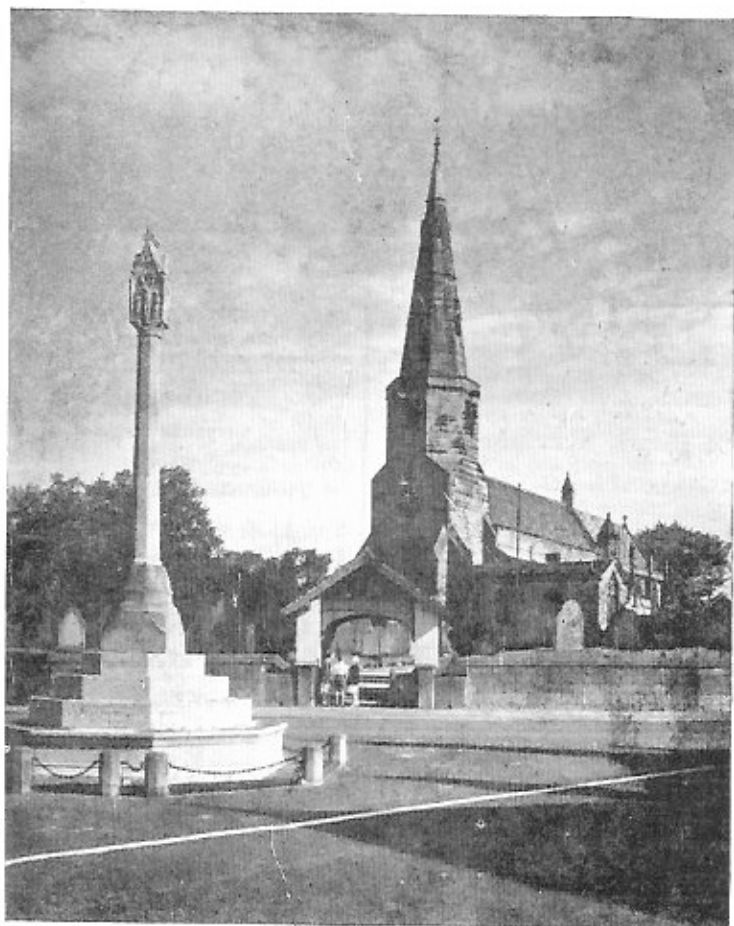


MAY 1967

HALSALL PARISH MAGAZINE



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The Rectory,
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15th April, 1967.

My Dear Friends,

During the Great Forty Days between Easter Day and Ascension Day the Risen Jesus appeared at odd times and only for a short time to His followers. He was really there all the time, but they could not see Him. Then for a time He as it were emerged from the world of spirit and showed Himself. The Risen Jesus made the appearances to convince His disciples that although they could not always see Him, He was still with them. During the Great Forty Days they were gradually weaned from the need of His continued presence in the flesh. On the day which we call "Ascension Day" the Risen Jesus made His final appearance to the disciples. After a conversation with them in which He made it clear that they were seeing Him for the last time He disappeared, withdrawing into the world of spirit.

The Jews of Our Lord's day believed that the earth was flat and was capped by a large bowl called the "firmament" above which were the heavenly regions. So to say that Jesus went "up into Heaven" was how it seemed to them. But what Jesus really did was to withdraw into the unseen world, which is here with us, surrounding us like a spiritual atmosphere. Having become convinced that Jesus was still at their side, unseen yet full of power; the disciples "returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

The Ascension of Jesus meant that He had closer contact with His followers than He had ever had before. In His earthly body He could only be in one place at a time. But now His spiritual presence could be with all men everywhere, day or night, in solitude or crowded street. He is no longer limited to one place, but present to all men everywhere. The glorious truth behind the Ascension story is that Jesus has never left us. He is with us whether we are awake or asleep, in our work and our pleasure, in our sadness and our joy. When we pray with quiet minds His spirit is leading us. He is in the world today striving to bring peace and goodwill through us. In the power of His abiding presence we can face life with all its problems, struggles, joys, disappointments and fears, unafraid and certain of victory.

