

## VICAR'S NOTES

My comments last month under this head have provoked an excellent and thoughtful letter which appears later in this issue. We hope that this will set a precedent, and that as time goes on more letters will be sent to the Editorial Board telling us what our readers think about various topics. We cannot promise in advance to publish them all for reasons of space and so forth, but we can promise to read them all carefully and consider what they say.

Mr. Jackson makes some good points. It is of course on matters of importance that we are striving for unanimity, and we do not want to waste time, as we easily could, over routine day-to-day decisions. And by matters of importance I would agree with him—"general policies for the work of the Church," "the Church's duties in mission and service to the parish and the world."

Harold Loukes, in "The Quaker Contribution," p. 108, after speaking of the value of the Quaker method of decision-making, admits that it has certain limitations. The larger the group and the more fluid the membership, the more difficult it is to work. It requires genuine fellowship and face-to-face relationships; and sometimes the overriding necessity of unity may delay a decision to the point where a decision has been made by default. "To postpone saying Yes too long is, after all, to say No." So we shall obviously have to feel our way in this method, without being too rigid or doctrinaire, till we find whether we are the sort of people who can make it work effectively or not.

Another well-known member of the parish has been stimulated to make a "confessio fidei" as a result of the confessions of unbelief recently appearing in Outlook, and we are glad to print this too, and would welcome further contributions along the same or similar lines.

The life and death of that great personality, Mollie Ford, are also spoken of on a later page, and it would be the kind of memorial that she would like if the parish now went on to become more deeply prayerful. Deep prayer is perhaps our greatest need to-day.

At the end of this month, we celebrate our Patronal Festival, and we shall be glad to see as many people as possible after Evensong for the traditional "At Home" in the Vicarage garden. No invitations are being sent out—just come!

## COFFEE PARTY

A glorious sunny evening greeted the members of St. James's Church when they held their recent coffee party. It was a very happy occasion with pleasurable greetings being made between friends who had come to give their support for a very worthy cause—to aid the funds for the furnishing of the new Church of St. Richard of Chichester at Hanworth.

A great attraction were the really beautiful floral arrangements which graced the dining room at Wayside.

A "bring and buy" table laden with good things was presided over by many helpful ladies, supported by two good prizes which incited the guests to try their luck with the raffle. Cups of steaming hot coffee and cool drinks were there in plenty, organised by the committee, and very ably served by the members of the Young People's Fellowship who seemed only happy when one's cup was full. All in all, an evening well spent in happy company and all will be gratified to learn that the sum of £14-10-0 was raised.

O.V.H.

## THE MOTHERS' UNION

It was appropriate that as our June meeting was held just before Whitsuntide, the subject of Miss Armitage's talk was "Power for Living." This proved to be most inspiring, and we were all left with much food for thought.

Our closing meeting on Wednesday, July 7 will be conducted by the Vicar in Church. Tea will be served at Wayside. I shall be with you in thought only, provided I waken early enough, Calgary time being eight hours behind British Summer Time.

We shall resume our meetings on the second Wednesday in September, the first being too soon after the Bank Holiday. Many of you will be going on holiday soon, and I hope that you will all come back refreshed in every way. Try to bring something back with you that can be brought to the Bring and Buy Sale which will follow the opening service.

At the moment of writing both Mrs. Drew and Mrs. King are patients in West Middlesex Hospital. Mrs. Ward is coping at home with a broken right arm, and Mrs. Bellingham expects to go into a London hospital at any time now. Please remember them all in your prayers. We wish them a speedy return to good health.

I.V.R.

## THE SCOUT GROUP

The A.G.M. was held on Wednesday, May 12, in the Parish Hall, the Vicar being asked to take the chair. The secretary in her report listed the very extensive programme organised by the Committee during the past year in order to raise funds.

The G.S.M. then thanked all Scouters and Committee members for their work over the year and stated that a lease has now been signed for land for a Camp Site and we were a good step forward towards our ultimate aim to obtain our own headquarters.

