

VICAR FORSEES

EVERY REASON FOR HOPE

REPLY TO RELIGIOUS PESSIMISM

History Repeats Itself At Randwick

SPECIAL BY "WANDERING WORSHIPPER"

"I THINK if you look really deeply into things, you will find there are many signs of real religious revival in this and other countries." This was the encouraging declaration made by the Vicar of Randwick (the Rev. G. R. Wehner), in the course of his sermon on Sunday morning, and he supported his contention with illustrations drawn from parallel situations in history.

"I think we are living in a period when we should be full of hope for the future, and when we have every reason to hope that things will begin to revive once more," asserted the Vicar.

In these days when so many seem depressed about the religious life of the age, I thought it was refreshing to listen to one who found himself able to look with optimism to the future, and to give sound advice to those listening to him.

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AFTER listening to Mr. Wehner's discourse, I could not help thinking how curiously history sometimes repeated itself. Mr. Wehner alluded to religious revivals, and in one, at least, that he mentioned, Randwick played its part, for in 1742 John Wesley visited the village and preached to a great concourse of people. Only a few years before, George Whitefield was to be heard preaching in the Church, possibly from the same spot on which Mr. Wehner was standing on Sunday, and it was quite conceivable that, in view of the conditions then existing, both the great 18th Century revivalists spoke in similar strain as the Vicar did.

Not a Time for Looking Miserable

Mr. Wehner reminded his hearers that the beginning of the Lenten period was imminent, and said he thought they were justified in regarding the season, not as a time for being unhappy and looking miserable, but rather as a time for quietly drawing near to God. They needed to draw quietly and thoughtfully near to God, and though they gave up certain things during the Lenten period they should do so with the thought of having a little more time and leisure, and perhaps an opportunity for quietness, in order to pursue their way. He would suggest one thought which might be helpful in Lent, when people were drawing nearer to God.

Sunday and Cinemas

"We are disturbed to-day," proceeded the Vicar, "by the falling off of church congregations. As you know there is, at present, some agitation going on as to whether theatres and cinemas should open on Sunday or not. There are people who are getting very disturbed indeed, and think things are about as bad as they can be; they think matters are, at all events, getting steadily worse.

I want to remind you of one or two facts of English history which may be of encouragement to us. I am quite prepared to agree that there is a good deal to make us depressed about our church, religious, and moral life as a whole. Yet when you go back and read the history of this country for the last 300 years you will come to think matters are not quite so bad at present as we may imagine, but that really there is a great deal of indication that we are just on the verge of a new religious revival.

Slumps Follow Wars

"May I remind you of one or two facts and dates? At the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century there were two great wars going on, commonly known as the War of the English Succession and the War of the Spanish Succession. These wars closed with the Treaty of Utrecht, signed about 1712. There followed a slump in social and religious life. Between 1730 and 1740 there began that great revival in English religion known as Wesleyanism.

"When you come to another century you

find almost precisely the same thing happens. There is a great war with France, which ends with the Battle of Waterloo, and following was the usual slump in social and religious life. Nearly 20 years later—in 1833—there began that great movement in religion called the Oxford Movement. The beginning of this is attributed to the preaching of an Assize sermon by Keble in that year.

Many Signs of Revival

"So we come to our own century, and we find the same sort of conditions prevailing. We have experienced a big war, and there has followed the usual slump in social and religious life. We get to that period—about 20 years after—when we have every reason to hope that things will begin to revive once more. I think if you look really deeply into things you will find there are many signs of real religious revival in this and other countries. Therefore, far from being hopeless, I think we are living in a period when we should be full of hope for the future.

"If this is true," continued the Vicar, "we must remember that this sort of thing does not usually happen when people sit down, fold their arms, and say, 'Things are all going wrong.' It is true we are dependent on the spirit of God to infuse into our hearts the new life that is necessary, but we can help the Spirit of God. We can be waiting for it and making ourselves ready to receive it."

A Way To Get Ready

The Vicar added that he would suggest one way in which they could get ready. As Christians we were standing for a body of principles including loyalty to God and Christ, but we sometimes forgot that. We forgot we were representatives of God in the sphere in which we moved. People had the alternative of either bearing witness for God or not doing so. They often failed to make it clear exactly where they stood. They let Christianity and the Church down by living in a fog so that nobody knew where they stood. It was really necessary that they should stand clearly in their different departments of life for Christianity. He did not suggest that they should try to advertise Christianity in a public way by going about with a sandwich board on their backs. Anyone who made his position clear made an impression on those around, and that was what was needed.

They should remember, too, that they were not individuals standing on their own as Christians, but members of a great body. They were all standing for the same great principles, and were able to help and sympathise with each other. All could help to make things better for the Church and Christianity in the future.

