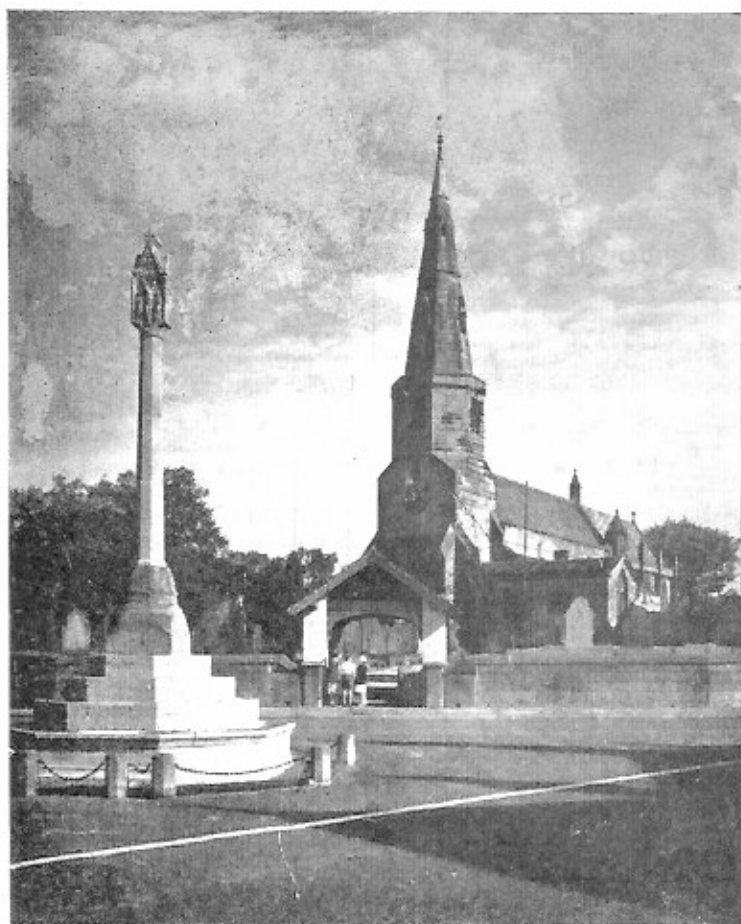


DECEMBER, 1966

# HALSALL PARISH MAGAZINE



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## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday 18th December 2.30 p.m. Children's Carol Service and Tableaux.  
Saturday 24th 11-30 p.m. Sung Eucharist.  
Sunday 25th 8-00 a.m. Holy Communion.  
10-30 a.m. Sung Eucharist.  
3-00 p.m. Evensong.

PLEASE NOTE THERE IS NO EVENING SERVICE ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

The Rectory, Halsall.  
10th November, 1966

My Dear Friends,

It was Charles Dickens who wrote, "How many old recollections, how many dormant sympathies does Christmas-time awake!" This seems to be just the right thing to say about Christmas. It is the way it strikes most people. At no other season do old customs, old sayings, and old music take so much of the stage of the present day. Nor does any other season arouse so many "dormant sympathies" for Christmas-time has its own atmosphere of good cheer, goodwill, and warm human sympathies. At this season we live in a magic world of Christmas trees and fairy lights, colourful parcels and cards of goodwill; festivities and dancing, and singing. We experience for a brief space something of what human life can be. The season radiates joy and happiness and goodwill. This has been so ever since the first Christmas Day described by St. Luke (chapter 2). It is St. Luke who writes, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." And so, century by century, year by year, at this time mankind gives "Glory to God in the highest," in hymn and carol, psalm and song, and in public worship through our Prayer Book offices—particularly in the Eucharist. Never can we join more fervently in the "Gloria" at the end of our Communion Service than at Christmas-time, since it begins with the Christmas message "Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, goodwill towards men." Indeed, it is the Prayer Book's masterpiece for Christmas-time.

