

CHURCH AND KING

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The Magazine of the Society
of King Charles the Martyr
Summer 1999



‘Remember’

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The Annual General Meeting

In his report the chairman reviewed the society's activities during the year.

- our usual 3 commemorations, in November at which the preacher was Fr. Anthony Couchman, in January the Bishop of London and on that day the Rev'd John Paul who also celebrated in the absence of Fr. Williams.
- the usual 2 issues of Church & King. Barrie Williams was now retiring as editor and he was thanked for his work over many years. The editor's position was not to be filled: the chairman would collate the material and arrange publication at least for the time being.
- four publications: The Liturgical Manual, Volumes I & II of the White King and the reprinting of the Sanctity of Charles I.

In addition we had contributed one of our relics to the British Architectural Library's exhibition on 'the lost palace of Whitehall.' The chairman had given an interview for a Radio 4 programme entitled Random Editions which will be broadcast in October and had corresponded with Ruth Gledhill of the Times about her ultimately abortive Times Book of Saints.

So far as the future is concerned there will be the usual 3 commemorations details of which are elsewhere, Church & King and volume III of the White King. The chairman will again carry the Society's banner during the Glastonbury

Pilgrimage on July 3rd and hopes some members will be able to join him in this important act of witness. This year is the 50th anniversary of the death of our foundress Mrs Greville-Nugent and Jeffrey Monk who has collated the White King is arranging Anglican and Roman Catholic requiems and is looking into the possibility of repairing her grave in Worthing. AD 2000 is both the Millennial Year and the 400th anniversary of the Royal Martyr's birthday. For the former we have as a Catholic Society agreed to contribute £250 towards the costs of the 'Christ our future' Eucharist in the London Arena on June 10th at 12 noon and for the latter we hope to arrange a symposium: a prominent historian has already agreed in principle to speak.

Elections were held and the following elected for the year.

Chairman: Robin Davies

Chaplain: The Rev'd Barrie Williams

Secretaries: The Rev'd Alan Lee (Distribution), Peter Maplestone (London), Pamela Warren (Minutes) and Barrie Williams (General).

Treasurers: Robin Davies (Hon.) and Chris Verity (Membership)

Also on the committee: Barry Bracewell-Milnes (and representing the Royal Martyr Church Union), the Rev'd Charles Card-Reynolds, Jeffrey Monk, David Peters, the Rev'd Michael Silver, Martin Woods.

Andrew Crosbie, John Muggeridge, Philip Pelham and Wilfred Spence retired from the committee and we are grateful for all their work on behalf of the society.

Accounts for 1998 were presented and approved. A copy will be sent to any member who sends in a s.a.e.

The 350th Anniversary of the Martyrdom was marked by considerable coverage in the press including a major lead article in the Daily Telegraph. One of our members the Rev'd Simon Heans had a letter in the Church Times and this is reproduced below. Another, John Winterburn organized a special coffee morning and an exhibition of related memorabilia near Stratford on Avon. There were study days at the British Library and Keele University, a lecture at the Victoria and Albert Museum and special exhibitions at the Queen's Gallery (Buckingham Palace) and the Banqueting House.

Please send subscriptions in future to Chris Verity at The Turnpike, 83 West Town Road, Backwell, Bristol BS19 3BQ.

The choice faced by King Charles I

From the Rev'd S. J. Heans

Sir, — It is Dr Coleby (Letters, 19 February) rather than Ted Harrison who "totally misrepresents the circumstances which brought about" the execution of Charles I.

The alliance of 1648 with “certain Scottish leaders” (the Engagement) to which Dr Coleby refers did indeed involve Charles’s agreeing to an experimental period of Presbyterian government in the Church of England for three years, but Dr Coleby omits to mention that part of the deal — the crucial part as far as Charles was concerned — was the retention of the English hierarchy alongside it. Dr. Coleby also fails to mention the alternative: the permanent abolition of episcopacy proposed in the Four Bills presented to him for his assent on the very same day (24 December 1647) as he chose instead to sign the Engagement.

Thus Dr. Coleby’s accusation of “flexibility as to principles” is a misrepresentation: there was tactical flexibility, but at the same time unwavering adherence to the principle of episcopacy. His further claim that Charles’s conduct makes him “a strangely topical case-study in the very different political context of the 1990s” seems to me to underestimate (to say the least) the perilous position of Charles, the prisoner of the forces which had defeated him on the battlefield.

Charles was no politician. Many historians have remarked on what Hilaire Belloc nicely calls “his lack of skill in deception”: but only Belloc (to my knowledge) draws the appropriate lesson from it: “It was to the good of his soul that he had it not.”

SIMON HEANS, Edgewood, Hoe Court,
Lancing, W. Sussex BN15 0QX

Forthcoming Events

September 1999

This year being the 50th Anniversary of the death of our foundress The Hon. Mrs Greville-Nugent, it is hoped to hold a Requiem in Mid-September. Further details to follow.

November 19th 1999

NOTE TIME

Nativity of King Charles the Martyr. Sung Eucharist (Prayer Book Rite) 6pm, S. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, Queen Victoria Street, City of London (nearest tubes Blackfriars, St. Paul’s) Preacher: Preb. Peter Delaney.

