

Vicar's Notes

The Advent season comes to us with its call to put on the armour of light and walk as in the day at a most appropriate time. We can all see the strength of the darkness that overshadows the world. No wonder that men's hearts are failing them for fear, and that all kinds of forebodings are abroad. Will England sooner or later share the fate of Hungary, and be held down in terror by the tanks and torture-chambers of a ruthless dictatorship? Or will there be universal catastrophe, culminating in the terrifying climax depicted in one of our Advent lessons—2 Peter, 3: "... The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up . . ."—and this, not as a result of God's action in bringing history to a close, but by men using their own mastery of nuclear power to destroy themselves and their world? Yes—possibilities such as these are real, and have to be faced and reckoned with by believers and non-believers alike. The day of the Lord may be darkness and not light. Evil may go on increasing in intensity until God intervenes in a cataclysmic way to bring the present order of things to an end, or men sink the ship themselves with hydrogen bombs and others even deadlier and more destructive. Scientists now tell us that the picture given by 2 Peter is well within the bounds of probability.

But there are other possibilities too. All Christians believe in the certainty of the final victory of God beyond history, after the end of this present age and world, whether this end is brought about by God Himself or by men rebelling against Him. And the full scope of this victory is most finely conceived of, not in terms of destruction, but of reconciliation. One of our greatest New Testament scholars sums it up in these words: "The ultimate unity of all things in God is secured not by the mere suppression or destruction of hostile elements, human, sub-human or super-human, but by bringing them all into harmony with the Will of God as expressed in Christ." Such a victory is vic-

tory indeed, and the certainty of it can make Christians lift up their heads even when there is widespread distress of nations and the powers of Heaven are shaken. But is there then, no hope of victory within history? Must history peter out in darkness and despair, or end with a bang in fire and explosion and universal ruin? No!—there is also the possibility, though not the certainty, of victory in this world; the glorious possibility that Christ and His cause may triumph in the here and now—that God's Will may be done in earth as in heaven, and that

"The beam that shines from
Zion's hill
Shall lighten every land;
The King who reigns in Salem's
towers
Shall all the world command,"

or, as a hymn which we often sing puts it,

"Jesus shall reign wher'er the
sun
Doth his successive journeys
run;
His Kingdom stretch from
shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane
no more."

A great hope, the fulfilment of which perhaps depends for more than we know on us, and the quality of the faith and love and obedience which we offer to God.

What I have just written are some of the thoughts Advent inevitably brings before us, but at a time like the present they seem to have added significance. We shall be thinking of these things in greater detail in our Advent readings and sermons, as against the background of the world's darkness we prepare for the coming of Him who is the world's Light, and the only sure hope of the victory of Day over Night.

LARGE ISSUES— AND SMALLER ONES

Advent brings before us issues of the greatest importance—and the present state of the world reinforces their claim to our attention. The plight of the world's homeless and the many victims of cruelty and injustice lies heavy on our hearts; we were glad that there

was such a good response to the spur-of-the-moment collections for Hungarian Refugees on Remembrance Day, and as a result we have been able to send nearly £17 to Inter-Church Aid and Refugee Service. We must continue to do all we can to help. But we also have to attend to our own smaller affairs, and keep our own house in order. At a time when great issues were at stake, and many expected the end of the world at any moment, St. Paul, while not having any shirk these things, and thanking God for the help being given to men in need, also reminds the Thessalonians to "Study to be quiet, and to do your own business." Part of our own business is to keep our Church property in decent repair, and to fulfil our obligations to the Diocesan family. If we all did our part week by week, we should take these things easily in our stride, and have more time and energy to give to more important things. As it is, we need before the end of this year an additional £400 to pay our ordinary household accounts. This figure is made up as follows: £50 to supplement the loans freely offered to us by five generous parishioners to enable us to change the church heating-system from coke to oil (we are assured that a ration of oil, but how much we do not yet know, will be allotted to us); £100 to clear off the bank overdraft on this year's running expenses on the Hall, and £150 to pay our share of the cost of renewing the roof (the other £150 is most kindly being granted to us as a free gift by the Trustees of an Ecclesiastical Charity); £100 more towards our Diocesan Quota of £148, which is our contribution of obligation to the common purse of the Diocese, to which each parish gives according to its ability, and from which it draws according to its need.