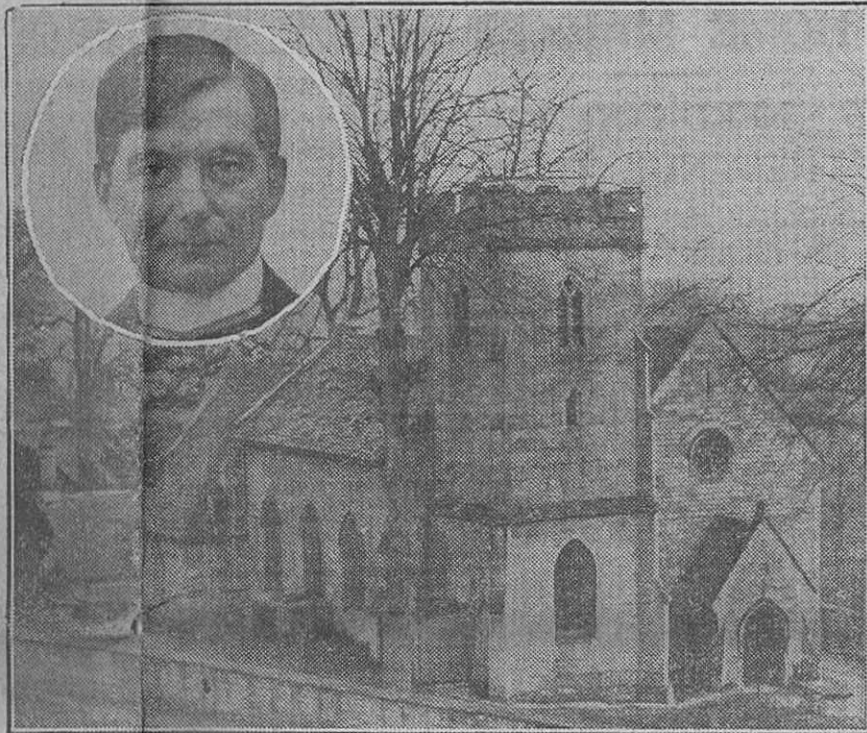
Mr. Wehner spoke very earnestly, and I thought it was a pity some of those who possess a more gloomy outlook in regard to religion could not have heard him. A good many could have been packed into the church, for the building is capable of holding about 270 people and the congregation was on the thin side.

Strong Choir

Not so was the choir, however, for nearly all the stalls were filled. I was, in fact, surprised at its strength for a small village church, there being at least 30 members present. I learned also that there were several absentees, so that when at full strength the choir would no doubt be quite comparable with any others of similar sized churches in the county. I delayed my entry into the church, and I was outside when the service began. I thought the singing sounded very pleasing.

Singing has, I understand, always figured prominently in Randwick Church services. I don't know if it were particularly vigorous

A RELIGIOUS REVIVAL



Randwick Church, and the Vicar (the Rev. G. R. Wehner).

in olden days, but certainly 100 years ago rules for conducting the singing in the churches were drawn up. They were:— (1) That the portions to be sung be selected by the Minister; (2) that no instrument be used except bass viols and one clarinet or flute instead of a clarinet; (3) that the Psalms and hymns to be sung to those tunes only which are marked at the head of each respectively; (4) that the music be confined to the treble and bass as set in the book, and that no third part be introduced.

One can quite imagine that to an enterprising conductor, the rules would have been very irksome. I cannot imagine that they

charitably bequests of various kinds ranging from 1628 to 1892.

In Mediæval Times

The dedication of the Church is mentioned in a document of 1465 as to "St. John," while in Ecton's Thesaurus Rerum Ecclesiasticarum 1763, it is referred to as "St. John Baptist." In mediæval times the Church was served from the Abbey of Gloucester, which held the tithes until the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII., when they were transferred to the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester.

sand or upwards stayed in the churchyard.³ Three years previously George Whitefield, then curate of Stonehouse, preached there, and the record of his visit reads: "July 1st. To Randwick; the church was quite ruin, and about two thousand were in the churchyard, who, by taking down the window behind the pulpit were able to hear."

In the "London Magazine" of March, 1765, mention was made that "Randwick Church, in Gloucestershire, has been much damaged by a dreadful storm of lightning and thunder."

Unusual Christian Names

The parish registers contain many instances of unusual Christian names, such as Orlando, Marina, Cassandra, and Mordecai. The register of baptisms shows that in the beginning of last century three children were started in life with the following somewhat formidable nomenclature: William Mahershalalhashbaz, Zadoc Merodach Balam, and Vashiti Hamutal Zipporah Hamaleketh.

