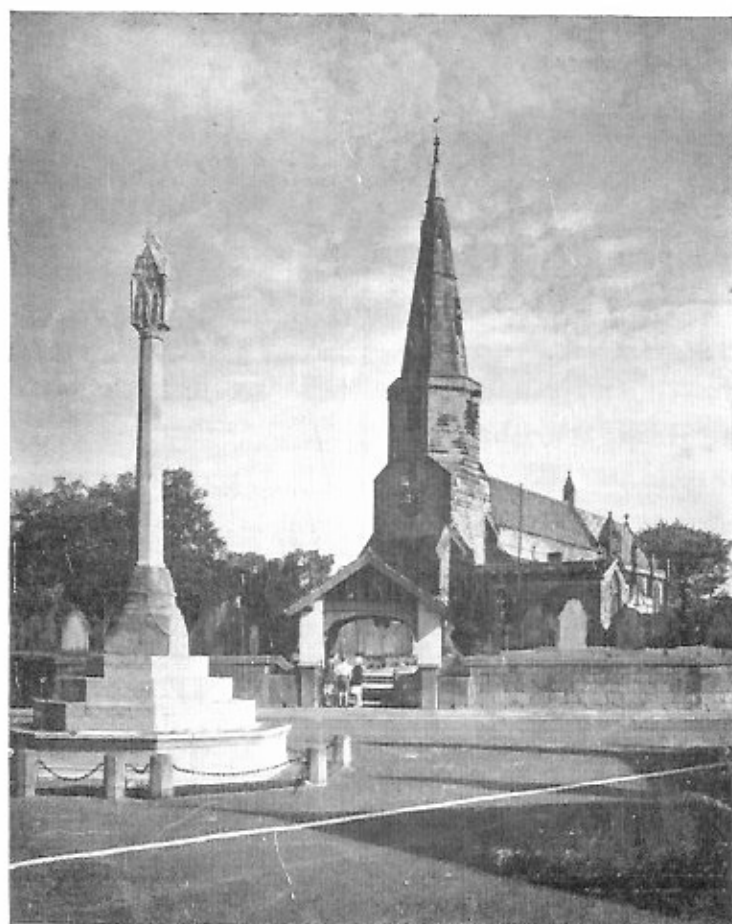


MAY, 1966

# HALSALL PARISH MAGAZINE



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Licensed Reader: Mr. H. NELSON, 90 County Rd., Ormskirk  
Church Wardens: MR. HAROLD GRIMSHAW, MR. HENRY SERJEANT  
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My dear friends,

So many people during the past week or so have said to me "Isn't everything just wonderful at the present time, the trees, the fields, the spring flowers and the birds?" My answer, of course, was "Yes." Shall we think of this month, when we observe Rogationtide services, of all this beauty around us.

The more we perceive the majestic sweep of God's plan in creation, the more we note the delicate detail of His pattern—the more we shall want to go on our knees and worship. When we realise who made the things of earth, and why, we begin to see the care and love He has lavished on them—then we shall approach them no longer with an easy familiarity but with something akin to awe. As a fresh understanding of these things dawns we shall want to handle the things God has made with a new respect and even reverence. We shall begin to see all things as designed and created by God for a purpose—His purpose. And more and more we shall want to make sure what that purpose is, and to fit in with it. As we use His gifts, we shall ask "Is this what God meant, when He gave it? Is this how He meant it to be used?"

All this will involve us in a major revolution and this is just what we all need. The world God made and in which He delighted—"... behold it was very good"—today lies scarred and ravaged because of man's blindness and perversity. Green pastures have been spoiled by Man's greed or ruined by his ignorance. Great fertile tracts in three Continents have been reduced to mere dust-bowls. Beautiful forests, precious for their beauty have been ravaged and denuded.

The powers within the earth, which God placed there for man's betterment, have been put to satanic uses; petrol is perverted to the napalm bomb, and atomic energy harnessed to the work of indiscriminate destruction. The human body—God's Holy Temple, as Paul reminds us—has like that other Temple in Jerusalem, been misused and defiled.

