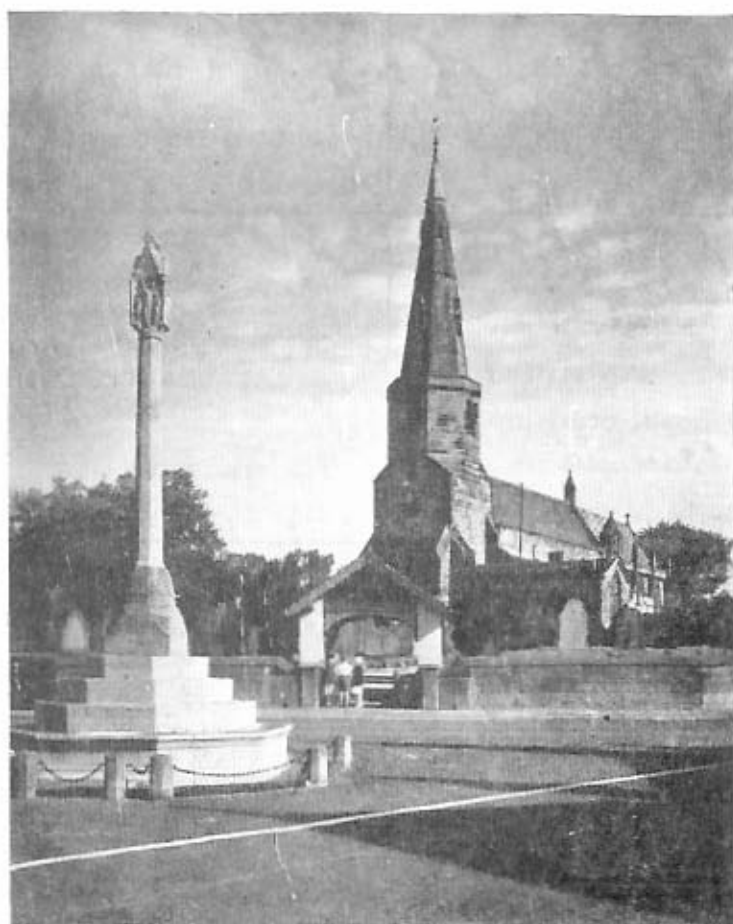


APRIL 1965

# HALSALL PARISH MAGAZINE



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## MONUMENTAL MASON

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The Rectory,  
Halsall.  
13th March, 1965.

My dear Friends,

Someone once wrote that "The true antidote to pessimism is not optimism but faith." That is true. Even twenty years after the war the times are tense in spite of massive attempts to bring into the world some sense of security. There is a bubbling and a boiling all over the world. In some places one can even hear a sort of snarl. There is plenty of explosive material about and one day some foolish V.I.P. may do or say something that may be a spark to blow the whole thing up.

For my part I am neither optimist nor pessimist. One is too cheap and the other too degrading. I am a sort of pessoptimist! That may be a good definition of faith for it is often a desperate business. Paul once saved his own soul and the situation by boldy declaring: "Sirs, I believe in God."

**Faith is more than belief or trust:** it is a man's final challenge to evil and the final committal of himself to God. This is the victory that overcometh the world—when finite man steps out beyond reason and throws himself into the hands of God. In that hour of great darkness, when it looked as though hell and the powers of evil had won the victory; when our Lord Himself uttered the cry of dereliction on the Cross, earth listened with awe to His shout of victory as He threw Himself into the Everlasting Arms. So our final faith in a world like this is to say "Our Father."

There are grim and ambiguous moments in life, perhaps as we walk our own "dark mile," when it seems beyond reason to believe in the goodness of God. But Jesus's word to us is to say "Our Father," and go on saying it until the vision returns and our courage comes back. It is a good thing that we have to fight for our faith at times. A facile faith only produces a filleted Christian. From that specimen of humanity, good Lord deliver us.

While in this strain, let us look at another Christian virtue, too often overlooked. There is a saying that it is no use being good if we are not good enough. Agreed. How often the Christian life falls short of complete goodness; fails to remember our Lord's challenging command to His disciples—"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." We have the strength and solidity of the pillars (as in the old Temple), but the lily work that crowns the whole is missing! The "grace of courtesy" is not there — sometimes the one thing lacking. Now, it is obvious that there is a difference between courtesy and politeness; the one is an inward disposition, the other an outward expression. (We get the same sort of difference between holiness and righteousness, the interior and exterior, shall we say?).