January 31st 2000

Commemoration of the Martyrdom of King Charles, Banqueting House, Whitehall. 11.40 Devotions and wreath-laying on the bust outside followed at 12 noon by Sung Eucharist (Prayer Book Rite) inside. Preacher: The Rt. Rev’d Michael Houghton, Bishop of Ebbsfleet.

KING CHARLES'S DAY 1999.

LONDON

The 350th. anniversary of the martyrdom of King Charles did not pass unnoticed in the Media and while some of the publicity was patronising, it probably helped to boost attendance at the annual Solemn Eucharist at the Banqueting House. Before the service, the Chaplain, Fr. Barrie Williams, led the act of devotion and hung the wreath at the King's bust — the Church Times included a fish-eye photograph of the wreath and bust the following week. 30 January fell on a Saturday this year, and it was a great pleasure to hold a joint commemoration with the Royal Martyr Church Union which again helped to pack the Banqueting House. Fr. Williams celebrated the 1662 Liturgy, with Fr. Derek White, Chaplain of R.M.C.U., as deacon and Fr. Royston Beal as sub-deacon. The Royal Martyr Sermon was preached by Dr. Richard Chartres, Bishop of London. His magnificent sermon, which is printed below, proves him to be a worthy successor to Dr. William Juxon, who ministered to the King on that memorable day. The singing was led by a choir from King's College, London to whom we always look for a standard of musical excellence on these occasions. Thanks are due to the London Secretary, Peter Maplestone, and his team of helpers, for all their hard work in preparing the occasion, and we are deeply grateful to the Royal Palaces Department for the privilege of using the Banqueting House. Those who joined the R.M.C.U. for the lunch at the Strand Palace Hotel after the service would like to express their appreciation of this opportunity to share hospitality — an admirable way of rounding off a very special King Charles's Day. B.W.

USA

1999 Annual Mass & Meeting — Saint Clement's, Philadelphia — 350th Anniversary of the Decollation of Saint Charles, King and Martyr, was held on Saturday 30 January 1999 at 11 a.m.

At the kind invitation of the Rev'd Canon Barry E. B. Swain, we returned to S. Clement's for our celebration of this major anniversary, indeed, the major Caroline anniversary many of us will experience in our lifetime. For us who venerate him, it was the 350th anniversary of his beheading, of course, but also his 350th heavenly birthday, for so a martyr's anniversary is reckoned. The attendance at the Mass was well over 300, a tremendous witness to Almighty God and in honor of the Martyr King.

All who were present were stirred by the glorious act of worship, finding it a privilege to be able to participate in it. At the excellent luncheon, held in the recently-renovated hall upstairs in S. Clement's Parish House, about 125 were present. Dr. Mark Wuonola, the American Representative thanked Peter Conte,
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the choir and orchestra, all those who served at the altar, the ushers, the altar guild and flower arrangers, those who prepared the programme, and of course the clergy of S. Clement's, Canon Swain and Father Fraser, whose support was critical for the success of the meeting and much appreciated by all. The Rev'd Norman J. Catir, Jr., recently retired Rector of the Church of the Transfiguration, New York City, was our preacher on this occasion.

It was a particular pleasure for all that the Rt. Rev'd Keith Ackerman, Bishop of Quincy, was present at the throne. After the luncheon, Bishop Ackerman spoke with passion and urgency about the importance of our Society's particular witness, to the essentiality of Apostolic Orders, in Anglicanism today. He made his point very clearly: Each of us has the responsibility. Unless each of us works to keep the Faith alive, unless each of us lives the Faith (even if none of us is called to die for the Faith), the danger is it could die out. Many members came a great distance for the event, including from as far as Montreal, Nebraska, Colorado, and Florida, as well as all up and down the eastern seaboard.

The music of the mass was Franz Josef Haydn's Heiligmesse, one of his magnificent last six masses. The anthem, O Lord, grant the King a long life, by Thomas Weelkes, was also sung. S. Clement's choir, under the direction of Peter R. Conte, was supplemented with an orchestra. The overall performance of the musical setting, integrated with the flawless liturgy into a single, unified act of worship, was conducted with verve and strength. The music was made possible by many generous members. M.W.

AUSTRALIA

On the Eve of St. Charles' Day, Brisbane members of the Society gathered with other worshippers for a Mass at St. Augustine's church in suburban Hamilton. The church has a window in which King Charles is depicted so it was of particular significance to have the Society's commemoration there. Father Robert Braun, Rector of the Parish, was celebrant at the Mass and was assisted by Father David Chislett of All Saints' Church Brisbane (who was the preacher) and Father Reg Mills, the Society's secretary in Australia. Some 70 worshippers attended.

In Sydney, on 30th January, about 60 people gathered at St. John's church, Gordon, for a Mass which was sung by the Cathedral Singers, the relieving St. Andrew's cathedral choir. Celebrant was the Rector of St. John's, Fr. Jim Pettigrew and preacher was Canon Austin Day, recently-retired Rector of Christ Church St. Laurence, Sydney. Quite a number of the worshippers continued their fellowship with a luncheon after the Mass.

