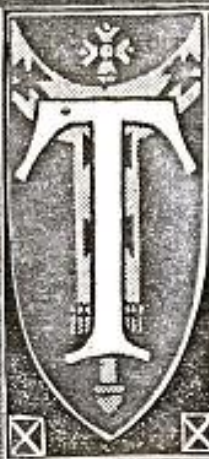


LORD, save Thy Church our King
and Realm and send us
Peace in Christ. ANCIENT GRACE.



THE CHURCH MAGAZINE

OF

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN
PURLEY :: BERKS

CHURCH SERVICES.

Holy Communion.—Each Sunday at 8 a.m., also at 12.15 p.m. on 1st Sundays, and on Saints' Days and Thursdays at 8 a.m.

Motets.—11 a.m.

Evening.—6 p.m.

Rector:—REV. E. E. SKUSE.

Churchwardens.—MR. C. E. HODGKIN, MR. H. A. TIDBURY.

Parochial Church Council.—MR. C. E. HODGKIN (*Vice-Chairman*), MR. H. A. TIDBURY and MR. A. N. M. COOPER (*Joint-Treasurers*), MR. E. O. FARRER, MR. S. F. HANKIN, MR. G. HEATH, MR. ANDERSON and MRS. LISTER, MISS PALGRAVE, MISS LISTER, MISS MOLE, MISS N. SHEPPARD with MRS. H. A. TIDBURY (*Secretary*).

Day School.—MRS. H. A. TIDBURY (*Head Teacher*).

Sunday School.—MR. A. N. M. COOPER, MISS LISTER, MISS M. LISTER.

Mothers' Union.—MRS. LISTER (*Enrolling Member*).

Girl Guides.—MISS M. MOLE (*Captain*), MISS M. LISTER.

Organist.—

MR. A. N. M. COOPER.

Sexton.—

W. J. LESBUN.

February,



1933.

CHRISTMAS, 1932.

Everyone admired the decorations in the Church for the Christmas Festival. On the previous Sunday contributions amounting to 18s. 2d. were given to provide flowers, and for this kindness as well as for the generous help given on Christmas Eve by willing hands we are all most grateful. And it was good to note how sympathetically the congregations throughout Christmas Day entered into the object of our alms by contributing £5 to the Mayor of Reading's Fund for the Unemployed. One only other comment will we make upon the Christmas which has now passed into history. It shared the fate—if it may be so called—of all such Festivals when they fall upon a Sunday. And as often as this is the case, a parish is tested. We may indeed keep the Feast, nor could it be better observed, one would think, than on the Lord's Day. But to forget the Host Himself is to turn deaf ears to the Angels' Song and to prefer good things to the Good News.

MONTH BY MONTH—*January.*

The opening month of the New Year will remain long in our remembrance. And if there is any sort of understanding between fog and 'flu (to curtail this devastating word) the first fortnight of January witnessed it. Nor did many escape the results of that unhappy combination. Happily the attack took a mild form but there is no doubt that its worst feature was, and still remains, its high infectivity. And not so much from this complaint as from its weakening after-effects we mourn the loss of three parishioners, Mrs. J. Kirk, Mrs. West and Mrs. Smith. Seldom have three deaths occurred in Purley within the space of months and much less in the course of one month. But it has been said, "Man is immortal till his work is done," and each of these, our fellow-parishioners, had fulfilled her course as length of years is counted. And we offer our sympathy to those who have been thus bereaved, not forgetting the while to take to ourselves the lesson of the dread summons which awaits us all. It is good, however, to be able to end upon a brighter note, and to congratulate Mr. and Mrs. Foster, of The Kennels Cottage, upon the birth of a daughter on January 20.

GENERAL GORDON.

On the 28th of January, 1833, was born Charles George Gordon. Fifty-two years later almost to a day he was killed at Khartoum. And ever since the men who set out to write, or rather write up, the lives of their greater fellows have given us their views upon this soldier-saint. At the moment of his death it is enough to say that he was the world's supreme hero. For seven months Khartoum was besieged before he fell, and Gordon's journal reveals him as a peerless instance of courage, faith, resolution and humility throughout that time and to the fatal end. To-day, however, modern writers seem unable to understand sainthood, because their outlook is bounded by its own physical limitations. "The natural man," as St. Paul says, "cannot receive the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness unto him." And so estimates of Gordon's character tend to disparage him, if the least loophole can be found for adverse criticism. But calm, clear minds can readily discount all such malevolence, as a phase of writing which will pass with the generation which begat it. Even our Lord Himself was called, as He Himself said, a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber. And to us who read this Magazine Gordon is for ever a rare example of the unchallengeable selflessness of his Master. Many stories are told of him

