

VICAR'S NOTES

Strange Beliefs: We have long been used to representatives of the Jehovah's Witnesses knocking at our doors and inviting us to join one of their Bible study groups or to buy their literature. Now we have two young Americans living in Teddington calling frequently "to get to know the families". They are Mormon missionaries, here for two years, and they are pleasant and earnest young men — but they represent a crude and rather childish form of religion, and we should meet them with courtesy but also with firmness if we do not want them to call again and again. This has been my first direct contact with them, though when I was at Mansfield I used to get many letters from families in Salt Lake City asking me to search the registers for details of ancestors long since dead — presumably so that their living descendants could be baptised for them and so rescue them from hell.

The Mormons are one of those sects which get a "kick" out of believing that they alone have the truth, they alone are the saved, and everyone else will be everlastingly damned. This gives them a feeling of "being on top of the world," and makes them keen and cheerful. As well as having this infectious enthusiasm, they live very simply and soberly; they work hard, and are exceedingly generous in giving money to their "church" and to the poor. But throughout their history there has been a certain ruthlessness about them which from time to time has flared out into downright cruelty and murder. And they do not seem to set much store by intellectual honesty. The Book of Mormon on which many of their doctrines are based is a palpable forgery, and it is amazing that the shifty and illiterate man who perpetrated this gigantic fraud has been held in such high honour for so long. One of the queer things that the Mormons teach about Jesus is that the wedding at Cana was His own, and that there He married Martha and the Marys, thus providing a convenient sanction for Mormon polygamy.

Though modern Mormons appear to be attempting to refine away some of the former crudities, enough still remains to make it a creed repulsive to people who value truth and love. Further details about it and other strange forms of belief can be found in a book on our church book-stall which is a good five shillings' worth — "Christian Deviations," by Horton Davies.

Services in August: I have spent a good deal of time, and written very many letters, trying to arrange help for the first four Sundays in August when I shall be away. I had thought that everything was successfully settled several times: then unforeseen circumstances caused my prospective locum to change his plans, and I had to start all over again. At the moment I am still desperately trying to find help to maintain

just two services each Sunday — at 9.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. As I write, two Evensongs are fixed up (on 8 and 22) but no Communion at all, and in case the worst comes to the worst, I am asking the Bishop for permission to arrange for transport to be at the church 15 minutes before the service should start here to take people to other churches in the district. Details will be posted on the church notice-boards, and also perhaps in a stop-press in this magazine. The normal pattern will in any case be operating again from August 29 onwards.

I hope that before long, the diocese or rural deanery will take full responsibility for seeing that all clergy have adequate holidays, and that the necessary help is provided in the parishes when they are away.

OUTING TO GREENWICH

The day dawned with a steady drizzle, but the forty or so stalwarts were not deterred by so minor a weather hazard, and armed with cardigans, macs, umbrellas and flasks of coffee we set off from the Church almost on time. We were joined at Westminster by the Melvilles (only just by Papa, who was to be seen racing across Westminster Bridge with only a minute to go before sailing time).

We had a very informative member of the crew who acted as guide from Westminster to Greenwich, and even the Londoners amongst us learned something new. We were soon shedding macs, etc., as the sun shone down soon after leaving Westminster.

At Greenwich we went our several ways to visit "The Cutty Sark," the R.N. College and its chapel, the Museum and its lovely grounds, the Observatory—according to our choice.

To describe all that we saw of beauty and interest is quite beyond my scope here. I must confess, rather shamefacedly, as a Londoner, that I had never before visited Greenwich and this perhaps added to the surprise and pleasure found there. There was so much to be seen that in spite of a stay of some 5 hours most of us still have much left to see on another visit.

We returned home surfeited with sweets and ice cream which had been very kindly donated by Mr. Eaton. Our thanks are due to the Committee for a well organised trip, and for the excellent maps and information that was distributed.

P.M.D.

NO SMALL CHANGE INDEED!

M.R.I. — the Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence manifesto to the laity from the Toronto Conference blossomed, or at least budded, into the No Small Change Lent-course. Fifty-three London parishes took part in the pilot scheme this year.

