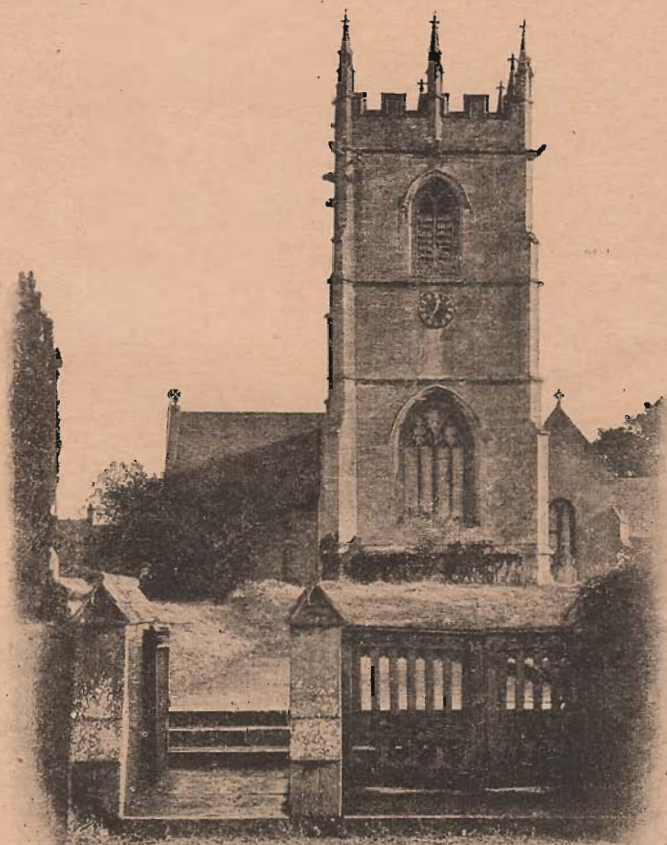


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LETTER FROM THE BISHOP.

To the Members of my Diocese.

We are now on the eve of the most important undertaking which this Diocese has faced for many a long day. In order to do our work better amongst an increasing population we have resolved, on the unanimous advice of our representative Church Councils, to create a New Diocese for Warwickshire, and to make the old Diocese of Worcester more manageable. The large influential Council appointed for this purpose met to-day (November 22) and requested every parish to make an effort to get the necessary funds, by united action, during the three months between Christmas and Easter.

Will you all do your best to help us? We have already collected more than £24,000, but we must get a further £36,000, and we need the assistance of those who are able to offer only small sums.

The Council has invited every parish to send us a representative collector who will be welcomed among "the Ruridecanal group," which is the body appointed in every Deanery to accomplish this great work. Besides which I hope I may rely upon all the parochial representatives of the Ruridecanal Conferences and members of the C.E.M.S., and of course the Churchwardens and Sidesmen to be hard at work in this effort to enable the shepherding of the Lord's sheep to be done more effectively.

I am also asking that addresses from the pulpit, setting forth the need, may be given in every Church on the Second Sunday in the New Year.

A remarkable token of how the Clergy view the proposal is shown by the fact that although in very many instances they are poor men, no less than £5,000 has already been offered by them. Under such circumstances I have little doubt that the laity will not fall behind. It would be a glorious thing if on Easter Day we could thank God for the accomplishment of the task, and we can do it if we all join hands.

Your faithful Bishop,

HUYSHE WORCESTER.

AN INTERESTING PUBLICATION.

CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS OF THE PARISH OF BADSEY, WITH ALDINGTON, IN WORCESTERSHIRE FROM 1525 TO 1571: Transcribed from the Original Manuscript by the late Rev. W. H. Price, M.A., sometime Vicar of Badsey, and edited by E. A. B. Barnard, F.S.A. Hampstead: The Priory Press, 2/6 net.

As some of our readers are aware, Badsey possesses a treasure of rare value and of more than ordinary interest in an old volume of Churchwardens' Accounts. In 1898 a considerable portion of this volume was transcribed by the Rev. W. H. Price—a work demanding both knowledge and patience. Mr. Price's transcription of the earlier entries has now been edited by Mr. E. A. B. Barnard and published by Mrs. Drysdale Bowden (Mr. Price's sister) as a memorial to her brother. Mr. Barnard, whose qualifications for such a task are well-known, contributes an Introduction and Notes, in the preparation of which he has had the advantage of consulting notes made by Mr. O. G. Knapp who, with Mr. C. A. Binyon, assisted Mr. Price in the work of transcription.

The extracts now published cover one of the most critical periods in the history of the Church in England and also throw some light on the social life of the period to which they relate. Beginning with the middle of Henry VIII.'s reign they carry us on through the vicissitudes of the reigns of Edward VI. and Mary to what is known as the Reformation Settlement under Elizabeth. Particularly interesting are the entries for 1550-53, when images, stone altars, rood-lofts, "Judassys" and such like were sold for what they would fetch (which was often very little), and those for 1553-57, when all such ornaments were restored at the expense of the parish. How these various reforms and counter-reforms were received by the good folk of Badsey the Accounts do not reveal. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, however, we may assume that Badsey people were of an adaptable disposition and accepted each succeeding change with resignation if not with indifference. It may be observed (though it does not appear from this transcription, the names of the wardens for 1553-54 being unfortunately omitted) that the same gentlemen, to wit Wylyam George and Thomas Roberdys, who in 1552-53 were busy disposing of 'yrne' and 'gyldynge' and the 'rowde lofte,' were in 1553-54 equally busy buying 'Judas taperys' and a 'sawuse bell' (probably they re-purchased the original one which had been sold for old metal) and spending money on the 'peyntynge of the rowde.'

