

MAY

FREE

Marston times

PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS

IS GOD LEFT-HANDED?

It was a natural enough question for a child to ask, but it floored the parents.

"Why on earth do you ask that?"

"Well", replied young John, "We said in Church this morning that Jesus was sitting on his right hand".

The right hand is the place of honour, and anyone who has worked in the East knows that the right hand is important. Gifts are given and received with the right hand. Greetings are given with the right hand. Guests are given the place of honour at the right hand of the host.

"Ascension Day" (Thursday, 11th May) is the day when we think of Jesus Christ as the Lord of Glory - He who walked the hills of Galilee, who was flogged and crucified on a gibbet - now raised to the place of honour in Heaven, at God's "right hand".

But even the word "Ascension" can be misleading. We talk about prices 'going up', of Bill being given a 'higher' position in the firm. In the same way, the truth of "Ascension Day" is that Jesus now reigns in glory, or as the Psalmist would say: "The Lord is King". When we read the account in Acts, Chapter I, which says: "He was lifted up, and a cloud removed Him from their sight", we've got to remember that Luke, the Gentile doctor,

is using the Hebrew symbol of the Special Presence of God - i.e. the cloud or 'Shekinah' - to describe something that was beyond words. For throughout the Old Testament the idea of 'a cloud' marks the special or localised presence of God, and Luke uses this beautiful symbol to describe something that was beyond words. For throughout the Old Testament the idea of 'a cloud' marks the special or localised presence of God, and Luke uses this beautiful symbol to describe an experience when at one moment our Lord was with them, and another moment they knew His physical presence had been taken from them, and He was with the Father . . . 'sitting on the right hand of God! . . . reigning in glory.

The world may seem grim at times. The news is horrifying, but the Christian believes that, despite all this, 'the Lord is King', and one day 'He will come again with glory'. This faith and hope has sustained believers down the ages. It can still sustain us.

John A. Rumbey

Vicar and Rural Dean.

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NOT BEREFT

"We don't keep Whit any more of course", my friend said.

On the day of Pentecost Christ's followers . . . "were all together in one place when suddenly there came from the sky a noise like that of a strong, driving wind, which filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues like flames of fire, dispersed among them and resting on each one. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit". (N.E.B.)

Not keep Whit indeed!! Of course Whitsun may or may not now co-incide with the Bank Holiday week-end. This year it will be a week before the Bank Holiday. Rather nice, as it gives many of us the chance to celebrate the great festival in our own parish churches, but to go further afield for the longer break from work.

But not to keep Whit! If I don't, is there any point in 'keeping' Christmas and Easter? Christ - God - had come to this earth as a helpless child. He'd lived and taught here. Then his bewildered followers had seen him crucified dead and buried. They'd witnessed the glory of his resurrection stupendous events, that I can only dimly understand. But had that been the end of the story would I have ever known of them? If I did, would I have understood them even dimly? They would have touched me only indirectly as other historical events do.

But it wasn't the end of the story. Christ has promised it wouldn't be. "I will not leave you bereft. I will return to you . . ." He'd kept His promise. He had returned to them at Pentecost - the first Whitsun. He keeps his promise. He has not left me bereft.

And could I not keep Whit? Can you wonder that I replied to my friend "Oh, but we do: Thank God WE DO! I.F.R.

Ascension Day

The Vicar of New Marston has invited our own Vicar to preach at the special Ascension Day Evensong at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday, 11th May, and the choir to sing at the service in St. Michael's Church.

He has also invited our congregation to join with them and to go to New Marston Vicarage afterwards for light refreshments.

CONFIRMATION

"What's he like?"

"He's a whizz kid!" You may not believe it, but that was a conversation overheard about our new Bishop, Kenneth Woolcombe, in the precincts of Christ Church Cathedral. Well, you can judge for yourself when he comes to confirm a number of adults and young people at our service on Thursday, 18th May at 7.30 p.m. (We'll be using the new service too).

Come along, and welcome and pray for our candidates. BUT please come early as we may be sitting in the windows before we're finished!

The Jesus Generation

Many will have seen on T.V. the tall American preacher, the Rev. Arthur Blessitt, carrying his enormous cross, as he walks the roads of Britain. Arthur Blessitt is one of the few preachers of today who is 'tuned in' to the youth scene. He will be speaking in Oxford Town Hall at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 10th May, and also at an open air meeting in South Park on Thursday, 11th May at 7 p.m. (St. Clement's Church, if wet). Please pass on the message to any young people who want to hear someone who is 'different'

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The Annual Church Meeting was held on Tuesday, 25th April, preceded by the Series III Communion Service and the Annual Vestry Meeting, and about fifty were present.

As a result of the Stewardship Campaign there had been a great increase in membership on the Electoral Roll, which is now complete and no more names can be added until 1973.