Recently-enrolled member Adrian Scarra, who is Registrar of the Diocese of Bathurst, was organiser of a Eucharist and Commemoration in the historic St. Paul's church in the village of Carcoar in central western New South Wales.

Some 60 people made a pilgrimage to Carcoar for the Mass at which the Prayer Book used was the one presented to St. Paul's by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge on the occasion of the setting of the foundation stone of the church by the first and only Bishop of Australia, William Grant Broughton, on 29th January, 1845. St. Paul's is now part of the Parish of Blayney and its Rector, Fr. Bruce Craig, was celebrant, with Canon Robert Withycombe from St. Mark's National Theological Centre in Canberra as preacher. The Administrator of the Diocese of Bathurst, Archdeacon Howard Smith assisted, along with Frs. Christopher Freestone and Rodney Swansborough.

In Melbourne, the Philip Harris Memorial Address (delivered annually in commemoration of King Charles the Martyr) was given by Professor David Flint, Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Authority. This was on Sunday 31st January in the suburban church, Christ Church Brunswick.

It was good to discover quite an amount of well-prepared information on the internet regarding St. Charles and the Society. Thanks for this go to our S.K.C.M. branch in U.S.A. Those responsible for it may be interested to know that it was noted, with delight, in Australia! R.M.

SERMONS ON THE OCCASION OF THE
350th ANNIVERSARY OF THE EXECUTION
OF KING CHARLES I.
SATURDAY 30th JANUARY 1999

THE BANQUETING HALL, WHITEHALL.

**By the Rt. Rev'd and Rt. Hon. Richard Chartres,
Bishop of London**

All those words and thoughts which come from thee, wilt thou bless them and make them fruitful; and all those words and thoughts which come not from thee, but from our own vanity, wilt thou forgive. Amen

King Charles began this day, three hundred and fifty years ago, by receiving the sacrament. The communion service from the Book of Common Prayer was celebrated by my predecessor as Bishop of London, Dr Juxon. The lessons were awesomely appropriate, the Passion story from St Matthew and the account of Jehovah's vengeance on Pharaoh for his disobedience to his anointed, Moses. The King asked whether Juxon had specially selected the lessons but was told that they were the ones appointed for the day.

The details of the events which followed were to be etched into the imaginations of succeeding generations largely because the King with his sense of balance and his inner faith and peace dominated the scene which was meant to signal the triumph of his enemies. The day before, Parliament had passed an Act ordering the substitution of the phrase “the Guardians of the Liberty of England” everywhere in the statutes where there was a reference to the King.

“Do this in remembrance of me” words of Jesus Christ which reverberate through this service. So potent was this remembrance of Jesus Christ that the King offered his life in conscious imitation of the Passion. He laid aside the last insignia of royalty, the George of the Order of the Garter. He forgave his enemies and declared that “I die a Christian according to the profession of the Church of England as I found it left me by my father.. . I have a good cause and I have a gracious God and I will say no more.” Even the puritan poet Andrew Marvell admitted

“He nothing common did or mean
Upon that memorable scene
Nor call’d the Gods with vulgar spight
To vindicate his helpless Right.

King Charles prayed in silence and himself gave a sign to the executioner to strike his blow. The axe flashed, a groan went up from the onlookers, the Executioner exhibited the head and the body was put in a coffin but it was not the end.

The King died professing loyalty to the Christian faith as received by the Church of England. In a message to his son and heir, he said of the Church, “I have tried it and after much search and many disputes have concluded it to be the best in the world keeping the middle way between the pomp of superstitious tyranny and the meanness of fantastic anarchy”. The King had sought to defend the order of the Church, especially as he said “the primitive apostolicall and anciently universal government of the church by bishops”. He also defended the liturgy of the Church embodied in the Book of Common Prayer.

There is a painting in Parliament as you enter the lobby of the House of Lords which shows the body of King Charles being taken into St George’s Windsor. Bishop Juxon is carrying the Book of Common Prayer from which he proposed to read the funeral service. But there also is Colonel Whichcot the Governor of the Castle firmly closing the Book which Parliament had banned.

Remembering Jesus Christ is at the heart of the Christian faith and at the heart of this service of the Holy Communion. Remembering, that is, not in the weak sense of reminding ourselves of past events but remembering in a full blooded way, making present Christ’s life and spirit.

It is good also to remember those who have followed him in their own generation. We are sad for those individuals who have lost their memory and the condition of a church or nation that ceases to remember is equally to be pitied.

We also have to remember that sometimes it is necessary to give our lives rather than desert what we understand of the truth. When I was a student of theology we had a Romanian monk staying with us who had endured great sufferings in the early years of the Communist regime in that country. He complimented us on the convivial atmosphere in the College but said "I wonder how many here would be prepared to die for the faith of the Holy Trinity?". It was a question that took me under the fifth rib. Was there anything or anyone we would die for at a time when we were busy constructing a risk free environment? I do not know the answer to that haunting question with any certainty but it was a fruitful question and now many years later I pray that I would be prepared to die if required for the faith and life of the Holy Trinity. It is a question worth pondering in the privacy of your chamber.

