

BADSEY, ALDINGTON and WICKHAMFORD PARISH REVIEW

AUGUST, 1969

PRICE 4/- PER ANNUM

Vicar (& Rural Dean): REV. P. BRABY, M.A.

(Tel. Badsey 343)

CHURCH OF ST. JAMES, BADSEY.

SUNDAY SERVICES:

First Sunday	...	...	Holy Communion 8 and 11 a.m. (said). People's Service 6-45 p.m.
Second Sunday	...	...	Family Eucharist 10-15 a.m. Evensong 6-45 p.m.
Third Sunday	...	...	Holy Communion 8 a.m. Evensong 6-45 p.m.
Fourth Sunday	...	...	Holy Communion 8 a.m. Mattins and Holy Baptism 11 a.m. Sung Eucharist 6-45 p.m.
Fifth Sunday	...	..	Holy Communion 8 a.m. Family Service 10-15 a.m. Evensong 6-45 p.m.
Holy Baptism	...	...	See 4th Sunday. (Parents must see the Vicar personally at least seven days before).
Sunday School	...	...	10 a.m. Over 8, in church. Under 8, Parish Room and Meeting House.

WEEK-DAY SERVICES. According to notice in porch.

Churchwardens	...	...	Mrs. N. Clark, Pennyfields, Aldington. Mr. D. W. Hartwell, 35, Willersey Road.
Clerk	...	...	Mr. E. Mitchell, 68, Synehurst.

CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, WICKHAMFORD.

SUNDAY SERVICES:

First Sunday and Festivals	...	...	Holy Communion 9 a.m. Evensong 5-30 (3-0 Nov. to Feb.).
Second Sunday	...	...	Evensong and Holy Baptism 3 p.m. (all the year).
Third Sunday	...	...	Holy Communion (with hymns) 11 a.m. Evensong 5-30 (3-0 Nov. to Feb.).
Fourth & Fifth Sundays	...	...	Evensong 5-30 (3-0 Nov. to Feb.).
Holy Baptism	...	...	See 2nd Sunday. (Parents must see the Vicar at least seven days before).
Sunday School	...	...	11 a.m. (except 3rd Sunday), Village Hall.

WEEK-DAY SERVICES. According to notice in porch.

Churchwardens	...	...	Mr. J. E. Parry, Wickham House. (Badsey 244). Mr. H. J. Dunkerley, C.B.E., Gallisport Farm, Broadway. Tel. Badsey 395.
Clerk	...	...	Mr. C. H. Willis, 35, Pitchers Hill.

THE VICAR'S LETTER

19th July, 1969

My dear People,

As we are away on holiday at the time I usually go to press with the Parish Review, it may be published a little later than usual this month.

A set-back for the Church

The day before we came away, the decisive votes were taken in the Convocations and the Methodist Conference. What a tragedy it was that, when the Methodists by an overwhelming majority showed that they were prepared to go forward with the scheme for unity, the proposals failed to get sufficient support in our own Church to enable us to proceed. It was irritating to see such newspaper headlines as "Anglican Church rejects unity with Methodists". This was of course quite untrue. About 7 in every 10 members of the Church of England were in favour of the proposals - that is hardly a rejection. Nor must it be inferred that the opponents of the scheme were against unity with Methodists. They sincerely believed that this was not the right way to achieve it.

We can try to comfort ourselves by saying that perhaps what has happened was all for the best. Shall we look back in a few years' time and be thankful the scheme did not go through? I do not think so. An earlier example comes to mind. For some years it has been fashionable in clerical circles to say that it was providential the 1928 Prayer Book was turned down by Parliament. Personally I have never agreed with this view. The Revised Prayer Book may have had a number of defects which can now be seen in the light of increased liturgical knowledge. But by now they would have been corrected. Had it been passed, the green light would have been given for reform. As it was, its rejection by Parliament set back all attempts at revising the services for nearly forty years. The movement for reform had all the heart taken out of it, and the result was an even greater chaos in the ordering of church services than there had been before. I fear that the efforts for re-union, not only with the Methodists but with other Christian denominations, may now have received a similar setback (if not for 40 years, at any rate for a long time to come).

