

ALL AID SHORT OF REAL HELP

The facts of world poverty weigh heavily on all people of goodwill in the affluent areas of the earth — and we know that things are steadily getting worse instead of better. And yet, as Patrick Sergeant, the outspoken City Editor of the Daily Mail, said in an article with the above heading on October 2, the developed nations seem more and more reluctant to do anything effective about them. 'Like Lord Palmerston, I have seen many changes in my life and most of them for the worse. One such is that we seem to love each other less and less. As nations we are growing more selfish; aid has become a dirty word and cutting it the first thing Finance Ministers do when they get into trouble.' The Sunday Times on November 16 pointed out that during the 1960's, Britain's aid record had been even worse than that of other donor countries. 'In net terms, aid has actually fallen, from £151 million in 1961 to £150 million in 1968. In that period the gross national product grew by more than 55 per cent. While some attempt has been made not to cut the budget despite balance of payment troubles, capital and interest repayments from aid-receiving countries have steadily grown. The decision which is imminent will determine whether or not Britain is willing to make good the undertaking given five years ago to raise the total aid to level to one per cent. of G.N.P.' The Observer on the same date had a leading-article headed 'Aid: A disgrace.'

But more aid (even with no strings attached) is not enough. There must be fair trading instead of the present tendency to exploitation. For instance, we who live in the United Kingdom pay less for the raw materials and agricultural products (e.g. tin, cocoa, coffee, tea, etc.) of the poor countries. We charge them more and more for the machinery and manufactured goods we sell to them. Just trade between the rich and the poor countries is the crux of the problem.

Is there anything we ordinary people can do to help our country to become less selfish and to play a more worthy part in the battle against world poverty? Well, an opportunity will be given to us in December to let the Government know what we think and feel. All the Churches have come together (through the Churches' Action for World Development) to sponsor a National Sign-In. Forms will be available in our church on December 21. When completed, all the signed forms from our area will be collected together and presented to the two M.P.s who represent our borough at large public meetings in Twickenham and Richmond towards the end of January.

METHS. DRINKERS AND OTHERS

(Concluded)

However, meths. drinkers have to exist somewhere and a twenty-four-hour fire was kept going at The Ramp where there were sometimes between 50 and 250 derelicts. One of Sally's friends turned over into the fire and nearly burned his left leg off but no ambulance would turn out. It would mean an infested ambulance and ward, to no ultimate purpose. As Sally herself was not a meths. drinker she was able to forage for food for them from Covent Garden and "conned" blankets. One winter was particularly bad and six men died in a week and the Council's van came and took them away as unidentified persons. No one had a last name — just Joe, or Sally, or Tom. Sally

realised that if more were not to die in the cold, shelter had to be found and she searched about and found the shell of an old A.R.P. shelter, filthy and rat-infested and roofless, but it was the carcass of a home. She got it cleaned up and foraged for corrugated iron and roofed it, but leaving the Ramp did not come easily for most and some never came, fearing some kind of restrictions. At one time, however, there were 250 in that one small space, lying in layers, the fittest on the bottom and the sick and dying on top with the rats running over them. Sally just wanted those who were dying to die in a sheltered place where they belonged rather than alone somewhere out in the cold.

There was Joe, very near to death. Sally got him to the shelter, washed and de-loused him and took a whole hour getting a few spoonful of Farex down him because meths. burns out the muscles of the throat until swallowing is impossible and suffocating ensues. The final stages of death from drinking crude spirits set in for Joe — blindness and coma — five days to live. Sally sat and held his hand as much as she was able praying just that he would regain consciousness long enough to die knowing that one person cared. The third night he opened his eyes. “Sal, is that you — why do you care — what makes you tick?” “I care because I love you.” “Why should you?” “Because I’m a Christian.” “How do I become a Christian — I’ll be dead in the morning.” Sally sat holding his hand and pondering. What is Christianity — Love and thought for others whatever they are like, however low and disgusting — the hardest thing in the world. She thanked God that Joe had woken to know he was not alone and she prayed for a miracle and that Joe might live. He grew better and stronger every day and she nursed him for two months until one day he vanished. She searched his usual haunts and concluded that he’d crawled away to escape her and had died quietly in private and so she forgot about Joe because there were so many others.

