

No. 12: November – “Raise earth to heaven”

Our current sermon ‘iBelieve’, based on the words of the Apostles’ Creed has reminded us that Jesus ‘ascended into heaven ... and will come to judge the living and the dead’.

The sermons, preached by Steve, about the Ascension, (October 15th) and Judgement, (October 29th) can be heard on the church website here:

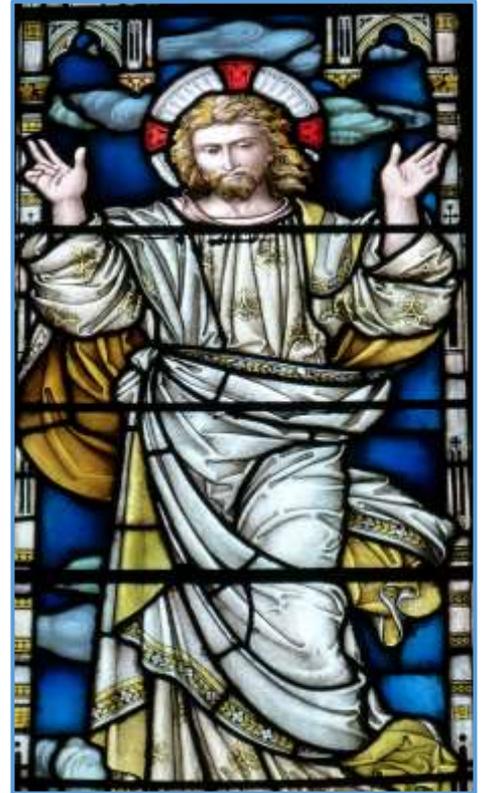
<http://www.holytrinityhuddersfield.com/series/ibelieve/>)

Both of these sermons are well illustrated by our east window which I often find myself looking at during services. It would be hard to imagine Holy Trinity without this window, but it is not an original feature. Until the stained glass was installed it was (like all the other windows in church) just fitted with plain glass.

To the taste of the Victorians, the interior of Holy Trinity was described as being ‘dreadfully plain’. In the 1880s a programme of modernisation began, part of which included the east window we enjoy today.

The main image in the top half of the window is of the 11 disciples watching as Jesus ascends to heaven.

Below the Ascension are 5 pictures illustrating the preaching of Jesus as told in Matthew 25:35-7, which is quoted from the Authorised Version at the bottom of the window, now well hidden by the carved reredos. *“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was in prison and ye came unto me.”*