In May five groups, each of ten churches, met to pool their findings. Representatives of St. James's group joined with the "Riverside" churches when they met at Sunbury. Here we were surprised to find that similar problems had emerged in all the parishes. Immediately, then, we felt a sense of community with local churches. (Our ignorance about neighbouring churches was one of things that was brought home to us during the course). All the groups found an urgent need for "training of the laity" — we didn't have time to discuss exactly **what** training — and St. Richard's and All Saints' were already planning to join forces over this. Why not St. James's too? Efficient use of manpower, one of the points discussed would be served by this.

Each of the five groups briefed one of their members to report to the Bishop of London. He had agreed to attend a meeting with ten members from each of the fifty-three churches to hear their conclusions. To this meeting, nine members from St. James's went in July. It was held in the Assembly Hall of Church House, Westminster.

With the five opening speeches we saw the same themes emerging:

The Church's work is the responsibility of the laity.

This work is world-mission — as much at home as overseas.

This is the day of **inter**-dependence: we must work together with overseas churches.

Our local churches have not kept pace with the changing needs of society: changes in services and the parochial set-up are often suspect.

We, the laity, are too ignorant about the beliefs of our Church.

Ignorant also about the local and diocesan organisation of the Church — and what we **do** know we don't like! Unanimously the groups had concluded that the Diocese of London was too big and so, inefficient.

Lay-training was urgently needed, and the clergy also needed much more help and pastoral care than they were now receiving.

All speeches were excellent. Then the Bishop invited contributions from the hall with "no holds barred," he said. This opportunity was used mainly to hammer home, rather repetitiously, the points about ecclesiastical organisation and the remoteness of the Bishop. This seemed rather a waste of time since they had been adequately dealt with in the original speeches. Finally the Bishop had to close discussion with "We've got to get out of here in exactly seven minutes, which just leaves me six and a half to speak to you!" Although this was a pity, he used the short time very well.

First he urged a sense of proportion: after all the discussion we should remember that Organisation still doesn't preach the Gospel! And he pointed out something else, which perhaps we'd lost sight of in our enthusiasm — we, whose fifty-three parishes constituted, after all,

less than a tenth of the parishes of the Diocese — that in most parishes there is a solid wall of conservatism and the tides of change wash almost in vain against them. For example, although most parishes accepted the Paul report and approved, in theory, a group ministry, when he tried to set up such a ministry the parishes always said: “a good idea, but not for us!”

The Bishop went on: “I believe that in the future, Parliament will put no obstacles in the way of any changes the Church wants to bring about”. So, once again we were brought back to the parish level. Even in the most successful No Small Change parishes only a fraction of the church had taken part. Our own parish seems to have been average — twenty-two out of an electoral roll of 225.

Prayer-book revision, with experimental forms of services, will soon be on the agenda. Regular church-goers may love the Prayer-book as it is with its beautiful prose, its reminder of the Reformation, and we can turn a deaf ear to the medieval theology which we no longer believe. But however precious to our Church and literary culture, it is still hindering masses of people from finding the love of God through Jesus Christ.

Are we troubled about this, or is it for all time “No change, no change”?
C.H.B.

READING THE LESSONS

At recent meetings of the Liturgical Committee it has been suggested that there should be a rota of people willing to read certain lessons in church. Will anyone who is interested in doing this please give their name to the Vicar. Further details will be announced in due course.
H.T.

PARISH RENEWAL WEEKEND

How do you feel about a break after the exertions of Christmas? This is your chance to have it. Come to the Parish Renewal Weekend at Stoke Poges, near Slough, on January 21 — 23, 1966. More details will be available later, but as the accommodation is limited to twenty-eight make sure of a place by booking early! The cost is estimated at about £2-5-0.
A.T.

THE YOUNG WIVES' GROUP

We were pleased to welcome some new members to our June meeting, when Mrs. Lambourne, Mrs. Melville and Mrs. Orton led a discussion evening. The topics were varied and both interesting and amusing views were expressed on education; reasons why women go out to work, and television programmes. We thank our speakers for an enjoyable evening.

Mrs. Glenwood, 81, Winchendon Road, restarted the Toddlers' Club this month, and meetings will recommence in September on the first and third Tuesdays at 2.30 p.m. in Wayside. The carpeted floor is very much appreciated and gives plenty of space for the youngsters to play. Mothers with small children are very welcome.

Our next meeting is an "At home" at Wayside on September 29.
K.B.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP

Since our last report in the "Spire" (which was unfortunately too long ago to remember), the Y.P.F. has met regularly on Sunday evenings at Wayside and occasionally on Friday evenings for a games and records evening. Services are still held at Laurel Dene approximately every six weeks and Communion breakfasts have also been continued monthly.