In the Second Volume of "Readings in St. John's Gospel," Archbishop William Temple wrote concerning Our Lord's Ascension: "Because He is 'in Heaven,' He is everywhere on earth; because He is ascended, He is here now. Our devotion is not to hold us by the empty tomb; it must lift up our hearts to heaven so that we too 'in heart and mind thither ascend and with Him continually dwell'; it must also send us forth into the world to do His Will; and these are not two things but one."

On Thursday, 4th May, we keep the most important Festival of Ascension Day. Because it is a week day we tend to let it slip by without notice. At St. Cuthbert's there will be services of Holy Communion at 7 a.m. and 10.15 a.m. and we shall sing The Eucharist at 7.30 p.m. Will you all make a real effort to attend one of these services and help us to "keep" the Feast. It is a great occasion, let us make it so.

God Bless you all.

Your sincere friend and Rector.

HERBERT BULLOUGH.

HAS SUFFERING A PURPOSE?

How often has been said: "I don't know what I've done for God to make me suffer like this." There we have the heartbreaking puzzle so many wish they could solve. Our human instinct would accept that the wicked should suffer for their wrong doing while the good should be rewarded with health, wealth and joy. Yet life does not work out like this, hence the heartache.

Suffering with a Purpose

Suffering with or for a purpose is bearable because we can understand it. "Jesus", we are told, "for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross . . ." He could see a purpose in the suffering He endured. But the greater part of human suffering seems to have no purpose at all, and useless suffering is intolerable . . .

Christianity is unique among religions and philosophies in offering at least an approach to this awful and mysterious problem.

Avoidable Suffering

But first, a great and terrible amount of the suffering in the world is avoidable — it is inflicted upon the sufferer by other men. Men inflict pain on others through sheer lust for cruelty. Torture chambers throughout the ages, and not least today, have always found men ready and willing to ply the hideous art. Human greed pursues its treasures regardless of other lives crushed in its path. Sheer callous indifference about the fate of those not in our immediate sight, and thoughtlessness, add to the toll.

To these causes alone a high proportion of human pain and sorrow may be directly and indirectly traced. The problem here is not that of suffering but of sin.

In addition to the suffering inflicted by others, whether wilfully, carelessly or ignorantly, there is the pain which men bring upon themselves. Misuse of our own bodies by lust or greed brings severe punishment such as venereal disease, delirium tremens and other less spectacular results of the misuse of appetite. Overwork, under-feeding as well as over-eating, dampness, strain and many other ills are self-inflicted. Laziness and ignorance with their attendant dirt bring yet other scourges.

These factors account for a very high proportion of human suffering. The problem is the problem of sin. Remove the sin and the consequent ills will disappear.

The Crux of the Problem

Yet when all the preventable suffering caused by human sin has been set aside there still remains a vast agony of "natural" suffering caused by sickness and disease which we cannot attribute to human behaviour. Here lies the crux of our problem. We have already recognised that some suffering—indeed a great deal—comes as a result of human sin, either that of the sufferer or of others. But this does not mean that God sends it or wills it. In fact it comes from breaking, or attempting to break, some Divine Law. For the Christian it is unthinkable that God wills suffering for His creatures. Indeed, if it were so Jesus, the Founder of Christianity, frustrated God's will by healing the sick. Yet no part of our Lord's ministry shines with such splendour nor seems so divine, nor has had such effect upon history as His ministry of healing.

Is God Impotent?

The sufferings of Jesus Himself emphasise the alternative problem. Is God impotent in the face of suffering and evil?

Three important statements by our Lord stand out in the Gospels and will help us in our search for a solution of this difficulty. They are (a) St. Luke 13, v. 16, "Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" (b) St. John 9, v. 3, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (c) St. Matthew 10, v. 8, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give."

