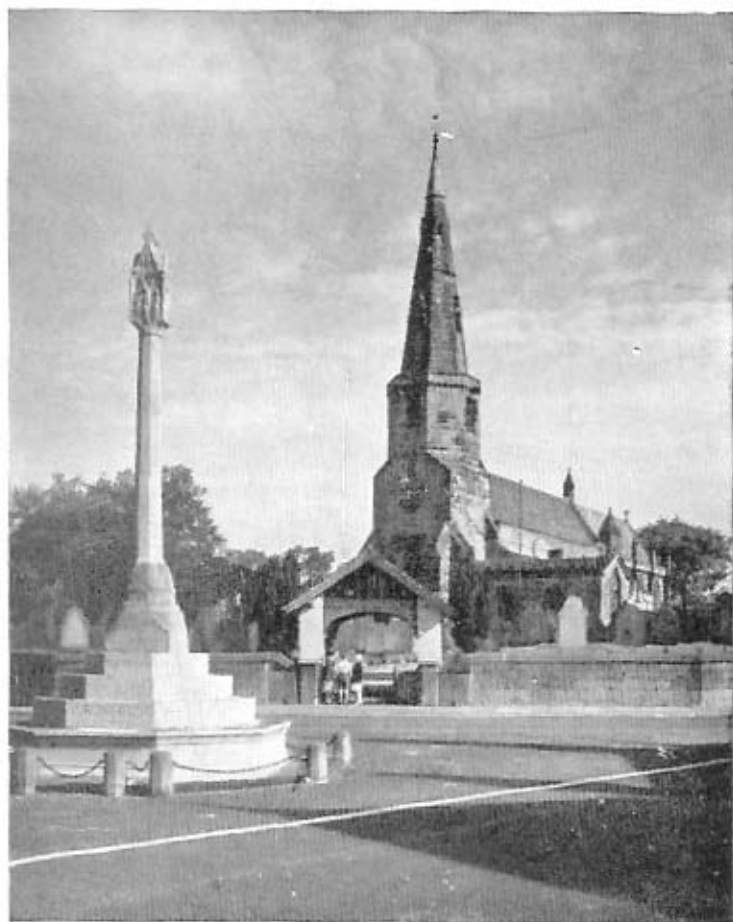


HALSALL PARISH MAGAZINE



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Rural Dean of Ormskirk

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Services at St. Cuthberts

1st SUNDAY IN THE MONTH

9.00 a.m. Holy Communion
10.30 a.m. Mattins and Sermon
6.30 p.m. Evensong and Sermon

2nd SUNDAY IN THE MONTH

10.30 a.m. Family Eucharist
6.30 p.m. Evensong and Sermon

3rd SUNDAY IN THE MONTH

9.00 a.m. Holy Communion
10.30 a.m. Mattins and Sermon
6.30 p.m. Evensong with Holy Communion

4th SUNDAY IN THE MONTH

9.00 a.m. Holy Communion
10.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist
6.30 p.m. Evensong and Sermon

5th SUNDAY IN THE MONTH

9.00 a.m. Holy Communion
10.30 a.m. Mattins with Holy Communion
6.30 p.m. Evensong and Sermon

Holy Baptism: Second Sunday in the month at 3.30 p.m.

Churchings: By appointment

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17th March, 1975

My Dear Friends,

This month we celebrate the "Queen of Festivals,"—Easter. The secret of a true understanding of the Easter faith is to remember all that came before, all that made the Resurrection necessary, all that made the Resurrection possible. That is the reason why to make a good Easter, Christians need to have Holy Week. Without the sombre joy of Palm Sunday, Christ deliberately declaring the purpose of this return to Jerusalem; without the declaration of His self-offering and the Last Supper of Maundy Thursday; without the anguished obedience of Gethsemane; without the agony of the sacrifice of Good Friday; yes, without the coldness and desolation of the burial of Holy Saturday—without all of these, Easter can never be known.