Century by century, too, mankind has approached year by year at this season nearest to the ideal of "peace on earth" and universal "goodwill amongst men." The spirit of Christmas-time is the spirit which alone suggests the happy solution of the world's wars and divisions. And this spirit springs directly from Christ. Christmas-time is, in a way, our strongest proof of the truth of the Christian religion. The story behind it all is simple, and full of human appeal. The man and his wife hastening to find shelter; the stable, the Birth of the Child; the shepherds, the Syrian night full of stars, the herald angels. "Glory to God in the highest—on earth peace, goodwill towards men." What does it mean? What is the deeper significance? St. John tells of this in his first chapter. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things were made by Him... And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, and we beheld His glory."

Will you behold His glory in your Christmas Eucharist?

God Bless you all this Christmastide,

Your sincere friend,

Herbert Bullough.

## COME

It is fascinating to watch small babies. They are at once so simple and yet so complicated, so packed with possibilities for the future.

Delightful as they are to watch, I doubt if any of us would care to pass through babyhood again. Once in a lifetime is quite enough. Fancy having to be bundled about by other people all the time so undignified! How horrible to be cutting teeth and not even to have the consolation of knowing that it is all for the best!

I doubt if we should enjoy later childhood either. We should want to be able to do things we could not do, and we should long to be grown-up. Children are often happy but they have their own difficulties. One problem with older children who come from good homes is that they have their own uncompromising, high ideals of conduct and dreams of success. As they grow up they become discouraged by their failure to achieve the highest standard. Many adults have solved this problem by lowering their standards. Christians need real faith if they are to persevere.

There was once a Man who had both the highest vision of how He ought to behave and the strength to live true to it. Surely He must have been happy. So He was; yet He was also tormented. The highest behaviour comes from unqualified love, love of God and all creation. But men are part of creation and they are a wayward part to love. This perfect Man had no short-comings of His own, but the short-comings of all mankind weighed on Him as if they were His own, because He loved men so much.

Can we ever know what it meant for Jesus to be born a human child? We can understand only in a small part, but that much is possible because He was truly a man as we are. The effort of imagination is worth while if it enables us to return a fraction of his love for us.

From creation He was with the Father. The divine joy was His, and the glory of heaven. Yet for the sake of rebellious humanity He willingly allowed himself to be born a human child. Swaddling clothes had to be found to cover Him. He was not in a king's palace. He chose a filthy stable. His mother a peasant woman, and His nation conquered and despised. If we would rather not go through childhood again, what must it have been like for Almighty God? He accepted the trivialities of home life in Nazareth. Rejecting every temptation to follow a lower course, He let faithless, blind humanity seize Him and put Him to death in the most degrading manner they knew.

That is the setting of the Christmas story. It is not as idyllic as some nativity plays suggest, but it is even more deeply moving. What a message to the world!

This Holy Child, whose birth we celebrate, is alive today in the glory of His Father. He is alive in heaven, not to leave us alone, but to give Himself to us even more fully through His Spirit. Through His Spirit He is present in the fellowship He founded, and He stands at the door of every heart. Wherever He enters lives must change. Where He comes the same love which brought Him to earth as a child must take charge. Christians must dare to love others with the same kind of love. Come, Lord Jesus.

## CHRISTMAS—IN ISRAEL

In the Western World, Christmas unhappily often means only turkey and plum pudding. But to the hundreds and thousands of Christians who inhabit the Holy Land it is an occasion which brings the origins of our religion not only geographically close, but in spirit also.

The Christians of Palestine belong to various races and, indeed, to various sects. Each of them, in his own way, will seek to achieve a one-ness with his faith, and the very hills of Galilee will take on their ancient holy significance.

In Israel there are many historic churches where Midnight Mass will be celebrated; the Church of the Dormition, for example, where the Benedictine monks may be heard at their Gregorian chants; and Terra Sancta, Notre Dame de France, Ratisbonne and Saint Charles Borromeo. All will unite in prayer as the peal of bells comes through the clear night air to herald the message of Christ.