These texts do not stand alone, but we may take them as representing New Testament teaching on our problem.

When faced with the woman with the spirit of infirmity described in St. Luke 13, our Lord in His comment to the Pharisees assumed and taught, as He did on other occasions, the fact of the existence of a hostile power of evil within the universe, a Satan, Devil, the Evil One.

This has not been a fashionable belief. But now, in face of the awful upsurge of dynamic evil in the last decade and longer, many are beginning to accept once again the belief in a Prince of the Powers of Darkness. Our Lord traces the origin of sickness, suffering and death to Satan, whose great purpose would appear to be desire to bring about the separation of men from God, "Curse God and die." The issue of suffering, it would seem, to be not only the death of the body but also the death of the soul. If this is true our problem is again brought back to the problem of sin in the form of a Cosmic power of Evil.

A Battle to be Won

Suffering is to be seen, not just as something to be endured but as a battle to be fought. It is an opportunity for the victory of the spirit and the revealing of the work of God in us. So the man in St. John 9, born blind, became the means of demonstrating God's power. Satan, or if you will, Evil, can be conquered and is conquered, and so often at the point of his seeming victory.

Our Lord not only gave us an example of obedience which triumphs over evil. He gave direct commands for an attack upon the enemy stronghold of pain. "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give."

From the days of the earliest monasteries with their primitive infirmaries and lazar houses, down to the most modern and up-to-date medical missions, the Church has sought faithfully to fulfil this command. Our Lord sets this ministry alongside the preaching of the Word as part of the Good News of God's salvation. His objective is the wholeness of man in body, mind, spirit and society.

By our forgiveness of wrong done, by our obedience in spite of opposition, by our suffering nobly borne not doubting God's goodness, by our prayers and witness, we as it were make Christ's atoning death a continuing vital stream. We take our sufferings to His Cross where they are gathered up in His, and by our love and obedience He makes His redemption available to us and through us to others so that the powers of evil are frustrated and the purposes and will of God are performed.

We suffer no longer as convicts, but as companions rejoicing in the knowledge that Christ has conquered, and with Him and through Him we pray that we too may conquer and "at the last obtain a crown which fadeth not away."

PRAY NOT

Do not pray for easy lives! Pray to be stronger men and women! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle. But you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life which has come to you, by the Grace of God.

—Phillips Brooks.

EASTER REFLECTIONS

So it has come—and gone—again, our greatest and brightest Festival. The Church seems strangely quiet and empty. The golden daffodils have drooped as though exhausted in the effort of proclaiming their joyous message—and they have been removed.

Do you find the Easter stories convincing? Do they not seem so honest, so "unedited"—exposing fearlessly with each fresh incident the bewilderment and disbelief of the disciples, "Follow Me," He had said to each of them and obeying, they had watched and listened to,

loved and hailed Him as the Chosen of God. Yet when, as He had warned them, the twin powers of sin and death proved equally futile to hold Him, "it seemed to them as idle talk."

Mary Magdalen, running wildly back to the house of mourning, her message spilling from quivering lips: "They have taken away . . ." not "The Lord is risen, as He promised." The two men, hurrying to investigate the scene of the "robbery", totally unprepared for the sight of the grave-clothes, flat and undisturbed in the empty tomb. Thomas, in that too-familiar story, refusing to accept the testimony of the others . . . Did it really happen all that while ago—for how familiar and modern it is, and how like ourselves are these first friends of Jesus. "Lord, I would like to believe, but it seems too good to be true. Now if only I could see You just once . . ." It is often, and rightly, said that the proof of the Resurrection is seen in the disciples because of their behaviour.

But for me that road to Emmaus will always be enchanted ground. For it was not Peter—or John—or indeed any one of the Eleven who travelled from Jerusalem to Emmaus on that first Easter Day; just two ordinary followers of Jesus, who had so come to love Him, that His death had robbed their lives of hope and purpose and made the path ahead as dark as night. And because they had not yet learned to trust Him through the seeming desertion, they nursed their sorrow until it grew . . . and grew . . . To them the Lord Himself drew near, enlightening first the minds and then the eyes of His friends.