This appeal is going to everyone who reads the magazine, and to everyone whose name is on the Electoral Roll. If each will put £1 (or as near to it as can be managed) into the accompanying envelope, and bring it to any Service on our Church's Birthday Sunday, December 9th (at the Evening Service there will be the usual opportunity to present your gift

in a personal way), then our immediate needs will be more than covered. And if then, each of you who read this could go further and join the growing number of those who give 2/6 regularly every week, such special appeals for our own needs would not have to be made, and we should be able to reserve them for larger needs outside our borders. Please therefore respond as generously as you can—and if you cannot be in church on December 9th, the envelope could be returned on any other Sunday before Christmas, or sent direct to the Vicar or Churchwardens.

SOME ARRANGEMENTS TO NOTE

To try to stem the increasing deficit on the running expenses of the Parish Hall, the Church Council has been considering various measures. One of the more moderate ones has now been approved; other more drastic ones are being kept in reserve for further consideration should the situation continue to worsen. The alteration now agreed on is that, from January 1st onwards, the minimum fee for functions arranged by Church societies should be increased from 21/- to 30/-, and that when a profit is made, 25% of this should go to Hall funds up to the maximum fee already charged to other organisations.

It has been agreed by the Church Council that the main part of the collections on Christmas Day should again be given to our Parochial "Charities Account," out of which we help parishioners in need or sickness with gifts mainly of milk and coal. This Christmas, owing to the lowness of funds, it seems it will be possible to supply only 1 cwt. of coal instead of the usual 2 cwt, and this to a more restricted list of aged and infirm parishioners than we should like.

Starting in Advent, the beginning of the Church's Year, I propose to introduce the short three-minute address which we have had for nearly five years now at the Parish Communion to every other Sunday celebration except that at 12.15 p.m. Such a "Preaching of the Word" is really an essential

accompaniment of the Sacrament, as you will see from the Prayer Book Rubrics. I also hope that we may soon adopt other changes, such as standing for the Offertory and the Gloria in Excelsis, and saying the Prayer of Humble Access altogether.

I hope to start Confirmation Preparation early in January. I am anxious to have as many adult candidates as possible, as well as boys and girls. Please let me

have your name as soon as you can if you are interested in the idea.

The Christmas Services will be as usual this year, except that there will be no celebration of the Holy Communion at 7.0 a.m. Wayside will be available as a children's nursery, with two or three competent helpers in charge, from 8.45—9.45 a.m., to enable parents of young children to attend the 9.0 a.m. Service free from distraction.

AROUND THE SPIRE

being notes and news about people, activities & organisations

THE SCOUT GROUP

On 1st November the Group held a Beetle Drive which resulted in an addition of £2-18-9 to our Funds.

On Saturday, November 24th, we are holding our first Social & Dance. This is instead of the usual Christmas Bazaar, so we are hoping it will be well supported by all friends of the Scout Group.

Future Events:

Cub Pack. On December 5th in Parish Hall at 7 o'clock there will be a Meeting of all Cub Parents.

Christmas Social & Dance. Saturday, January 5th, in Parish Hall at 8 o'clock. Tickets 2/-.

The Cubs have settled down in good spirits after the Summer Camp and several proficiency Badges have been gained.

Twelve new boys have been received into the Pack, but there is still a Waiting List should any parents be interested.

All parents of new boys are specially welcomed to the Parents' Meeting on December 5th.

THE RENOVATION FUND

We are not attempting anything spectacular at the moment in the way of raising money, but Mr. Geer and his Committee have planned a series of events throughout the Autumn and Winter. Three have already happened—the Bonfire Party; a Modern Dance; and a Grand Social, which between them have added £20 to the Fund. We are very grateful to Mrs. Orton and her helpers for the suc-

cess of the first; to Mr. Holt who was such an excellent M.C. on the other two occasions, to Mr. Sergeant and Mr. Geoffrey Eaton for helping Mr. Geer with the work of organisation, and to Miss Rosemary Andrews, Miss Johnson, and their pupils for the entertainment they provided in their Dancing Display.

