

# The Muswellbrook Chronicle

TUESDAY, 18th MARCH, 1947.

## METHODIST CHURCH

### THANKSGIVING SERVICE.

#### Stained Glass Window and Honour Rolls Unveiled.

One of the most notable services in the history of the Muswellbrook Methodist Church was held on Sunday evening, when a large congregation attended. The service of thanksgiving was held to mark the re-opening of the church after extensive renovations had been carried out, and for the unveiling of a stained glass window "to the glory of God and in memory of Sgt. Alex A. Prowse (R.A.A.F.)," and honour rolls of members of the church who had served in two world wars. During the service the Rev. H. Lynn acknowledged gifts which had been presented to the church by various members of the congregation.

The magnificent stained glass window, showing the lone figure of Christ at prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, was presented to the church by Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Prowse and family in memory of their son and brother, Sgt. Alex A. Prowse, R.A.A.F., killed during an operational flight at Dusseldorf (Germany). The window adorns the western wall of the church, and its richness in coloring and vivid portrayal of an event of tremendous significance for Christians are emphasised by the indirect lighting which brings out every detail of the artist's work.

The unveiling ceremony was performed by the Rev. C. P. Viney, a former minister of the church, and first Methodist chaplain to enlist in World War II. The ceremony was attended by the executive officers and members of the Returned Soldiers' League, Legion of ex-Servicemen and Women, and Voluntary Aid Detachment.

#### UNVEILING CEREMONY.

Prior to the unveiling ceremony, the Rev. Mr. Viney said he felt that he was present, with the congregation, on an occasion which would live long in the hearts of not only the people of

in the hearts of not only the people of the church, but also those of the people throughout the town and district. Their hearts would, because of the unveiling of the beautiful window and the honor rolls, be filled with love of fellowship and thanksgiving that such thought for others should arise out of others' sorrow. "I ask you," he said, "to stand in silence as the flags fall, and in that moment of silence we shall offer our thanks to God that all loyal hearts and true and valiant souls should have proved to us again that death is stronger than life."

Proceeding, Mr. Viney said: "We salute the boys whose names are inscribed on the honor rolls. Their names are inscribed in your hearts and shall ever be remembered. They did not hesitate to accept their responsibility, the discipline, of their tragic hour. They were young, strong of limb, true of eye; they fell with their faces to the foe—

"They shall not grow old  
As we who are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them  
Nor the years condemn,  
At the going down of the sun,  
And in the morning,  
We will remember them."

"We dedicate this choice and lovely Honour Rolls to the service and worship of the church, to the enrichment of your devotions, to the service of our Lord Jesus Christ and the glory of God, the Father."

Prior to the unveiling ceremony the solo, "May These Windows" (Kent Sutherland) was sung by Mrs. T. Simon.

The inscription on the brass plate attached to the window reads: "To the Glory of God and in memory of Sergeant Alex A. Prowse, R.A.A.F., who gave his life in the service of his country on 26th May, 1943, this window is presented to the church by Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Prowse and family."

Names of members of the church appearing on the Honour Rolls are (an asterisk denotes those killed in action):—1914-18: Allen, A. H.; Bayley, H.; Bayley, S.; Bolton, J.; Burns, V. R.; Burns, F.; Burns, Nurse; Carpenter, A. W.; \*Carpenter, F. J.; Cross, L. A.; Dann, E. G.; Dann, H. J. \*Ellis, H. G.; Greenaway, E. J.; \*Hayne, G. A.; \*Hicks, H.; Holmes, C.; Jones, G.; Jones, W. C.; Kitchen, J. F.; Morey, —; Pankhurst, Nurse; Priest, H. A.; Priest, J.; Purkiss, B. Walters, T. C.