Just as even today He to whom all hearts are open, knows the phrase or gesture that will open our eyes to His Presence . . . So then—for Magdalene the awakening came at the sound of her name, spoken with the subtle inflection that only He could give. In the humble home at Emmaus it was the broken bread that revealed the Beloved. But for each of them recognition came because they had been constantly with their Lord, learning to know and love Him.

As it was for them, so it is for us, and so it will always be. How shall we serve Him unless we have learnt to love Him? How shall we have learnt to love Him until we have begun to know Him? And how shall we even begin to know Him except by frequently and deliberately seeking His company? For learning to be a Christian is as simple—and as profound as that.

But in that learning the whole of life is transformed, and each new day is truly Eastertide.

A GUIDE TO SYNODICAL GOVERNMENT

What is Synodical Government?

The theory of synodical government is based on a simple theological truth about the nature of the Church, that the Church is a single body, containing bishops, priests and laity. Each of these three groups have differing roles to play within the body, but none on their own can claim to be the Church. Any system of Church government should therefore reflect this unity. It must recognise that the Holy Spirit speaks through the whole Church, not just through part of it, and it must ensure that decisions can only be taken through all three groups coming to a common mind on every matter.

Synodical government is not simply an attempt to translate democratic ideals based on one man one vote into ecclesiastical terms, although the value of properly representative government should certainly not be disregarded.

In what way is the Present Government of the Church of England not Synodical?

We now have a large apparatus of Church government, from P.C.C.'s up to Church Assembly, in which the laity are represented. In deciding many important

matters the laity have an equal voice with the bishops and the clergy. There are, however, certain vital decisions from which the laity are still excluded, or on which they are only consulted as a matter of courtesy.

At the national level, decisions on doctrine, canon law and certain aspects of ecumenical affairs are the prerogative of the Convocations of Canterbury and York, bodies consisting only of bishops and priests. At the diocesan level, bishops can take decisions (for instance, on establishing or discontinuing specialist ministries in the diocese) without consulting any body that includes laity. In practice the situation is better than it might appear. The convocations often do consult the House of Laity of the Church Assembly, and many bishops are careful to involve lay people in many important decisions affecting the life of their diocese.

It is vital that this is realised, because it would be wrong to think of the present moves towards synodical government solely in terms of the laity "demanding their rights". There is now a general acceptance throughout the Church of the ideal of full synodical government. The arguments and controversies tend to centre on the form in which it should be achieved.

The Commission's Proposals

The full history of the events that led up to the appointment of the Commission can be found in its report. Here it is sufficient to note that it was bound by its terms of reference and that these were based on a compromise over conflicting views on the place of the Convocations of Canterbury and York in the future government of the Church of England. Unlike the Commission, we are not bound to accept that compromise.

The Commission's Major Proposals:

1. The Church Assembly should be reconstituted as the General Synod, and should be given the authority and powers at present exercised by the Convocation over doctrine and worship.

2. The Convocations should nevertheless remain in existence. They would be able (either at their own request or through their senior officers) to insist that matters concerning doctrine or worship be referred to them for approval, before receiving the assent of the General Synod. There would, however, be safeguards against indefinite delay by one house or one convocation.

3. The same rights and privileges would be given to the House of Laity.

4. The General Synod would be smaller than the present Church Assembly. It would have 543 members as opposed to 746. The House of Clergy and the House of Laity would continue to have the same numbers as each other, but the ex-officio element (archdeacons, deans and provosts) in the House of Clergy would be somewhat reduced.

5. The members of the House of Laity would be elected by the lay members of ruri-decanal synods (replacing our present ruri-decanal conferences). At the moment they are elected by the lay members of diocesan conferences.

6. The General Synod would meet in the Province of York as well as in Canterbury. It would continue to meet only on weekdays.

