

No. 72

FEBRUARY, 1964

Price 4d.

A NATION OF SOUND FAMILIES
CREATES A SOUND FAMILY OF NATIONS



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.
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Tel. : Oxford 47997.

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

SERVICES :

SUNDAYS IN THE MONTH

1st.	Holy Communion 8.0 a.m. and 11.0 a.m. Parish Communion.	Mattins 10.30 a.m. (said)	Evensong 6.30 p.m.
2nd.	8.0 a.m.	11.0 a.m.	6.30 p.m.
3rd.	8.0 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. Family Communion.	11.0 a.m.	6.30 p.m.
4th.	8.0 a.m.	11.0 a.m.	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 and Crossbearers : 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 7.45 p.m. in the Church Hall (see separate notice).

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

Girl Guides : Tuesdays at 7.0 p.m. in Scout Hall.

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

Scouts : Fridays at 7.15 p.m. in Scout Hall.

St. Nicholas Art Group : Thursdays at 7 p.m. in Scout Hall.

CHURCH PARADE : Once a quarter at Evensong.

WEEKDAY SERVICES :

Mattins—7.15 a.m. (daily except Saturdays). 9 a.m. when there is a 7.15 a.m. Service of Holy Communion.

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

Holy Communion — Wednesdays and Saints Days at 7.15 a.m.

Friday at 10.30 a.m. on every third Friday of month with Laying on of

Hands for Sick.

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.

"THE THINKING CHRISTIAN"

"I feel there should be a great deal more discussion on the intellectual side of Christianity" writes a member of the Congregation and suggests also that the Vicar should use some sermons to answer or comment on questions sent in by the congregation. This is a healthy sign. Too often those in the pews have become "spiritual sponges" quietly absorbing but never actively participating in the Christian dialogue. "If Christians cannot communicate as thinking beings" writes Harry Blamires in the 'The Christian Mind' "they are reduced to encountering one another only at the shallow level of gossip and small talk."

LENT is the time of Spring ploughing. Use it to plough a deeper furrow into your "settled" convictions! Get your teeth into some worthwhile Christian reading matter! Begin to think! Ask Questions! Challenge the Preacher! Come regularly to the "School for Christians." Join with others in Christian dialogue.....

THE VICAR'S LETTER

My dear Friends,

This year's School for Christians beginning February 12th has as its title: "The Bible Comes Alive" and if you look at the topics you'll find that they cover many aspects of life, which should interest everyone. Do come along. Bring your friends. We welcome everyone to these gatherings, whether they come to Church or not.

Some people make a special effort during Lent to attend the Wednesday morning Holy Communion at 7.15 a.m. I hope more will try and do this this year. Its a great mistake to think that Holy Communion is only a "Sunday service." Life and Worship become much more a part of each other when we make the extra effort to come on a weekday.

I have just read "The New Morality" by Sir Arnold Lunn, and Mr. Garth Lean (Blandford Press: 5/-). Here is a clear and straightforward indictment of the prophets of loose living and muzzy morals. Do we want our children to grow up in the kind of world, characterised by the laxity such men advocate? Heaven forbid! Pray that as a parish we may have the God-given courage to withstand and overthrow the forces of evil that would destroy our faith, our homes, and our nation.

Your sincere friend and Vicar,


"SCHOOL FOR CHRISTIANS" : LENT 1964

THEME: "THE BIBLE COMES ALIVE"

All meetings will be at 7.45 p.m. in the Church Hall except for Ash Wednesday, 12th February, when there will be a Service in Church.

Feb. 19. "Through People and Customs."

Speaker: The Rev. Metcalfe, Church's Mission to the Jews.

Feb. 26. "Through Liturgy."

Speaker: The Rev. Vere T. Ducker, Assistant Secretary of "Parish and People."

Mar. 4. "In Balsall Heath."

Speaker: Miss Winifred Heilmuth, Birmingham International City Mission.

Mar. 11. "Through Christian Drama."

Speaker: Miss Norah Ratcliffe.

Mar. 17th—21st. BIBLE WEEK IN OXFORD.

CONGRATULATIONS :

Our love and congratulations go to Mr. and Mrs. F. Cattermole who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on Christmas Day.

It was a great joy to visit them on Christmas Eve with flowers from all their friends at St. Nicholas' Church (it was just possible to see them in the midst of telegrams, cards and bouquets !!) and to see them in their home surrounded by members of the family who had been able to come and share this great day with them.

I know full well that there was nothing more that they would both have wished, but to have been in Church together on Christmas morning, but owing to weather conditions, I persuaded them not to venture out. So, although they were not with us "in the flesh" as we prayed for them on Christmas morning, I know they were truly with us "in the spirit." May God bless them abundantly in the days which lie ahead.