1939-45: Arnott, F. G.; Armitage, Str.; Armitage, W.; Clare, T. A.; Clare, L. M.; Clare, R. E.; \*Holdsworth, L. G.; \*Holdsworth, A. R.; Holdsworth, J. T.; Holdsworth, S. E.; Holdsworth, J. L.; Holdsworth, B. T.; Holdsworth, A. R.; Jordan, R.; Morey, A.; Newman, L. A.; Newman, R. W.; Newman, F. J.; \*Prowse, A. A.; Prowse, N. R.; Page, E. H.; Stewart, R. D.; Stewart, M. T.; Storer, J.; Storer, W. J.; Wilson, K. V.; Woolford, V.; \*Wattus, E. O.; Firth, W.; Baker, C. C.

#### ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS."

Rev. H. Lynn said that it was with a full heart he conducted the service. "I feel," he said, "it is a day that will live long in the memories of all

who have been privileged to take part in the service, and to enter into its

who have been privileged to take part in the service, and to enter into its spirit of fellowship. The window that you see before you is the gift of Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Prowse and their family, and we are deeply indebted to them for the beauty and holiness that they have added to this place. It has been truly said that this church is now a sanctuary as it has never been before."

Mr. Lynn acknowledged with thanks the following gifts: Mr. Taylor, for the preparation of the Honour Rolls; Priest family, pulpit chair in memory of their parents; Mr. H. E. Simpson, cost of removal of pulpit and erection of vestry; Messrs Ron Jordan and D. R. Broadfoot, cedar desk carrying the visitors' book; Mr. H. J. Newman, music bureau. "There are," Mr. Lynn said, "many people who have given donations to make this night possible. You are worshipping in a church which is entirely different in many respects to what it was. That has been made possible by the gifts of our people, and I want to express my heartfelt appreciation of all who have, either by gift or kind, helped us to meet together to-night in this thanksgiving service."

During the service a solo, "Open the Gates of the Temple," was sung by Mr. D. R. Broadfoot. The soloist during the singing of the anthem, "Sweet is the Sunlight," was Mrs. T. Simon. Special hymns were selected for the service. The prayers and dedication and thanksgiving were said by the Revs. C. P. Viney and H. Lynn, respectively.

#### THE ADDRESS.

In the course of his address, Mr. Viney said that those gathered for worship that night represented a much greater number than the church could hope to contain. Memory had exercised their minds and from each one went those radiations of thought which linked them with the godly company—the unseen host who made up for them the family circle, the fellowship of this church, the loyal, the strong, the true, the friendly and the faithful, who still enriched and shared life with them on earth, and those dear ones of the precious company who went "over the way." "Know you not that there is no distance which the soul did not span in fancy? And when the soul shall span that distance it becomes a rhythm in

that distance it becomes a rhythm in the soul. The space that lies between you and your near neighbor unbefriended, is indeed greater than that which lies between you and your beloved who dwells beyond seven lands and seven seas. For in remembrance there are no distances, and only in oblivion is there a gulf that neither your voice nor your eye can bridge." As Khalil Gibran spoke in his mystical message and we of a new virile nation knew their hearts exhort those thoughts.

"We know," the preacher said, "that the treasures of life, the imperishable treasures, which neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal, are the precious jewels of service, acts of graciousness, bestowed upon us by others. If your life has been cheered, if your life has been enriched, if you have been impelled to link yourself in service against the unlovely and the vile, is it not because of influences poured forth from others to you? And, further, if truth, beauty, love, have entered into your souls, is it not because we have accepted the chalice filled with life's sacrifice?"

"Measure your life by loss instead of gain,

"Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth.

"For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice,

"And they who serve the most have most to give."