The Parish Council had discussed baptism and marriage policy, as well as sponsoring the Stewardship Campaign and the Total Revision of the Electoral Roll.

Plans were afoot to improve the heating system and to treat the nave with Rentokil. Worthwhile sums of money had been sent to Christian Aid and to the Church Missionary Society.

In the open discussion that followed suggestions were put forward about teenagers, (Is a mixed Christian Fellowship possible?), about adults (Need for House Groups and more face-to-face meetings of the congregation), Evangelistic work in the Parish (Special meetings to reach the outsider). A creche was proposed for the 10 a.m. service and it was hoped that committees might be formed to go into the question of meeting the needs of churchgoing parents with young children.

There is obviously plenty of material for the new P.C.C.'s agenda!

JUMBLE SALE

CHRISTIAN AID JUMBLE SALE

SATURDAY, 13TH MAY

in St. Nicholas Church Hall and Scout Hut

at 2 p.m.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY,

Whit Sunday, 21st May, is the Birthday of the Christian Church, when the gift of the Holy Spirit was out-poured at Pentecost. Join us at church that day at 8 a.m., 10 a.m. or 6.30 p.m. We'd love to see you!

DON'T MISS . . .

On Trinity Sunday, 28th May, the Rev. 'Bob' Jefferey, Vicar of St. Andrew's Headington, author of a number of books, and until recently on the staff of the British Council of Churches, is preaching for us at 10 a.m. Miss the Archers, miss your favourite film, forget your handbag, but don't fail to hear Mr. Jefferey on Sunday, 28th May.

STEWARDSHIP

At a packed Church on 23rd April, the Vicar told the congregation that there were times when he had felt: "I wish I'd never heard of Stewardship!"

But the preparation, training sessions, get together and calls made by the Visitors had proved that the Campaign had been intensely worthwhile.

Those who had pledged a regular gift had more than doubled, but quite apart from this, there were the offers of help, suggestions and requests, and in nearly every case a warm welcome and appreciation of the call. In some cases money was never mentioned because the pressing problem was one of loneliness, domestic trouble, or illness. Here the Visitor was called upon to exercise the Christian ministry of listening.

Mr. Cyril Steele, the Chairman of the Campaign, expressed his gratitude for the work of the Visitors at the Annual Meeting, and pointed out that the work had just begun. It has certainly been a good beginning.

FAREWELL!

Margaret Cahill, our Editor, will have departed from Oxford by the time this edition goes to print. Many people have cause to be grateful to Margaret for her medical care during her time as Sister in charge of the Rowney Ward at the Radcliffe Infirmary. In the parish we will remember her as an indefatigable organiser of Christian Aid for the Marston area, a keen member of the P.C.C., a helper at the Youth Club, a member of the House Group, and one of those people who can be relied upon utterly to see a job through. We wish you well, Margaret, in your new course of training, and look forward to welcoming you back again in our midst as soon as possible.

The Parish - and particularly all readers of the Marston Times, which you have edited, send you their greetings

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CHRISTIAN AID

May could easily be the month when we count our blessings and perhaps think of a token 'thankyou' to give to the less fortunate of the world.

This year as usual Christian Aid week is in May from 15th to 21st. As usual too, there will be an envelope house-to-house collection so that you can make your own donation. You will receive your envelope with this newsheet; please keep it safely and our collector will call for it later in the month.

This year too we are having a Grand Jumble Sale on Saturday, 13th May in the Church Hall and Scout Hut. If you have jumble please let Mrs. Checkley (Ox.41017) or Mrs. Whetham (Ox. 49017) know and we will arrange collection, or bring it yourself on the morning of 13th May to the Church Hall.

Christian Aid came into being towards the end of the second world war as an expression of the desire of Christians in Britain to work together; first in the task of reconstruction and refugee resettlement in Europe and later in the wider field of international aid and development.

Christian Aid meets human needs both immediately and through 'long term action'. Long term action is designed

to deal with the root causes of poverty and is concerned with a new and more just relationship between rich and poor areas of the world, with regard particularly to trade.

Immediate action is concerned with emergency first and relief, followed by long term assistance to return life to normal in areas of natural disaster and other crises, as in Pakistan in 1971

Aid to refugees is high priority and Christian Aid channels funds into recognised refugee agencies whose specific task is the resettlement of uprooted families, child care and self-help in this area.

Special projects such as educational programmes, agricultural and industrial training are an important aspect of Christian Aid work. Associated with this too is the work in Britain to foster better community relations in multi-racial areas and towns.

This is a little of the work of Christian Aid - and it is very worth while and would benefit even more from your help, however small. M.E.C.

M.U. Service

Ladies of the Parish unite and join the Mothers' Union for the Deanery Service at Burford on 25th May. Transport has been arranged, but please contact Mrs. Rimmer now if you want to go. (You don't have to be a member of the M.U. to go.)

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