This century has created more Christian martyrs than any century since the Passion of Christ and the foundation of the church. Some of them from many nations are now commemorated on the West Front of the Abbey. In our own generation we have re-discovered the truth that Eliot put into words "the blood of thy martyrs and saints shall enrich the earth, shall create the holy places... though armies trample over it, though sightseers come with guidebooks looking over it.... from such ground springs that which forever renews the earth, though it is forever denied."

Ours is not a society which creates martyrs of blood thank God but we do produce unassuming martyrs, real witnesses to the power of the Spirit, in those who offer their lives in dedication to some charity or profession or who spend years caring for a sick relative or friend. We also produce suicides in horrifying numbers. Perhaps the spiritual health of a country can be measured in part in the balance between the capacity for martyrdom, the giving of life for a greater life and the strength of the temptation towards suicide, the tragic refusal of the gift of life.

Martyrdom does renew the earth as we have seen in the resurgence of the faith after the communist winter. King Charles had not always been a very wise King in the days of his personal rule but the manner of his death gave new depth and vitality to the spiritual life of the Church of England. Tertullian said truly "semen est sanguis Christianorum".

The King's last word to the Bishop of London on the scaffold outside this very hall was, "Remember" When Juxon was later interrogated about the meaning of this injunction, he gave the politic answer that the King knew he was absent minded and that, having just given the Bishop the insignia of the order of the garter, the George, for the Prince of Wales, he was concerned lest the prelate

forget. Generations have remembered in a profounder sense. It is one thing to sweep away an institution and quite another to secure agreement on what should replace it. The axe fell but it was not the end of the story. The monarchy was restored in 1660 with later the Church and Prayer Book. Juxon at the age of 77 lived to see the day.

Let us end with a prayer from eikon basilike.

“The experience we have of the vanity and uncertainty of all earthly glory and greatness in our scatterings and eclipses; let it make us both so much more ambitious to be invested in those durable honours and perfections which are only to be found in thyself and obtained through Jesus Christ. Amen”

ST. GEORGE’S CHAPEL

THE DEAN OF WINDSOR

In the presence of members of the Royal Stuart Society

Saintliness. “Saintliness does not mean all round perfection. That is a childish dream. Saintliness means one thing only: some quality or aspect of Christ built up in a person through the creative work of the Holy Spirit that is what saintliness is: something of Christ revealed in a person.” So preached Harry Williams more than thirty years ago through one of those sermons recorded in his book *The True Wilderness*. “That is what saintliness is: something of Christ revealed in a person.”

In so far as that is true, continues Williams, “All members of Christ’s Body are saints, and in the purpose of God, Christ’s Body includes all mankind”. In a sense, therefore, since the Holy Spirit is at work in each and every one of *us*, we see ourselves as a communion of saints; some quality or aspect of Christ being built up in each of us so that, through us as we hold together in all our individual incompleteness, Christ’s Body is revealed. Christ shines through all the strengths and frailties of our human personalities.

For this reason, we are justified in celebrating the life and death of Charles I, and for regarding him, as a member of Christ’s Body, as a saint. But what particular quality or aspect of Christ is made plain in him who lived his life in the context of a world in so many ways far removed from our own? What can we recognise and give special thanks for?

There was courage, the virtual signing of his “own death warrant when he refused to abandon the bishops in order to purchase the support of the Scots”. “That” writes David Edwards “is his best claim to the title martyr.”

There was loyalty. “I die a Christian according to the profession of the Church of England, as I found it left me by my father.”

There was the dignity of his demeanour at the end (praying, as our collect said, for those who persecuted him), a dignity which “won many to his side (and) so soon after his death brought him as near to canonisation as it is possible to be in the Church of England (and made him) the symbol of the patient sufferer who lays down his life for his creed and Church.” (Moorman).

There was his undoubted devotion and faith revealed particularly in that last letter written to the Prince of Wales: “Piety will make you prosperous, at least it will keep you from becoming miserable: nor is he much a loser that loseth all, yet saveth his soul at last.”

These qualities are clear but maybe rooted in something deeper in the personality: his profound desire for “order”. They noticed it in changes to the court after King James’s time. The court, said Edward Hyde (the greatest historian of the reign) was “very orderly; no man presuming to be seen in a place where he had no pretence to be.” The moral temper of the court became more ordered too, his being “temperate, chaste and serious; so that the fools and bawds of the former court grew out of fashion.” Perhaps it can be seen in his aesthetic taste which caused the great Rubens to comment that “None of the crudeness that one might expect from a place so remote from Italian elegance” was to be found about him. It was, of course, certainly at the heart of his dealings with Parliament and the governing of the State at a time when he surely *felt* that the centre no longer held and that a certain anarchy was “loosed upon the world.” Most clearly of all it is there in his determination that religion should be rooted; expressed through Holy Order and the order of the liturgy.