THANK YOU

"It was not until we put up a new notice board that people realised there was a Church behind it!" said a well-known priest at an Oxford meeting. I am sure that the new notice board, made by Mr. J. Casterton, and beautifully lettered by Mr. Christopher Jennings, will certainly make passers-by stop and take notice.

Thank you for this fine piece of workmanship. Thank you also to Mr. Maund who has provided and decorated our Christmas tree for a number of years. Thank you to Mr. Furber and Mr. Sheppard who risked their necks to clean the reflectors on the roof heaters.

LOST — AND FOUND AGAIN

The Film strip projector has returned to its home at the Vicarage. It had gone to stay for a few months with some Congregational friends who do not take either the magazine or the Oxford Mail! It would like to thank all those who enquired after it during its absence!

STRANGE ADDRESSES

Two strange addresses on Christmas mail to the Vicarage :—One letter from Belgium read "The Old Vicarage Pryer, Marston." Another from Nigeria was addressed to the Rev. & Mrs. Rimmer, The Vicarage, Anglican Mission, Oxford, England.

We feel flattered that the Post Office wrote "Marston?" on the bottom left-hand corner!

URGENT NEEDS

The Rev. Joseph Nathanael of Gudalur in the Church of South India writes about the difficulties in building a Boarding House for the "unfortunate, needy, starving, and uncared for children of the Tribal people." Cement has been hard to come by, and also the cost of building and materials has slowed work down to a stand-still. Gifts from friends in Germany and England have helped, but the immediate need is for Rs : 2,000, to provide working facilities and sanitation, a water pump, and a minimum of furniture. The Diocesan Board at Coimbatore have no available funds. "Many a time thoughts flash into my mind whether my ideas and plans are really workable or empty dreams," writes Mr. Nathanael. "At critical times like this, I simply pray and usually say nothing, as I am fully aware 'I am nothing and I have nothing.' What I know is that the Almighty will not be organised, but when something is in the life towards the extension of the Kingdom, all

else is added..... so we had to go forward with much faith, and hope and planning for great things whatever seems right, completely looking unto Jesus and leaning on His promises. Usually, the help comes one way or other in a most mysterious way."

Perhaps someone who reads this magazine may feel that God wants them to share in answering that prayer in a "mysterious way." P.N.R.

OLD MARSTON YOUTH CLUB :

The Youth Club entertained the Management Committee and other guests to an excellent Turkey dinner on Dec. 23rd. Entertainment was provided afterwards by the members. The Club is to be congratulated on this effort.

HOUSE TO HOUSE COLLECTION

From time to time House to House Collections are held in Marston for worthy causes. Unfortunately there seems to be little co-ordination in arranging these with the result that during 1963 House to House collections for three Children's Societies, Oxfam, and the Boys Club clashed or followed in quick succession. Not only is this undesirable, but it is embarrassing for those who are willing to collect.

If organisers would let the Editor know (11 Elsfield Road, Old Marston) when they propose to hold a collection, a list might be drawn up and alternative dates suggested so as to space out collections at even intervals.

DOCTOR SNORT BEFORE TRIBUNAL

It is reported by our special correspondent that Doctor Snort who was summoned before the Medical Tribunal for failing to visit a sick patient pleaded ignorance of the fact that she was ill in the first place. He pointed out that he had not been told of the patient's sickness, and could not therefore be expected to call. The Chairman of the Tribunal in imposing the fine of £300 roundly condemned his attitude.

"It is quite unreasonable" he pointed out to the accused "to expect that relations, or friends should inform you of the patient's illness. Were not clergy for the most part expected to discover when people were ill by hearsay, rumour, or casual comment? The doctor's attitude was quite reprehensible, and no National Health Service would work if doctors expected to be contacted personally every time a patient was taken ill."

On paying the fine, the Doctor made the comment that he had now decided to take up market gardening, as he felt inadequate for his job.

PARISH CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY

- Feb. 2. **SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.**
Presentation of Christ in the Temple.
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
10.30 a.m. Matins (said).
11.0 a.m. **PARISH COMMUNION**
6.30 p.m. Evensong.
- „ 5. Wednesday. Holy Communion, 7.15 a.m.
- „ 9. **QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.**
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
11.0 a.m. Matins.
3.00 p.m. Holy Baptism.
6.30 p.m. Evensong.

