

Vicar's Notes

THE WITNESSES

There are, and have been, many sects which have held, in one form or another, the doctrine caricatured in the famous lines:

"We are God's chosen few,
All others will be damned.
There is no room in Heaven
for you,
We can't have Heaven
crammed.

One of the latest and largest of these is the sect now commonly known as "Jehovah's Witnesses." A brief statement about them from the Adult Education Secretary of the Church Assembly appears on a later page. There can be few sects which have such a hatred of Churches and Christianity as they have. Apparently their 'party-line,' which can be suddenly switched, is now to conceal this basic antagonism under a cloak of pleasantness and friendliness, and to put the blame on the Church for being too 'militant.' But again and again in their writings it is stated that all Churches are under the control and supervision of the Devil, and that all clergymen are false shepherds, and due for slaughter.

Many people in this parish are now being persistently called on by these fanatics, and however pleasant or unpleasant they may be, it is useful to keep in mind what they really stand for.

It is very strange that people who hate us as enemies of God and followers of Satan should yet ask us to be kind to them and give hospitality to those who are coming to their convention. But as was said—and exemplified—in the Drama Group's recent play, "human nature is very peculiar," and we must pray for these deluded people, do what we can to rescue them from their false belief, and strengthen ourselves and others in that full and rich Faith which is ours and intended for everybody, but which we often so gravely neglect.

APPOINTMENT OF ORGANIST

We welcome as our new Organist and Choirmaster, Mr. R. E. Bougourd. Some people remember him when he served temporarily

in these capacities for 2½ years at the end of the war, and he is fast making many new friends. Already his enthusiasm and knowledge are making themselves felt, to the great benefit of both Choir and Congregation. Some changes in the music will doubtless now be made, and one certain one is that the new and much-improved point-of the Psalms will gradually be introduced. The Church Council were entirely convinced, after a demonstration arranged by Mr. Bougourd, that this would be a change for the better, and one welcomed by nearly everybody after the first unfamiliarity had worn off.

RENOVATIONS AND REPAIRS

The recent Box-Opening gave a much-needed lift to our Renovation Fund, bringing in about £40. It came at a time when we had just received further bad news about the condition of the church. It has been a mystery why the roof over the south aisle should still let water through on certain occasions despite all the work and money spent on it. Now two experts have made another thorough investigation, and as a result some of the reasons for the leaks have come to light. Their report mentions four main causes, all of them "quite clearly due to omissions in the original construction," and not the fault of any recent work by our contractors, who have done a good job. These omissions were such as might not cause trouble for many years, but were bound to do so in the end. They were not easily detected, for sometimes work that appeared sound was concealing work left unfinished or badly done when the church was first built, and for this we are paying the penalty now. We have no idea as yet about what the cost of putting these defects right will be, but it may be considerable, and we obviously cannot afford it at the moment. All we can do is to face the prospect that we may have to peg away at raising money to put the church in proper order for many years yet—but to face it in good heart, and hope that many more parishioners will join us in the task.

Another disappointment was to learn that there were still defects in the condition of the organ. Some of the work done in 1951 that should have lasted 50 years is now beginning to go, and to put it right and make it as it should have been in the first place will cost us £254. It would, of course, be better if this work could be done immediately, but as this is

not financially possible, it is fortunate that it can be spread out over the next 8 or 9 years, at only slightly higher cost. The main thing for us to try to do is to strengthen our general funds so that we have reserves to put aside for the repairs and renewals that become increasingly necessary as the years go by.

AROUND THE SPIRE

being notes and news about
people, activities & organisations

THE DRAMA GROUP

The St. James's Drama Group maintained their high standard with the presentation of "The Judgement of Harris" by Parnell Bradbury on Friday, 3rd June, 1955.

This very amusing comedy was extremely well acted by all the cast and the whole production did great credit to the indefatigable producer, Mrs. Rockcliffe.

Sam Harris, the hero of the play, who is the victim of an eccentric uncle's will which involves him in having to choose a wife from candidates selected by the uncle, or lose his inheritance, was admirably played by Alan Laurie. His portrayal of the hearty and painstaking Yorkshireman was most natural, as was his well-sustained Yorkshire accent. His appraisal of each candidate, in interviews where he made notes of their various points, called forth much mirth. He made the most of each amusing, and sometimes embarrassing, situation.