The Scoutmaster and Cubmaster then each gave a comprehensive report on the work and progress of their respective Sections, and our Treasurer presented a very satisfying Balance Sheet of our Accounts. The election of Committee and Chairman then took place, Mr. R. S. Hayward being elected Chairman.

Congratulations to Richard Cox and Robin Hammond who have been successful in obtaining "The Scout Cord." Also to Keith Lambert and Mark Olesker who with the rest of the team were successful in winning the 2nd Trophy at the District Cub Sports. This being our first appearance in the larger District of Twickenham, Whitton, etc., to which we now belong (23 Cub Packs competing) I feel we can be justly proud of our boys.

At our last Committee Meeting it was with very full hearts we stood in silence in memory of Mollie Ford, a much loved and loyal supporter of the Group over many years.

S.R.C.

## OUR CHURCHYARD

Due to the fact that some 30 or 40 people were on parade on May 29, great strides were made in clearing the Churchyard, and thanks are due to all those who assisted in the hard, but enjoyable, day's work. Needless to say the tea and coffee breaks were thoroughly appreciated and many thanks go to those who prepared the refreshments. It is hoped that another effort will be organised for early September when we hope to have an even larger band of helpers.

A gratifying result to the day has been the number of people who

have offered to maintain graves and as a result the appearance of the older part of the Churchyard is greatly improved.

D.L.

### RIVER TRIP — JULY 10

The Social Committee have arranged a trip on the River Thames from Westminster to Greenwich on Saturday, July 10. A coach will leave the church at 9.15 a.m. sharp, and the boat-trip, which takes approximately one hour, starts from Westminster Pier at 10.30 a.m. It is expected that the coach will arrive back at the church at 6.30 p.m.

Tickets, price 12/6 Adults, and 8/6 children (under 15) obtainable from any members of the Social Committee including Mr. J. Gostling, 21 St. James's Road; Mrs. Mary Harper, 249, Uxbridge Road; Mr. Roy Brooks, 10, Links View Road, Mrs. Eila Severn, 4, Ormond Drive, and the Vicar.

### THE YOUNG WIVES' GROUP

Last month we received instructions in the domestic arts. First we had a talk on dressmaking by Mrs. Adkins, a demonstrator from Vilene Ltd., who gave us several useful tips and showed us how to use Vilene, not only as an interfacing but as first-aid for sagging hems and inverted pleats. It was a very interesting evening. Then in June quite a large party visited the gas show-rooms in Kingston for a demonstration on continental cookery. We were greeted with coffee and biscuits and finished the evening sampling the four exotic looking dishes. Always provided too many of us were not tempted by the gleaming automatic cookers, we hope to arrange another visit later in the year!

The next meeting on July 28 is a social evening and we hope to see as many members as possible to discuss plans for the Autumn.

K.B.

### WHY I BELIEVE

(An answer to the series of articles "Why I don't believe" recently featured in Outlook).

Nothing is more telling than personal experience. We cannot hope to understand the way in which God's purposes are achieved but when we know that He does in fact work miracles we can speak with authority just as the blind man in the Bible spoke with authority when he said "all I know is, that where before I was blind, now I see." What better authority is there than that? The writers of the articles in Outlook are tragically blind and remain blind and so have no authority to speak.

Fifteen years ago I was very close to death and in great despair, and out of that experience came the knowledge of the power and real presence of God. I had learned the Bible stories at my mother's knee, but although "I believed in God" in the way that most people do in their hearts there was so much I could not believe and it seemed to me that although I prayed I did not become any better a person and that God had no real part in my life.