His profound desire for order and his insistence upon order might be seen as arising from a deeper conviction still that is that, in the last analysis things *do* hang together and cohere; that in the end it is a kind of harmony we are made for. The desire for order is a kind of witness to the ultimate rule of God, that witness like some aspect of the life of Christ himself.

In the end, however, no order can be imposed; no *system* lasts. It is always bound to crack under the pressure of our human seeking for a better state.

The God of order does not *impose* order upon us. He *invites* us to embrace an order that will only ever be achieved when sacrificial love runs fluently through each and every one of us. God’s invitation to such order is declared through Jesus on the cross. We respond because we know, deep down, the necessity of sacrifice. Maybe that is why the “martyrdom” of Charles touches a nerve. A death can remind us of the way to our hearts’ desire. It is to a dying daily we commit ourselves each and every time we share the broken bread; to incorporating ourselves into that movement of sacrificial love which will bring us to that final harmony of which all our creations of little bits of order are but symbols.

“I go” said Charles “from a corruptible crown to an incorruptible, where no disturbance can be, no disturbance in the world.”

David Conner

THE CHAPEL OF PUSEY HOUSE, OXFORD

Father William Davage

Priest Librarian and Custodian of Dr Pusey’s Library

Blessings In Adversity Remember¹

King Charles I, the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of whose execution and martyrdom was commemorated yesterday, was not a successful politician. He contrived to lose three kingdoms, his crowns, two Civil Wars and his head. He is an example, *par excellence*, of the late Enoch Powell’s celebrated and incontrovertible dictum that all political lives end in failure. That the Royal Martyr still has some hold on the imagination is all to do with his death and hardly at all with his life and character. He made disastrous political miscalculations. He was vain, foolish, extravagant. duplicitous, arrogant. He sacrificed his most loyal ministers in William Laud and Thomas Wentworth to the executioners’ block before him. He was profligate, stubborn and petulant but at the last he died a martyr’s death. *Nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it.*² Even one of those who opposed him was able to write:

He nothing common did or mean
Upon that memorable scene.³

The Church of England may have no mechanism for beatification and canonisation or for raising martyrs to the altars of the Church — the flotsam and jetsam gathered together by the Liturgical Commission for the latest calendar simply proves the point; but the *cultus* which has surrounded King Charles since 1649, admittedly now in somewhat etiolated and attenuated form, is something akin to the veneration paid to virtually every saint and martyr in the Middle Ages before their cause had reached Rome and been ratified there. Many causes began as local veneration and devotions whose popularity spread and was acknowledged. Perhaps the most striking contemporary example is that of Padre Pio, the Capuchin Friar who exhibited the stigmata and around whom both in his

¹ The last word of King Charles I to Bishop Juxon: 30 January 1649

² William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* iv 7

³ Andrew Marvell. Horatian Ode upon Cromwell’s Return from Ireland

life and since his death has grown an international following and whose cause is before the Sacred Congregation. King Charles' cause may not go before the Sacred Congregation but the English Church might reasonably accord him the status of a martyr. It is rather like the Master of Arts degree in this University. Some have the degree itself, by purchase or award. Others in the University have the status of Master of Arts without having the degree itself. We might reasonably be forgiven, in this City and University which was his capital, if we accord King Charles the status of a martyr.

Despite his personal weaknesses, and who of us is without them, and his political ineptitude, King Charles sought to lead a life of personal holiness and devotion, he attended public prayers daily and was assiduous in his private prayers, which was unusual in the age in which he lived. Look to his son and successor to see a more representative figure of the age. That alone, however, may not have merited him some reward in heaven, but it is in his death that he revealed greatness of soul. He died at the hands of the enemies of the Church. He died for that which made the Church of England Catholic. He died for bishops. He did not die for bishops as individuals, none of us in our right mind would want to do that but, rather, he died for the office of bishop as successors of the Apostles. We do not have to assent to his policies, to the Court of Star Chamber and High Commission, to his treatment of Wentworth for whose unjust sentence and fate he showed contrition on the scaffold, to his sorry treatment of Laud who languished for three or four years before the parliamentarians remembered that he was there and he met his unhappy fate, nor to his Personal Rule, although not as tyrannical as his opponents averred. Even if we were to accept all that his enemies said of him and ascribed to him, we would still be able to claim that when a tyrant dies his rule ends; when a martyr dies his reign begins. If he lived for the Erastian principle of state control over the Church; he died because he would not agree to the abolition of the three-fold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons and the principle of apostolic succession. It was the same principle enunciated with characteristic clarity by John Henry Newman in the first of the *Tracts of the Times* which launched the Oxford Movement in 1833 and which is the reason why we are here this morning, in this House and Chapel, doing what we are doing and doing it in the way that we are doing it. King Charles died for the Book of Common Prayer that enshrines within it the Catholic Creeds and Catholic Order because it was the best that he had to die for. Ironically those who supported him the longest and the best were those very men and families who had fought to abolish it a century earlier in defence of the old religion.