- „ 12. **ASH WEDNESDAY.** 1st day of Lent.
Holy Communion, 7.15 a.m. and 10.30 a.m.
7.45 p.m. Service in Church.
- „ 16. 1st **SUNDAY IN LENT.**
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
9.30 a.m. **FAMILY COMMUNION.**
11.0 a.m. Matins.
6.30 p.m. Evensong.
- „ 17. C.M.S. Day at Wycliffe Hall. (Details from Vicar).
- „ 19. Wednesday.
7.15 a.m. Holy Communion
7.45 p.m. "School for Christians" in Church Hall.
1st in series "The Bible comes Alive."
Speaker: The Rev. Metcalfe—Church's Mission to the Jews.
- „ 21. Friday. Holy Communion, 10.30 a.m.
- „ 23. 2nd **SUNDAY IN LENT.**
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
11.0 a.m. Matins.
Rev. J. Cocke, Vicar of All Saints, Highfield (Deuteronomy vi).
3.00 p.m. Holy Baptism.
6.30 p.m. Evensong.
- „ 24. Monday. **Festival of St. Matthias, Apos. & Martyr.**
7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
- „ 26. Wednesday. Holy Communion, 7.15 a.m.

COLLECTION AND COMMUNICANTS

	£	s.	d.	Communicants
December 15th	23	8	5	47
December 22nd	36	7	7	20
December 24th, Christmas Eve	27	18	2	155
December 25th, Christmas Day	12	12	10	86
December 29th, Christmas I	15	14	5	16
Number of week-day communicants — 35.				

HOLY BAPTISM

- Dec. 22. Tanya Ann Ward, 45 Mill Lane.
Angela Teresa Ward, "Highview," Church Lane.
Tracy Mavis Wheatley, Cannon's Farm, Elsfield Road.

HOLY MATRIMONY

- Jan. 11. Sylvia Margaret Jones and Peter William Andrew Watts.

IN MEMORIAM

- Jan. 7. Mary Elizabeth Ward.

ALTAR FLOWER ROTA

- Feb. 2. The Mothers' Union.
" 9. " "
" 12. Ash Wednesday, beginning of Lent.
No flowers during Lent.
- EASTER DAY.** Mrs. Tomlinson.



Stability

THE trouble with young people 'to-day,' said a magistrate recently, 'is that they lack stability.' 'I find it very noticeable,' a headmistress was quoted as saying not so long ago, 'that girls nowadays seem to lack stability. They don't seem to know where they stand in life, or what they want to do with it.' 'One of the difficulties about getting people settled down to a job of work,' an employer lamented, also recently, talking of the question of training for industry, 'is that so many of them don't seem to want to settle down to anything.'

How much is there in all this? When all allowances have been made for the age-long tendency of seniors to imagine that their juniors are going to the dogs, it would seem that there is, in fact, a great deal of truth in the general

implication. But it is not only young people who are involved. The evidence accumulates on all sides, and affects all age groups—a firmly-based attitude to life is indeed something which many of us to-day lack.

What does it mean?

What is this quality. Stability means steadiness, firmness, not being lopsided or wobbly. A stable car will hold the road well. A stable building will stand up well to wind and weather. Similarly, a stable person is one who will be able to stand up to the stresses of life, and will know where he or she stands when temptation comes along.

How, then, is stability to be acquired, and why do so many to-day seem to lack it? One thing is clear: nobody is born with a ready-made, firm outlook

on life. That is something which has to be implanted in a budding personality by other people. And it has been the agelong experience of humanity that no other people can do this job anything like as well as fathers and mothers. In other words, stability begins—if it begins at all—like charity, at home.

Forming of character

The Feast of the Purification, this month, has something to say to us here. We know nothing of our Lord's life between the time of his birth and the time of his presentation in the Temple when he would be about twelve years old. What we do know quite a lot about, however, is the quality of that marvellous character and personality which, under God, was formed under the hands and under the guidance of his earthly parents, Joseph and the Mother. This is the ultimate symbol of the responsibility that is every parent's in the forming of character. This is a God-given task, if ever there was one. It was said of our Lord that, 'The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.' It was God's will that

THE SIGN

Not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified

FEBRUARY 1964 No. 710

- S. 2 Purification of the B.V.M.
Sexagesima.
M. 3 Anskar, B., 864.
W. 5 Agatha, V.M., 251.
S. 9 Quinquagesima.
W. 12 Ash Wednesday.
F. 14 Valentine, B.M., 270.
S. 16 First in Lent.
S. 23 Second in Lent.
M. 24 St. Matthias, A.M.

Days of fasting, or abstinence:

Saturday, 1; Friday, 7.
All weekdays in Lent.
19, 21, 22 are Ember Days.