I sometimes fear what an awful vengeance will overtake us and our civilisation if we persist in so misusing the gifts which have been given us. God is not mocked. And Nature herself, so meek in some respects, can be terrible in others. She has her own uncanny but awful power of retaliation on those who abuse her.

But all this need not—MUST NOT—be. There is another way, and for God's sake you and I must take it; showing others how much better is this path, and persuading them also to walk in it. Seeing the things of the earth as things of beauty and from God, let us handle them with reverence and care, seeking always a better understanding of why they are here, and what God would have us do with them.

When we try to take this better road we shall find some around us who are showing us the way. There is the scientist who prays every day before he enters his laboratory that all his researches there may be guided by God for the welfare of the world. There is the wise farmer, a man of understanding and sympathy, caring for his fields as a good horse-man cares for his horse. And there is the young labourer, going forth in the morning to his day's work, asking God that it may prove to be not just a

means of earning a living, but a means of grace. They are showing us the way—the only way. God bless you all.

Your sincere friend,

W. HERBERT BULLOUGH

## ROGATIONTIDE

On Sunday, 15th May, we shall hold our usual Rogationtide service at 10.30 a.m. and after lunch the Parish Rogationtide Procession will leave the church, at 1.45 p.m. Have you ever been round the lovely countryside with us? It is an experience you should not miss. We invite you all to join us at 1.45 p.m. on Sunday, 15th May, you will most certainly enjoy it. We shall go no matter what the weather may be. Wet or fine we shall go.

W.H.B.

## RESURRECTION

C. S. Lewis suggests that in modern times when people talk of the Resurrection they usually mean the discovery of the empty tomb, and the appearance of Jesus a short distance away. If this is too trite a judgment, it may nevertheless be true to say that many people never think further than the idea that the Resurrection was a spectacular miracle demonstrating the power of God to reverse the action of the Jews and Romans in crucifying Christ. It certainly was this, but this aspect of the Resurrection is only incidental to its real significance which the first Christian evangelists and apostles expounded in their writing and preaching, especially St. John and St. Paul. For them, and for us, the questions are: "What is the nature of this body which arose?" and "What is its significance—what does it mean?"

It is clear from Gospel accounts that the Risen Body had undergone some kind of transformation. When Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalen, and to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus he was not immediately recognised. It was a body which St. Thomas could touch; which Magdalen must not touch; which could appear and disappear out of all conformity to known physical laws. On this account many people reject the authenticity of the Gospel records, and in so doing they would seem to be committed to the view that known physical laws cover all reality, or more accurately, that the method of investigation which has provided us with known physical laws is the only method of investigating all aspects of reality. An alternative approach is to accept the records as revelations of, or pointers to wider, and otherwise unknown modes of existence.

Both St. John and Paul concede that we are given an entirely different view of the physical world, and the material body. For them the Risen Body is a revelation in time of eternal truth. The scales are taken from our eyes. We are shown what "body" really is—what the material world really is—sensitive to a degree to spiritual powers.

According to conventional ideas the body is born, grows and dies. It is subject to rigid physical laws. It is a limitation on the spirit. In Christ, "it is seen as that which neither dies, nor is born, which neither comes nor goes, and which cannot be confined within the walls of conventional conceptions."

The body we experience under the limitations of the conventional world is a mere caricature of the truth. This caricature undoubtedly is born, and dies; suffers pain, injury, disease; enjoys merely physical pleasures. But the real body knows no such limitations. It is an entirely adequate vehicle for the mind and the spirit; completely responsive to the will, when that will is the will of God.

In the Resurrection appearances it is the same body undergone transfiguration by its being "taken over" by the spirit. It is a human body redeemed from the limitations, and retarding "earthiness" of its terrestrial existence. It is what it was always capable of becoming, because this is what body really is in the divine economy. In the Transfiguration of Christ we have a revelation of reality—a preview of the Risen Christ.

St. Paul applies this idea of transfiguration to the entire creation in foreshadowing some final consummation in which even the material world will be redeemed and be "taken over" by the Spirit.

"Creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

The vision of transfiguration in resurrection on a cosmic scale is beautifully expressed in these lines by Kathleen Raine.

"Lift up your heart again without fear,  
sleep in the tomb, or breathe the living air,  
this world you with the flowers and with the  
tiger share.

Then I saw every visible substance turn  
into immortal; every cell new born  
burned with the holy fire of passion.

This world I saw as on her judgment day  
when the war ends, and the sky rolls away,  
and all is light, lovely and eternity."

In the words of Nicodemus: "How can these things be?" The answer of St. John is that they have already been manifested in Christ. Listen to the opening of his Epistle:

"It is of what existed from the very beginning, of what we heard, of what we saw with our eyes, of what we witnessed, and touched with our own hands, it is the Word of Life (the life has appeared; we bring you word of that Eternal Life which existed with the Father, and was disclosed to us)."

News of that Eternal Life which has existed with the Father! This Life of Eternity was manifested in time in the person of Jesus Christ. He brought it into this world, and revealed it to men.

Into this world where life had undergone a metamorphosis due to man's sin—full of fear, and struggle, and very short, with death ending all! Into this world He introduced a New Order, the Life of Eternity, radiant with goodness in every sense. He died, as all men die. He arose from the dead, and although the manner of His Resurrection is unique, we see in it the crystallisation of a universal principle. Death is not the end. It is a phenomenon in life in this world. It is something which happens to man, but it is not the end of man. "The Life has appeared." The tide of God's infinite love has invaded the world. (New in this world, it existed with

the Father before the world was). Invaded this world in Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit like the tide of an illimitable ocean invading a stagnant pool—flowing into it, sparkling, invigorating, cleansing—overwhelming it, and finally assimilating it to itself to share its own illimitable power and infinitude.

### ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN

This month contains the Festival which marks the close of Our Lord's earthly appearances. The Ascension is both the natural consequence of the Resurrection and the fitting prelude to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It closes the public ministry, and opens the continuation of that ministry in the new age of Spirit. Without the Ascension and subsequent outpouring of Holy Spirit at Pentecost Our Lord's earthly life would be meaningless. Great as the difficulties are (to our modern minds) of a bodily ascension, we cannot dispense with it. It is a logical necessity that the risen body should be thus glorified. It could not remain on earth perpetually, and it is inconceivable to think of Our Lord dying a second time of old age. So we have no option but to accept the Ascension if we accept the Resurrection. And why not? What do we know of the qualities of the risen body? Surely the Ascension presents no difficulties to the God who made the atom and electron, and the galaxies of stars, and the mysterious consciousness of selfhood which is the basis of our human nature.

At Christmas God emptied himself of glory and became man. At the Ascension Man was raised to the right hand of God. The work was completed. And there the Eternal Son stands at the right hand of the Majesty on high, forever God and forever Man. There, too, He pleads for us men and for our salvation. When we pray to God, we do not pray alone. We join His prayer for a few moments. That is why we say: "through Jesus Christ, Our Lord."

"He has raised our human nature to  
the clouds at God's right hand,  
There we sit in Heavenly places, there  
with Him in glory stand,  
Jesus reigns, adored by angels,  
Man with God is on the throne,  
Mighty Lord in Thine Ascension  
we by faith behold our own.

### WHITSUNTIDE

The days between now and Whitsuntide are some of the happiest in our Church Calendar. We read in Gospels and Lessons of the Resurrection appearances of our Lord to his disciples. We share in the joy of reunion, and gain reassurance of the promises of life everlasting on finer planes of existence than anything we experienced in this world.

We who live in the northern hemisphere are very fortunate that Resurrection and Ascension come in the spring of the year. The world of nature is in harmony with our deepest spiritual experiences. April and May in England! Life renewed, retrieved!