Bells More Than 500 Years Old

The bells of the church, which can be heard for many miles around, are only four in number, but are of great interest. Two of them are referred to in the "Transactions of the Gloucestershire Archaeological Society" in the following way: "I now come to two very beautiful examples at Randwick Church, unique as far as Gloucestershire is concerned. They probably date from 1380." There is support for this belief in the fact that the bells are dedicated to saints, one of them, the treble, to "Sancti Egidii," and the other to "Sancti Margareta," the latter also having "Ora pro nobis" inscribed on it. The third bell was cast in 1701, and bears the name of Mr. Nathaniel Eyles, churchwarden; while the fourth, which is the heaviest, weighing just over six hundredweight, was cast by Rudhall in 1717, and bears the inscription: "God prosper this parish."

Vicar For 72 Years

Randwick Church can boast of a record which few, and in fact, quite possibly none other can, for it had an incumbent who, living to the great age of 100, was vicar of the parish for 72 years. He was the Rev. John Elliott, M.A., who became the vicar in 1819, and held the living until 1891. He is buried in the churchyard, and an aisle

exist to-day, for the choir was singing four-part harmony with pleasing effect.

Randwick's Healthy Position

I don't think Randwick is as well-known as it deserves to be. Situated in a picturesque nook of the Cotswolds, with a south aspect, the village is healthily placed about 500 feet above sea-level. Behind it the hill continues to rise to a height of between 800 and 900 feet. The church stands in the centre of the village, and its situation strikes visitors very differently according to the direction from which it is approached. To a visitor who has to climb an ascent of two miles from Stroud it seems a veritable church set on a hill, while a traveller who approaches it from the north has to drop down a somewhat steep descent to what the late Bishop Ellicott, when so approaching it called "the little church in the valley."

Well-built of Cotswold stone with stone-tile roof, it consists of chancel, chancel aisle, nave and south aisle, vestry and tower. Two carved stones, apparently the capitals of small pillars, are the only remains of a church existing here in Norman times.

Early Mention of Church

Apparently the earliest mention of the church now to be found is in a document of the Consistory Court of Worcester, which indicated it existed in 1348, and described as in the episcopate of Bishop Wolston. Of the then existing church nothing now remains but the low, square tower, the other parts of the present building being the result of many successive enlargements and restorations.

In 1678 a gallery was erected in consequence of the church being too small to accommodate the worshippers, and a water-colour drawing of the church in 1809 shows an exterior flight of stone steps leading to the gallery. In 1719 a south aisle was added, and in 1823 a new chancel replaced the old one. Forty-three years later the church was re-seated, the faculty seats given up, and the whole of the seats made free.

The next and last restoration was in 1893, when a new chancel, chancel aisle, and organ chamber were built, the galleries abolished, and the tower arch opened out into the nave. One of the last additions to the church was the new vestry, dedicated a few years ago by Bishop Gibson. In the church there are mural tablets recording

In the year 1832 the vicarial tithes were assigned to the perpetual curate of the parish, and in 1866 the benefice was made a Vicarage. The first "minister" of which there is any record extant is Radulph Meisy, whose tomb in the churchyard bears the following inscription: "Here sleepeth the body of Radulph Meisy, preacher, a gentleman by birth a painful labourer in the ministry 34 years and rested the 24th of December; anno 1628." There is a list of ministers under the various names of minister, preacher, perpetual curate and vicar from 1609 to the present time.

Glimpses of the Past

Many interesting glimpses into the past history of Randwick Church are afforded by the registers and other parish documents. In 1465 the lords of the Manor gave a piece of land "to the intent that a house may be there built and forever possessed to the honour of God and the Blessed Mary, His Mother, of Saint John and All Saints in the Church of Rendewicke aforesaid, for the health of our souls and of ancestors, benefactors, and all other faithful people." In 1781 the "Church House" was taken down, and a workhouse for the parish erected on the site. It was in 1844 that the Vicarage House was built, and the site of the workhouse was included in the garden. The lower walls of the old workhouse are still standing and constitute an interesting link with the past.

It is most interesting to delve into the historical records of a church like Randwick. From a Chantry certificate of the second year of Edward VI. we learn that "Randwick, a Chappell belonging to the parish of Standish, had given to Mayteigne a lampe there to the yerelie value of XIIII." A list of Recusants of 1577 includes "Randwick: William Chapman and his wife, worth nothing."

In 1708 there is a "Docket of Presentation of Samuel Fowler, Clerk to the Vicar of Standish, with the Chapels of Sale, Randwick, and Hardwick, void by lapse. Sealed December 22, 1708."

Famous Preachers' Visits

As I have mentioned, Randwick has been visited by many famous people in days gone by. In John Wesley's Journal, 1742, the famous preacher described a visit he paid as follows:—"About 11 a.m. I preached at Bunwick, seven miles from Gloucester. The Church was much crowded, though a thou-

was erected in his memory. It was he who erected the vicarage.