The Vicar was most convincing as the family solicitor who was extremely concerned at the conditions of this eccentric client's will. His perturbation as to the way in which the enthusiastic legatee was going to cope with the situation was presented with skill.

Joan Bassett showed just the right amount of restraint as the quiet and sincere Helen Cardew, the one candidate who proved that Sam's judgement was somewhat belated in recognising her sound qualities.

Rita Malyon as the alluring Hebe Marchant got her part over extremely well. Sam's interview with this pert and modern Miss caused much amusement.

Mrs. Marchant, Rita's scheming mother, was well acted by Peggy Holmes. Her anxiety to see that her daughter should be the chosen bride, and her indignation when this failed, was well portrayed.

Daphne Cooper was most natural as Anthea Shellick, the representative of "the county." Her gestures were expressive and she displayed good stage presence.

John Lloyd played the country gentleman, Graham Thetford, with ease and showed his good feeling towards the "parvenu" Sam Harris, who was likely to be his neighbour, and appeared quite sincere in his efforts to save him from the designing women.

Wyn Green was very well cast as Mrs. Winters, the rather dignified and prim housekeeper. Her bearing was well sustained in all circumstances.

The farm-hand, Board, who could cope with any situation, was well played by Michael Rooney.

The work behind the scenes must have called for much untiring effort, and contributed to make the show such a success. These hard workers were Mrs. Norah Lloyd, Mrs. Vera Rockcliffe, Miss Dorothy Tarrant, and Messrs. A. G. Hill, D. Hill, L. Rockcliffe and J. Strawson. D.R.M.

The above is a short account by a member of the audience of the Group's last play. Members of the Group are glad that the play was so greatly appreciated and caused so much mirth. It was certainly very well supported, and every seat in the hall—over 180—was filled.

This is the third full-length production that the Group has presented in the Hall since its incep-

tion 3½ years ago. It has also presented an evening of one-act plays, and two Nativity Plays and one Passion Play in church. This last production was noteworthy in that it was the first play to be presented without outside help. We have owed a great deal to producers and other helpers from outside the Group, and in particular from the Teddington Theatre Club, but on this occasion—and thanks largely to the generous help and instruction so freely given to us in the past—members of the Group covered every department themselves, including that of producer.

The Group's plans for next season include a one-act play at the Harvest Supper and at the Summer Fête, a three-act comedy-thriller in December, and a Passion Play in church in Holy Week. Intending members — and young men are particularly needed — should get in touch with the Secretary, Mr. Rooney, as soon as possible.

The Group is organising a Theatre-Party to travel by coach to see "My Three Angels" at the Lyric on Monday, July 11th — those wishing to reserve seats should apply to Mr. Rooney or Mrs. Rockliffe.

THE SCOUT GROUP

Cubs

Sports were held on June 8th in preparation for the Cubs' District Sports to be held at Denmead Sports Ground on June 28th. A number of our Cubs took part in a Country Dancing Display at the 1st Hampton Hill Scouts' Fete at Beveree on June 11th. A most enjoyable and inspiring evening was had by all of us who took part in the Coach Outing to the Albert Hall to see Ralph Reader's Show entitled "Boy Scout."

Scouts

An enjoyable evening was held when our Troop combined with the Sea Scouts for an ordinary Scout meeting.

Please ring Molesey 2640 if you have any waste paper or jam jars to be collected. The proceeds are to be given towards the upkeep of "Wayside."

Watch for further particulars of our **Penny Party** to be held at "Wayside" on Saturday, September 10th.

AKELA

N.S.P.C.C.

The Branch Secretary thanks most warmly the Collectors and the contributors to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in the recent collection. The sum of £28-16-11 has been forwarded to the Society and a letter of thanks together with the official receipt may be seen in the Church Porch. The Secretary will gladly give information about the work at any time or receive requests for help.