Mary and Joseph should have a part in the formation of that character. It is God's will also that we who are parents must have a responsibility in the forming of the character and personality of our own children—a personality in which stability must always play an essential part.

SIGNET

GOD'S HOUSEKEEPERS

*There are a faithful few, who work unseen
and unobtrusively give of their best.
Who spend their lives perfecting little things,
which often pass unnoticed by the rest.
Theirs are the hands that dust the altar rails,
that change the flowers and keep the linen fair.
They sweep the aisle with cheerful reverence
and polish silver with a murmured prayer.
These are the quiet ones, who freely give
their time and thought and love with glad accord;
who softly tread the by-ways of resolve—
and share the peace of God for their reward.*

JOAN B. HOWES

CHILDREN in NEED

What fostering has taught me

by Ivy Russell

IT is now eighteen months since we became foster-parents for babies in need of care and protection; eighteen months of hard work and anxiety, of fun and laughter, of new ideas and new understandings. When we first took the plunge and applied for permission to foster our hearts were eager and our minds exalted. This was to be our contribution to society, and we were going to put all we had got into it.

No doubt also there was a big streak of sentimentality in our outlook. Unwanted babies, we felt sure, usually belonged to unfortunate young girls who were more sinned against than sinning, and who, having paid the price of their folly, were now unable to cope with the baby they had brought into the world.

Haze of romance

We had often read accounts in the newspaper of some blue-eyed baby being found abandoned on a railway station, and handed over to the authorities for protection. There was even a slight haze of romance about a child of unknown parentage, who might be the son of a prince or a poet or . . .

But that was before we started



fostering. Eighteen months of baby-minding has put an end to sentimentality. We have been faced with facts, and facts can be very revealing.

But first of all, why do we need people to act as foster-parents? In this enlightened age, when there are government grants and pensions to cover every eventuality from the cradle to the grave, why is it that tens of thousands of children should be in need of care and protection? In London alone the figure is around 9,000 a year. Nine thousand children who must be given immediate help, or their lives will be in danger. Why?

Illegitimacy is only part of the answer. There are many genuine cases of hardship—mothers taken ill and

fathers left to cope with the children and a job; mothers deserted and forced to go out to work; children ill-treated by their parents, and so on. When danger threatens, it is the duty of the Welfare State to see that the children are protected. But there is no doubt that a good deal of the trouble arises from a widespread disregard of the Christian rules of moral behaviour.

Of the babies that we have been called upon to help, four out of six have been illegitimate; in three of these cases the parents were actually living together, though not in a position to marry. Coloured men frequently have a wife living overseas, but are prepared to raise another family here if they can find a girl willing to co-operate. Unhappily, this is not usually difficult. Quite often the children born are not unhappy, even though they live in overcrowded quarters; but heartaches occur when mother is taken ill and rushed into hospital, and there is no relation who will come forward to help with the children. No one seems eager to admit that these dark-eyed little mites are their blood relations. The problem would indeed be great if the Welfare Officer were not at hand to help.

Unable to cope

Perhaps the saddest case that we have met with was little Anne, who came to us at the tender age of four weeks. She was British, born in wedlock, and had four older brothers. But the father had been in poor health and lost his job; the rent was never paid, and finally the family were evicted and the four boys taken 'in care.' Then Anne was born. With no home and no money, how could the parents hope to keep her? So she came to me till a permanent foster-home could be found, where the people would be willing to adopt if the opportunity ever arose. This was not a case

of cruelty or neglect; just the tragic story of a rather pathetic family who could not quite cope with the problems of life.

But sometimes I come across people who really make me angry. Have you ever felt like banging two people's heads together? That is how I feel when I come in contact with people who have made such a mess of their lives that they need all their time to work out their own salvation, and have none to spare for their children. So the children are jettisoned and the Welfare department picks them up and tries to work out some kind of future for them.

No sentimentality

Reverting to our early dream of what fostering was all about, I did once have to deal with a fairly young girl and her illegitimate baby. He was a dear little fellow, with a pale face and big blue eyes, and we took him in gladly, while our hearts overflowed with pity for his unfortunate mother. It was quite a shock when we heard the full story of the case, and discovered that this baby was her fifth illegitimate child! The others, some white and some coloured, were all 'in care.'

I said to myself, 'Why should I wear myself out fostering babies for people like this? She doesn't deserve sympathy, and if I can't sympathize I might as well give up.' My inner self replied, 'Why?—because she's a sinner? And pray, what are you?'

