

ST. ANDREW'S-TIDE, 1940.

PASTORAL LETTER

FROM THE MOST REV. THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY.

(To be read in the Churches of the Diocese of Sydney on Sundays, November 17 and 24.)

Last year, when I sought your co-operation in prayer for the missionary work of the Church, the war had just begun to cast its shadow over the world. Its real horror, however, was more a matter of anticipation than experience. Since then the fury of the invader has harried much of Europe, and the eyes of all are turned to Britain, where our kinsfolk are resisting incessant air attacks with a fortitude which is the admiration of their friends and the despair of their foes.

The enemy is moving with such lightning speed and ferocious purpose that it is impossible to foresee what other nations will be involved.

In times of persecution and danger, the early Church advanced against the Roman Empire with unconquerable faith. While Europe was being remoulded in the furnace of the Napoleonic wars, a greater force than that of arms was manifesting itself in the birth of the Baptist Missionary Society (1795), the London Missionary Society (1795), the Church Missionary Society and the Religious Tract Society (1799), and the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804).

All these movements were the outcome of a new vision of God, vouchsafed in the time of trouble.

In the hour of anxiety and fear, the human heart turns instinctively to prayer for relief—a fact which we have seen demonstrated by crowded Churches more than once during the past year. Few, however, would regard an occasional response, on however great a scale, to an appeal for prayer as sufficient for the needs of the world. To be of higher value, prayer must be an intelligent and permanent activity in our lives, springing from a true conception of the character of God, an understanding of His love for all mankind, and a ready willingness to be His instruments in making that love known.

St. Andrew's-tide calls us to such prayer. Many years ago the Bishops of our Church appointed a day of prayer for missions in their Cathedral on or near St. Andrew's Day, and the movement has assumed world-wide proportions. I trust you will join me in our Cathedral Church of St. Andrew on Thursday, the 28th November. There will be a celebration of Holy Communion at 8 a.m., and half-hourly intercessions commencing at 10 a.m. until Evening Prayer at 4 p.m.

Thus we shall pray for the people of Europe, whose missionary enthusiasm totalitarian governments are seeking to quench. We shall remember the child races of Africa, who have been drawn into the white man's war. Palestine and the Near East will be the burden of our petitions to Him Whose sacred feet trod the paths of Galilee.

India will not be forgotten in her search for National Government. China has long had a warm place in the hearts of many Australians, as has also the Church in Japan, from whose leadership the British Bishops have felt it necessary to resign; and we shall seek the guidance of our Heavenly Father for the people of the Far East, the Pacific Basin and America. As we pray for Melanesia, our thoughts will picture the Mission Ship "Southern Cross" tied up and inactive for the duration of the war; while the Bishop of New Guinea's heartrending stories of the needs of his diocese will echo in our minds.

Nearer home is the tragic spectacle of the Australian Aborigines, our work among whom has been made more difficult by flood and tempest.

Let us find assurance, as we pray, in the inspiring refrain which recurs through the 107th Psalm: "So they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress."

30th October, 1940.

HOWARD SYDNEY.