Saint Paul, writing to his fellow Christians at Corinth in his First Epistle which we heard this morning, shows us the reason why it is that King Charles is not merely an historical figure locked in time, place and circumstance, but has something to exemplify in our own day. Unlike many of the Corinthians, of

whom *not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth*,⁴ Charles was both powerful and royal but he was also like the Corinthians, he was not *wise according to worldly standards*.⁵ Yet as Saint Paul shows and as Saint Matthew also shows in the Beatitudes that were read as the Gospel this morning, God does not choose the strong, the wise, the powerful. He did not come into the world in power and great glory but, rather, as an innocent, weak and vulnerable baby, born in a stable not a palace. His was not an earthly crown of gold and emeralds, rubies and diamonds but a crown of thorns that pierced his flesh and sent blood trickling into his eyes. *God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise ... what is weak in the world to shame the strong*.⁶

In his trial King Charles recognised he was before a power and no legal or constitutionally constituted authority. He showed dignity and grace before his judges, wit and courage. His debilitating stammer miraculously left him. In the weakness of his predicament and the insecurity of his position, he showed immense strength of purpose and steely resolve. As he had faced his judges face to face, so he prepared to face the final judge, to stand before God and to see him face to face on the day of his judgement with the same equanimity and bravery. In his last days he showed exemplary patience in his suffering, a tranquil reliance upon God's infinite grace and goodness, trust in God's mercy and submission to his judgement, a serene resignation to his fate. On his last morning he heard the Gospel of the day which was by divine coincidence the Passion of Our Lord and before he walked to his own Calvary he received the Sacrament, the Body and Blood of the Saviour into whose presence he was soon to be despatched and into whose hands his spirit would shortly be commended, *the source of ... righteousness and sanctification and redemption*.⁷

On the scaffold he spoke to those near to him as the crowds had been kept well back. He commended his soul and his cause to God, *I have a good cause and a gracious God*,⁸ and declared that he died *a Christian according to the profession of the Church of England*.⁹ He said, *If I would have given way to an arbitrary way, for to have all laws changed according to the power of the sword, I need not have come here; and therefore I tell you, and pray God it be not laid to your charge, that I am the Martyr of the People*.¹⁰ Bishop William Juxon, who attended him, told him that he had to undergo but *one stage more which though*

⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:26

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ 1 Corinthians 1:27

⁷ 1 Corinthians 1: 30

⁸ From the contemporary account of John Rushworth. *Vide* James Mason (Ed), *Charles I and Robert Hammond: Politics and Revolution 1647-1649 London Trial and Execution* Longmans Case Study in History [1980]

⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰ From Rushworth's account

*turbulent and troublesome ... will carry you from earth to heaven and there you shall find, to your great joy the prize you hasten to, a crown of glory.*¹¹ His last thoughts turned towards God. King Charles said that, *I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown where no disturbance can be, no disturbance in the world.*¹² There in Whitehall the axe fell and his blood was spilled in the January snow. Our Lord's words in Saint Matthew's Gospel that we pray might be applied to us, may be said of him:

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.¹³

In adversity God grants his blessings to us all, commoners and kings. We are never abandoned, never left forlorn and comfortless. Among the greatest of blessings is forgiveness, God's forgiveness of us and of our sins, and our forgiveness of others. *In extremis*, at the last, King Charles was granted that grace to forgive his *enemies, persecutors and slanderers.*¹⁴ He asked Juxon to *bear witness that I have forgiven all the world, and even those in particular that have been the chief causers of my death.*¹⁵ His murderers sinned in ignorance, neither they nor their fathers had been born within earshot of the nightly Angelus; they had not seen the Sacred Host carried in procession through their streets.¹⁶ It might be said that in some measure King Charles' blood acted as a national propitiation so that the English Church was able to rediscover its Catholic heritage.

The Archbishop of York reminded us last week of the insistent call of Christ to holiness of life, to discipleship, to penitence in confession, and even to martyrdom. These attributes were all exhibited at the last in the Royal Martyr, an earthen vessel transformed by God's grace into something exemplary, beautiful and holy. However weak we are, however foolish we may seem, however lowly and despised, however impoverished of spirit we may become, however much of cross we have to bear, we can still rejoice in Christ our King, our Saviour and friend and know with that blessed assurance that came from Christ's own lips that we too may enter into that eternal joy and felicity where no disturbance can be, no disturbance in the world.

¹¹ *Op cit* Mason

¹² *Op cit* Rushworth

¹³ St Matthew 5:10-12a

¹⁴ The Litany. The Book of Common Prayer

¹⁵ *Op cit* Mason

¹⁶ Mgr. R. A. Knox, *The Thirtieth of January A sermon preached to the Society of King Charles the Martyr* 1913

S. AGATHA'S PORTSMOUTH

(Traditional Anglican Communion)

The Rev'd Robert Aird, Vicar General

Charles, King and Martyr

In those four words, we find contrasts so great that we almost think that they cannot be combined. To be a king is clearly to have power and authority, to have armies to march at your behest, and the power to impose one's will on anyone who is under you. While a martyr? Well, to be a martyr is very much to be the underdog, to be subject to the will of others, and even to die at the behest of others. And as we say those things, our natural inclination is to hope that our own future might be more like that of a monarch than a martyr.

But how mistaken we might be in this decision.