And that is why I am still fostering, backed up by my wonderful family. That, and the joy that these babies bring into the home, no matter what their story, and in spite of bottles and nappies, teething troubles and polio injections. Only there isn't any sentimentality about it now. I think perhaps we've got the hang of that passage in the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians. Love, of the right kind.

Question Page

Seeing God

Can you please explain these apparent contradictions between 1 St. John 4, 12, 'No man hath seen God at any time,' and St. John 14, 9, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father'?

It has been well said that in Christ we have the 'mirror' of God the Father, i.e. that we can see God as we look on him. There is thus not any essential contradiction between the two passages you quote. Whereas 1 St. John 4, 12 is saying that no one has ever looked upon the Godhead itself, yet St. John 14, 9 is very rightly saying that those who have seen Jesus have seen God reflected in him. 4309

How did they Hear?

How do you suppose it was possible for Jesus to be heard by 5,000 and 4,000 people in the open air without modern aids? St. Mark 6, 34 and St. Mark 8.

The Bible often uses numbers figuratively rather than accurately, and it is not necessary to suppose that four or five thousand people were in fact addressed by Jesus in the open air simultaneously. All the Bible is saying is that there was a multitude or a considerable number of people present. The question is none the less an interesting one. The great preacher, George Whitfield, in the eighteenth century did as a fact make himself heard to very many thousands of people by the use of the natural voice. So did John Wesley. It would therefore seem that it is quite a possible thing to do. 4310

Prayers for the Dead

Romans 6, 7: 'For he that is dead is freed from sin.' In view of this, why do some people pray for the dead?

Paul is referring in Romans 6, 7 not to physical death but to that death to sin and resurrection to righteousness, i.e. to a new life in Christ, which is the consequence of the reception of God's grace. Verse 4 is the key: 'By baptism we were buried with him, and lay dead, in order that, as Christ was raised from the dead in the splendour of the Father, so also we might set our feet upon the new path of life.' The question of prayer for the dead does not, therefore, arise in this context. 4311

After the Third Collect

May a humble member of the laity ask why the practice is creeping in of deserting the Prayer Book after the Third Collect, and proceeding with a series of 'home-made' prayers?

The practice of extra-liturgical intercessions after the Third Collect has a long and respectable ancestry. At the end of the Third Collect the Office, be it Mattins or Evensong, was, until 1662, concluded, and what followed was not determined by any particular order. It is therefore quite in accordance with good Liturgical practice to draw the prayers used after the Third Collect from many sources and even, if need be, to use extemporary prayer. The purpose is often to associate those prayers with the particular needs of the community. 4312

When is a Parish not a Parish?

When does a 'conventional' district become a parish in its own right?

A conventional district becomes a parish when sufficient money has been raised to provide a regular income for a vicar. Until this stage is reached it is in the care of a 'curate in charge,' whose stipend is provided by the mother parish, although no doubt the district will make what contribution it can. 4313

Readers' 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 Church in the New Universities

by Peter Croft

LEICESTER, where I began this investigation, is in fact a middle-aged university. One built in the full flood of secularism when the Church was not popular in scholastic circles. So, apart from a single Christian service a year, the university does not officially recognize the existence of Church, and so the Anglican Church, like the others, has to find a place to work from, and money to pay its chaplain with. In Leicester they have solved (or partially solved) this problem in two ways: by making the chaplain incumbent of a city church with a parochial population of twelve, so that his income comes from endowments and his church can be used as the University Church; and by making his vicarage an Anglican Centre. The chaplain's name is Canon Widdess, a young northerner full of plans and enthusiasm. The centre from which he works is St. Nicholas' House.

Making contact

All around this place in Knighton Road lies the scattered university population (though staff and students *may* live miles away) and the chaplain's problem is to establish contact with them. He has to be available ('I spend a lot of time in the coffee bar'); to afford them the same pastoral care a priest affords his parishioners ('My wife helps with the women students'); to provide for their special needs as Christian students ('I'm always starting

and stopping. We put on something that's needed—like a course—then it wilts and we knock it off"); to give them a centre to meet in.

The Anglican Church here, as in all the universities I visited, is working in close collaboration with other Christian bodies. All the chaplains meet for a staff meeting twice a term; they pray together (the Roman Catholic as well); they see that their services and plans don't overlap; and they work out a series of lectures to be given in the Students' Union.

Constant tension

'Although I think my first job is the pastoral care of the students,' said Canon Widdess, 'there's a continual tension for me between that and the fact that there's no theological faculty in the university. I have to keep up with the latest thought, and to a certain extent "pronounce" on it. I'm doing at least two full-time jobs.'