These great and saving acts are not merely the deeds of a man, but the deeds of God. This is God fulfilling the purpose for which He came to us in great humility in the Nativity of Bethlehem. This is God making possible the Kingdom which is declared in the teaching ministry and the healing works of our Lord. This is God apparently the victim, but actually the victor. The Resurrection is God bringing to us all that Christ won in His glorious life-long battle with evil. Let us see more explicitly what we know of this Easter, when we know Him and the power of His resurrection."

1. THE RESURRECTION IS THE CONQUEST OF SIN

How frequently sin is misconceived in terms of simple acts of disobedience! These acts are indeed sinful, but sin is more than deeds. It is the power within us which forces us to commit them. It is a tremendous and awful mystery. Sometimes we even horrify ourselves when we realise what we are capable of doing. When we see the mystery of iniquity unleashed in its more ghastly corporate forms, as in the madness of war, the injustice of racial discrimination, and man's inhumanity to man, we are appalled. History teaches us that what are sometimes called inhuman acts are characteristically human. Moreover, we find the sources of such things suppressed and sometimes expressed in our own inner lives. A Christian should never be shocked at what man can do because he knows a tragedy

of Adam's fall within his own life. The story of the Garden of Eden is his own biography. Between him and Paradise, if he be left alone, there is ever the angel with the flaming sword. The place where all of this comes clearest is the cross. Here is a manifestation of the malignancy of sin. Here is the one good man receiving total injustice. Here is the eruption of all of the perversion of human nature, manifesting itself in the demonic glee of those who scoffed at Him. Here is what man does to man. Here is what man does to God. And we see so clearly here not just the deed of bad men, but the implication of all men in this deed

One of the truest ways of understanding the Atonement is to see the cross and the Resurrection as one mighty act, whereby the power of sin is broken. Jesus has overcome all that the evil will of man can do, and He has overcome it not in vengeance, but in love to come back to the sinner to forgive, and to give him the power to destroy the force of Satan in his own will. Thus Christ gives us today the conquest of sin.

2. THE RESURRECTION IS THE CONQUEST OF PAIN

It is good to ponder the reality of the suffering of Christ. There was the physical agony of the torture of the crucifixion. There was the greater agony of mind and soul which really caused the death of Christ. Nowhere in the world is there greater pain than that represented in the cry of dereliction, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" On the cross is the very essence of pain. No man has ever suffered more than this. But the cross is followed by the Resurrection. "The strife is o'er, the battle done," God has conquered pain. Again this is not just a demonstration of divine power of God freeing Himself from involvement in evil. It is God giving us through Christ alive, His strengthening presence, the ability to overcome. The truly Christian life is one which can face anything. The Christian can suffer without being destroyed. In fact, his suffering, like Christ's, can serve as part of God's work for the healing of the world. Christ has conquered pain.

3. THE RESURRECTION IS THE CONQUEST OF DEATH

Christ died. His death was real, like our death. In our speech about the departed, we seek to shun

using the word "death". Our friends "pass away," they do not die. Death is in its deepest sense no tragedy. It is an entrance into victorious life, not the moment of ultimate destruction. When we are bereaved, God has a word for us—the Lord is risen; He is risen indeed! When we speak of Resurrection, let us do so in the fullness of the Christian faith. The Resurrection of Christ is the pattern of our resurrection. In it is the final fulfilment of creation in which all things are made new. Christ has conquered death.

So let us picture the Resurrection of our Lord. So let us receive Him. The Lord is risen. The Lord is here. We may know Him and the power of His Resurrection—the power over our sin, our pain and our death. ALLELUIA.

I look forward to seeing you at your Easter Communion.

God bless you all.

Your sincere friend,

Herbert Bullough

FACING FACTS

In Dean Inge's "Diary of a Dean" he concludes the entry for December 31st, 1919, with these words: "... but I am not hopeful about the Church of England." In another entry some three years later, in 1923, he quotes one of the greatest thinkers of that time as saying that the Church no longer counts for anything in organised society. About the year 1911 Dean Inge earned for himself in the Press the title of "The gloomy Dean," and he was generally thought of as taking rather a pessimistic view of things. In defence of his past sayings he said: "I have never predicted anything half so bad as what has now come upon us."