Dominating the skyline of David's city, the high tower of the Y.M.C.A. building will announce, by the lights of its multi-coloured lamps, a traditional carol service. Some will sing there, while others will ascend to the communal settlement of Ramat Rahel on Jerusalem's border.

Nazareth, higher up in Galilee, has another air. It is an all-Arab town within Israel, and blends into the hillside as though concealing itself from the march of time. Its beauties are in the winding, narrow streets that suddenly give way to convents and other buildings erected by various Orders within Christendom.

The pilgrims of Nazareth will bow to the glory of the Coming beside Arab women in traditional dress, and men with white keffiyahs on their heads. All will sing His praises from midnight far into Christmas morning. They will sing at the Church of the Annunciation, built above the grotto where St. Luke tells how the Archangel appeared to Mary and spoke of the birth of Jesus. Others will attend the Church of St. Joseph, marking the home to which Joseph brought his family after the return from Egypt; while just beyond Nazareth, on the gentle rounded peak of Mount Tabor, which is the traditional site of the Transfiguration, they will congregate on the spot now sanctified by one of the most beautiful churches in the Holy Land.

At a time when the world is divided by conflict and stress, and not least the Holy Land, Christmas with its message of peace and goodwill will bring once again renewed inspiration and hope.

## FRIENDSHIP

Christmas time is the season of goodwill; the time when the treasure of good friendship is mostly realised. Most of us know many people whom we regard as friends, and whom, we feel, are friendly towards ourselves. But how many of these friends are proved friends? On this question I always think of this (admittedly rather flippant) passage of Robert Louis Stevenson:

"The friendships of men are vastly agreeable, but they are insecure. You know all the time that one friend will marry and put you to the door; a second will accept a situation in China, and become no more to you than a name, a reminiscence; a third will take up with some religious crotchets and treat you to sour looks henceforward. So in one way or another, life forces men apart and

breaks up goodly fellowships forever... And a man who has few friends, or one who has a dozen (if there be anyone so wealthy on this earth), cannot forget on how precarious a base his happiness reposes, and how, by a stroke or two of fate—a death, a few light words, a piece of stamped paper, a woman's bright eyes—he may be left in a month, destitute of all."

There is a great deal of truth to experience in this passage. This one feels, is life! And yet some friendships endure. There are men—and women—who remain unchanged as the North Star through all the vicissitudes of life. Men and women who, if they make friends, remain so for ever, even if wide oceans separate them! They can endure all adversities, all contrary winds of fortune, all slights of men. This, I believe, is because the well-being, and happiness of the other persons is their chief concern. Such a man was Gabriel Oak in Hardy's 'Far From The Madding Crowd.' Read this side-light on his character by the girl who had consistently slighted him:

"What a way Oak had, she thought, of enduring things. Bold-wood, who seemed so much deeper and higher and stronger in feeling than Gabriel, had not yet learnt any more than she herself, the simple lesson which Oak showed a mastery of by every turn and look he gave—that among the multitude of interests by which he was surrounded, those which affected his own well-being were not the most absorbing, and important in his own eyes. Oak meditatively looked upon the horizon of circumstances without any special regard to his own standpoint in the midst."

How true a summary of Oak's character this is becomes clear as one follows the story. We find him pressing the suit of a well-to-do farmer, against that of a trifling adventurer, without ever putting forward his own case. "You know that I love you, and shall love you always. I only mention this to bring to your mind that at any rate I would not wish to do you harm. I have lost in the race for money, and good things, and I'm not such a fool as to pretend to you now I am poor. But Bathsheba... this I beg you to consider that you should be more discreet in your bearing towards this soldier."

Such disinterestedness, one may feel, is rare, but it does exist in certain people, and where it is to be found it is the greatest treasure in human experience. Look at life from the point of view of the spectator—sit in the grandstand and view the game as it is played on the pitch! The player whose every move is determined by the opportunity, and by the needs of his fellow players, is the one who rises head and shoulders above the rest. This is the spirit in which all enduring friendships are maintained—above all, it must be the basis of marriage. Romantic attraction is a fickle substitute, fleeting, and insecure. Listen again to Stevenson writing, as it were, from the Press Box in the grandstand:

"The blind-bow boy, who smiles upon us from the end of terraces in old Dutch gardens, laughingly hurls his bird bolts among a fleeting generation. But for as fast as ever he shoots, the game dissolves, and disappears into eternity from under his falling arrows; this one is gone ere he is struck; the other has but time to make one gesture and give one passionate cry; and they are all the things of a moment."