From Leicester I went on to Birmingham University. Here there are more students—a yearly intake of 1,200 as opposed to Leicester's 600—and 90 per cent of them live in lodgings up to eight miles out from the university. At St. Bartholomew's House in Edgbaston, a mile from the university campus, the Rev. Bob Turnbull, the warden and chaplain, is trying to meet the need to create some kind of community within this scattered body. He has about thirty-six people at St.

Bartholomew's. As we toured the house the warden told me about the place.

It's a long story. It all started seven years ago, providing lodgings for students in the curate's house—I'm still on the staff of Edgbaston parish church. We built up what I call a vacation practice. Gradually it became known, and the money we got paid for the housekeeper during the year. We moved. We expanded. Canon Allen and the parish of Edgbaston raised £1,200 in a week—in a week, think of that—to buy another house. They were as sold on the idea as I was. Now it's no longer just a lodging-house. It's a Christian Residential Community. They're not all Anglicans living here—in fact they're not *all* Christians—but they're hand-picked. I have as many years of students and as many departments of the university as possible represented.'

An experiment

Birmingham, like Leicester, is a middle-aged university. So there is no such thing as a university chaplaincy—only chaplains to denominations, and even they were not recognized until 1958. The chaplain has no rooms or office on the campus, though he is a member of the Senior Common Room and Staff Club. To care for every student would be a physical impossibility in so large and scattered a university, so the Church in Birmingham is conducting an experiment in community. (This is not *all* that the Church in Birmingham University is doing. But this is its particular contribution.) It has its limitations. But its value is not limited to the thirty-six residents. The community itself is—and can be to an even greater extent—a single crystal in a jar of solution, around which a larger crystal can form.



It happened here . . .

William Neil looks at places in the Holy Land intimately connected with the events of our Lord's life and Ministry

2

WHERE CHRIST WAS BORN

THE picture on the opposite page shows the busy market square of Bethlehem, looking down from the belfry of the Church of the Nativity. Although it reveals clear signs of life in the twentieth century, and although we read each year of the special permission that has to be granted for pilgrims from Israel to cross the angry frontier into Jordan, it saves us from the sentimentality of thinking only of 'O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie,' and forgetting that in that 'still' little town there was no room in the inn for the Mother of our Lord and the infant Saviour.

Yet even looking at the Bethlehem of real life without rose-tinted spectacles—and like any other town it is a mixture of saints and sinners—we ought still to be rightly moved by its associations. Those of us who love our Old Testament stories cannot forget that this was the 'city of David,' where Ruth, his great-grandmother, gleaned the corn; where David, that turbulent but likeable poet-king, was born and learned his shepherd's trade, and was prophetically anointed to take the place of mad king Saul.

It was into a quiet sleepy little village that two travellers came almost two thousand years ago, but it was the birth of the Son in a cave that transformed it into a place of pilgrimage. The first pilgrim visitors were shep-

herds and astrologers—symbolic of the lordship of Christ over the work and learning of the world. The cave in which Jesus was born soon became a place that drew men and women from all walks of life, from many nations, and speaking many tongues.

One of the early Roman emperors tried to discourage this veneration by building a pagan temple over Christ's birthplace. It only served to perpetuate the site. So that when the Roman Empire became Christian and the emperor Constantine, inspired by his devout mother, St. Helena, built the first Church of the Nativity in 325 there was no doubt that this was one of the most sacred spots in Christendom. Traces of this early building have recently been discovered, but the church as it stands now is the work of the emperor Justinian two centuries later. Mercifully it has escaped the depredations of armies—on one occasion in 614 because the Persian invaders saw a mosaic of the adoration of the Magi who were wearing Persian dress.

Some people are put off when they go to the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem and find themselves inside a great Roman basilica, a church like that of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, divided and jointly owned by several branches of Christendom who jealously guard their rights. They find



Bethlehem

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the ornamental Grotto of the Nativity with its star on the floor and the inscription 'Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary' something of an anti-climax.

It is, of course, possible for those with a passion for realism to wander through the streets of old Bethlehem and find houses with caves under them which must be as old as the Grotto of the Nativity and which give a clearer picture of the actual conditions under which our Lord was born. But surely the veneration of millions of men and

women who have visited the Grotto over the centuries has a greater power to kindle our imaginations and awaken a like devotion. The history and tradition that are wrapped around this holy place are beyond all telling, and the thought of the prayers that have been said there and the tears of happiness that have been shed by those who have come from all over the world to worship at the shrine is enough to make the most matter of fact among us humble and grateful that we are part of this great company.

2. MATTINS COMES ALIVE

THE church and playhouse have this in common: both are built for the presentation of drama. For drama is the combination of language, movement, costumes and scenery for the telling of a story or the proclamation of a truth.