It is remarkable that Inge should have taken the view he did fifty-five years ago now, when congregations still were good and Sunday Schools full. That events have proved him largely a true prophet shows a penetrating mind that could read the signs of the times.

"The Church no longer counts for anything in organised society." In some respects this statement may be too sweeping. It is not possible to say what buried loyalties still dimly remain, however deeply buried, in the hearts of many to whom church has long been an unnecessary institution. But in every practical and realistic sense the statement is largely true today. If a man never goes to church nor

supports it in any way it is difficult to see how the Church counts for anything in his life. There are, no doubt, many who do not support the Church in any way who still look upon themselves in some way as concerned with the Church. But are they being realistic? If the Church does count for anything in their lives, what does it count for? One thing is certain, and it is that if it rested on them there would be no church services in the land, and eventually no Church. The truth is that these people, while they approve of the Church in a vague and general way, are content to leave it to others to carry on in their generation.

For a vast number of people the Church just does not count for anything at all nor does religion. They are completely indifferent to its existence. It has nothing, simply nothing, to offer that they need or desire. I do not mean that they have carefully studied and thought out the matter, and arrived at a well-reasoned decision that the Church has nothing to offer. They have not done this, but have simply gravitated into a way of living in which church does not figure. A birth, a marriage, or a death for a few minutes interfere with their normal routine and force the Church upon their attention; but nothing else will.

What causes have produced this state of affairs? They are many and involved. Dean Inge saw them fifty five years ago, and in greater prominence after 1918. Two people were discussing this very question in 1919; one asked: "What are the bishops and clerics thinking of, letting the Church fail so miserably?" The other replied: "The Church is not only the clerics; it is you and me who are equally answerable."

I am not here going to attempt to give any answers. Whatever the causes, let us face the facts of the day to begin with. It is not pessimistic to accept facts even if they are unpalatable. It is necessary for those who are still loyal to the Church to realise what a small minority they are, and how much depends upon them. Complacency and optimism are the dangers to be avoided.

H. B.

SERVANT OF THE LORD "THE DEATH OF JESUS"

For most men death is simply the termination of life. The act of dying achieves nothing in itself; it

is to their lives that we look for their achievements.

But some men—heroes, martyrs—accomplish more by dying than by living. For them death is not a termination; it is a completion, a fulfilment of the very purpose of their lives. This is how Jesus died. His death was the climax of His life. Service had been the keynote of His life; His death was the greatest act of service of all. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to surrender His life as a ransom for many." (St. Mark 10, 45.) In His life Jesus served those He met by friendship, by healing, by teaching, by leadership. In His death, Jesus served men of all time by reconciling them to God.

The unknown prophet who wrote Isaiah 53 had pictured a man whose suffering and complete obedience to God would effect the salvation of mankind. In Jesus that hope and prophecy were fulfilled; the vision became reality.

Jesus was able to fulfil it completely because of His moral perfection, His oneness with men, and His oneness with God.

Perfection

No-one can read the Gospels without gaining an impression of the strength and beauty of Jesus' character. We saw His self-giving last month. Christians have ever claimed that Jesus was morally perfect. St. Paul said, "Christ was innocent of sin" (2 Corinthians 5, 21.) Sometimes writers use the sacrificial language of the Old Testament to make the point, as in 1 Peter 1, 19: "a lamb without mark or blemish." He whose sufferings were to achieve man's salvation must himself be sinless. Otherwise for ever remains that his sufferings were part of his own folly and wickedness. The suffering of the Servant of the Lord is suffering for others.

The Man for others

Jesus deliberately made Himself one with men. He was a man by birth and nothing could change that. Some men hold themselves aloof from their fellows. Jesus was known—and criticized—for mixing freely with all, even with those whom society rejected.

His great act of identification was His baptism by John. Those sharing in it acknowledged both their individual sinfulness, and the need for national renewal. Jesus had no need of such a baptism. His

purpose was to make plain His oneness with men, even in their sinfulness.