Tail wags dog?

The proposals for Anglican-Methodist unity, so carefully worked out by the Commission, have been defeated by the same combination of extremes in the Church of England as thwarted the desire of the majority in 1927-28. The Prayer Book Measure had been approved by large majorities in the Convocations and House of Laity, but the Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic wings, for quite opposite reasons, succeeded by an intensive campaign in persuading Parliament that it would not be in the interests of the Church or nation to give it the force of law. Now the same thing has happened with the unity proposals, although this time the parliamentary stage has not even been reached. The opponents of the scheme have been extremely active, and by sheer persistence in putting their views to the public have quite altered the climate of opinion from what it was three years ago. They managed to get a few heads shaking, and head-shaking soon becomes an infectious thing. This is no discredit to the campaigners, who were able to take advantage of an unnecessarily prolonged time schedule. But it is bewildering and frustrating to the middle-of-the-road majority that this should have happened, when there was such a clear majority in 1965 for going forward.

The dividing issues which seem of such importance to the more old-fashioned clergy and ecclesiastically-minded laymen are considered irrelevant by most of the younger generation of committed Christians, who passionately want the Church to concern itself with the pressing moral and social problems of our time. What happened on July 8th will seem, to many, one more indication that the organism which claims to be the

national Church is more occupied in preserving its own ingrowing toenails than venturing its heart to save the world from perishing in despair.

What next?

The Archbishop of Canterbury, interviewed after the Convocation vote, said there seemed to be sufficient support for the present scheme to encourage them to put it forward again at a later date. One feels this would be a serious tactical error. Again there is a warning to be seen and heeded in the events of forty years ago. After the Prayer Book Measure had been rejected by Parliament in 1927, it was modified by omitting several features objectionable to the extremists, and re-presented to Parliament in 1928. This time it was thrown out by a greater majority than in the previous year. One can see the same sort of thing happening to a revised edition of the present reunion proposals, even though it would not be the Convocations but the new central Synod which would have to decide. In the meantime the Methodists might well have lost interest, and be concentrating their energies on less uncertain and more promising ventures of Christian endeavour.

The best hope for the future would seem to lie now in establishing relations of inter-Communion, not only with Methodists, but with other Christian bodies. This would have to grow spontaneously in local situations, and not be imposed by direction from above. At the same time there would have to be agreed regulations at the centre as to what would be permitted. It simply will not do for individual clergy and congregations to be a law to themselves in this matter. This would cause more disunity in the long run, and further weaken the Church.

What gives real ground for hope is the unity in mission already existing between Anglicans and Methodists in many places. Where the two Churches are sharing buildings and working as one team in co-operative efforts, that 'growing together' which was envisaged for Stage One of the proposals is already taking place. If in these circumstances the two congregations can be united at the Lord's Table, inter-Communion will come about in the right way, and the growing pressure of public opinion will demand the same practice in other places where there is joint endeavour. But inter-Communion would be meaningless in situations where Anglicans and Methodists are not co-operating closely in Christian service and witness. To isolate the Sacrament of Holy Communion and use it as a means, a kind of gimmick, for attaining some other end, such as an outward show of unity, would be sacrilegious.

Patience and hope

At this time, even more than when the scheme for organic unity hung in the balance, our leaders should have the support of our prayers. They will need great patience, wisdom and courage. They will not be helped by petulant independent action on the part of disappointed supporters of the scheme, or by the attempts of minority parties to take advantage of disarray in the central ranks. The failure of the Church (and it is a failure) should be accepted by us all as a challenge to deeper penitence and braver perseverance, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope is not deceptive, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us".

Your sincere friend and Vicar,

PETER BRABY.

Postscript. On returning home, I find a circular letter from the Bishop to his clergy. He hopes we shall do all we can to co-operate on the local level with the Methodists and others, in the ways allowed to us. The temptation to act unilaterally, either as a Diocese or a parish, must be resisted. He has no authority at present to permit inter-Communion, except that a Methodist who lives at a distance from a Methodist Church may be welcomed

as a guest communicant. The Bishops would be meeting later in July, and the Convocations in October. No doubt the Church as a whole will then receive guidance about future action.