Other events to follow include a Variety Show on January 26th, and another Dance on February 9th.

MOTHERS' UNION

I hope we shall have a good gathering of members to welcome Mrs. Ackroyd at our December meeting. May I give you a preliminary notice: Monday, January 14th, will be the day observed by our Deanery for the Wave of Prayer, touching London and Accra. Each Branch has been allocated a time during that day, so that the chain of prayer is continuous. Our time is 8.30 to 8.45 a.m. It would be nice if some of us could get to Church and spend this time together.

I trust you will all endeavour to remember the Wave of Prayer in your daily intercessions. I have spoken to some of you about this, and have discovered that the Wave of Prayer, and where it touches, seems to some a bit obscure. May I say a word about it? The Wave of Prayer means a daily act of remembrance and intercession, undertaken by members of the M.U. for the furtherance of their work throughout the world. Each Diocese is remembered by name for

five days, in regular rotation during the course of the year. The Wave of Prayer was begun at the close of the Overseas Conference in 1920. Those present felt that some definite effort should result from that week of fellowship—an effort to be shared by every M.U. member. This to be called the Wave of Prayer. A calendar was arranged, and you will find this and how it operates on the inside cover of the service book. We have now in our Branch a lovely map, and it is intended in future at our meetings to indicate on this map the places in special remembrance that day, so that in our prayers we shall pray more intelligently about them.

You will remember, dear members, that our membership binds us to be regular worshippers. I wonder why so many of us neglect this means of Grace?

Dates to Remember:

- Dec. 19th, 8.0 p.m., Parish Hall.—Programme of Films presented by "Unilever." (Open meeting: Collection for Renovation Fund).
 Jan. 9th.—Mothers' Union Supper at Wayside, 7.0 p.m.

Miss Finlay, who while she was Head Mistress of a famous school at Winchester knew Mrs. Sumner and by her was brought into the Mothers' Union, shared her great knowledge of young people with us in her address on November 7th. All of us learnt a great deal from it.

M.J.B.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

- Dec. 5.—3.0 p.m. Mothers' Union. Speaker: Mrs. Ackroyd (W).
 7.0 p.m. Wolf Cubs: Parents' Evening (Hall).
 Dec. 8.—2.30 p.m. Church Lads' Brigade Bazaar (Hall).
 3.0 p.m. Brownies' Display (St. Michael's Hall).

Dec. 9.—Dedication Festival and Gift Day.

Holy Communion 8 and 9 a.m.
 Matins 11.0 a.m.

Evensong and Presentation of Gifts 6.30 p.m.

Dec. 13.—8.0 p.m. Scout Group Committee (W).

Dec. 19.—8.0 p.m. Film Evening (Hall).

Dec. 21.—St. Thomas. Holy Communion 7.15 a.m.

Dec. 24-25.—Christmas Day.

Holy Communion 11.45 p.m. (Midnight Eucharist), 8.0 a.m., 9.0 a.m. and 12.15 p.m. (N.B. No Celebration at 7.0 a.m.).
 Matins 11.0 a.m.

Dec. 26, 27, 28.—Holy Communion on the Three Festival Days after Christmas at 9.0 a.m. only.

Dec. 30.—6.30 p.m. Festival Service of Lessons and Carols.

Dec. 31.—7.30 p.m. Old Time Dance (Hall).

Jan. 1.—The Circumcision.

Holy Communion 7.15 a.m.

Jan. 5.—8.0 p.m. Scout Group Christmas Social and Dance.

Jan. 6.—The Epiphany.

Jan. 9.—7.0 p.m. Mothers' Union Supper (W).

Jan. 11.—7.30 p.m. Magazines ready (V).

Jan. 12.—7.45 p.m. Parish Christmas Party (Hall).

BAPTISMS

- Nov. 25.—Janet Mary Lambourne, 47, Uxbridge Road.
 „ 25.—Simon Derek Gutteridge, 1, Albert Road.

BURIALS

- Nov. 8.—Emily Alice Nash, Laurel Dene, aged 82 years (at Hampton).
 „ 14.—Jessie Singleton, 23, Edward Road, aged 73 yrs.