But is it not pathetic to see otherwise good Christian men and women snap and snarl, bark and bite, easily take offence and fly off at the handle, or — worse still — sulk? If the beauty of the Lord is to be upon us — the beauty of holiness — then we must do something about it. That is to say one

must let Him work within us upon the springs of action. After all Christ came to save to the uttermost. That includes the "lily work" of our lives. Only the best is good enough in work like ours. Was it not Hilaire Belloc who wrote:

"Of courtesy, it is much less  
Than courage of heart and holiness,  
Yet in my walks it seems to me  
The grace of God is in courtesy."

It is perhaps here that the Christian religion comes to perfection — its thoughtfulness for the feelings and the needs of others. Is it not there that our lives often break down? Only the Holy Spirit of God can make human nature the thing God always meant it to be — if we are willing and obedient. But we cannot teach right unless we live right. Truth can never be expressed: it can only be lived.

May God grant you all a happy and glorious Easter!

God bless you all.

Your sincere friend,

HERBERT BULLOUGH

#### PASSIONTIDE

This is the last fortnight of Lent when we commemorate the suffering and death of our blessed Lord. During this time in Church we veil all crosses and pictures, as a sign of mourning, until Easter.

There was a young boy whose parents never mentioned God, never took him to Church or sent him to Sunday School. But one day, a friend visited them and he told the boy the story of our Lord's Crucifixion. He told him how the Son of God was arrested, scourged and mocked, crowned with thorns and condemned to death by the Roman Governor. Finally, He was nailed to a Cross and left to die even though He had done nothing wrong. At the end of the story the young boy thought for a moment, then said, "Let's hope it never really happened." I wonder what you would say if someone said that to you.

We know that it did happen. It is just as much an event of history as the Battle of Waterloo or the Battle of Britain. As Christians we thank God that it did happen, because by His sufferings and His sacrifice, Jesus atoned for (made up for) our sins and opened the gate of heaven to us. But it did not end there for the Resurrection followed on that first Easter Day. Jesus triumphed over death and hell. So our sorrow not by Passiontide turns us to joy on Easter Day.

God planned this way to redeem us, and His Son, our Lord, willingly accepted it. "I lay down my life for the sheep . . . No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and take it again. (S. John 10: 15 and 18). This is important, for we must never think of Jesus as a helpless and unfortunate man who was hounded to death. He gave His life willingly in a battle with evil to save us. Through Him we can follow to victory. Through Him we can come to the Father and His heavenly Kingdom.

So let us, this Passiontide, follow His footsteps right through to His Victory over suffering and death. Let us remember, in sorrow, the part our sin has played, and let His love shine all the more through us.

## EASTER

The "Feast of the Resurrection" is by far the oldest of Christian festivals. We can be sure that there has never been an "Easter" unobserved since the first Resurrection morning, which is more than we can safely claim even for Christmas. It is, of course, the greatest of Christian festivals. Nothing can surpass the beauty of the Gospel story of the Resurrection, especially as told by St. John. Mary Magdalene entered the garden before dawn, found the tomb empty, saw the angel, and turning away came face to face with another Presence whom she mistook for the gardener in the dawn. "Thus the Resurrection was revealed to a woman at sunrise." And so Easter is particularly a festival of the early morning. Sunrise and Springtime! This is Easter. Even in this present age when so many Church customs have been forgotten, the early morning services are by far the best attended on Easter Day. All the beauty of a Spring festival is there too. The awakening to new life and joy in brightness and fragrance. On the altar there should be only white and green on Easter Day. The white of Resurrection, and the green of eternal life." "Arum lilies and narcissi, white as angels' flesh by an empty tomb, and the deep green of English yew, the one evergreen that belongs to Easter, and to no other festival. Yew in a churchyard is an emblem of life, not of death."

White and green only, on the altar, but anywhere else in church all flowers are in favour. Primrose, violet, crocus; daffodil and hyacinth; wind-flowers and anemones—all the profusion of Spring.

