



Ansley Church News

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WORSHIP

1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays

11.00 a.m. Parish Communion.

6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer.

3rd Sunday

11.00 a.m. Family Worship.

6.30 p.m. Holy Communion.

Holy Communion also on 1st Sunday at 8.00 a.m.

St. John's Hall—NO SERVICE IN AUGUST.

FLOWER FESTIVAL

FRIDAY, AUGUST 24th — MONDAY, AUGUST 27th.

Evening Service at 8.00 p.m., on Friday 24th.

This year's theme — LIGHT.

Concert at 8.00 p.m., on Monday 27th.

Tearcraft Stall. Proceeds divided between League of Friends of Nuneaton Hospitals and Church Funds.

MATTERS ARISING !

It's not often that Christian belief gets an airing on the national news media, but the words of the new Bishop of Durham concerning the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ and his resurrection caused something of a stir. The Bishop appears to be saying that literal belief in a virgin birth and the bodily resurrection of Jesus is now optional for church members (and bishops too, apparently). The media greeted his words with 'shock horror' headlines but the bishop wasn't saying anything new—such beliefs have been expressed by theologians for the past two hundred years.

BISHOP OR BOUNDER ?

David Jenkins' remarks give rise to some very important questions. Jenkins moved from a position of academic distinction to that of a Bishop, a teacher, defender and preacher of Christian truth. A bishop at his consecration (like any priest at ordination) makes certain vows concerning his duties and his calling. The priest is given a Bible, with the word, 'Receive this Book, as a sign of the authority which God has given you this day to preach the gospel of Christ and to minister his Holy Sacraments.' Ministers within the Church of England affirm and declare their 'belief in the faith which is revealed in the holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds . . . ' These affirmations demand something more than academic distinction. They ask a sincerity of intention and a commitment to belief which is ultimately a step of faith.

HERESY ?

Jenkins is giving an interpretation to the meaning of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection which is at variance with the way in which the church has commonly understood them. The Bishop of Durham, in common with many churchmen, appears to be unable to believe in God's intervention in the world in unique events such as Christ's birth and his resurrection.

In the case of the resurrection of Christ, some scholars seem to want the risen Christ without the embarrassment of a bodily resurrection. This is very convenient for them because it means that Jesus can be regarded as just another very holy man who came to an unfortunate end and whose inspiration lies in his godly life. Being a Christian means copying Jesus. So we can forget about belief in the divinity of Jesus, the empty tomb, the actual historical happening of the resurrection at a unique time and place in Palestine. Unfortunately for such people this does not agree with what the New Testament says ! Does this make the Bishop of Durham a heretic ?

Efforts were made to prevent David Jenkins from being made bishop, but they predictably failed because the Church of England

has always found a place for clergymen who are unorthodox (or even atheist!). Jenkins brought upon himself a heap of abuse and hysteria, mainly from within the church, which has now largely disappeared. But a number of questions remain:

- 1—In trying to make the Christian faith more 'acceptable' to 'modern man' have theologians and others simply hastened the decline of any belief in a God who can be active in the world?
- 2—Those who take public ministry within the church are committed to a sincere belief in the Creeds, to Jesus Christ as being divine and human and to the historical reality of Jesus Christ's resurrection. How far can David Jenkins' assent to these Christian truths be termed 'sincere'?
- 3—Throughout his ministry, David Jenkins has been interested in the impact of scientific ideas on the Christian faith. Do we forget that there are other types of 'knowledge' other than what can be 'proved' by science?
- 4—Thousands of young people have been brought up to believe that 'science has disproved religion.' As a consequence all matters of belief, morality and conscience are thought of as merely making up one's own mind without any guidance and without any appeal to authority.

The Christian faith traditionally begins with God 'who has spoken to us by a Son' (Hebrews 1:2). God has also spoken to us through the Commandments (Exodus 20). If God has **spoken** ought we not to be **listening**?

In looking at the church, one sees an organisation pre-occupied with its own future, busy organising this and that event to keep the show on the road. But questions like those I've asked above won't go away. The purpose of the ministry and of all church members is to seek to answer them in ways that are both faithful to the past and relevant to the present. If they are persistently neglected then the reason for the Church's existence is lost.