In the Church of England the Book of Common Prayer provides both the 'script' and the 'stage directions.' It also gives some instruction about the costumes to be worn when the drama is presented.

When Christians meet they use this drama in order to tell the story of God's mighty acts, and more particularly about the life, death, resurrection and saving power of Jesus, who 'for us men and our salvation came down from heaven.'

The parish church is the theatre where this drama has been re-enacted, Sunday by Sunday, for centuries past. But there is one big difference between the parish church and the playhouse. In the theatre there is a sharp division between the stage and the auditorium. The play is performed by the actors on

KNOWING YOUR PRAYER BOOK

by Canon Edward Patey

one side of the footlights, the audience sits on the other side to watch the drama and to applaud.

But this is not true in the church, where the drama of our redemption is acted. There is no division between actors and audience here. The whole church building from the west door to the sanctuary is the stage, and all who take part in public worship—clergy, choir, sidesmen and congregation—are all actors participating in the drama.

Sometimes, of course, the congregation thinks of itself as a passive

The Story of Saint Francis



audience. Sometimes it is difficult for the people to know what the clergy and their assistants are doing, and sometimes organist and choir seem almost to resent that there is a congregation at all.

But this is not the intention of the Prayer Book, which so orders public worship that both ministers and laity have an equally important share in the presentation of the drama. This is particularly true of Morning and Evening Prayer. In no other Church is so great a part allotted to the people.

Both Morning and Evening Prayer are carefully planned sequences of Bible and other material designed to set forth the wonderful works of God in history and in Jesus Christ.

Each service is in the form of a three-act drama.

The First Act sets the scene by preparing the worshipper for the story which is to follow.

The Second Act sets out the narrative of God's redeeming work, beginning with the Old Testament (Psalms and First Lesson), proceeding to the New Testament (Canticles and Second Lesson), and reaching its climax in the Affirmation of Faith (the Creed).

The Third Act tells of man's response to the God who has now revealed himself so uniquely in history in Jesus Christ and in the life and teaching of the Church. Only when this point is reached is the worshipper ready to bring his needs, his hopes and his fears to God.

The Exhortation with which both Morning and Evening Prayer begin provides a kind of synopsis of the drama to come. We 'assemble and meet together' for four purposes:

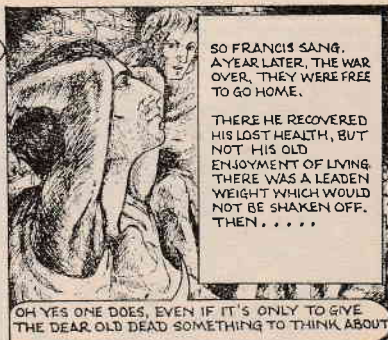
To render thanks for his great benefits.

To show forth his most worthy praise.

To hear his most holy Word.

To ask for those things necessary for our spiritual and bodily welfare.

It is interesting to note the Prayer Book's own priorities here. The first three reasons for worship are all focused on God—we come together to tell of all the wonders of God's great goodness. Only when this has been done are we able with any reality to come to that same God to ask for the things which we need in body and soul.



In the Garden with W. E. Shewell-Cooper

IT's a very good thing to rot down every bit of vegetable refuse that can be got hold of in a wooden compost bin. Mine are 8 ft. by 8 ft., but in a small garden the bin can be as small as, say, 4 ft. by 4 ft. Be sure to treat the wooden planks making this bin with green Cuprinol, for this ensures that the wood lasts for a very long time, almost for ever! Cuprinol is not poisonous to plants and so can be used in safety. As the vegetable refuse, tea-leaves, orange peel and soaked newspapers are collected and put on to the heap together with the leaves, straw, tops of the potatoes and the like, the heap is sprinkled with fish manure at the rate of 3 oz. to the square yard for every 6-inch thickness collected.

The fish manure, with its 6 or 7 per cent potash content, can also be used

in the garden to feed the plants, and so you have one standardized product. If you have any difficulty in getting this locally, let me know and I will send you an address. Some of you may have a shady part of your garden and here you can plant ferns. I have put in 58 different species and varieties of ferns in my own garden, like *Osmundas Aspleniums*, *Polypodiums* and *Athyriums*. These ferns can be obtained from the Waithman Nurseries of Silverdale, Carnforth, and are a great joy.

For a wonderful show in May and June why not plant a collection of irises? These are not difficult. They are what I call 'look-after-themselves' plants. Good varieties are *Ebony Queen*, *Sunny Spain*, *Middy Sun*, *Rocket*, *Jane Phillips* and *Sable*.