Since his time there have been several vicars, and the present one, who succeeded the Rev. W. E. Moore, has occupied the living for just over two years. Mr. Wehner was in business in London before the War, and being mobilised he served with the R.N.D. He was interned after the capture of Antwerp, and remained so for four years, during which he was able to study for ordination. After the cessation of hostilities he went to King's College, London, where he studied for three years. He became curate of St. Catharine's (Coleman), North Hamersmith, and after two and a half years there he went to Winchcombe, where he was curate for three years. For 18 months subsequently, he was curate of St. James, Gloucester. During the present year, Mr. Wehner is lecturing to the Standish Church Tutorial Class.

The Vicar and the church are fortunate with regard to the churchwardens. They are Mr. Fred Turner and Mr. J. F. Buckle. The former can look back on a long period of valued work for the church. He has been warden for over 30 years, a chorister for something like 40 years, and choirmaster for the greater part of that time. He is also secretary of the Parochial Church Council. Mr. Buckle, who is the local schoolmaster, was elected warden within the last five or six years.

The Two Randwicks

Randwick has a namesake in Australia, which was founded by a Randwick man, namely the late Mr. Simeon Henry Pearce, who was an uncle of Mr. O. J. Pearce, the chairman of the Stroud Urban District Council. The late Mr. Pearce emigrated from Randwick to Australia in 1841, and he settled in what was at that time an unnamed part. He afterwards called it after his own name, and thus founded the new Randwick. There he built the first house to be erected, was the town's first Mayor, and played a great part in the building of the Church of St. Jude there. This is still attended by members of the Pearce family. These facts were brought much to the fore the year before last, when Canon W. J. Cakebread, vicar of St. Jude's, and the Town Clerk of the new Randwick, visited Gloucestershire. When he returned to Australia, Canon Cakebread took with him a stone from the older portion of Randwick Church in order that it might be built into the Church of St. Jude's.

LOCAL NAVAL OFFICER

DEATH OF ADMIRAL RICARDO

MEMBER OF WELL-KNOWN COUNTY FAMILY

The death is announced as having taken place at Monte Estoril, of Admiral Arthur David Ricardo, C.B., of Myrles, Puddletown, Dorchester. He was 69.

Admiral Ricardo was Admiral-Superintendent of Chatham Dockyard during the greater part of the War. He served on the active list of the Royal Navy from 1874 to 1920.

The second son of Mr. H. D. Ricardo, of Gatecombe Park, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, and a brother of Major H. G.

Ricardo, Admiral Ricardo was a great grandson of David Ricardo, the celebrated political economist. He was born on September 14th, 1861, and was under 13 years of age when he entered the Navy on July 15th, 1874.

Promoted to Lieutenant in September, 1883, he was then appointed to the Champion, screw corvette, on the China Station, and after a commission in this vessel he elected to specialise in gunnery, and studied in H.M.S. Excellent at Portsmouth from 1887 to 1889.

Distinguished Career

Resuming sea service as gunnery lieutenant of the battleship Trafalgar, flagship of Lord Walter Kerr in the Mediterranean, he afterwards served in the same capacity in the battleship Resolution, in the Channel, the cruiser Bonaventure, flagship of Rear-Admiral Sir William Kennedy, in the East Indies, and other vessels, and was promoted to Commander in June, 1897 in which year he was employed upon the completion of addenda to the official "Hydraulic Manual."

He then returned to his old ship, the Peulise, as executive officer, and in 1901 joined the battleship Glory, flagship of Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge, in China, being

advanced to Captain in December, 1903. In this grade he commanded the Empress of India, reserve flagship at Devonport, and the Russell, in the Atlantic Fleet. In July, 1909, he became Captain of the Dockyard, Deputy Superintendent, and King's Harbour Master at Chatham.

After two years in command of the Vanguard, the ship which blew up by an internal explosion in 1917, with nearly all on board, Captain Ricardo was appointed in June, 1913, as Commodore in command of the R.N. Barracks and Depot at Devonport, where he served until after his promotion to rear-admiral in March, 1914. For a year before this date he was an Aide-de-Camp to the King.

Soon after the outbreak of the War he was appointed to the Admiralty for special service, and on August 9, 1915, he hoisted his flag as Admiral-Superintendent at Chatham in succession to Rear-Admiral C. E. Anson. Admiral Ricardo was retained in the post until May 1, 1919. Promoted to vice-admiral in January, 1919, Admiral Ricardo retired about a year later. He was gazetted a C.B. (Civil Division) in the first New Year Honours list after the Armistice, and was promoted to admiral on the retired list in March, 1924. He married Rhoda, daughter of Lieutenant-General E. V. Hewett; she survives him with two sons.

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Randwick Church Choir, with Mr. Fred. Turner (choirmaster and churchwarden) on left, and Mr. J. F. Buckle (churchwarden) on the right.



THE CHINCHILLA, AND AN ILLUSTRATION