And the experiences of King Charles are experiences which yet again show how our natural assumptions can so easily be turned upside down, and inside out. For yes, Charles *was* a king, and a king who had a strong and loyal army to support him. So he no doubt believed he *did* have the power to impose *his* authority over all and sundry. But by doing so, he encouraged resentment, bitterness and then resistance. And eventually it was to be at the hands of another army, the 'roundhead' army, that his power would be taken away and he himself eventually led to the block. Far from being his salvation, his kingship would prove to be his doom.

But then, as he knelt at the block and died, he became a martyr. And by becoming a martyr he achieved a greatness which he had never really achieved before. For a start, he showed a courage and a dignity which impressed many who saw him, not only amongst his friends, but also amongst his enemies. And this earned their respect in a way which no armies would have been able to command.

But he did so much more than that. For he showed that he had a guiding principle in life which was of such importance that it was even worth sacrificing his life for, rather than degrading it. He demonstrated that he was aware that there is more in life than flesh and blood; more than just survival, comfort and security. He showed that he was more than just an animal who happened to have a bit more intelligence than most; but was also a spiritual being who was aware of the divine. And to a very large extent, it is **THIS** for which we honour him today.

Yet the problems which King Charles had to face in his life are very much the same kind of problems which *we* have to face day by day. We may not have the opportunity to be kings or queens; and we may not be called to be martyrs. But throughout our lives, we are repeatedly faced with small scale variations of

those choices; faced with the dangers which come with worldly power, and also with the opportunities which sometimes come when we think we are at our lowest ebb. For all of us do have occasions when *we* can wield power, whether it is as directors of great concerns, or whether it be simply as babysitters caring for our children's children. And as we do so, it is too easy to assume that these are the areas where we can say with confidence "MY will be done at least here on earth."

But in fact, these are the times when we are most at risk. For if we do think this way, then we are forgetting the very reason for which we have been put on this earth. We are abandoning our spiritual heritage for the sake of very short-term gains which will soon wither away. For the truth is that we have been put on this earth *not* necessarily to flourish in worldly terms, but in order to grow spiritually into worthy children of God. And to do this we need to imitate Jesus himself. And to be like Jesus, we need to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength; and our neighbour as ourself. So, even any power we may possess is not really there in order to enhance our *own* well-being; but so that we can serve those in our care more effectively — just as Jesus devoted his life on earth to caring for those around HIM.

And as we seek to follow in Jesus' footsteps, we too may have to face pain and unhappiness. But it may be here, even as we are being trampled under foot, that we can show that we are true men and women: people of real stature who have learned what life is *really* about. Or at least, that is true so long as we have sufficient faith in God to know where we are going, and what the important things in life *are* all about.

We may all be able to think of someone who does *not* apparently have great power or authority, but who has impressed us so much by his or her life-style that we can say with feeling "there is a really *good* person". And we know deep down that *they have something which we really* respect, and something which makes them truly great in *real* terms, however powerful or otherwise they may be in material matters.

Yet it is not just men and women who have to make the choice between the world and righteousness. Every organization is faced with similar temptations, and even those which have been founded with the best of intentions can fall by the wayside. And that is as true of the Church of God as of any other organization. The Church of God is just as capable of turning away from its true calling, and seeking the material blessings which the misuse of power can bring. And history is littered with examples. Even in the Epistles we read of churches which are turning away from their calling; and in the Book of Revelation, there are the stern warnings to those churches who need to turn back to true righteousness. The Western church was riddled with corruption before the Reformation. And the church in THIS country has been guilty on many an

occasion since — as you can see merely by looking at some of the situations which grew up in the 17th and 18th centuries in particular; as well as more recently, when the C of E deliberately abandoned its Catholic heritage.

So on this feast of Charles, King and Martyr, it does us no harm at all to ask ourselves where *we* want to go, and where we want to see our church going. Do we want to see it follow the path of material power, gaining the authority of that power? Or do we want it to follow the paths of righteousness; and that rather different authority which comes only with righteousness? In the end, because the church is the people of God, the decision will be largely determined by individuals, by the decisions that people like you and I make in our spiritual lives.

Despite all the tragedy which surrounded the downfall of the C of E some years back; at least *some* good has come out of it all. Like King Charles, we have been faced with a situation where we *have* to make a decision about what *we* believe, and about how *we* should serve God. Do we believe that we should love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength; and our neighbour as ourself? If we believe we should love God, then we can do nothing less than commit ourselves to his service, therefore we must be obedient to HIS will, and follow HIS teaching in everything we do. And if we believe we should love our fellow *men*, we must do all that is in our power to help them — especially to help them find for themselves the truths which we here are privileged to enjoy.

Of course, to try and follow such a path will not be easy. Time and again we will find that we have to give up what we want in order to help those around us, and those whose need is greater than our own. But then, that is the difference between the way of the world and the way of the Spirit. That is the difference between enmity, bitterness, party spirit, hatred and all the other fruits of the flesh; and love long suffering and patience, as well as peace and joy, and all the other fruits of the Spirit. That is the difference between seeking to mould the world in the hope that it may be made *our* servant, and seeking to serve God, being faithful servants to HIM here on earth whatever the cost might be to us.