7. A Diocesan Synod would be set up in every diocese. It would be smaller than the present diocesan conference, having a membership of 150-250, roughly equally divided between clergy and laity. Apart from a few ex-officio members, all members would be elected by ruri-decanal synods, not directly by parishes. It would be empowered

to debate any Church matter and make suitable provision for it in relation to its own diocese. (These are much wider powers than those held by diocesan conferences).

8. A diocese could, however, decide to retain its Diocesan Conference in addition to the new Diocesan Synod if it wished. The Conference would then be left with such of its statutory functions as it wanted to retain (these include finance and certain administration functions).

9. The Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod would be known as the Standing Committee and Bishop's Council. It would play a much more positive role in formulating diocesan policy than the standing committees of most diocesan conferences.

10. The bishop of the diocese would no longer form a separate house in the Diocesan Synod. He would not therefore be able to veto decisions passed by the Houses of Clergy and Laity. He would also be legally bound to consult the Diocesan Synod (either directly or through the Standing Committee and Bishop's Council) on all matters of general concern to the diocese. He would, however, be able to withdraw for his personal decision "matters belonging essentially to his episcopal office or pastoral duties".

11. A Ruri-decanal Synod would be established in every rural deanery, with a membership of 50-100. It would serve as the electoral base for the Diocesan Synod, and for the House of Laity of the General Synod. It would also deal with matters referred to it by the Diocesan Synod, and with general problems of the deanery.

1st HALSALL SCOUT AND CUB NEWS

At long last I have some news to report. Now that Spring is on the way we are hoping to hold a number of events in the coming months.

Indeed this is a necessity in view of our rather disappointing Balance Sheet for the past year. Our Spring Dance on the 31st March only raised £7 18s. 11d., which did little to help our finances, but we look forward to our main Dance on October 13th, when we hold our Autumn Draw, to give a much better result.

The Bob-a-Job Week was quite good, the Boys worked hard and earned a total of £21 11s. 6d., and many thanks to all the good people who found them an assortment of jobs.

The Summer Camp has been arranged and the Boys will be going to Wales on Saturday, August 19th. More details later.

P.S.

HOUSING

"... I know that in one single room thirteen crowded people are breathing on one another.

I know a mother who hooks the table and the chairs to the ceiling to make room for mattresses.

I know that rats come out to eat the crusts and bite the babies.

I know a father who gets up to stretch oil-cloth above the rain-soaked bed of his four children.

I know a mother who stays up all night since there is room for only one bed, and the two children are sick.

I know a drunken father who vomits on the child sleeping beside him.

I know a big boy who runs away alone into the night because he can't stand it any more.

I know that some men fight for the women as there are three couples in the same attic.

I know a wife who avoids her husband as there is no room for another baby at home.

I know a child who is quietly dying, soon to join his four little brothers above.

I know ...

I know hundreds of others—yet I was going to sleep peacefully between my clean white sheets.

(From "Prayers of Life" by Michael Quoist.)

THE MOTHERS' UNION

On Tuesday, 2nd May, we hold a short devotional service in Church at 7.30 p.m., followed by a bring and buy sale at the Rectory with coffee. We hope, very much, that all members will support this event.

On Thursday, 15th June, 41 of our parishioners will visit the new Roman Catholic Cathedral to hear a choral concert given by the choir from our own Cathedral with Mr. Noel Rawsthorne our Cathedral organist at the console of the new organ in the Metropolitan Cathedral. Messrs Walkers our organ builders have built the new organ in the new Cathedral.

PARISH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE SCHOOL, HALSALL, ON 6TH APRIL, 1967, AT 8 P.M.

In the Chair: The Rector.

The Vestry Meeting—The Rector thanked Mr. Harold Grimshaw for his services to the Church and invited him to continue as Rector's Warden. Mr. Henry Serjeant was elected as people's warden and also thanked by the Rector.

After the opening of the meeting with a Prayer, apologies for absence were received and the Rector then made his Annual Report.