The culmination of Easter and Ascension is Whitsuntide. Whitsun Day is a day of equal significance with Christmas and Easter, but it never seems to take the popular imagination like the two latter festivals. If I may quote Laurence Whistler, "A birth in a stable can be imagined and clothed from early childhood in all the warm human symbolism of Christmas. Rebirth can be imagined too, less easily



perhaps, though on it is pinned the most profound ambition of the human mind. But the gift of Imagination itself is less imaginable." The meaning of Whitsun Day is entirely novel in human experience. Christmas and Easter were foreshadowed in the old pagan religion, but the descent of the Holy Ghost has no counterpart in pagan beliefs. It is peculiar to Christianity. All the more reason for Christians to keep this festival with at least the same zeal as they keep the others.

On Whitsun Day again we decorate our churches with the loveliest flowers. On the Altar the flame of gladioli—if possible! If not gladioli, the red of some sort, for red is the liturgical colour for Whitsuntide.

It is a great mistake to allow Whitsun Day to become a pale reflection of Christmas and Easter. Its New Testament significance is quite on the level of the Nativity and the Resurrection, for on this day we commemorate the fulfilment of Christ's last promise to the disciples. The Holy Spirit is the dynamic power which built up and sustains the Church.

I do hope that at Halsall, Whitsun Day will be as great a day as Easter Day.

May I suggest that gifts of flame-coloured gladioli for the Altar and Sanctuary would help greatly to give our Church a Whitsun Day look.

H.B.

### THE HOLY GHOST

"I believe in the Holy Ghost." This is the last clause of the first part of the Creed. It concludes what Christians affirm about the nature and action of God. There is a sharp line in Christian theology between God and His creatures. This clause, with its emphatic repetition of the words "I believe," declares that the Holy Ghost belongs to the divine side of that line. But it comes here just before the second part of the Creed, which is about the new life of the Christian in the Church, because the Holy Ghost is the mode of God's action which creates the Church.

The English Bible uses two words, "Ghost" and "Spirit," for the original Hebrew and Greek. It leads to some misunderstanding that the old English word "ghost" is employed in the Creed and often in the Bible because it suggests a "spook" or "wraith," which is not what it means. But there is a strong reason for retaining this archaic English term, in the Creed at any rate. The most common modern error is to confuse the Spirit of God with the spirit of man at its highest. Man is a spirit-centred creature. Therefore he has will and intelligence, ideals, ventures, inspirations, emotional vibrations and "religious experience." These are real expressions of the spirit of man reaching out beyond himself. But the human spirit leads amazingly into the arms of Satan, if its works are not brought into subjection to the Holy Spirit. The spiritual urges of men are the source of the worst as well as the best in man. The greatest villains in history have been idealists, from Herod the Great to Hitler—and the unpleasant characters of Ibsen's plays. Therefore the human spirit must never be confused with the Spirit of God; it must be submitted to Him. So, it is well to have the different word "ghost" in use sometimes; it should serve to remind us that we are talking about a different kind of spirit from that of man or of the devil or of his demons. St. Paul makes quite clear the difference between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man in

I Corinthians ii, 11 and 12: "We receive the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God."

The Holy Ghost, then, is God in his action which makes us able to receive. What is it that Christians receive? It is God's declaration of Himself in Jesus Christ. Jesus is called the Word of God, because in Him the unfathomable being of God is uttered forth.

You know, however, that a word can be said to you which you don't hear. Some talk is like that; it never becomes a conversation. Some people look as if they are listening, but they are thinking of what they want to say the moment you draw a breath. They're not listening. And we hear the wireless like that very often. There is sound but no real hearing. You know, too, that if you take up a book on military science or a score of orchestral music, unless you already know a little bit about the subject, they will say nothing to you.

Well, the language of the Divine action is not natural to us like our mother tongue; we have to learn to listen to God's language because it's about a bit of reality we are estranged from. So God not only speaks in Jesus, He gives us the gift of hearing what that says. That is the work of the Holy Ghost, as it is described in the New Testament. He makes man who believes, open, receptive to the Word. Listen to the phrases: "He" (the Holy Spirit) "shall glorify me, . . . He shall testify of me . . . He will bring to your remembrance all that I have said unto you." Those are the words of Jesus. For St. Paul the test of the Holy Ghost is that man is brought by Him to the feet of Christ. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." It is by the Holy Spirit that men acknowledge Jesus as Lord, as having an absolute claim on them through and through. That is why the New Testament less frequently speaks of the Spirit being in a man, but more strongly of the Christian man being "in the Spirit" or living "after the Spirit."