Another thing is that we have received an invitation from the Methodists in Evesham to a missionary sale which they are holding in the forecourt of their church, on Saturday, August 2nd, opening at 3 p.m. For those of you who receive this magazine in time, or hear it given out in church, here is a real opportunity to show our solidarity with our Methodist friends, and to demonstrate that the failure of the Scheme to receive enough support in our representative bodies does not denote unwillingness of Anglicans to unite with Methodists.

P.B.

Mr. Patrick Jones

We shall all be sorry to lose Patrick Jones who has been of such great help to us in both parishes in his capacity as Reader, conducting services in my absence, and assisting at Holy Communion at the great festivals. He will be leaving the district to take up an appointment at Biddulph Grammar School in Staffordshire, where he will be in charge of the history department. We wish him success in his new post, and happiness to him and Winifred and their children in their new home. He hopes to be able to continue to help us, at Christmas and other occasions when staying with his parents.

"Greater love hath no man . . ."

I sometimes wonder whether the most obvious sign of a decline in Christian spirit is our inordinate concern for self-preservation. The 20th century humanist may scoff at our godly forefathers' belief in eternal life. But the fact is that when people do not believe in eternal life they are inclined to regard physical death as the worst evil that can happen to an individual human being.

Here is an example of Christian self-sacrifice three hundred years ago, which we have come across in our holiday in Derbyshire. It is the story of a whole village laying down its life in order that others might not suffer. Only faith in Christ crucified and the hope of resurrection in Him could have inspired such courageous devotion.

Before the days of modern vaccines, the only way to avoid pestilence was to run away from it. But, if you did this, you might carry the infection with you and spread it to other places.

1665 was the year of the Great Plague of London. In September a travelling tailor was lodging with a widow and her two sons in the village of Eyam (pronounced like 'steam') in the Derbyshire dales. While there he received a box of clothes from London, which he opened. Shortly afterwards he was taken ill, and was found to have contracted the dreaded plague. His death was followed within a few weeks by those of the two sons of the household and very soon the infection had spread to other people in the village. The homes where the epidemic started, known as the Plague Cottages, are still to be seen, quite close to the church, and the names and dates of death of the victims are displayed over the doors.

Naturally the villagers were in a turmoil of fear, and many made plans to evacuate the place altogether. But the rector, William Mompesson, who had only arrived in the parish the year before, saw the danger this would bring to other areas. He and his wife set to work to persuade the parishioners to stay in the village, at whatever risk to themselves, reminding them of their Christian vocation. Imagine what a difficult task this must have been. But the rector found an ally in an unexpected quarter. His Puritan predecessor, Thomas Stanley, had been ejected from the living because he had been unable to

accept the Act of Uniformity, but was still residing in the village. He added his influence to that of Mompesson. The rector closed the church, and held services in the open air. The 'Pulpit Rock' from which he preached is still shown. Week after week the deaths mounted up. In a few months Mompesson had the sad task of burying the majority of his parishioners, including his own wife. But such was the force of his character and inspiration that not one person left the village. By arrangement with the local magnate, the Earl of Devonshire, food was left out on rocks outside the village, for the Eyam people to collect.

The names and dates of death of the victims, copied from the burial register, are inscribed on a memorial in the church. By looking at this one observes that the plague went on without respite, not only through the winter, but all through the spring and summer of 1666, the last recorded death being on All Saints Day that year (Nov. 1st), some 14 months after it had begun. This was much longer than London's ordeal. Out of 350 inhabitants, only 50 or 60 survived, William Mompesson being one of the few. But the surrounding villages had entirely escaped.

When people talk of Christian 'compassion' as if it were a discovery of our own time, and seem to suppose that churchmen in days gone by were more concerned with ecclesiastical controversy than with loving their neighbours, it is good to be reminded of such heroic sanctity. We ought not to get smug about our poor little efforts towards 'Christian Aid', as if we were doing something colossally sacrificial. The example of the martyr village of Eyam can fill us with a just sense of our inadequacy, but also strengthen our hope. For Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever.

The Dean of Christ Church, Oxford

Dr. C. A. Simpson died peacefully in his sleep on June 30th, aged 77.

