

Vicar's Notes

SOME PROBLEMS

In the last few weeks, we have been thinking a little of some of the problems which to-day confront the Church as a whole, and which therefore affect us too.

On April 28th a big meeting was held at the Central Hall, Westminster. To it the Bishop summoned all the members of the clergy, churchwardens and other parish officers, and he and others put to us the need of taking steps to see that all who work for the Church in this diocese in a full-time capacity should have adequate stipends. The challenge put to us was that this should be treated as a private family matter, and not made the subject of a public appeal.

At our own Ruri-Decanal Conference a few days later, the parish of All Souls, St. Margaret's, took the lead, and called upon all the other parishes in the Deanery not to rest content until they had done their best to raise not just their standard quota, but their quota of ambition—40% more. All the parochial representatives present responded to this challenge with enthusiasm.

Our own Church Council, with generous thoughtfulness, took steps before I came to augment the stipend here, which had been decreasing for some years. But there are blitzed parishes, and parishes which simply cannot raise any more money where men are urgently needed—and here the greater family of this diocese must help, through the monies paid by other parishes in their quotas—"bear ye one another's burdens". We in this parish are proud that we have never once failed to pay our standard quota—now we are asked to do even greater things. I am sure that we could do this, if everyone of us took our giving to the Church as a serious obligation.

On Trinity Sunday the Patronal letter of the Archbishops was read, challenging us to think about another great problem—the urgent need for men to serve in the ministry of the Church, and to provide funds to cover the cost of their training. The number of clergy at work in the Church is steadily declining; men who

begin to feel that perhaps God may be calling them are all too often deterred by well-meaning friends and parents, who point out how much more they could earn in other, less exacting, walks of life. If things go on as they are, in another thirty years there will be only one full-time professional clergyman available for the whole of the Hampton area, and another for the whole of Teddington, and so on. The Archbishops hope that if we really pray, and face this problem with faith and courage, both the men and the money will be forthcoming. But there are some who think that the Church may be led to develop a non-professional ministry to supplement the parochial one—made up of large numbers of men engaged in all kinds of secular work, manual, administrative and professional, and building up the Church around them wherever they are.

Another problem is that of the ancient parish churches of England—are they to be preserved? If so, it is estimated that four million pounds will be needed in the next ten years if these buildings are to be brought into that state of repair where £750,000 a year will suffice to keep them in good order.

Can the Church (the State at the moment gives no help, and has not offered to do so) face this staggering amount? It will come back to the dioceses and parishes again: can they raise the money required? Ought they to try, when there are far more urgent claims on their money which are not being met? It would be a thousand pities if some of our lovely old churches were to crumble into ruins in the next few years—but better so than that Christianity itself should crumble because there was no money to send the men where they were needed.

We in our own parish are faced with problems and expense about our own church. As it is not an ancient building and has little historic interest, we cannot expect to claim much help from outside. If the church is to be preserved the main burden must fall upon ourselves. There is also the question of beautifying it: this may be considered a luxury, or necessity,

Our forbears raised a Golden Jubilee fund, and built the tower and spire. Cannot we issue a Coronation Year Appeal, and hope for as good a response? Then we might feel that we had done our part, as the Victorians did theirs, to pass the parish church on, renovated and enriched, to serve and inspire the people of Hampton Hill for another 65 years.

But we cannot wait till Coronation year. Some of the urgent external work ought to be done this autumn. I hope that all men of good-will in the parish will rally round and help. The Fete is one way of helping. Please do your best to be there, wet or fine, on July 5th.

THE PATRONAL FESTIVAL

Let us make St. James's Tide a joyful time of renewal of purpose, as we face the problems mentioned above—and others! St. James, the Son of Thunder—nothing could daunt him. And he learnt to add to his courage a love that directed his natural aggressiveness into positive channels. We could all do with more of his spirit, as it developed and matured under the influence of the Holy Spirit

After the evening service on July 25th, my wife and I will be 'at home' to members of the council and congregation at the Vicarage, and shall be very glad to see as many there as do not mind a squash!