Some long time later a cleanshaven, middle-aged man in a decent suit came into the shelter, a strange enough occurrence. “Don’t you know me Sal — I’m Joe.” It was a miracle, one of many — cured of his desire for meths. and death, even his sight partially restored and with the insight to seek out his surviving companions in distress and say to them, “Look at me, I was worse than you but I’m working and I’m living and it’s great.” He was able to do more to help and re-habilitate than twenty Sallies but she had given him the spark of life and set him on the road.

Many questions were asked. Is the problem dying out with the deaths of the present meths. drinkers? The answer is “No.” Sally Trench had come across a boy of twenty-one a short time ago — the youngest meths. drinker she had ever seen. Bigger boys at school had given him drugs but his stomach would not accept them and so as not to be rejected by his group he had taken to alcohol instead, had been expelled and drifted downwards. If one is N.F.A. (No Fixed Abode) one is not eligible for National Assistance and meths. drinkers seldom, by virtue of being what they are, are of fixed abode. Sixty percent of all meths. drinkers who have been reclaimed have been helped by individuals doggedly caring enough. “Please CARE about people, never despise without understanding,” ended Sally Trench and we, the audience, filed out sick at heart at so much suffering which we felt so powerless to mitigate.

(Sally Trench worked on her own in a most devoted and heroic way. But others are also in the field. Eight years ago the Rector of Spitalfields became aware of the immensity of the problem—8000 dossers in and around his parish, many of them vagrant alcoholics. He felt that he would have to leave if he did not do something about it. £20,000 was raised to convert the crypt of his church into a rehabilitation centre, and it was opened four years ago by Princess Alexandra. Raymond Draper spent part of his summer holiday helping in the work there, and an article written by him describing his experiences appears below.—Ed.).

SPITALFIELDS CRYPT

Spitalfields crypt is a home for chronic vagrant alcoholics. It aims to minister to men in Christ's name, and to present Christ to them. 18 men live in the converted crypt which is staffed by two full-time Church Army Captains and innumerable voluntary workers, businessmen, students, housewives, nurses and others. When a man is admitted to the crypt he comes knowing that no alcohol is allowed, and knowing he is entering a specifically Christian home. For the first few days he will simply want to sleep and eat. He may have been skipping—sleeping rough—for months and may have had no solid food for days. All the food is cooked in the crypt kitchen by either women of the parish or by other voluntary workers. The atmosphere is relaxed and he will not be disturbed. In a few days he will be out and about: able to help in keeping the crypt clean, able to come and go as he pleases. Every week he will have a thorough inspection by the crypt doctor who may recommend a course of treatment. His health may well have broken down after months or years of skipping. Slowly he will begin to be built up. The possibility of baths and clean clothes are a new and welcome experience. Twice a day he will notice there are prayers and a talk. Perhaps one of the captains, or the doctor, or the cook, will read a passage of the Bible, say what it means to him or her, and then conclude with some prayers. These prayers are not compulsory and about half the men come.

H. was one such. He had come thus far and one evening carefully watched the Rector (the Rev. D. Downham) during a distressing incident—one of the men returning to drink. Suddenly he realised that the Rector really cared about the man. He really was a Christian. And from then on what the Rector said about Christ H. listened to. He is an Irish Roman Catholic. Encouraged by the crypt he began to go to mass, and through the church and the crypt he began to experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Let me expand. H. found a job. He found digs and began to work. All this time he was off the bottle. One drink would destroy him and he would have to begin all over again. Then months later the old craving came over him as he walked past a pub. Sweat broke out on his face and he felt his legs being pulled towards the pub. His only inner cry was "Lord Jesus, help me,"—the cry of the psalmist (Ps. 40); and the only way Christ could help him was by taking H. past one pub to the next until he reached his digs. There H. collapsed on his bed exhausted. In the morning he awoke and dared not open his eyes; if there had been one empty bottle he would have known he had failed. He opened his eyes—no bottle. Christ had won the victory. H. is still a frequent visitor

to the crypt. I heard the story from one who had it from H's lips. He is loved and welcomed by men and staff.