At the Annual General Meeting, November, 1964, Gillian Howard, Ann Harper, Lesley Young, Richard Cox, Raymond Draper, and Richard Melville were elected as members of the General Committee and the Vicar approved the appointment of Trevor Atkinson as a Leader. Robin Hammond has since been co-opted onto the General Committee.

The Sunday evening activities and topics have been varied and interesting including many Guest Speakers, discussions, Problem Boxes, reviews and Bible studies. Extra activities have included the holiday in Derbyshire at Easter 1964, hikes, a debate, a visit to the Scripture Union Rally in London, musical evenings and work parties. The Y.P.F. now also participate in an Old People's scheme by which members visit and help old people in and around Hampton Hill.

All young people in the parish are warmly invited to attend our activities. Sunday evening meetings at 8 p.m. will be as follows:—

- Aug. 1.—Problem Box.
- .. 8.—Bible Study Parable.
- .. 15.—Competition.
- .. 22.—Topic: What I find in Christ.
- .. 29.—Vicar's Evening.
- Sept. 5.—Guest Speaker: Mr. Taylor.
- .. 12.—Bible Study, Minor Prophets 1.
- .. 19.—Meeting with Congregational Y.P.F.
- .. 26.—Bible Study, Minor Prophets 2.

L.Y.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

SERVICES IN AUGUST—SEE "VICAR'S NOTES."

STOP PRESS: All Evensongs Fixed up August 1-22. For Communion Meet at Church 9.15 a.m.

- Aug. 10.—10.00 a.m. Editorial Board (52, Park Road).
- .. 26.—8.00 p.m. M.R.I. "No Small Change" Group (2, Hartland Road).

- Sept. 12.—Sunday Schools re-open.
 „ 14.—8.00 p.m. Liturgical Committee (Vestry).
 „ 16.—8.00 p.m. Stewardship Sunday — Briefing Meeting (National Society's Main Hall, Westminster).
 „ 17.—8.30 p.m. Junior Confirmation Class re-opens (Vestry).
 „ 21.—8.00 p.m. Stewardship Committee (106, Park Road).
 „ 28.—8.0 p.m. Reading Auditions (Church).

BAPTISMS

- June 27.—David Edward Murrell, 16, Queen's Road.
 „ 27.—Kathryn Phillipa Price, 77, Longford Close.
 „ 27.—Gavin Raffaelli, 36, Windsor Court, Sunbury.
 „ 27.—Leona Frances Savva, 134, High Street.

MARRIAGES

- June 26.—Richard Stratton Taylor to Shirley Ann Edwards.
 July 17.—Rodney Philip Bishop to Ann Frances Margaret Swindale.

BURIAL AND CREMATIONS

- July 5.—Frank Joseph Head, 7, Cranmer Court, aged 57 years (at S.W. Middlesex Crematorium).
 „ 21.—Arthur Charles Lott, 29, Park Road, aged 77 years (at Kingston Crematorium).
 „ 21.—William Charles Hobday, formerly of 35, Wellington Road, aged 85 years.
 „ 22.—Violet May Smith, 51, Wolsey Road, aged 71 years.

CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE organises functions throughout the year.

THE YOUNG WIVES' GROUP meets last Wednesday evening in each month. (Chairman: Mrs. K. Brooks, 10, Links View Road.

TED. Lock 2593)

THE MOTHERS' UNION meets first Wednesday afternoon in each month. (Enrolling member: Mrs I. V. Rockliffe, 40, Gloucester Road, Teddington. TED. Lock 4909)

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP meets after Evensong on Sundays.

SCOUTS: 3rd Hampton Hill Scout Group. (Group Scoutmaster: Mr. S. R. Childs, 60b, French Street, Sunbury. SUN. 4182)

GUIDES: 1st Hampton Hill Company (Captain: Miss Ruth Mills, 40, Oldfield Rd, Hampton. Mol. 6626). (Brown Owl: Mrs. D. M. Casey, 89, Connaught Rd, Teddington. TED. Lock 5041.

THE YOUTH CLUB meets at Windmill Road School on Friday evenings.

THE HISTORY SOCIETY: (Chairman: Mrs. M. Orton, 30, St. James's Rd, Mol 5868)