Look at it another way. The early Church had an intense sense of having been brought into the Kingdom of God which came in germ through Christ, like the seed planted in the ground. They were now members not only of this changing and fallen world, but members of the realm where God's writ runs completely and where His will is done. That is only possible through the Spirit, who is the power or presence of the Ascended Christ, making His glorified Body of Heaven operative in the Church on earth, which is called "The Body of Christ." In his great study of Christian worship, "The Shape of the Liturgy," Dom Gregory Dix points out that "Baptism incorporates a man into that Body from the eternal point of view, but the gift of 'the Spirit' in confirmation is what makes him a living member of that body within time," and that in the primitive Church the two sacraments were conferred within five or ten minutes of each other. He also paraphrases Ephesians i, 13, 14, in the telling words: "the seal of confirmation is God's act claiming full possession of goods which He has purchased outright but which He has not yet removed to His own warehouse." So only the confirmed—those who have received the Spirit—take part in the Eucharist, which is the worshipping act of the Body in time.

Modern Christians are often mistaken when they think of the Holy Spirit as the possession of all men. What is common to all men is the "light which

lighteth every man, coming into the world" (John i, 9). That is the Word, God the Son. Every man bears a kind of image of God in Christ. But he is not aware of it, nor does he respond to that truth, except in the Holy Ghost. That is why the Christian Church came into being with the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

### 1ST HALSALL SCOUT GROUP NEWS

Once again it gives us great pleasure to inform you that the sum of £30 18s. 11d. was raised as the result of the Jumble Sale, which was held in the School Hall on March 25th.

We would like to thank all those who most generously supported us, both by giving and buying at the event.

At the time of going to Press the boys are working very hard on the 1966 BOB-A-JOB week and the results will be reported later.

P. R. Saunders.  
Hon. Treasurer.

### THE MOTHERS' UNION

We are all looking forward to our visit to Mrs. Brown's at Great Crosby on Tuesday, 3rd May. The coach will leave the church at 2.15 p.m. and group leaders are asked to let Mrs. Gaskell have the names of those intending to go.

### WHITSUN DAY, 29th MAY AT 6.30 P.M. CONFIRMATION

The most important parochial event in the coming month is the Confirmation which takes place on Whitsun Day at 6.30 p.m. Twenty-six candidates will be presented to the Bishop of Liverpool on that evening to renew their Baptismal promises and to seek the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands with prayer. Most of them are quite young. All of them, so far as we can judge, are very much in earnest.

We now think of the future. Can they, and will they continue, as they have begun. What about their Communion? Will they make them regularly? They have said that they will.

My own experience teaches me that everything will depend upon the influence and atmosphere of home. Will you encourage them and help them? By your own example? By your prayers? Many of you who read this have been confirmed yourselves. You were in earnest at the time when you stood where they now stand. May I suggest to you that you come to the Confirmation Service to refresh your memory and to renew your promise, and that you say, as the Sundays come round, to your children, your God-children and your brothers and sisters or your friends, not "You had better go to Communion" but "Come with me and let us go to Communion together."

Four years ago we started our family Eucharist on the second Sunday each month at 10.30 a.m. The parents of all the candidates expressed their desire to assist in establishing a regular Communion with their children. I would like to thank them all, they have been most faithful and the result is very encouraging. Four years after their Confirmation candidates are still making their Communion regularly on the second Sunday in the month. With the addition of the candidates who are to be confirmed, along with their parents, our Family Communion Service should now become the main service

each month and also very representative of our Parish. I hope and trust that the parish will rally round these young and keen members of the Church and by so doing help them in no uncertain manner to find their rightful place as loyal members of the Family of God in Halsall.