"The world's kindest and keenest mind, the only complete life ever lived is behind the words "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that looeth his life for My sake shall find it." And He began to tell them that the son of man must suffer. From these words we have come to know the word 'sacrifice.' Current amongst us is the idea of living for others. It is far better than living for self; but it is not enough. It is the half-way house of thought; it suggests we are to be the receivers of the messages of other lives, and to be the transmitters of the excellencies for the benefit of posterity. It is suggested that the importance of life is not what we can possess materially, intellectually, spiritually, but how much can we bequeath

to following generations. This leads us to think that millions of young and vigorous lives were robbed of health and happiness and deprived of life, suffered and perished for a cause, to establish the Four Freedoms, to maintain justice, and make the world safe for democracy, or increase the greatness or effectiveness of a nation or empire. This thinking suggests that a certain section of the population of a country must die to make life happier and better for the survivors, that one generation exists only to further the development of those who follow afterwards, and the individual exists only for the sake of a new generation of individuals. We cannot deny that one age contributes to those which, coming along later, repeat the benefits of the past—

'Of Caesar's heart and Plato's brain,  
Of Lord Christ's heart and Shakespeare's brain.'

"To say an individual exists only for the sake of a new generation, millions died simply to make others happy, is unjust, and reduces the joyous abandonment of self to an act of legacy. To-day, we are fast moving towards another dangerous theory, the giving of self to the State. We are units necessary to the good of the whole. This reduces life to an idea of doing, living, giving and passing on. We are like a ball tossed from one player to another in a relay game. Who is the State? We are. We change, we move on, and the State is an ever-changing mass without a soul. The heritage of good must increase with the ages, but the State would make us slaves to posterity. We turn again to the One whose mind could accept the gift of Himself as necessary and we immediately come away from a depressing to a refreshing statement of life. We do not live for man. We live to God. First and foremost it is the men and women who matter. They are the concern of the Father. The message of Jesus is direct. 'Not one sparrow falls without your Father' You are of more value than many sparrows. His parables of the lost Cain, the lost sheep, the prodigal's son lift us away from thinking we are servants of the community, benefactors of our race, or slaves to posterity. Man is the off-

slaves to posterity. Man is the offspring of God, made in the Divine image. A child is possessed of the dignity of a son of the family, and we are offered sonship in the family of God and life is centered not towards man but towards God, and the Christian knows that voluntary surrender of self to God is the highest gift that man can make. It is the joyful outpouring of oneself to the service of God, Creator, Father, Redeemer, the displacement of self from the centre, from the throne of our hearts, so that God reigns in us. Hear the words of Jesus, 'Ye must be born again.' This time we must suffer the anguish of a new birth. No one enters into His life easily and painlessly, but evil fights to hold you, and the struggle in your soul is greater than the struggle for life. Paul cries, 'I am crucified with Christ.' The anguish, agony of the Cross are suffered before He could emerge free to become a new man in Christ. This is the Christian doctrine which satisfies our conception of life. 'The heart of man is so constituted that its fulness comes of spending. When we serve we rule. When we give we have. When we surrender ourselves we are victors. We are most ourselves when we lose sight of ourselves.'

"Last in our service to God is our surrender to His will and guidance. We live, and live out our lives in such fulness that the place where we have passed becomes a shrine and memories of us have such refining influence that thought and word and deed are treasured and life is purified, the dross is discarded, and—

"As some rare fragrance in a vase  
of clay  
Pervades it with a fragrance not its  
own,  
So when thou dwellest in a mortal  
soul,  
All heaven's own sweetness seems  
around it thrown.'"

Concluding, the preacher said they found the supreme witness to be truth of living unto God was Jesus Christ, Whose sacrifice, of Himself was the world's greatest triumph: He gave an illustration drawn from Lone Pine on Gallipoli, where a desperate band held on for many long and weary days, when attempt after attempt was made to relieve them un-

til finally the New Zealanders drove back the enemy. The sick and wounded and a few survivors who moved down the hill on the slopes of which were those who died to rescue them,

their faces to the sun, looked upon the faces of the men who died for them. "When you have once seen the face of a man who has died for you, life is never the same again. From that day the lives of all those men was changed. So in memory look upon the faces of those who made their sacrifice, and like their Master of long ago, they are content. But life must never be the same for us again; it must be a full, rich life offered in service to God, and lived out in fellowship with our neighbors."