The point is simply this. Do we or do we not believe that Christ can transform us? (Be it from chronic indifference or chronic alcoholism). Of course medicine has a part to play but medicine cannot inject hope or power into men's lives. Some will say that H. is an isolated case. That is true. Only 10% of men are completely rehabilitated from the crypt. But is the rest failure? Just to see 18 men living together inside the crypt is a miracle in itself. Many will break down and return to drink, but they will know when they want to try again they will be welcome. Many men need 5—10 spells in the crypt before they can be rehabilitated. And remember the effect on the thousands of dossers, many of them vagrant who live around—here is a ray of hope, here is a light shining out of the darkness. And what darkness! Hundreds of men sleeping rough drinking anything with alcohol—hair tonic, boot polish, airwick, meths: and two minutes from the crypt is one of the worst areas of prostitution in London. Opposite the crypt is a pub. There are men there who deliberately try to get men from the crypt back on drink. You can feel a great weight of evil which lies heavy on the area. And in the centre of all this—the crypt. The Church Army Captain tells all the helpers that Christ is at the centre of the crypt—alive, directing, transforming. I believe him.

Any offers of men's or women's clothes, money or time, should be sent to The Crypt Secretary, 2 Fournier Street, Spitalfields, E.1.

(We have already sent a gift of £25 from St. James's.—Ed.)

R.J.D.

HAMPTON HILL OLD PEOPLE'S WELFARE COMMITTEE

The "Forget-Me-Not" Club was formed 6 months ago on May 1, and is now functioning very well. Mrs. Cox is Chairman, Mr. Thompson is "Minutes in Rhyme" Secretary, Mrs. Nicholson, Secretary, Mrs. Winchester, Treasurer and it is she who has most to do at present for by unanimous vote we formed a club with an annual subscription of 2s. 6d.; this goes towards a savings fund, and members pay in as much as they like towards anything they like. Total number of members to date is 63.

We try to have some interesting entertainment every week on Thursday, such as discussions, recitations, competitions, exhibitions of needlework and peculiar vases—very interesting! We also have singing, both solo and community, monologues, etc. St. James's Mothers' Union is entertaining us (including tea) on December 4 and they will be very welcome. Also very welcome would be anyone who can play the piano, or who can entertain in any way and is willing to give half an hour of their time on any Thursday afternoon, bearing in mind that we are ladies and gentlemen of pension age and gambling and bingo are not allowed as we meet in the Congregational Hall.

Our Forget-Me-Not Queen has been pleased to accept an invitation in her official capacity to the Congregational Church Christmas Bazaar on November 29.

We, the Hampton Hill Old People's Welfare Committee, are very pleased with the result of forming the club and hope that still more of our pensioners will find their way to—and their friends at—the Congregational Hall on Thursdays at 2.30—4.30 p.m.

L.M.

THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The request for tickets for the Fireworks Party was overwhelming this year and we were sorry that so many were unsuccessful in getting any. Perhaps the reason for the increased demand was the publicity given to the dangers present at smaller gatherings. We too have to consider the safety aspect and that is why we are allowed to issue only a limited number of tickets. However, we do hope that those of you who did obtain tickets enjoyed the show and also the soup and potatoes afterwards. We are very grateful to the gentlemen who spent the entire day setting up the fireworks and also to Matron and the staff of Laurel Dene who let us "take over" the kitchen and grounds.

Tickets are now available (from Mr. D. Leatherdale, 18 St. James's Road) for our first Whist Drive at Wayside on December 2 at 8 p.m. Even if you are not a very skilled card player there is always the "Booby" prize!

Have you ever longed for a trip to the Wild West? January 10 is the date—the price 5s. for adults, and 3s. 6d. for children under 14. For further details see next copy of The Spire, and posters.