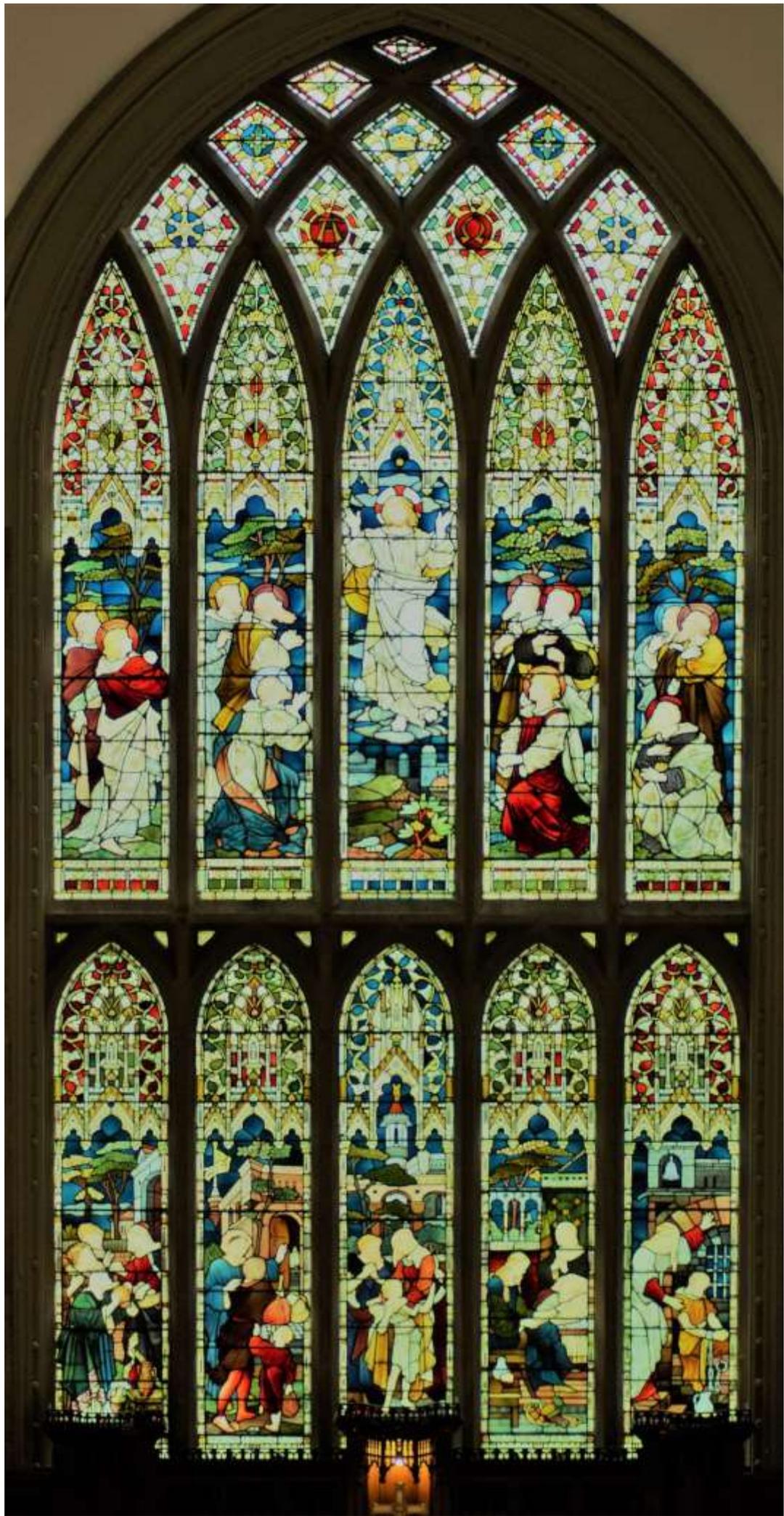


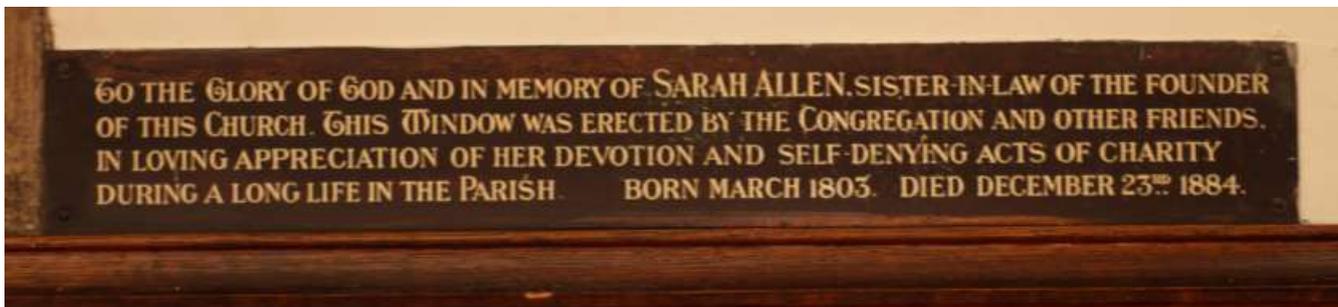
Jesus went on to say we will ultimately be judged on how we treat others and that service is an integral part of our worship.

There is some fine imagery in the window and some artistic licence has been taken. I like the Huddersfield crest shown on the flag of the home where strangers are welcomed. The fruit-basket in the room where the sick are visited features a pineapple, historically a symbol of wealth and power, and used symbolically here to speak of generosity and hospitality. Today pineapples can be cheaply transported around the globe, but even after food markets were opened up during the height of the British Empire during Victorian times they were an ultra-luxury item costing thousands of pounds at today's prices.

The window was given in memory of Mrs Sarah Allen, the sister in law of the church's founder, Benjamin Haigh Allen. For most of her life she had lived as a widow at West Place on Trinity Street – now the Highfield funeral home. She was described in 1875 as being *“a blessing to all around her, — her ear being always as open to listen to the sorrows of the poor and afflicted as her hand is to relieve them. She has fulfilled to the utmost the benevolent instincts of her own and of her adopted family.”*

When Sarah died in 1884 aged 81, the east window was given in her memory and it sounds as though the image of helping others was a suitable one to remember her by.





Brass plaque, a copy of the inscription written at the very base of the east window (hidden by the reredos). The plaque is to the right of the east window and was erected when the sanctuary was panelled in the 1920s.

The window was designed and made by A O Hemming & Co of Marylebone Road, London and cost £432 (over £36K at today's prices)

At the special service held to mark the unveiling of the window, the guest preacher, the Vicar of Huddersfield exclaimed the window "raised earth to heaven".

I hope you are inspired to study the window more closely next time you are in church. As followers of Jesus, we must remember that both our worship and our lifestyles should 'raise earth to heaven.'



Jesus' crown of glory, as pictured in one of the top lights of the east window

Part of the biblical inscription behind the carved reredos

Andy Barber
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