Then, out of my desperate need fifteen years ago, as I lay in that hospital-bed my prayers were answered — and answered in the way as of old we are told prayers were answered in the Bible. God spoke to me. Step by step, clinging to His aid, I recovered. It was not easy and without Him I know I should not have survived. Step by step, clinging to His aid I recovered until, I thought, I could stagger along by myself and as I grew stronger — such is human nature — I forgot where my

strength lay and even began to question whether it was not wish-fulfilment or the instinct of self-preservation that had saved me and not God at all, although in my heart I know the answer. But it is not easy to serve God, it takes a lot of time and courage and self-analysis, and so life went on. I did the best I knew how but real happiness eluded me as it eludes most of us because we do not know where it is to be found. I stopped praying for a little while, but then my inner loneliness forced me back into the habit of prayer as I felt my own gratitude for my lot in life, which most people would declare to be a fortunate one and an ever-increasing dissatisfaction with myself with which I did not know how to cope. Things which should have been a joy to me were so often an irksome duty and I didn't know what it was to have peace of mind.

I prayed, as I said before, for happiness, not knowing what it was. I had tried to find it in service to other people, in social work, in hobbies and interests but always the unhappy "ego" stood between me and fulfilment. So, as I say, I prayed for happiness. I prayed to have my unbelief pardoned. Knowing that I was inherently selfish I prayed to be unselfish — unselfish in mind as well as in actions and at last, as something happened in my life that challenged not only my faith but the faith of the whole world I prayed for proof that God was really here — and God spoke to me as He had once before.

I was told that before I was only of little faith, but now my faith was to be made whole. I was helped to see myself as I really am, and helped to begin to change myself. I was told that Love is the most important thing in life and if we really love we understand. Self-love gets nothing because it gives nothing; resentment is always evil as it serves only as an excuse for doing things we ought not to do and thinking destructive thoughts. I was shown that if I remembered that it is not "who is right" that counts, but doing "what is right" I should find life simple instead of complex.

I was told that God had saved me once before but I had not believed enough, but that now He would never leave me and would be in me to the exclusion of that inner loneliness which I, in common with most people, so unhappily was conscious of. I was shown that happiness lay in the realisation that God is with us everywhere — in the roar of the traffic, in the kitchen, in the shops — everywhere. If we pause to listen to His voice we shall hear it telling us the way to go. To this day, the times I fail are the times when I am too busy being Martha to stop to sit with Mary at the feet of our Lord and listen to His words.

I read at this time that some people would find it difficult to believe in the voice of God as an actuality, but that everyone knows that inside everyman there is something — a kind of essence — that in times of stress and need and tribulation — enables mere man to transcend himself and do things that he knows normally would have been beyond him. It is that essence; that presence that is apart from man, yet by whom man is known and whom man has a consciousness of, that can talk to us if we will take time off to listen.

I have done this — and do this everyday — and through the grace of God, the miracle continues. Our life seemed to change all of a sudden and is still changing and growing more rich. For the first time my heart is so full of happiness that I feel tears of humble gratitude. My home, my friends, even the humblest chore is seen in a new light. Impossible things have become easy. The peace of mind I prayed so

desperately for has come to me, and abides with me just so long as I remember from whence it comes. Even the sun shines brighter and the world has become all together a lovely place for me. I used to be fearful of the revelation I had had but I was told not to be afraid. God has always spoken to His children through the centuries and will continue to do so if they will only listen.

I still stand on the threshold of the possibilities opened to all of us through the Grace of God. I often fail God but I know that God will not fail me and out of this firm knowledge comes a strength not my own and a faith and hope and confidence in the future. I cannot say "I am a Christian" — I can only say, with humble gratitude that, through the Grace of our Lord, I am trying to be one — or trying to learn how to be one.

(Contributed)

**"OUT OF THE DEEP HAVE I CALLED UNTO THEE, O LORD . . ." (Psalm 130)**

The parish has just suffered the loss of one of its most faithful and beloved servants, and in Mollie Ford's death her many friends have sustained a blow from which it will be hard to recover.

Such was Mollie's personality — her quiet strength, her real kindness, her wit and charm — that she filled the hearts of those who came in daily contact with her with respect and love. Out of this love sprang a compelling need to be of service to her and to her family in their dark days and out of that need her friends had the courage to fight their personal shyness and to approach one another to form an ever-increasing circle of prayer. Immediately a great force was felt to be at work and within the circle those who prayed found comfort and strength and renewed faith and also an increased regard for, and awareness of, one another.