Much has been written in the obituary notices about his great work for the College and the Cathedral. I just want to say something about the very keen interest he showed in the parishes of which Christ Church are the patrons. Some of you will recall his visit to both our churches some years ago, soon after his appointment. Every two years he has invited the incumbents of Ch. Ch. benefices to a conference, at which we have always had a happy as well as instructive time. Since he has been Dean, the Governing Body has sent each of us two or three theological books a year to keep up our reading. He was an extremely charming and lovable man as well as a devout and learned churchman. God grant him light and peace.

P.B.

BADSEY AND WICKHAMFORD NOTES

Church Services

Aug.

- 3 Trinity 9. As for 1st Sun.
- 6 Wed. Transfiguration of Our Lord. 10-0 H.C.
- 10 Trinity 10. St. Laurence, D. & M. As for 2nd Sun.
- 13 Wed. 10-0 H.C.
- 17 Trinity 11. As for 3rd Sun.
- 20 Wed. St. Bernard, Abbot 10-0 H.C.
- 24 St. Bartholomew, Apostle. Trinity 12. As for 4th Sun. 11-0 M. & Baptism.
- 27 Wed. 10-0 H.C. No Pram Service.
- 31 Trinity 13. St. Aidan, Bp. As for 5th Sun. 10-15 Family Service.

The Choir and Sunday School will be on holiday during August. Parents are asked to bring their children to the ordinary services, here at home, or at the local church, if away on holiday. There will be no Pram Service this month.

Mothers' Union. No meetings this month. Corporate Communion Wed., Aug. 6.

Holy Baptism

June 22 Michaela Haines.
July 27 Dawn Louise Pritchard; Carol Elizabeth Beasley; Julie Anne Taylor.

Holy Matrimony

July 12 Michael Alan Hartland, of Bengeworth, and Carol Mary Baker, of Badsey.

Jottings. We all share with the parents of Michele Haynes relief and thankfulness at her recovery after her head injury. Mrs. Edith Smith is now home from hospital, and has been back at church. Mr. Bill Sears was taken to Evesham Hospital after a stroke, but is making a steady recovery. Mr. Peter Tucker had to be taken to Ronkswood as an emergency case with duodenal ulcers, but is now home and very active as usual. Mr. J. E. Bartlett has had an operation for hernia.

Servers for August. 3rd, 8-0 M. Betteridge; 11-0 T. Bell; 6-45 M. Exon. 10th, 10-15 S. Gresty (Server), R. Keen (Crucifer); 6-45 A. Clements. 17th, 8-0 C. Tucker; 6-45 T. Bell. 24th, 8-0 D. Barrand; 11-0 M. Clements; 6-45 C. Hartwell (Server), M. Exon (Crucifer). 31st, 8-0 M. Clements; 10-15 C. Hartwell; 6-45 D. Barrand.

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War Memorial Flowers. August 10th, Mrs. A. C. Sears; 17th, Mrs. R. Hartwell; 24th, Mrs. A. W. Sparrow.
Birthday Half-crown. Rev. P. Braby.

WICKHAMFORD NOTES

Church Services

Suns., Aug. 3 (Trin. 9), 10 (Trin. 10), 17 (Trin. 11), 24 (St. Bartholomew, Ap.) 31 (Trin. 13). As for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th Suns. respectively. Baptism on the 10th at 3 p.m.

Jottings. We are glad to say that Mr. Jim Stanley is now home from hospital and making steady progress, and that Mrs. Griffin Senr. has also returned to her home.

We do not usually announce engagements, in case anyone should get left out, but we feel that Margaret Willis is an exception. We wish her and Richard Tysack every happiness.

Children's Christmas Party Committee

Due to the poor response at the Bingos in aid of the above fund, we find we are unable to continue.

Anyone wishing to take over, please contact Mrs. J. Ford, 2, Coombefield Road. Failing this, the balance of £20 will be handed to the Sports Club Committee towards children's apparatus on the playing field.

J. Ford, M. Sutton, M. Hatford,
J. Taylor, A. Roberts, P. Spragg.

Birthday Offerings. Rev. P. Braby, 2/6; Mrs. Nott, 5/-.

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