I wish to express my thanks to all those who have supported our parochial experiment on the second Sunday of each month, and I am full of admiration for the way in which many of our Confirmation candidates have remained loyal and faithful to their Church. The Family Communion is now established as the most inspiring service each month and I pray that this happy state may continue.

H.B.

### SERVERS' ROTA

May	1—	8.00 a.m.	John Davies.
	8—	8.00 a.m.	Peter Balmer.
		10.30 a.m.	Harold Grimshaw, Malcolm Serjeant.
	15—	8.00 a.m.	Brian Heaton.
	22—	8.00 a.m.	Jim Heaton.
		10.30 a.m.	Harold Grimshaw, Raymond Juba.
	29—	8.00 a.m.	John Gaskell.
June	5—	8.00 a.m.	John Pounds.

### SANCTUARY FLOWERS

May	1—	Miss Mawdsley and Mrs. Parker.
	8—	Mrs. H. Serjeant and Mrs. Banks.
	15—	Mrs. W. S. Martin.
	22—	Mr. E. Lord.
	29—	THE CONGREGATION.
June	5—	Mrs. E. Grimshaw.

### HOLY MATRIMONY

"Those whom God hath joined together"

April 11—John Graham Temple, of the Royal Southern Hospital, Liverpool, and Margaret Gillian Leighton Hartley, of Broadgreen Hospital, Liverpool.  
(By Special Licence)

### HOLY BAPTISM

"Entered into the family of Christ's Church"

April 10—John Alan, son of John Brian and Cecelia Webster, Manor House Farm, New Cut Lane, Halsall.  
10—Kathryn Mary, daughter of Dennis and Betty Knowles, 31 Billington Gardens, Billington, near Blackburn.

### BURIAL OF THE DEAD

"In sure and certain hope"

April 7—Mary Wareing, age 78 years, late of Cranton Bungalow, New Cut Lane, Halsall.

### SIDESMEN'S ROTA

May	1—	E. Grimshaw, E. Gawne, H. Huyton, A. Grimshaw.
	8—	W. Robinson, E. Blackhurst, J. D. Grimshaw, G. Midgley.
	15—	E. Serjeant, D. Swift, C. Shacklady, J. Balmer.
	22—	R. A. Gaskell, R. Hunt, J. Cheetham, H. Gaskell.
	29—	R. Lewis, H. Rimmer, W. Leadbetter, N. Britnall.

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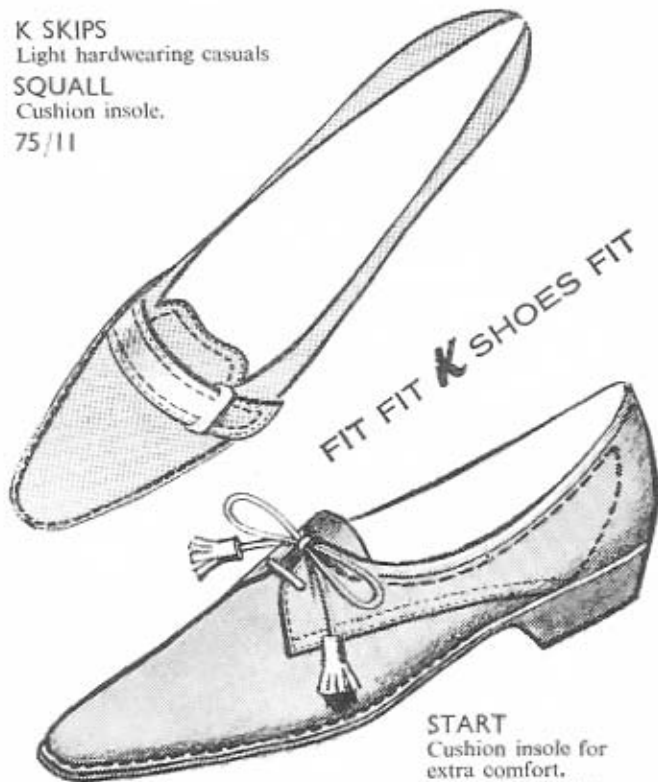
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