in this connection. We will content ourselves with but one. Gordon was Commissioner of the Danube from 1872 to 1874. One bitterly cold winter morning within that period he saw a fisherman's boat capsize in the River Danube with the result that the occupant was thrown into the frozen water. Immediately Gordon leaped into the ice-floes and brought the drowning man to the shore. Then covering the fisherman with his own sheepskin overcoat he put him on his horse and ran behind him all the way to the nearest town. Such was the man whom the Dervishes of Egypt revered as a saint. And we can see the reason. When Disraeli was asked if he had any religion he replied that he had "none to speak of." Nor had Gordon, though, of course, the two men are not to be compared. But that is the difference between being saintly and sanctimonious. And a saint is one who lives apart with God within, and without makes his actions, great and small, speak louder than mere easy words.

E. E. S.

THE RELIGIOUS CALL.

(ii) CHURCHGOERS.

A well-known newspaper has recently told us that "to-day we are bad listeners." Truly a change from the day when the hour-glass upon the pulpit was turned upside down again after the sands had once run out. Perhaps, however, to vary the figure the pendulum will swing back again in due course. But it can only be so if we interpret afresh to ourselves the truth which lies behind our going to Church. And, first of all, there is—as there must be—God. He expects us. And to be in our place before Him is to acknowledge Him in our lives. Hence the opening invitation—"O come, let us worship and fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker." If we forbear to do this, may we not say that He must miss us—to our own incalculable loss, but also to His grief.

Then, there is our neighbour. He needs both our example and our presence. Nor can we escape our responsibility in this matter. The "Ancient Mariner" in Coleridge's poem far away at sea longs for the quiet Sunday at home and

To go together to the Church
 With a goodly company,
 Where each to his great Father bends
 And all together pray,
 Old men and wives and loving friends
 And youths and maidens gay.

It is being together that matters, for being good sociably is the best way to learn to be sociably good.

And then ourselves. The soul of improvement is the improvement of the soul. And as soon as we sit loose to our churchgoing, the thought of God fades out of our lives, and we begin to find, and even to complain, that "things are going wrong." But it is not the things that are out of joint. It is we who are wrong and, alas! we make matters worse by trying to find pretexts for ourselves. And if it is not the music that displeases us, it is the sermon. But well does George Herbert say:

The worst speak something good; if all want sense,
 God takes a text, and preaches patience.

P. R. O.

THE DAY SCHOOL.

In our last issue we referred to the increase in the number of our Day scholars, and of the new situation which this addition created. The Board of Education have now approved the constitution of the School as for Infants up to eight years of age. And two results have followed. First, six children who have attained the limit just mentioned have been removed by the Local Education Authority to Pangbourne Council School, namely, Rosemary Rodell, Eileen Smith, Ronald Rawlins, William Fisher, John Iles and Donald Carter, whilst a seventh, Jack Whitney, has gone to a Reading School. All of these former scholars seem happy in their new surroundings, and incidentally, we are asking ourselves when was there not a kind and hearty Mr. Lee to carry us to school when we were young? A second consequence is that Mrs. Tidbury has been left with a class of sixteen children which is uniform and comfortably manageable in size, and we wish her, as at all times, the highest success in working the new régime. To add to her comfort and that of the children under her care, parents and parishioners alike will be glad to hear that the Managers have decided to instal at once a hot-water system of heating in the School.

PARISH NOTES.

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

On the Thursday after Christmas (December 29, 1932) Miss Lister and Miss Mary Lister entertained their classes to tea in the Schoolroom, and never could there have been such a joyous "treat" or such diligent preparations therefor. After tea there were games; and how they were played, and especially how we all found ourselves in the "Family Coach," you must ask the parents who later came on the scene, for if the children began to tell you, one is sure they would never cease.

NEW YEAR'S PARTY.

Owing to the prevalent illness this gathering had to be cancelled so far as the 6th of January was concerned. But now that conditions are more favourable we have arranged to hold the Party at the School on Friday, February 10, when we hope to see all the children from school age and upwards at 5 p.m. Just one hour later the entertainment will begin, and parents are warmly invited to come and share it.

PARISH REGISTER.

BURIALS.

- Jan. 11. Eliza Kirk, aged 73 years.
.. 14. Matilda West, aged 67 years.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND THANKS.

Annual subscriptions for the Magazine have been received as follows, and are hereby gratefully acknowledged: Mr. Hodgkin, 10s.; Rev. H. C. Wilder, R.D., 2s. 6d.; Mr. Tidbury and Mrs. Mulford, each 2s.; Mrs. Lister has kindly given 12s., of which 10s. is towards the cost of production.