"Easter Eggs" are centuries old. The egg from time immemorial—before history—has been an emblem of new life. Christians at an early date adopted them as symbols of the Resurrection. They were known as Paschal Eggs, and eventually in England as Pace Eggs. The true Pace Egg or Easter Egg is a hen's, duck's or goose's egg decorated at home. The true design always contained a leaping hare which was sacred to the Spring deities of pagan times. The industrial modern world has put on the market artificial eggs—Easter Eggs made of chocolate and wrapped in silver paper. I suppose the children find them more palatable, but it is good to remember the meaning behind the custom. Even the lamb and mint sauce of the traditional Easter dinner originates from the old belief that it was the principal dish at the Last Supper.

I am indebted to Laurence Whisler's "The English Festivals" for most of this information.

H.B.

### A GREAT STONE

"And he rolled a great stone to the door of the Sepulchre." "They went and made the Sepulchre sure, sealing the stone." What finality these two parts of the Gospel for Easter Eve seem to have. Our Lord had been put to a most shameful death and his friends could only lay his body to rest in the rock tomb with its opening closed by a great stone. The Pharisees, being afraid of future events, set a seal on the stone to ensure that Our Lord's friends did not re-open the tomb. This, we might think, was the end—Our Lord seems to be finally cut

off from the world. He cannot get through to man and man cannot get through to Him. There is a barrier between, and man has put it there.

So often today barriers are erected between God and man—erected by man's selfishness and pride, his disobedience and indifference to God's Will. So many seem to have no time for God—no time for worship and prayer; no time for anything other than their own personal and often selfish interests. Many, as we are all too frequently reminded in our newspapers, seem to deliberately try to foster the very things which complete the separation of God and man. They set the seal on the stone. How depressing life would be if this were the end.

After Good Friday, however, came Easter Day. "They found the stone rolled away"—the barrier set up between God and man had been removed; removed by God. The barrier of sin had been broken and man is no longer cut off from God. This is the Easter message—Our Lord is risen—He has overcome the worst man could do. Those who went to the Sepulchre were the first joyous witnesses of this great event. Christian people throughout the world still share in their joy at the Easter Communion.

This is the time when the Church celebrates the most important event in the calendar—the Resurrection of Our Lord. So, in worship and praise and thanksgiving let us resolve to join with the Christian family around the Altar and share in the joyous message of Easter. Man rolled a great stone to the door of the Sepulchre—God broke down the barrier. He overcame death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life.

### A terrible awakening

### WHEN CONDITIONS CONFIRM BIBLE VIEW OF MAN

#### God's Remedy—The Cross of Christ

It has come as a shock to many people in the mid-20th century to discover how depraved human nature can be. After the respectability and morality of the Victorian era, much of it genuine, and some superficial; and following the advances of education, culture and science, there were those who thought that mankind had climbed out of the slough of bestiality and brutishness. The awakening has been terrible. In addition to two world wars, millions of people have been murdered in gas chambers and concentration camps. Nations have been enslaved. Peoples have been subjected to soul-destroying propaganda. The love of luxury and gain, gambling crazes, immorality and frequent divorces have characterised the life of other nations.

The people who should have been least surprised were those professing belief in Christianity. For the Bible has no illusions about mankind. It describes humanity as a fallen race. At the heart of the Christian story stands a Cross bearing witness to man's sinfulness. So far is man from being naturally good, or from embracing goodness when he sees it, that when Jesus appeared as a man among men, He was crucified by His fellows, religious and secular alike. In the Cross is concentrated man's reaction

to the moral challenge of God. The Cross tells us what we are like as unredeemed creatures.

If that were all, Good Friday would be a bad day indeed. It would sound the death-knell of human hope. But the Cross, fashioned by men for their evil ends, was seized by God for His great redemptive work. On Calvary expiation was made. Jesus bore more than the wrongs of priests, pharisees, Pilate, soldiers and the Jewish populace. All the sin of all the ages, all that ever was, is now or ever will be, was borne and suffered. The Cross expresses in time the cost of making expiation for sin, of righting all wrong, of breaking the power of evil, of overcoming with love man's alien, fallen nature. Only by such suffering could sin's power and destructive effects be exhausted.