At the back of my iris garden some fir trees were growing, and as they produced too much shade, I cut them down to within 6 inches of soil level. Then to get rid of the stumps and roots, I treated them with S.B.K. and the result was they rotted away naturally and perfectly. S.B.K. is first class for getting rid of brambles, gorse, briars and ivy, as well as nettles, thistles, bind-



Vegetable Recipe: *Stuffed Beetroot Salad*

For this we shall need 3 large beetroots, 2 hard-boiled eggs, 1 bunch watercress, 6 pickled onions, 2 apples, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint vinegar, 4 oz. sugar, 2 teaspoonfuls of seasoning.

Wash the beetroot and boil them until they are tender, then cool them a little, remove the outer skin and cut the remainder into pieces at least 2 inches thick and long. Remove the centre of each portion carefully so as to produce an egg-shaped hole. Then put the pieces into a dish with the holes upwards and cover with vinegar completely, leaving them in position for one hour.

Boil the eggs until they are absolutely hard, shell them carefully and chop up the white and yoke really fine. Get hold of the pickled onions, chop these up finely, and having peeled and cored the apples, chop these up also. Mix the egg, chopped onions and apples together, season with salt and pepper, plus the castor sugar, and then take the beetroot out of the vinegar and place carefully on a flat dish. The chopped-up mixture must then be put into the egg-shaped holes as well as to form a little pyramid on each beetroot slice. Serve surrounded with the watercress.

This recipe, together with hundreds of others, will be found in the book *Vegetable Fare*, published by Mowbrays and obtainable from the office of THE SIGN, 28 Margaret Street, London, W.1, price 8s. 6d.

Irene R. Shewell-Cooper

weed and seedling docks. Fortunately S.B.K. does not affect soil fertility.

In October so many gardens are dull. Why not therefore plant a Michaelmas Daisy border and have a blaze of colour in the late autumn? There are

dwarf ones and tall ones and they can be had in blues, reds, pinks, mauves and whites. To keep them free from mildew, dust them with Karathane once a fortnight from the beginning of July onwards.



Have you read . . . ?

by Canon H. G. G. Herklots

BEFORE the war, the late Canon McLeod Campbell, Secretary of the Overseas Council, issued a memorable series of 'unified statements' in which the missionary needs of the Anglican Communion were graphically set out. In *The Church on Asian Frontiers* his successor, the Rev. Gilbert Baker, has done something similar. The reader is taken to the Jerusalem Archbishopric, to India and Pakistan, to South-East Asia and to the Far East, and is shown some of the needs as estimated by the bishops. There is a need for more clergy; for theological teachers; for literature; for holy and humble men of heart who will enter imaginatively into the minds and hearts of Hindus and Buddhists and Muslims as these religions are infused with a new missionary spirit and given a fresh opportunity through the revolt against colonialism.

Great problems

Problems are everywhere great. 'In Durgapur, West Bengal, a huge new steel city has come into being; it stretches for eleven miles along the Grand Trunk Road to a depth of five or six miles. How is the Diocese of Calcutta to minister to Church members—and they include many British as well as Indians—who find themselves in this new community?

'Better use of the Laity.' This is being said everywhere. But what does it mean? This is being examined by members of a World Council of Churches Department, and, of course, by many

others. Results of this work are evident in an important paper-back from the S.C.M. Press, *We the People*, by Dr. Kathleen Bliss. 'Instead of being exhorted to live as a Christian and, as it were, thrust out into the world to do his best on his own, the layman now has more confidence that his lay situation is being better understood in the Church. All the laity of all churches are in a common situation in the world. Wherever he works, wherever he meets the community at large, he finds that Christians are in a minority. His faith comes under fire or is ignored, or even pitied. He is regarded often as a relic of the past.' The discussion is biblical as well as contemporary, and reaches a conclusion that 'there is no such thing as a theology of the laity alone, but that there is the possibility of a real shift of emphasis in the doctrine of the Church.'

Changing situation

In this changed and changing situation, what is the vocation of Anglicanism? This question must be new for many in this country, who have taken the Church of England for granted. It is important that they should be understood and discussed; and the Rev. Dewi Morgan has produced in *Agenda for Anglicans* an attractive paper-back, which will serve as a stimulus to discussion and provide some of the information which will enable discussion to lead to understanding.

Three books on the task of the Church throughout the world:

The Church on Asian Frontiers by Gilbert Baker (Church Information Office, 6s.).

We the People by Kathleen Bliss (S.C.M. Press, 5s.).

Agenda for Anglicans by Dewi Morgan (S.C.M. Press, 7s. 6d.).

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