

Christmas celebrations at the Swiss Church

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SWISS Y.M.C.A.

The Swiss Y.M.C.A. held its Christmas Celebration on the 19th December at 12, Bateman Street, W.1, where members and their friends met in the spacious clubroom, where a Christmas tree had been provided and tables attractively laid out for tea.

The President, Mr. W. Fischer, extended a hearty welcome to all, and read out messages from friends far and near who had sent their greetings for the occasion. He then said that for a Christian Association the present season was a particular occasion for rejoicing. The birth of Jesus Christ means much more to us than a mere historic event. It means, in the words of fulfilled prophecy: "The people who were dwelling in darkness have seen a brilliant light, and on those who were dwelling in the region of the shadow of death light has dawned."

In the course of the evening the word was passed on to the two guests who had been invited to address the gathering, Mr. E. Rapp and Dr. J. Rieger. They referred to the immense value of a faith which centres in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. In times of testing when the human mind seems incapable of finding a solution, there was the divine guidance, help and comfort available to those who knew God. For many under persecution on the Continent the Bible had become the only pillar which could not be moved, because it kept alive hope and courage. It is the living faith in Christ which always triumphs.

Mr. B. Segall, in his closing address, said that mankind had accepted the birth of Christ as a basis for fixing its dates, and contracts were signed every day "in the year of our Lord 1945." Yet few people realise that Christ's coming means far more. He has a purpose for us. He wants to transform our lives and give us a vision that reaches out into eternity. But it is for us to get ready for the quest.

After a well-spent evening, the gathering came to a close. We realised that to know more of Jesus Christ and the Scriptures is not merely a fascinating study in itself, but means an enrichment of one's life which nothing else can be compared with.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS AT THE SWISS CHURCH.

The invitation to celebrate Christmas at the Swiss Church in Endell Street on Sunday afternoon, the 23rd December, had brought a ready response from the Swiss Colony, and a full congregation assembled before a big, well lit Christmas tree.

Rev. M. Pradervand carried our thoughts back 2,000 years, to that memorable event, the birth of our Lord, by reading the scriptural records. Then he chose for his sermon the well known passage: "I am the light of the world." After so many years of war, it is a great joy for us to celebrate Christmas in peace, and now Jesus Christ, the risen Saviour, bids us shine with a clear, pure light in the darkness that still exists in many places and in many lives. Where darkness reigns there is hopelessness and uncertainty. Christmas is not merely a family reunion, nor a time of plenty to eat and to drink, but it is a time to remember that God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son to redeem it, and it is for us to stretch out our hands and to grasp His, so that we

may feel secure and experience the love of God in all its fullness. In Jesus Christ we are able to overcome sin, for He is powerful to save.

Rev. P. Rad dealt with the second part of the above passage: "He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The preacher showed that Jesus Christ was not only the light of the world, but had given the promise to be the light of life to those who accept Him. He illustrated this by an experience he had as a young student in Switzerland. On a dark night he lost his way across the wooded hills. The position was hopeless, when suddenly, at a distance, a light appeared. He followed it and it led him to a house where he found shelter. There are many who walk in darkness through the hills and valleys of this life, not having seen the light, and they are without strength and without guidance, at the mercy of the powers of darkness. But the living guide is near. Seek Him and your feet will be as secure as on a rock.

The celebration came to a close with the well known hymn: "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht." Afterwards, a cup of tea was offered to everyone present, and the children came forward in groups according to their age, to receive gifts which some kindly donors had provided.

The Swiss Male Choir sang three hymns during the celebration which were very much appreciated. Mrs. Spiers entertained us with solos on her violin.

It was dark when we left the place of worship and the thought came back to our minds: "Jesus Christ, the light of the world." Will He find many open hearts?

W.F.

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