TIM GOULDSTONE

BILLY GRAHAM

A full coach went from Arley and Ansley to hear Billy Graham at Villa Park I am sorry that the coach driver got lost and that there was some confusion over the tickets; I was given no information about these matters. The Villa Park mission was an outstanding success with over 26,000 people making a Christian commitment over the week.

As a 'follow up' to this event a series of meetings entitled 'Come Together' will take place from Wednesday, September 19th

onwards which will also serve as a confirmation class. There will be five of these meetings; some will be held at Fillongley vestry and others in this parish. **ALL** are welcome to these meetings, especially those who were challenged by what Billy Graham had to say, those wishing to renew their confirmation vows and those wanting to be confirmed. Of course if you want to be confirmed this November you must be starting **NOW** to be regular attenders at worship on Sunday. There will be further details about this course in the September magazine.

GEMS

On Wednesday, July 18th the Nuneaton branch of the Church of England Men's Society came to Ansley for a short service and tour of the church, followed by fellowship at the 'Lord Nelson.' It is often said that the Church of England is becoming the Mothers' Union at prayer—in our parish about 70 or 80 per cent of the members are women—so it is encouraging to see the work being done by this group. Although I can't see any theological objections to the ordination of women, I feel that at the present state of the Church of England this step could rapidly result in the Church becoming the established religious counterpart of the W.I. — ? ? ?

Last month also saw the passing of John Benn of St. Lawrence Road. He had been in ill health for some years but his sudden passing at the age of 59 was a shock to the village. Our prayers are with his wife Joan and with all their family. Mrs. Buckley also passed away at the advanced age of 90.

The 'Line of Coins' did not raise as much money as last time—£51 was collected, which is a fair weight of coins but we were short of helpers and although the weather was fine the event clashed with a number of sporting fixtures.

There will be a meeting of the PCC on Wednesday, August 1st at 8.00 p.m., in St. John's Hall.

FLOOD

Just before I went on holiday there was a sudden cloudburst in the village, which flooded out a number of houses in Birmingham Road and caused a mudslide down Nursery Hill in Ansley Common. Worst affected in the village was Mrs. Bailey's house, which in common with those in the area lies below the level of the road. Older folk in the village testify to the considerable amount of subsidence that has taken place near the 'rec since the early years of the century. This has very clearly affected the natural drainage of the area and steps need to be taken to ensure that this type of flooding does not occur again—many houses were flooded from front to back.

In the churchyard hailstones piled up against the tombstones and the water was two feet deep against the wall on the west

side of the church. In addition the vicarage was nearly struck by lightning, obviously in mistake for York Minster.

THANKS

To Colin Morewood for removing the tree next to the church gate. Have you tried counting the rings on the stump? There are about 77 visible, which means that these trees were planted about 1907, during the incumbency of Charles Heaton. Thanks are also due to Andre Nisevic who climbed the flagpole on the church tower to fix the flag rope—rather him than me, but probably all in a day's work for a fireman.

Thanks also to those who have been vigilant in keeping the churchyard tidy. We came first in the North Warwickshire area this year, which means we are now entered for the 'final.' At least we managed to beat Corley, who have won the trophy in recent years!

UNINTENTIONAL HUMOUR

. . . . is often found in church publications. On holiday we found that the church in Bristol we attended some years ago had the following sermon subjects for July 15th:

9.45 a.m. The First Martyr: The Vicar.

6.30 p.m. Recognising Error: The Vicar.

A case of being wise after the event . . . ? To add to the case, the subject for the mid week meeting was, 'Will it turn out O.K. for everybody in the end?'

3 A's YOUTH TRAINING SCHEME

This scheme is approaching the end of its first year and anyone who has passed along Arley Lane towards Gun Hill will have seen the transformation of the site of the St. John's Ambulance Hall. All the young people who have been on the scheme have benefited from the experience which includes training at the Technical College as well as practical skills in the realms of gardening, painting and decorating and catering. There have been a few problems, not least of which was a break-in last month during which a Kenwood Chef mixer, an electric iron, a hosepipe and various conifers were stolen. In addition over £300 worth of damage was done to office equipment and installations. If anyone has any information about this crime can they contact the vicar or ring the 3 A's scheme on Fillongley 42172. A new set of young people will be starting on the scheme from August 20th.

FUNERALS

July 12—Elsie Buckley, aged 90.

July 13—John Benn, 59 St. Lawrence Road, aged 59.