Only by total identification of Himself with men could Jesus rescue us. His death cannot help unless it was for us. What then did the Servant of the Lord do by His death on behalf of all mankind? He offered to God a life of moral perfection. He accepted the accumulated consequences of human sin.

The Son of God

At His baptism God spoke of Jesus as "my beloved Son." He had been chosen and sent to achieve God's purpose. The resurrection was the triumphant vindication of Jesus, demonstrating that God had both initiated and accepted the work of His Servant. The aim of Jesus' mission, accomplished by His death, was that "in Him we might be made one with the goodness of God Himself." No service could be greater than this.

FOR REFLECTION

"STRETCH FORTH THY HAND"

A plea for a more adventurous and hopeful spirit among Christians.

Can a Christian of the 1970's, holding all the traditional beliefs of fallen human nature—redemption, the power of God through Christ's death and resurrection to give new life and direction—all the basic eternal truths of the Bible—change to a completely new way of applying these truths? I believe it can be done.

Believers in God seem to get terribly shocked with modern trends, and understandably so. The new and swift changes all around us. Massive concrete buildings going up in a matter of weeks it seems, traffic difficulties, the disappearance of small businesses, the more serious moral trends, violence, crime, drugs, permissive living. They are all numbing, upsetting, shocking. But do we really need to be scared?

Does not much of the older generation's reaction come from downright unwillingness to change in outlook. In God's mind surely change goes on and on into eternity?

Had we not better all get it into our bones that the atomic age and all that goes with it is here to stay? We can never go back to the small, safe ways of thinking and living any more than an adult can

go back to being a child again.

But God and His eternal truths do not change. How to bridge that gap? Accept the greatness of new technologies, new potentialities for good or evil, yet keep our heart high and in the right place.

If those who are shocked at youth could take responsibility for having created the conditions into which they are thrust—if instead of fearing almost uncontrollable forces of mind and brain which seem to threaten, we could see in them the unfathomable resources of the Creator, would not this be a change for the better? Could it be possible if instead of the blind dependence in God to do everything (which seems to be some people's idea of faith), we saw **ourselves** as **our saviours**, yet always acknowledging the over-arching power of God? And to what new heights and achievements might not believers rise and to how much harmony with so-called "humanists?"

It may be an evil doctrine to say "God is dead, we no longer need Him," but if it made us draw on yet unplumbed depth of power and heart within ourselves, we believers could accept the glory and the greatness awaiting the world through our own efforts, yet acknowledging that the ultimate power comes from God.

May it not be that the tragedies of history come less from the evil deeds of perverted men than from the failure of so-called "believers" to reach out and grasp the full potentialities of redemption?

SERVERS ROTA

APRIL

- 6 9.00 a.m. Jim Heaton.
- 13 10.30 a.m. Keith Stopforth, Colin Stopforth.
- 20 9.00 a.m. Brian Heaton.
- 6.30 p.m. Nigel Gidney.
- 27 9.00 a.m. Clive Gidney.
- 10.30 a.m. Barry Gaskell, Malcolm Serjeant.

MAY

- 4 9.00 a.m. Simon Andrews.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

APRIL

- 6 Vacant.
- 12 Mrs. W. White.
- 20 Miss Mawdesley, Mrs. J. Parker.
- 27 Mrs. J. Morris.

MAY

- 4 Mrs. H. Serjeant, Mrs. M. Banks.
- 11 Vacant.

SIDESMEN'S ROTA

APRIL

- 6 P. Attwood, H. Rimmer H.S. E. Blackhurst, J. Rimmer.
- 13 G. Porter, S. Park R.H. J. D. Grimshaw, R. Dutton.
- 20 E. Grimshaw, D. Sephton J.B. J. Critchley, R. Gaskell.
- 27 T. Swift, T. Hunter H.S. J. F. Smith, H. Wood.

MAY

- 4 J. Heaton, E. Orritt R.H. H. Huyton, A. Grimshaw.

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March 14th—Michael Francis Doherty of 94 Moss Road, Halsall, aged 55 years.

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