But the Cross remained, symbol now of God's love and forgiveness, a force to draw sinners and to change their nature by reconciling them to God. Calvary is not a good example of heroic death. It is good news of a grace that saves, of a God who cares and forgives, of One who bears our sins and carries our sorrows.

To Calvary we have to add, of course, Easter morning; to the scene of disciples who fled and forsook, the welcome of the Lord when He met them after He had risen. Only then did they understand that He was not simply the victim of cruel injustice but that He had given Himself to save mankind.

Sometimes the sin of man weighs heavily on sensitive hearts. To see free peoples crushed, lives corrupted, or good work destroyed by men's stupidity; to suffer wrong without hope of redress, or see loved ones wronged can almost break the heart. But the Saviour's Cross stands planted in the midst, drawing our gaze upward to Him who is able to redeem and who loves those who make us despair.

And when our own sin and guilt lie heavily on our hearts, when we cannot forgive ourselves, it is at the Cross, and there alone, that peace can be found. He has made peace by the blood of His Cross. No flagellation, no sacrifice of ourselves could do that. We can neither go back and undo what is done, nor do what was left undone. Nor can we run after our sin and catch up on all its effects on other lives. Only the grace of God can redeem us and the world of which our sin is now part.

No wonder Paul determined to preach Christ and Him crucified. He had found the Cross sufficient for his own wracked conscience. He believed it sufficient to save the whole world.

And we can dare in this 20th century to sing:

In the Cross of Christ I glory.

Towering o'er the wrecks of time:

All the light of sacred story

Gathers round its head sublime.

That is the only boast worth any man's making

—that Jesus Christ died for him.

## MEALS ON WHEELS SERVICE

With the co-operation of the Lanes, County Council and West Lanes, Rural District Council and with the Women's Voluntary Service the above scheme is now in operation in Maghull and it is hoped during the next few months to cover the whole of West Lanes.

There are a number of people in Halsall and Downholland who are in need of this service and ladies with cars who can assist in this work are urgently needed. The arrangements will be on a rota system and may involve three or four times a month according to the number of volunteers available. Cars must have a full comprehensive insurance cover and a petrol allowance of 6d. per mile will be paid. Will all those who can assist in this work please contact Mrs. Russell, W.V.S., 14 Moor Street, Ormskirk, Tel. No. Ormskirk 4158.

## THE HYMNS WE SING (7)

### THE PRINCE OF GLORY

#### 108. When I survey the wondrous cross

Of all the hymns sung by the Anglican Church during Holy Week, this, must surely be the best known and most widely used. It has an affinity with the hymn "There is a green hill" which we thought about last month, but whereas the latter was used to expound the Catechism, "When I survey" was written to illuminate Holy Scripture.

Written by one of the greatest English hymn-writers, Isaac Watts, its strong, clear lines make it penetrating, demanding and imaginative. It is a paraphrase on the 14th verse of the 7th chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world."

In the second line of the first verse "On which the prince of glory died" we find a use of adjectives which appeals to the imagination and sets a standard of sublime poetic truth which is constant throughout all the stanzas.

It was conceived by the author for use at the Lord's Supper, and the verse in scripture on which it is based comes straight from the busy mind of the Apostle Paul to the confused and perplexed life of a group of primitive churches. I quote in full a passage by Dr. Routley which is relevant to our day:

"The Holy Communion, the **sacrament of common life**, is always in a sense a table "furnished in the wilderness," a table "spread before me in the presence of mine enemies" a defiance of the secular and transitory through the very use for holy purposes of common and perishable things, and both the hymn and the great verse in Galatians are, as it were, points of stillness and adoration snatched out of the bustle and trouble of daily life."

Over and over again our hymns signpost very clearly the relevance of the worship and offering of the Holy Eucharist to the day by day life of the Christian community. "When I survey the wondrous cross" is not a holy and romantic thought, but a song of the abasement, offering and sanctification of common life. It is as much about the common life as "New every morning is the love."

Isaac Watts fastens on the phrase "God forbid that I should glory" and writes three whole verses on it. Where is PRIDE, Where is GRIEVANCE Where is POMP in the face of what Christ did for you and for me? Nothing but Love and Sorrow, Sorrow and Love being outpoured, Love adding triumph to sorrow. Watts like St. Paul had discovered truth, had discovered wisdom and goodness.