"When the generation is gone, when the play is over, when the thirty years' panorama has been withdrawn in tatters from the stage of the world, we may ask what has become of these great, weighty, and undying loves, and the sweethearts who despised mortal conditions in a fine credulity; and they can only show us a few songs in a bygone taste, a few actions worth remembering, and a few children who have retained some happy stamp from the disposition of their parents."

## A STORY FOR THE BOYS AND GIRLS

The story I have for you this month is about three apprentice devils.

One day the Devil summoned his angels to consider how best to win the world of men to his side. He told them that they would find it was easier to **lead** men into evil than to **push** them into it. He therefore warned them to be very crafty.

Turning to three apprentice devils, who were already fully trained and ready for their first job, he said, "Have you any ideas?" Devil number one was arrogant. He said, "I will tell them there is no God." Satan looked doubtful. "Well," he said, "they will never believe you, for most of them know that God is real."

"And you, what are you going to do?" he asked the second apprentice devil. "I will tell them there is no Hell." "That is no use," said Satan, "for many of them have made a hell for themselves already and know it exists."

The third apprentice devil was quite unlike his companions. There was an easy, indulgent look about him, and Satan turned to him for his plan of campaign. Number three devil bowed low and said, "I will tell them that God is real; that He is good and all-powerful; and I will assure them that Hell is real; **but**"—and the devil grinned—"I will also tell them that there is plenty of time, that there's no hurry!"

Satan was delighted. This officer's advice satisfied him. "Off you go," Satan said, "you'll do more damage in a day than those two other apprentices will do in a month!"

Thus was the devil sent out into the world, and is still there doing his master's work.

Therefore boys and girls, beware. "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth."

## LITTLE ANTHOLOGY

### Advent

Though satellites may whirl in outer space,

And hearts may faint with fear, this heart of mine  
Is confident. I hold the Book and trace

God's faithfulness in every single line.

And though the midnight of the world be nearing,

I face the dawn, the day of His appearing.

### Found Kneeling

"Blessed art Thou, O Christmas Christ, that Thy Cradle was so low that Shepherds, poorest and simplest of all earthly folk, could yet kneel beside it, and look level-eyed into the face of God.

Blessed are Thou, that Thy cradle was so high that the Magi, lords of learning and of wealth, could yet come to it by a Star's pathway, to hazard their wisdom's store into Thy Baby hands.

Blessed are Thou that, being grown to manhood, and being a carpenter, Thou didst fashion a Christmas altar, like unto Thy cradle, so that all simplicity and all wisdom, all poverty and all wealth, all righteousness and all penitence for sin, might find sanctuary there.

Be this our Christmas haste, O Christmas Christ, to seek that altar, and at this season of Thy birth, unafraid of the Time's complaint, may we be found kneeling still."

Author Unknown.

### God is not Dead

I thought of how, as the day had come,  
The belfries of all Christendom  
Had rolled along the unbroken song  
Of "Peace on earth, good will to men!"

And in despair I bowed my head:

"There is no peace on earth," I said,

"For hate is strong, and mocks the song  
Of 'Peace on earth, good will to men!'"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep!

"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;

The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,

With peace on earth, good will to men!"

Till, ringing, singing on its way,

The world revolved from night to day,

A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,

Of peace on earth, good will to men.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

### U.S.P.G. NEWS

#### THE FARMERS OF MASASI

by the Revd. Louis Sparham

Did you see the programme 'White Missionary' on BBC TV? It featured Bishop Trevor Huddleston in this diocese of Masasi. And did you notice when at one stage the camera focused on the possessions of a typical house here?

