drawn attention to Harold Wilson's *Reading the Bible Together*. He has now, with the help of Patrick Appleford of the S.P.G., produced a second work-book, *Living the Liturgy Together*. (Also from the Church Information Office at half a crown.) This contains eight sessions which are likely to be used with mounting enthusiasm by parish study groups. A great deal is expected of them. They will do much more than read aloud. By the time they are finished they will know a great deal about the Prayer Book—and even taken a hand in drawing up an experimental liturgy of their own.

Recommended for reading aloud: *The Story of St. Matthew* (and of St. Mark, St. Luke and Hosea) by Joyce Cosgrave (National Society and S.P.C.K., 2s. 6d. each).

Stories for School Prayers by Eileen Scott (National Society and S.P.C.K., 5s.).

And for working at together: *Living the Liturgy Together* by Harold Wilson and Patrick Appleford (Church Information Office, 2s. 6d.).

own parish, for I know perfectly well that I cannot do my work in my own strength. In this I am at one with all my brother clergy; for we are all utterly dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit and the presence of Jesus Christ. We say our own prayers, of course, but the prayers of our people help to open the door for God to act upon us, and to use us; and we are in continuous need of these prayers so that God can use us in his own special way for his work.

The work of this campaign, summarized in the poster, 'Pray for more clergy,' is not done. In a sense it never will be done. But, as we look back now over a year since the campaign began, we can at least say that it has made a good beginning. As Francis Drake prayed a long time ago: 'O Lord God, when thou givest to thy servants to endeavour any great matter, grant us to know that it is not the beginning but the continuing of the same, until it be thoroughly finished, which yieldeth the true glory.'



My Garden in June

BY W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER

How many different kinds of plants will you have flowering in your garden in June? From my total I see that last year's figures were forty-five and that didn't include the flowering shrubs or the rock-garden plants. Look at your garden this June—and then go to a good nurseryman and see what you need to buy! Put out the outdoor cucumbers where they are to crop—the variety Hampshire Giant; and the outdoor tomatoes—variety Open-Air Girl. The latter is particularly hardy and the fruits are very delicious. Mulch the ground after planting with sedge peat an inch deep and there will be no hoeing to do.

Make a second sowing of French beans, variety Phoenix Claudia, which is quite stringless. Sow also a quick maturing turnip like Extra Early Purple Top which, as its name suggests, is quick growing. With turnips it is important to prevent them being attacked by the Flea Beetle, so a good dusting should be done with Derris powder. When the seedlings are through put them out 5 inches apart.

Plant out Cardoons in the open in trenches as for celery. They are very delicious.

Forget-me-nots

I am very fond of the forget-me-not called Bluebird which I flower at Christmas time in pots in the greenhouse. The seed, however, must be sown now in a semi-shady spot. The seedlings are potted out at the beginning of October in the Eclipse No-Soil Compost. This compost comes in bags all ready to use. I use a similar compost for the final potting of the Christmas Flowering Chrysanthemums and this time a little more of the food base is added which turns it into Compost No. 3.

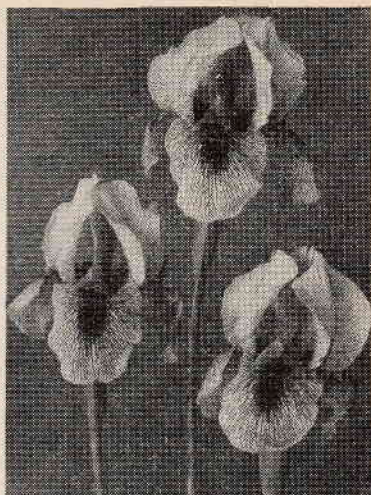


My Iris garden is always very much admired and many of the most lovely varieties are flowering in June. May I recommend to you Canarybird, a yellow; Black Hills, a bluey black; Blue Rhythm, a medium blue; Ranger, a crimson red; and Copper Cable, a copper with the falls suffused with blue. These Bearded Irises take very little looking after and the bed only gets replanted every five years.

Blackcurrants

If your blackcurrants have not cropped this year suspect the dreaded disease Reversion. This is a virus and there is nothing you can do about it except dig out the bushes and burn them. To recognize the disease follow the drawings in the *A.B.C. of Fruit Growing* which pictorially describes the trouble clearly. This is a good month for planting the Madonna and

Nankeen Lily bulbs. Order these straight away.



Iris Andromache

Vegetable Recipe: *Pea Shape*

At this time of the year there are usually plenty of peas about and so instead of serving them *au naturel* we make what we call a pea shape. For this I usually need:

1 lb. of cooked peas, 1 oz. of butter or margarine, 1 teaspoonful of castor sugar, 3 medium-sized ripe tomatoes, 1 dessertspoonful of whole wheat flour, 2 tablespoonfuls of milk—pepper and salt to taste.

The peas are put into a little water to which salt is added plus castor sugar. The saucepan then goes on to the flame, the peas are boiled until they are tender, when they are drained. (Incidentally we usually use the drainage water in soup.) The cooked peas are then to be rubbed through a sieve and the resultant pulp is put into a saucepan with a little butter or margarine. This is heated sufficiently to melt the butter, then the flour, milk and pepper and more salt if necessary is added and you stir the contents to a smooth cream. I used to mix the flour, milk and pepper first and then add this to the pulp, but to cut down time I find that the flour can be added to the pea pulp direct (if you do it carefully).

The pulp and flour and milk will remain over a low flame until it is thickened. It may then be placed in the centre of a meat dish to form a round shape. The tomatoes can be cut up into thin slices and be placed around the edge of the shape raw or you can fry them lightly in a little margarine or butter so that they are added hot.

Irene Shewell-Cooper



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