In the end Charles, King and Martyr got it right, and we honour him this day as a consequence. If we really do think he is worthy of our respect, we must surely now follow his example, by also committing ourselves fully to God.

BOOK REVIEWS

Graham Edwards : The Last Days of Charles I (Sutton Publishing £19.99).

The 350th anniversary of the judicial murder of Charles I has generated a flurry of interest, and this book proves that, however often the tale is told, it can still come across with new meaning. One reason is that Graham Edwards has drawn on printed source material (with good references in the notes) rather than on previous historians. Another is that, in 200 pages, it is necessary to be selective, and the author brings out aspects of the story that have been neglected

or underplayed. The reader understands better how Charles's struggle to overcome his physical weakness as a boy, combined with his deep spirituality, gave him that strength of character in adversity which his enemies could never break.

Other of Sutton Publications deal with the course of the Civil Wars. The first two chapters deal with the man and the causes of the conflict, but the greater part of the book picks up the story from the King's surrender to the Scots. Its theme is, therefore, an end-game, but one which was by no means certain to end in checkmate. One of its great virtues is to examine the complex relations between the King and the Scots and make clear that their alliance in 1648 was not a sudden aberration on either side. Edwards also reminds us that a clear majority, even of the land-owning classes, remained neutral in the conflict.

Why, then, did it all end in tragedy, when so many favoured moderation? Edwards gives a very rounded assessment of the King: his virtue as a family man is restated; his own judgment was often better than his advisors'; but many of his actions before 1640 were arbitrary, and his refusal to judge, sometimes even to discuss, finally drove his opponents to extremes. But his 'trial' and beheading are shown up for the legal and constitutional monstrosity they really were, the work of a rump of a rump who nevertheless presumed to speak for the people of England (they were not even consulted; nor, of course, were the Irish). The behaviour of the new Model Army seems to anticipate that of its counterpart in various post-colonial regimes; indeed, events often have an uncomfortably modern ring to them.

The need to be selective is clear. It would have needed another book to deal fully with the complex religious issues involved. But certain events which seem to me crucial receive scarce or no mention: the treasonable correspondence between the Five Members and the Scottish rebels; the crisis posed by the Irish rebellion; the Putney debates; the influence of the Fifth Monarchy Men.

The book contains a surprising number of small mistakes. Hyde (p.2) became Lord Chancellor, not Chancellor of the Exchequer; Buckingham in The Three Musketeers (p.5) was the lover of Anne of Austria, not Henrietta Maria; the correct Latin plural (p.11) is personae non gratae; Appleby (p.50) was in the former county of Westmorland; Livesey is killed on p.192 in Kent, but on the following page in Holland, I hope these errors will be corrected in any reprint. I found the book supremely readable, and towards the end I could hardly put it down.

Readers may not find a strong case in this book for King Charles as a martyr of the Church of England, though there is material for many Royal Martyr sermons in the full text of his speech on the scaffold (pp.178-81). But there is a stronger case here for regarding his beheading as an act of sacrilege. That view may be lightly regarded among the chattering classes today, but that is how I have always

regarded it ; so did the great majority of the English people in 1649, and so do they, I believe, to this day. Barrie Williams.

THE SOCIETY'S PUBLICATIONS

A Liturgical Manual comprising material for the 3 commemorations, the Litany of St. Charles and all known hymns in his honour, 44 pages	£4
The White King Vol. I — a selection of material from past issues of Church and King and from the Society's minute books covering 1894-1949, 32 pages	£3
The White King Vol. II — covering 1950-1954, 40 pages	£3
The Sanctity of Charles I — the Revd. Fr. Charles-Roux (republished)	£1.50
Medals (members only)	£5

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As part of the commemoration of the 450th anniversary of the Book of Common Prayer the Prayer Book Society has arranged three publications:

The First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI. 480 pages, £18.99 with an introduction by The Rev'd Canon Roy Porter formerly Professor of Theology at Exeter University. Available from PBS Mail Order for £11.99.

The Book of Common Prayer. The complete 1662 version with extracts from that of 1549 (the Communion and Burial services) and an introduction by Dr. Diarmaid MacCulloch. Of particular note is that this includes the three state services improperly removed in 1859 especially those for January 30th and May 29th. Other present-day editions of the Prayer Book do not include these.

592 pages £12.99, £11.99 from PBS Mail Order.

A Prayer for All Seasons. All the collects of the Book of Common Prayer beautifully illustrated with wood engravings from Vernon Staley's Altar Service Book of 1903. Foreword by the Prince of Wales, introduction by Ian Curteis and afterword by the Bishop of London, 72 pages, £19.50 hardback, £9.99 paperback. Hardback available from PBS Mail Order for £11.99.

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AN ENQUIRY

I had an enquiry recently from a well-wisher as to whether I could identify a poem with the opening lines

King Charles the first to Parliament came
Five good Parliament men to claim

The poem is not known to me. If any reader can identify it, I should be grateful for the information, which I can then pass on to the enquirer.

Barrie Williams.