M. J. BECKETT,

Hon. Secretary.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

- July 2.—3.0 p.m. Summer Fete (Laurel Dene).
- July 3.—7.45 p.m. Vicarage "At Home" to P.C.C.
- July 5.—8.0 p.m. Street-Wardens' Meeting (Vestry).
- July 6.—3.0 p.m. Mothers' Union Quarterly Service. Preacher: The Rev. W. H. Hitchinson.
- July 10.—9.0 a.m. Confirmation and Parish Communion. (N.B.: No Service at 8.0 a.m., and Matins—said—at 11.30 a.m.).
- July 24.—2.30 p.m. Children's Service; Presentation of Diocesan Certificates. (N.B.: The Sunday Schools close until September 11). 6.30 p.m. Patronal Festival Evensong.
- July 25.—St. James. Holy Communion 7.15 a.m.
- July 27.—7.45 p.m. Young Wives' Group (Hall).
- July 29.—7.30 p.m. Magazine Distributors (Vicarage).
- Sept. 1—3.—Flower Show in aid of Renovation Fund (Hall).
- Sept. 10.—3.0 p.m. Scout Group "Penny Party" ("Wayside").
- Oct. 6.—7.15 p.m. Harvest Thanksgiving.

BAPTISMS

- June 12.—Bryan Roy Farmer, 173, Uxbridge Road.
„ 12.—Geoffrey Leonard Farmer, 65, Longford Close.
„ 26.—Gary Royston Jackson, 8, Coleshill Road.

MARRIAGES

- June 10.—Derek Alfred Parkin to Shirley Clara Vine.
„ 25.—Albert George Glenister to Vera Elizabeth Cavey.
„ 25.—Henry James Clark to Doris Elsie Wyatt.

FROM BEYOND THE SPIRE

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Jehovah's Witnesses is only one of the names of a movement which claims to have at least 575 congregations in the British Isles "with approximately 15,000 active associates." They are also known as Russellites from the name of the founder; as members of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society; as The International Bible Students Association Incorporated; and as followers of "Judge" Rutherford, the successor of Russell.

The teaching of Jehovah's Witnesses centres round the belief that the end of the world is at hand and that after all their foes have been destroyed the Witness will continue on earth as the chosen of Jehovah, Who will then have set up His kingdom. This destruction of their enemies will be achieved at Armageddon where the final battle will be fought between Jehovah and Satan. Jehovah will prevail and Satan's organisation, which includes all Church people and those who do not accept Rutherford's teaching, will be consigned to perdition. When this has happened the Witnesses who all belong to what they call "the Overcoming Class" will be gathered together and will build Jehovah's kingdom, otherwise called "The Theocratic Kingdom" out of the ruins of the old order. The number of the "Overcoming Class" will be limited to 144,000, a figure presumably suggested by the passage in The Revelation of St. John the Divine which speaks of the 12,000 of each of the twelve tribes of Israel who were "sealed." The interpretation put on this passage by Jehovah's Witnesses that a fixed number of individuals in each tribe are alone to be saved while the remainder are lost is a completely mistaken one. The

number twelve was the Hebrew symbol of completeness, and the meaning of the passage is that every member of every tribe is "sealed" or capable of salvation.

But not only do the Witnesses misinterpret many passages in the Bible, they also use familiar words such as "religion" and "Christianity" giving them an entirely unaccustomed meaning. In spite of this confusion of words it is clear that they reject the teaching of the Christian Church about the divinity of Christ, the Holy Trinity, and the Resurrection.

Nor can any Christian accept the narrow exclusiveness which leads Jehovah's Witness to attack all religions except their own. They make no concealment either of their dislike of the Christian Church and its members or of the satisfaction with which they anticipate the ultimate destruction of all who do not agree with them.

It seems incredible that anyone could accept the fantastic and unproved interpretation of many Biblical passages put forward by Jehovah's Witnesses. But that this does happen should rouse Christians to a sense of the importance of reading the Bible more frequently with the help of good commentaries and other books by Christian scholars.

The Christian Church, too, must teach and preach more about what it means by the Second Coming and the Judgement. St. Paul wrote to the Romans, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Those Christians, who translate St. Paul's words into action will find themselves not only knowing their Bible but also beginning to understand what is the Christian hope.