A bucket, a few cheap aluminium basins, a few, very few, clothes.

This was a typical house. It was not specially chosen because it was so poor. It showed you what things are like here.

### Rural poverty

Poor people in Masasi are almost all country people. Their poverty does not always strike one as forcibly as the poverty in large towns. There is not the same squalor and depression. And the mere fact that people are living in their own homes and on their own land gives them a dignity even though they are poor.

But poverty it is none the less, and most people living in the country are never far above the subsistence line. Drought or floods or pests can quickly produce acute famine.

Many parts of Masasi face a grave food shortage this year because there was not enough rain during the last rainy season.

### Cash scarcity

In this part of Tanzania the economy is still largely 'cashless'. Most of the crops which a family plants and harvests are needed for its own food through the year.

There may be a surplus which can be sold, and an increasing number are planting nut trees. When these are fully grown the cashew nuts can bring in a good annual revenue.

But the little cash which is obtained in this way very soon goes in taxes or school-fees, for education is only free in the Secondary Schools. It is needed too for essential foods like salt, which cannot be obtained locally, and for clothes.

#### No wage-earners

Apart from teachers and clergy, there are no wage-earners in the country villages. So it is quite usual for a whole household to have not a single cent.

The facts that Masasi is in the tropics, and that there is no shortage of land, often hide the desperate truth of the situation. It is warm, so one can do without clothes. There are plenty of materials for building, so a house costs nothing apart from the labour of building it.

But when you have to lay your hand on cash for some essential, it is often just not there.

#### Using the land

**There is plenty of land. Why don't the people grow more food? Here are a few of the answers.**

At present there is a definite limit to the amount one man can grow. He has only primitive tools, and he is working in an area where there is no really fertile soil, and not enough water.

In addition the population has been growing. In the past when a plot of land had been cropped so long that its yield was reduced, a family could move on to occupy an uncleared area of bush. They cannot do so today. And there are no fertilisers.

The Government are making efforts to overcome this problem by hiring out tractors and ploughs. But hiring means money. And it is not worth the expense unless the work is to be done in a tract of cleared land much larger than is normally found.

**The single cultivator still farms a small plot round his house. His problems will only be solved when he can join in some form of co-operative farming. But this takes time.**

Co-operative farming has already begun to prove successful in other parts of Tanzania where coffee and cotton are grown. So it could succeed here—given patience and the will to carry on.

#### Self-help

See our diocese against this background, and you realise why it has to receive substantial grants through USPG. Money is still such a rarity here that only too often when there is some it tends to be used on non-essentials.

Even though the people are so poor, there is no doubt that they could do more to help themselves. One way in which we encourage them to do so is by giving in kind instead of money.

It has always been a common sight to see maize or rice or eggs brought as offerings to the Eucharist on Sunday. Now we are making a great effort to have each year a cashew nut Harvest Festival.

It somehow seems easier to give a few kilos of cashew nuts than the six shillings which is the amount of Church Dues. This sum is due each year from every adult communicant who does not earn wages.

**Six shillings—if it's very little. But see it in proportion to the annual income of a man with no regular wages. Already it is much larger than the average annual giving of a communicant in England.**

#### ABERFAN

The total amount handed in from the villagers was £133 10s. 6d. A cheque signed by the Rector and Mr. A. P. Trower, Chairman of the Parish Council was sent to Merthyr Tydfil on Thursday, 17th November. Thank you one and all. H.B.

#### FARMERS' MEETING

On Thursday, 8th December we shall welcome Mr. J. A. R. Nield, Crop Husbandry Officer of the Ministry of Agriculture. He will talk to us about Weed Control in Arable Crops—Recent developments and future aspects. It is an important subject and I hope there will be a good turn up. H.B.

#### THE MOTHERS' UNION

At our next meeting on 6th December we welcome Mrs. T. Orr who will speak to us on "The Lighter Side of Hospitals." I hope you will all do your best to attend. H.B.