His dying crimson, like a robe  
Spreads o'er his body on the tree.  
Then I am dead to all the globe  
And all the globe is dead to me.

In this verse, omitted from our hymn-book, Watts presents us with the great challenge. If we accept the utter faithfulness of the King of Kings then we must take the consequences of accepting Jesus Christ as the King of Life. Can WE accept this challenge which demands that we reject the world with its mental cowardice and meanness, and the false values of the secular, transitory abundance of an affluent society?

What are these consequences? Isaac Watts leaves us in no doubt in the last verse. In whatever region we make the change, whatever form the sacrifice has to take ALL MUST BE GIVEN, GIVING not receiving, DUTY not right, OBEDIENCE not mastery. The Gospel demands a response on this scale in modern life. The throwing down of the barriers of sin. "The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit, a broken and contrite heart O God thou wilt not despise." A heart that has willingly been broken and renewed under the weight and love of God. The heart that has experienced the reckless abandonment of earthly defences.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in."

In accepting the challenge of the Cross we shall not appear to our neighbours as specially pious. What will be apparent will be the freedom of heart from all the impediments of love, and the freedom of our minds from all impediments to generous speech.

Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Next month: All hail the power of Jesu's name.

#### ST. OSWALD'S, BARTON

The whole parish was stunned by the news of the disastrous fire at the Barton Mission. Our sympathetic understanding goes out to those who for many years worked so hard to make the Mission what it once was. Can anyone inform me in what year the Mission was built? It is impossible at this stage to say what our future policy will be. A meeting will be held when it is known what Insurance monies are available. It remains to say "thank God" for the faithful witness of the Barton Mission over a long number of years.

#### THE MOTHERS' UNION

The few members who attended the last meeting (14 of them) had a very enjoyable time. After a most interesting talk on "Tea Tasting" and sampling we were privileged to see some wonderful colour slides of the game reserve in Kenya. Our next meeting is on April 6th when we shall have as our speaker Miss White from Liverpool. When Miss White comes we are always assured of a very interesting talk.

#### HOLY MATRIMONY

"Those whom God hath joined together"

Feb. 20—Edward Stopforth, Gibbons Farm, Plex Lane, Halsall, and Eileen Margaret Britland, Flat 3, 72 Promenade, Southport.

.. 24—Leonard George Court, 65 School Lane, Haskayne, and Sylvia Lesley Raw, Blue Bell Hotel, Barton.

Mar. 2—Pietro Scarali, 37 Part Street, Southport, and Evelyn Couchman, 30 Linaker Drive, Halsall.

#### BURIAL OF THE DEAD

"In sure and certain hope"

Feb. 26—William Hesketh, age 67 years, Carr Moss Lane, Halsall. (cremation).

#### SERVERS' ROTA

April 4—8 a.m. Jim Heaton

.. 11—8 a.m. John Gaskell  
10-30 a.m. Harold Grimshaw, Malcolm Serjeant

.. 18—7-15 a.m. Peter Balmer  
8 a.m. John Davies  
10-30 a.m. Harold Grimshaw, Roger Dutton

.. 25—8 a.m. John Pounds  
10-30 a.m. Harold Grimshaw, Tony Gaskell.

May 2—8 a.m. Raymond Juba.

#### SANCTUARY FLOWERS

April 18—Easter Day—The Congregation. We ask all of our friends to make a small contribution towards the cost of Easter Decoration. Thank you!

.. 25—Mrs. L. White

May 2—Miss Mawdsley and Mrs. Parker

.. 9—Mrs. Serjeant and Mrs. H. Banks

#### SIDEMEN'S ROTA

April 2—a.m. R. Dutton, T. Grimshaw  
p.m. R. Heaton, W. Robinson

.. 9—a.m. R. Lewis, H. Rimmer  
p.m. G. Porter, S. Park

.. 16—a.m. J. Cheetham, H. Gaskell  
p.m. E. Grimshaw, E. Gawne

.. 23—a.m. W. Leadbetter, N. Britnall  
p.m. H. Huyton, A. Grimshaw

.. 30—a.m. Jas. Sergeant, J. Banks  
p.m. W. White, J. D. Grimshaw

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