

# *From the Pector*

## **Resurrection**

As I look out of the study window I see intimations of new life. The slender branches of the weeping willow are noticeably turning a yellow-green colour; and the daffodils are thrusting up strongly with the promise that in a very few weeks they will delight us with a riot of colour which is, for me, the definitive sign that the annual miracle which we call spring has come again.

### THE EASTER HOPE

For Christians spring has a special significance: it speaks to us of Easter. In the renewal of nature after the death of winter we see a sacrament of God's dealing with the whole of creation. Christians believe that the One who was uniquely the Son of God yielded his life for love of humanity. On Good Friday, Jesus was crucified, died and was buried. But God raised him from the dead; and by his resurrection he has (in the words of the New Testament) "abolished death and brought life and immortality to life".

Christian believe that through Jesus and his Resurrection we too have the promise of eternal life. "Because I live you shall live also", says Jesus in St. John's gospel. That is the Easter hope to which Christians hold fast - a hope that needs to be proclaimed more clearly in this age in which many people have lost their religious belief. It is a remarkable thing that today so many people claim not to believe in God or insist that 'you can be a Christian without the church', yet promptly turn to the church at the time of a death.


### SURVIVAL OR RESURRECTION

But what do we mean when we say that we believe in 'life after death'? We could mean one of two things. We could mean that the soul is of such a nature that it survives the death of the body. That is a belief which in itself has nothing to do with religion. It can be the subject of investigation by the Society for Psychological Research, and, no doubt, by the newly appointed Professor of Para-

psychology at Edinburgh University.

But when Christians speak of life after death they mean something much more than this. They believe not just in the survival of death but in resurrection from death to life: not life in spite of death, but life resulting from death - the 'death' of yeilding up one's life to the love of God. We grow by being loved; and as we surrender our lives into the unclouded love of God we become our true selves: we become all that God designed us to be.

#### THE BODY



In the Christian creeds which we say in church, we affirm this belief in the clause, "I believe in the resurrection of the body", and this has puzzled many people. Certainly the New Testament does not expect that in the next life we shall be disembodied spirits; but it is equally certain that our present bodies of flesh and blood are not the ones which we shall inhabit in our new existence. When we die these old bodies are of no more use to us and are discarded. This understanding leads us to some important conclusions. Firstly we need have no qualms about cremation. Secondly we need have no qualms about letting our organs be used after death. This issue is becoming more important with every new step forward in transplant surgery. Thousands of people live under sentence of death or permanent disability because there are not enough donors of the organs needed. No doubt this is partly due to people's slowness to respond to appeals. But it is also probably true that people have an emotional reluctance, a residual subconscious fear of mutilation after death.

As Christians we should surely rejoice to make this contribution to the welfare of our fellow human beings. I suspect that I myself have suffered from an emotional hang-up, because I have not yet signed an organ donor card. I intend to celebrate Easter by putting this right and invite readers to join me. I shall arrange for donor cards to be available at out churches.

Vyvyan Watts-Jones

# LIFE STYLE

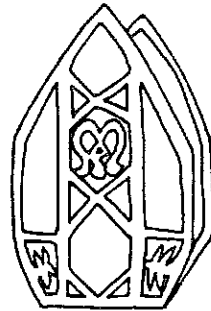
## St. THOMAS' LIFESTYLE GROUP.

A small group of people from St. Thomas' regularly gets together to discuss a variety of topics concerned with Christian life. In the background all the time is a general wish to help our less fortunate brothers in the Third World, and funds raised by the Group are channelled via Action Aid to this end.

Over the past few years we have financed a water tank project in Burundi, a Day Care Centre in Nepal, sent money to a primary school run by the Delhi Brotherhood, and to Kenya and Uganda.

Last year £1,100 was given to finance a forestry scheme in Burundi, and £400 went to provide clean water in the same country.

If you want to help, contact David Oldale or enquire of the editor - Doug. Inger.



PETER'S  
PENCE

## MONEY MATTERS

I am a 50p piece. I am not big enough to pay the milk bill, or the weekly newspaper bill. I cannot buy a seat in the cinema or theatre, neither can I buy a box of chocolates to eat in the interval. I can't even buy a pint of beer, let alone a packet of cigarettes. There are so many things I cannot do. But, put me in the church collection, then I'm considered very big and important.

Phyllis Hill.

FAITH IN  
ACTION