#### SANCTUARY FLOWERS

Dec. 4—Mrs. L. Huyton.  
Dec. 11—Miss M. Ballard.  
Dec. 18—Mrs. N. Smith.  
Dec. 25—The Congregation.  
Jan. 1—Mrs. R. Heaton.  
Jan. 8—Mrs. K. Edwardson.

#### SERVERS' ROTA

Dec. 4—8-00 a.m. Peter Balmer.  
Dec. 11—8-00 a.m. John Gaskell  
10-30 a.m. Harold Grimshaw and Roger Dutton.  
Dec. 18—8-00 a.m. Raymond Juba.  
Dec. 24—11-30 p.m. Harold Grimshaw and Malcolm Serjeant.  
Dec. 25—8-00 a.m. Brian Heaton.  
10-30 a.m. Tony Gaskell and Raymond Juba.  
Jan. 1—8-00 a.m. Jim Heaton.

#### SIDESMEN'S ROTA

Dec. 4—a.m. H. Huyton, A. Grimshaw.  
p.m. R. Dutton, T. Grimshaw.  
Dec. 11—a.m. R. Gaskell, R. Hunt.  
p.m. W. Robinson, E. Blackhurst.  
Dec. 18—a.m. E. Serjeant, D. Swift.  
p.m. J. Grimshaw, G. Midgley.  
Dec. 25—a.m. H. Baldwin, W. White.  
p.m. J. Cheetham, H. Gaskell.  
1967  
Jan. 1 a.m. R. Heaton, J. Colley.  
p.m. J. Balmer, N. Britnall.

#### HOLY BAPTISM

"Entered into the family of Christ's Church"  
Nov. 13—Alison, daughter of Donald and Naomi Louise Keats, 24 New Cut Lane, Halsall.  
Nov. 13—Amanda Jayne, daughter of Robert John Henry and Joan Rimmer, 92 New Cut Lane, Halsall.  
Nov. 13—Michael Anthony, son of Robert John Henry and Joan Rimmer, 92 New Cut Lane, Halsall.

#### BURIAL OF THE DEAD

"In sure and certain hope"  
Aug. 31—James Bolton, Toil Won Villa, Barton, aged 70 years.  
Nov. 2—John Rimmer Wright, Morris Lane, Halsall, aged 85 years.

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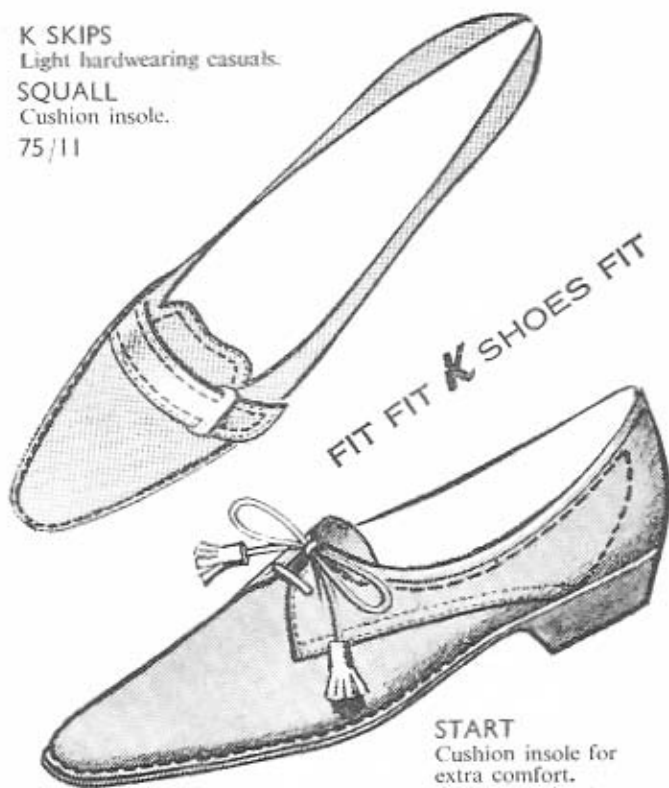
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