In an Appendix containing the names of churchwardens and the more important entries from 1571 to 1600 the following entry for 1571-2 occurs:—

"Item. . . when the chalys was changed for a cup Received of ouer plusse. . . xs. vjd."

The editor notes that there are a large number of cups of this year, all of much the same pattern

and ornament and apparently made from the old chalices. Archdeacon Lee found no less than 83 of them in the Archdeaconry of Worcester. It may be added that Archbishop Sandys, who was Bishop of Worcester 1559-1571, and whose eldest son is buried at Wickhamford, is said to have been responsible for the design of these 'cups.'

The volume concludes with an Inventory of Badsey Church Goods in 1604 and two exhaustive Indexes, which considerably enhance the value of the work.

The text appears to be practically free from errors other than a few misprints of no great consequence. It should scarcely be necessary, e.g., to warn readers that the bull purchased by the churchwardens in 1564-5 cost xxix shillings, not xxix pence! At the bottom of p. 46 a note is omitted which would be of little importance but for the fact that it is in the same hand as the note at the top of p. 47, and which runs, "this vis. and iiijd. is at this account on payed." It must have been a Badsey scribe who was responsible for these reflections on 'the men of Aunton.'

With the notes, as with the text, little fault can be found. They give just the information necessary to make the text intelligible to a person possessed of ordinary intelligence but with no special knowledge of the subject. The editor is neither too brief nor too discursive. His quotations from other Churchwardens' Accounts and similar sources are singularly apposite and to the point; e.g., if anything could possibly help the uninitiated in so intricate a problem as the 'tythyng off shepe,' it is to be found in the extract from the tithing customs of Godmanchester. The notes on such subjects as 'Church Ales,' 'Cocke Money,' and the 'gathering' of the 'yonge men' and the 'yonge mayds' throw light on one side—some would say the seamy side—of XVIth cent. Church Finance; but it must be remembered that a considerable proportion of the funds which passed through the churchwardens' hands was applied to purposes by no means strictly ecclesiastical. We think the editor is in error with regard to the statement in note 3 on p. 11. The names, if not the date, there referred to are, in our opinion, in the same hand as a number of other notes scattered about the book, including those quoted on p. 38 (the last two of which, by the way, should be transposed) and another as late as 1707, whereas the expression 'Cum Joconditate' looks uncommonly like part of the original. On p. 39 'Siyeame' is surely a misprint for 'Siyeane.' We must also take exception to the description of Wickhamford as 'for many years united to Badsey for ecclesiastical purposes' though 'originally an independent parish.' Wickhamford is still, as it appears to have been since at least the 13th century, a distinct and separate ecclesiastical parish, with sympathies sometimes very different from those of

the adjacent parish of Badsey (e.g., the Wickhamford people do not appear to have been as anxious as those of Badsey to provide their church with the Hanoverian edition of the Royal Arms), and enjoying an independence which even Ireland under Home Rule might reasonably envy. As a matter of fact Wickhamford and Badsey have not invariably been held by the same priest, nor can they ever be except by dispensation from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

It remains only to say that the volume is produced in a style worthy of the work of the transcriber and editor, the Accounts being beautifully printed, with the abbreviations in the original faithfully preserved, on paper with wide margin for MS. notes, and tastefully bound in a slip-on cover of vellum enriched with a drawing of Badsey Church by Mr. Frank Gillett, the well-known black-and-white artist. Mr. Binyon has copies of the work for sale, and all who are interested in the Badsey of other days, or who would like to possess some memento of the late vicar, should secure one. We would also suggest that a copy of this publication would prove a most acceptable Christmas gift to old parishioners who have left the neighbourhood.

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICES.

BADSEY.

Holy Communion at 7, 8 and Mid-day.

11.0.—Mattins.

5.0.—Evensong with Carols.

WICKHAMFORD.

9.30.—Mattins.

10.0.—Holy Communion.

NOTE.—The Celebration of Holy Communion at Badsey on S. Stephen's Day will be at 10.15, not at 8.

NOTES AND NEWS.

We apologise for the omission of the names of Mrs. Carr and the Misses Empey from the list of those who sent offerings in kind to the Wickhamford Harvest Festival.

Mrs. Taylor has presented to Wickhamford Church a chalice veil with lace border, in memory of her mother, the late Mrs. Wood. It was used for the first time on November 16.

About a score of parishioners attended the meeting on Church Finance at Wickhamford on November 19. Mr. Swift, who made such an admirable speech on the subject at the recent conference at Evesham, explained the scheme put forward by the Diocesan Conference, and Messrs. Kimber (Evesham) and Woodward (Bengeworth) spoke in support of it. It was eventually agreed that a parochial contribution of £2 for diocesan purposes other than the Bishop's Church Extension Fund be guaranteed for 1914, and that the method of raising the money be left to the Vicar, Churchwardens, and Sidesmen.