"Christianity was never meant to be practised in isolation. From the beginning it has been a fellowship of believers sharing in the new life in Christ in the company of one another. Prayer meditation and worship are all enriched when undertaken corporately" (Bible Reading Fellowship Notes).

The best remembrance that Mollie could have would be the continuation and growth of the habit of regular prayer and a growing study of the Bible in which are to be found the tenets of our Faith. We all need the prayers of our friends, we all need to experience the joy to be found in increasing Christian Fellowship, and if the supplying of those needs were to spring to life out of Mollie's death she would continue to live in us and for us as of old.

M.O.

## **LETTER TO THE EDITORS**

### **CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

The Vicar's Notes in last month's magazine discussed the unanimous decision or "common mind" as the basis of Church Government. Whilst at first sight this would appear to be the ideal method of reaching decisions, one wonders whether it will work in practice and whether we can afford the time to use this method.

Ideally a dissenting minority would discuss and pray with the other members until agreement is reached; but have our spiritual lives reached this standard yet? Is it not more likely that the dissenting would for convenience outwardly withdraw their objections, but inwardly retain them to be brought out in circumstances when, as we all know, they can do tremendous damage to the work of the Church? Would it not be better for them to openly express their differing

convictions in a vote, and then give themselves wholeheartedly to enforcing the policy which the majority, speaking for the Church, believe to be right?

The British jury system constantly demonstrates that even when the relevant facts have been expertly presented and summarised, the reaching of a common mind is much more time-consuming than a vote. The calls on the spare time of church members are many; family life, practical church work and work for civic and social bodies all compete for time with church council and committee work; we must be careful how we apportion our time. Do many of the matters on which the council must make a decision justify the time required to reach a common mind, or even discussion by the council in full session?

By delegating the responsibility for many of the day to day decisions to officers or small committees in whose appropriate ability the council has confidence, the limited time available might be more profitably used in forming, possibly by unanimous decision, the general policies for the work of the Church. Much more time could be given to considering the Church's duties in mission and service to the parish and the world.

M.R.J.

### SOME DATES TO NOTE

- July 2.—8.0 p.m. MRI "No Small Change" Group (Vicarage); 8.30 p.m. Junior Confirmation Class (Vestry)—and every Friday until July 16.
- .. 4.—3rd Sunday after Trinity.
- .. 7.—10.0 a.m. Holy Communion at Laurel Dene; 2.30 p.m. Mothers' Union Service.
- .. 8.—8.0 p.m. Stewardship Committee (106, Park Road).
- .. 10.—River Trip.
- .. 11.—4th Sunday after Trinity.
- .. 12.—Hampton Council of Churches: First All-Day Conference for School-leavers; 8.0 p.m. Hampton Council of Churches: Prayer and Discussion Group—Speaker: A Member of the Greek Orthodox Church (St. Mary's, Hampton).
- .. 13.—10.0 a.m. Editorial Board (52, Park Road).
- .. 14.—Second School-leavers' Conference.
- .. 15.—8.0 p.m. Youth Club Management Committee (Vestry).
- .. 18.—5th Sunday after Trinity.
- .. 19.—8.0 p.m. Hampton Council of Churches: Quarterly Meeting (W).
- .. 20.—8.0 p.m. Sunday School Teachers' Meeting (Vicarage).
- .. 22.—8.0 p.m. Church Council (W).
- .. 25.—ST. JAMES'S DAY: PATRONAL FESTIVAL.  
7.45 p.m. "At Home" in Vicarage Garden.
- .. 28.—8.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group: Social Evening (W).

### MARRIAGE

- June 5.—John Arthur Ebsworth to Margaret Gunns.

### BURIALS AND CREMATION

- June 3.—Edythe Mary Ford, 83, Park Road, aged 51 years (at S.W. Middlesex Crematorium: interment of ashes in St. James's Churchyard on June 4).
- .. 11.—Ellen Coote, 17, Park Road, aged 88 years.
- .. 11.—Edith Minnie Scott, Teddington Hospital, formerly of 35, Edward Road, aged 87 years.