FROM BEYOND THE SPIRE

A VISIT TO IONA

Iona is among the Inner Hebrides, off the west coast of Scotland; to get to it we went to Oban, from there by steamer to the Isle of Mull, and then crossed Mull by the bus carrying the mails. This bus journey took two hours and we passed through magnificent scenery; desolate high mountains, green glens and bright blue inlets of sea. At times red deer gazed startled at us as we passed. Not until we reached the west of Mull did we finally see the Isle of Iona, an island to which hundreds of thousands of pilgrims have made their way throughout the years.

Iona has been regarded as a sacred place for many centuries. In Druid times it was held in special veneration, and stones of the Druid circles still remain. In the year 563 Columba landed from Ireland, converted the Druids, established a monastery, and under his influence Iona "developed into the most famous centre of Celtic Christianity, the mother-community of numerous monastic houses whence missionaries were dispatched for the conversion of Scotland and Northern England, and to which for centuries students flocked from all parts of the North." For more than 400 years the holy island was the burial

place of Scottish, Irish and Norwegian kings.

We saw the site of the earliest monastery, the hermit's cell whither Columba could retire for private meditation, the Bay of the Coracle where he and his companions landed, and the Hill of the Angels where a brother monk saw Columba conversing with holy angels.

In 1203 the monastery was rebuilt for the Benedictine Order, and continued to flourish until the Reformation when it was dismantled and allowed to fall into ruin. After 350 years the Abbey was gifted to the Church of Scotland by the Duke of Argyll, and was restored between 1902 and 1910. It is a beautiful building, solid and entirely in harmony with its wild surroundings. The Iona Community started on the work of restoring the remaining abbey buildings in 1938. On our visit this year Dr. George Macleod took us round the abbey, and told us of the work of the Iona Community and of its objective of uniting service and worship against the background of working together on the rebuilding.

We stayed at Bishop's House, where there is a small chapel for the Episcopalian and Anglican worshippers on the island, and were made to feel completely at home by the warm hospitality of the wardens.

It is difficult to describe the atmosphere of nonness on the island. The prayers of St. Columba and his brethren in early times, and the worship of the Benedictine monks and their sister nuns in the later centuries have created a sense that prayer and worship are a part of the island. Just as we feel that in some churches the prayers of worshippers have given those churches a special atmosphere of "prayer-fulness," so Iona has this blessedness about it. We left the island refreshed and encouraged by the peace we found there.

The natural scenery of the island is lovely. The clear sea is of ever varying shades of blue and green:—as blue at times as the Mediterranean Sea, with shallows of a green which is translucent and delicate as a shell. The sands are white and cream, and the rocks all colours,—pink, red, black and green. The beauty of the shores is unforgettable. The moors, marshes and rocks of the island make walking rough but enjoyable, and the wild flowers, the birds and the seals are of absorbing interest. Our stay on Iona was a delight, and we also had a reverent feeling that we too had made a modern pilgrimage.

H.S.

THE GOLDEN CALF

All those who attended the Pageant, "The Golden Calf", presented by the S.P.G. in the Royal Albert Hall on Saturday, June 14th, were entertained for an hour and a half without pause or interval to a spectacle of colour and action, and

were given anew the message of God's abiding presence in all times and places.

The life-sized "Golden Calf," which appeared and reappeared in the arena, besides having its use in time and history, was symbolic of the whole Pageant.

The acting, from the beginning with the entry of Adam and Eve, to the finale when the massive cross was erected on the stage, was animated but reverent. This reverence was well reflected in the sincerity with which the thousands who were present rose as one man and joined without invitation or instruction in singing the first verse of that glorious Easter hymn "The strife is o'er, The battle done—Alleluia", which had been chosen for the close of the Pageant.

The theme of the Pageant is best given in the words of the organisers who sum it up as follows:—The Pageant sets forth the working out of God's plan in history. The central act of the Crucifixion is seen as the culmination of the denial of God under both the old covenant and the new. The Golden Calf of the days of Moses is repeated in the deification of the State in our day. Bewildered and sinful humanity is portrayed in different ages and through different races.

Through it all runs the calm authoritative tone of the still small voice which outlasts the storms in order to transform them. The timeless Word from the Cross, penetrating the human turmoil, repeats "Peace be still".

C. Mc. C.

AROUND THE SPIRE

being notes and news about people, activities & organisations

PERSONALIA

We are glad that Mr. Cornish is now safely through his operation, and look forward to seeing him amongst us again soon.