ST. JAMES'S CAROL SINGING

We hope as many people as possible will come carol singing round the parish on the evening of Monday December 22. We shall have St. James's Choir with us, and even if you can't sing very well, so many people appreciate hearing the carols that it makes it very worth while. We shall be collecting for one of the church's charities this year and will end up at Wayside as usual for mince-pies and coffee.

LOCAL CHEMISTS' OUT-OF-HOURS DISPENSING SERVICE

Week commencing:

- Dec. 1 H. Hall, 62 High St., Hampton Hill.
- „ 8 F. G. Martin, 28B Priory Road, Hampton.
- „ 15 Mrs. C. T. S. Lea, 193 High Street, Hampton Hill.
- „ 22 F. G. Martin, 3 Station Approach, Hampton.
Also Christmas Day and Boxing Day.
- „ 29 Mrs. E. James, 205 High Street, Hampton Hill.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

- Dec. 2.—Saint Andrew's Day: Holy Communion at 9.00 a.m.; 8.00 p.m. Whist Drive (W).
- „ 3.—8.00 p.m. Stewardship Committee (106, Park Road).
- „ 4.—2.30 p.m. The Mothers' Union provide the entertainment at the Forget-Me-Not Club (Congregational Church Hall).
- „ 5.—10.30 a.m. Editorial Board (34, Burton's Road).
- „ 6.—3.30 p.m. Old People's Party (Hall); British Council of Churches—All-Day Regional Conference (Times and place of meeting to be announced later).
- „ 7.—6.30 p.m. Evensong, with special Readings and Comments.

- .. 9.—8.00 p.m. Tuesday Club: Speaker—the Vicar (W).
- .. 10.—8.00 p.m. Liturgical Committee (90, Ormond Drive).
- .. 14.—DEDICATION FESTIVAL: The Mayor will attend the Parish Communion at 9.30 a.m., which will also be a Family and Parade Service, and all offerings will be for his Christmas Appeal Fund.
- .. 21.—Fourth Sunday in Advent: After every service, there will be an opportunity for all who wish to take part in the National Sign-In on World Poverty.
- .. 22.—Saint Thomas's Day: Holy Communion at 8.00 a.m.; 7.00 p.m. Parish Carol-Singing.
- .. 24.—CHRISTMAS EVE: 9.30 a.m. Decoration of the church for Christmas: 11.45 p.m. Midnight Eucharist.
- .. 25.—CHRISTMAS DAY: Holy Communion at 8.00 a.m. and 12.00 noon; Parish and Family Communion at 9.30 a.m. (N.B. All offerings at these four Christmas services will be divided between charities helping the young and old in great need—The Save The Children Fund and Help The Aged.)
- .. 26.—Saint Stephen's Day: Holy Communion at 10.00 a.m.
- .. 27.—Saint John's Day: Holy Communion at 10.00 a.m.
- .. 28.—The Innocents' Day: Festival Service of Lessons and Carols at 6.30 p.m.
- Jan. 1.—The Circumcision: Holy Communion at 9.30 a.m.
- .. 10.—7.45 p.m. Parish Christmas Party (Hall).

BAPTISMS

- On October 26:
 - Howard Peter Dudley, 8, Longford Close.
 - Jonathan Edward Gale, 4, Taylor Close.
 - Christopher James Garvie, 24, Parkside.
 - Alison Lucy Melissa Gerard, 28, Windmill Road.
 - Claire Nicola Powell, 7, Hathaway Road, Shirley, Solihull.
 - Justin Skinner, 8, Ringwood Way.
- On November 2, at the Parish Communion:
 - Elizabeth Anne Bowes-Cavanagh, 27, Clarence Road, Teddington.
 - Pippa Irene Rysdale Butterfield, 5, Edward Close.

MARRIAGE

- On October 25:
 - Peter Jeffery Richard Weaver to Lindsay Gillian Reddings.

BURIALS

- On October 25:
 - Daisy Alice Hawkins, 7, Burton's Road, aged 77 years (interment of ashes in Churchyard Garden of Rest. Mrs. Hawkins died in December 1968).
- On November 7:
 - Gertrude Maud Smith, 102, Hanworth Road, aged 69 years (at Hampton Cemetery).