The main theme of his report was Worship and he stressed that the prime function of the Church was the Worship of God. Carrying on he dealt with the forms and times of Church services and assured the meeting that there would be no changes without the Parochial Church Council and the congregation being consulted.

Choir—The Rector expressed his thanks to the choir for their services and said we still needed more members.

The Day School and the children's part in the Church were then mentioned by the Rector.

He reported that the Church Fabric was generally sound but the churchyard wall needed some £1,000 for reconditioning. He expressed his thanks to Arthur Mawdsley and John Carr for their efforts in improving the appearance of the graveyard.

Bells—The Rector told the meeting that we were very short of bell-ringers and that we were not getting anything like the full enjoyment and value of a first class peal. He appealed to parishioners for bell-ringers and thanked those who were at present performing this service.

The Rector concluded by thanking all helpers, particularly his Verger, Arthur Mawdsley.

The Hon. Treasurer then made his report and summarised the financial position as set out in the official statement of accounts.

Election of P.C.C. members—It was with regret that resignations were received from the following members: Mrs. Dean, Mrs. Moorcroft, Mr. & Mrs. H. Gaskell, Mr. & Mrs. Shacklady. It was proposed and seconded that these vacancies should be filled as follows: Mr. P. Aynsley, Mr. & Mrs. P. Saunders, Mrs. Lewis, Mr. G. Midgeley and Mr. Colley. These nominations were unanimously accepted. The remaining members of the Parochial Church Council were re-elected. The Rector proposed and it was unanimously agreed that Mr. A. Mawdsley be elected an Honorary Member.

Sidesmen—The resignation as sidesman was regretfully received from Mr. R. Dutton. Messrs. P. Aynsley and P. Saunders were nominated as sidesmen and their election was unanimous. The remainder of the sidesmen were re-elected.

D.C. Representatives—The Rector's and People's Warden were appointed.

R.D.C. Representatives—The existing representatives were re-elected en bloc with authority for the Parochial Church Council to fill vacancies at a later date.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

- May 7—Mrs. W. Martin.
14—The Congregation.
21—Mr. E. Lord.
28—Mrs. E. Grimshaw.
June 4—Mrs. C. Shacklady.

SERVERS' ROTA

- May 7—8.00 a.m. Jim Heaton.
10.30 a.m. John Pounds.
14—8.00 a.m. John Gaskell.
10.30 a.m. Harold Grimshaw, Raymond Juba.
21—8.00 a.m. Peter Balmer.
28—8.00 a.m. Brian Heaton.
10.30 a.m. Harold Grimshaw, Michael Lewis.

Ascension Day, May 4th

- 7.30 p.m. Sung Eucharist
Harold Grimshaw, Malcolm Sergeant.
June 4th 8.00 a.m. Gordon Midgeley.

SIDESMEN'S ROTA

- May 7—a.m. G. Porter, S. Park.
p.m. R. Dutton, T. Grimshaw.
14—a.m. E. Grimshaw, E. Gawne.
p.m. L. Robinson, E. Blackhurst.
21—a.m. H. Huyton, A. Grimshaw.
p.m. J. Grimshaw, G. Midgeley.
28—a.m. T. Swift, T. Hunter.
p.m. J. Cheetham, H. Gaskell.

HOLY MATRIMONY

"Those whom God hath joined together"

- March 25—Henry Shacklady, 1 Plex Lane, Halsall and
Joan Angela Cropper, 14 The Causeway,
Croscens.

HOLY BAPTISM

"Entered in the family of Christ's Church"

- March 26—David Glyn, son of Reginald William and
Kathleen Lale, 87 Somerset Road, Newport,
Monmouthshire.
April 9—Alison, daughter of Thomas William and
Anne Lloyd, Gesterfield Farm, Halsall.
April 9—Jane Alison, daughter of Brian Hodgson and
Jean Lawson, Glendale, Plex Lane, Halsall.

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