Mr. Thomas had to be rushed to hospital suddenly, but he appears much better now, though the doctors have not yet been able to decide what is the root of the trouble. We hope that it will not be long before he is back in his Reader's stall in church.

At the Adult Confirmation in St. Paul's Cathedral, on May 31st, the following ladies and gentlemen from this parish were presented to the Bishop: Lesse Mills, Marigold McHardy Young, Margery Orton, Myles McCarthy, John Edward Lloyd, Leonard Rockliffe.

Three girls from the Lady Eleanor Holles School who 'belong to us' were confirmed at the recent School

Confirmation: Gwyneth Lewis, Margaret Sayce, Daphne Fewster.

On July 21st, the Reverend Timothy Stanton, is to be professed at Mirfield as a member of the Community of the Resurrection. We shall remember him in prayer as he awaits this great event, for which he has undergone a long preparation.

Mothers' Union, Womens' Guild and Young Wives Group

Our last meeting this season will be our Church Service on July 2nd, when the preacher will be the Rev. W. F. Shergold of All Saints, Hanworth. We hope to have tea in the Vicarage garden afterwards.

The only "overseas" arrangement in the deanery this year is the exhibition "Christ in the Home" which the M.U. is sponsoring on July 3rd and 4th at Chiswick Town Hall. The programmes for this were unavoidably held up so that we did not have them in time for our last meeting, which means that unless everyone who reads this makes an extreme effort a number of our members may not know about it. We have already contributed a little towards the initial expenses of this exhibition but it would be a very great pity if we did not use and support it as fully as possible.

Programmes at sixpence (three-pence for children) may be obtained from the Vicarage or from members of the M.U. committee. We are invited to take contributions in kind for refreshments.

Missionaries home from so many parts of the world tell the same story of the threat that advancing Communism is to the young Christian communities.

Only when we have done our utmost to learn about the situation and to help, can we at home sit back with any sort of complacency.

(To help mothers of young children to attend the Exhibition, there will be a nursery available in Christ Church Hall. Experienced helpers will be there to look after the children.)

The Young Wives' Group outing will be to Polesden Lacey on July 16th, starting mid-morning and returning by about five o'clock. For times see notices on church-door.

THE BAPTISM ROLL

The Baptism Roll is now framed and standing in the baptistry until arrangements can be made to hang it. It seems fitting that it has been printed by a schoolgirl, Gwyneth Lewis, who is herself very much a daughter of St. James's. Her mother, a member of M.U. and foundation member of Y.W.G., was married, confirmed and baptised at St. James's; she was herself baptised here some thirteen years ago and her grandfather and grandmother, Mr. and Mrs. Daines (Miss Reynolds) were married at St. James's and had worked together as Sunday School teachers here!

SOME DATES TO NOTE

July 1st.—8.0 p.m. Social Committee.

July 2nd.—3.0 p.m. Mothers' Union Quarterly Service. Preacher: The Rev. W. F. Shergold, Vicar of All Saints, Hanworth.

July 3rd & 4th.—Overseas Exhibition, Chiswick Town Hall.

July 5th.—3.0 p.m. Summer Fete at Laurel Dene.

July 7th.—8.0 p.m. Drama Group (in Club-Room).

July 11th.—7.0 p.m. Sale of Tickets for Sunday School Outing.

July 22nd.—St. Mary Magdalene 7.0 a.m. Holy Communion.

July 25th.—St. James. Patronal Festival.

7.0 & 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion,

7.15 p.m. Magazine Distributors.

7.30 p.m. Evening Service.

8.15 p.m. Vicarage At Home.

Meetings of the Church Council and Committees to be arranged: dates will be notified to members.

BAPTISM

June 8th.—Elizabeth Marion
Jean Woodward, 17, Links View Rd.

MARRIAGES

June 21st.—Leonard William
Beaven to Doris Marjorie Manly.

June 21st.—Adrian Vickers to
Mollie Haynes.

BURIALS

May 31st.—Edward Arthur Smith,
22, Elmfield Road, Cheltenham,
aged 43 years.

June 12th.—Sarah Delafield, 50,
Windmill Road, aged 81 years.