

CHURCH NOTES.

Since the introduction of *Voluntary Church*, attendance at Divine Service has been poor ; and since the advent of the cold weather—which has driven us from the Theatre into the Gunroom—attendance has been bad.

The Commander-in-Chief put his finger on the *Cause of This* in his speech to the Post-War Brotherhood in January. He said : “ I have made enquiries about the *Actual Knowledge* of the young men who are joining the Navy as conscripts at present, young men of 18-19. The results I am going to quote cover a large number of young men and should give a representative idea.

The Lord's Prayer. 23% only could repeat this word perfect. 28% got it partly correct and 49% knew no more than the opening words.

Then although 72% knew who Jesus Christ was, only 39% knew where He was born. . . . the number who knew what Christmas Day celebrated was only 83%. 62% knew what Good Friday commemorated, but only 45% knew about Easter ; and as to Whitsun the percentage fell to 2.5%. The latter is surprising particularly because it is estimated that 15% have been confirmed.”

Thus the root trouble today is two-fold—as illustrated above, sheer ignorance of the basic facts of the Christian Religion, and no less potent, lack of *Faith* in those who do know the facts. By that I mean that though many may know who Jesus was and may be able to recite the Creed—they do not *really believe a word of it*.

Assuming that the above facts are true, no blame whatever attaches to those who do not go to Church, since obviously no one would want to go to worship a “ god ” whom either he knows nothing of, or he has long ceased to believe in. Some might want to go to hear a good sermon, but more and better sermons are to be heard over the radio than in the Gun Room or the average Church.

To be a Christian, a man *must believe*. If he believes he will act accordingly—cf. the Communist, the Fascist and the man who believes his house is on fire. Jesus said : “ If you *Love* me you will keep my commandments.” And His first Commandment is “ Thou shalt *Love* the Lord thy God ” and as in the Gospel for the First Sunday in Lent “ Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.”

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