

The Church Guardian

—: EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR:—

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CALENDAR FOR JANUARY.

- JAN'Y 1—Circumcision of Our Lord.
“ 6—Epiphany of Our Lord. Athan. Cr.
2nd Sunday after Christmas.
“ 13—1st Sunday after the Epiphany.
“ 20—2nd Sunday after The Epiphany.
“ 25—Conversion of St. Paul.
“ 27—3rd Sunday after the Epiphany.

THE CHURCH TO-DAY.

(By May Cochrane, in Dawn of Day.)

We have now traced in broad outline the history of our Church through eighteen centuries. Her history has been checkered with light and shadow; she has had times of great prosperity, and seasons of sore oppression. We have seen her the educator and physician of the nation; the source of art, literature, and music; the chief instrument in the material prosperity of the country; the originator (through her great monasteries,) of English agriculture and trade; above all, the liberator of the people; the winner of Magna Charta in the twelfth century, the defender of popular rights in the seventeenth, and in this, the advocate of the freedom of the black slaves in the West Indies, and of the white ones at home. It was Wilberforce, an ardent Churchman, who struck off the chains of the negro, and Lord Shaftesbury tells us in his diary that it was to the Bishops in the House of Lords that the passage of the Ten Hours Factory Act was due, in spite of the opposition of the popular leaders, Mr. Bright, Mr. Gladstone, Lord Brougham, and Sir Robert Peel.

During those eighteen centuries we have seen the Church sometimes falling into error, but always retrieving her fault; sometimes sleeping, but always awaking to new life, and in her arousal stirring up the slumbering sects around. We have seen her sometimes oppressed by the State and rival religious factions, trammelled by foes without, hampered by failings within, yet “she alone has survived the fall of dynasties and rise of constitutions, unchanged and unchangeable amid the vicissitudes of centuries—the grand central fact around which English history has revolved;” for, as Mr. Gladstone said, “take the Church of England out of the history of England, and the history of England becomes a chaos without order, without life, and without meaning.” The stream of the Church's life has watered England, as the poet Wordsworth beautifully said, “like a Holy River, on whose banks are found sweet pastoral flowers and laurels, immortal amaranth, and palms,” and whose “living waters, less and less by guilt stained and polluted, brighten as they roll.”

What is this glorious Church doing now, this Church of saint and martyr of old, of all the English people, princes and peasants, for the first fifteen centuries of English history, and which, amid the schisms of the last three hundred years has vindicated more and more her God-given right to be the one Church for all English-speaking people? Are her waters

“brightening as they roll?” Yes, we can thankfully reply, every year her standard is being lifted higher, new zeal, new love, new faith are filling her members, greater reverence marks her worship; no land or sea sets the boundary of her work, far and wide throughout the world her Liturgy is sung, her sons and daughters carry to all nations the Gospel entrusted to her care. At home she has covered the land with a golden network of loving sympathy; her agencies, religious and benevolent, are numberless as the ever-arising needs of the people. There is not a class in life that can truly say, “the Church does nothing for us.” From childhood to old age she bears her people on her heart. Every Churchman who wants to know what the Church is doing to-day should study the *Official Year Book of the Church of England* (S. P. C. K.), and there see how all sorts and conditions of people find in her their most wise and generous helper.

The Church schools, supported by the free will offerings of Churchmen, educate half a million more children than do the Government schools. When in 1870 the State, stirred up, as Mr. Foster acknowledged in Parliament, by the splendid example of the Church, began to perform its educational duty towards the nation, the Church was providing accommodation for almost as many children as are now in average attendance in the Board schools. On the building and maintenance of her schools and training colleges, the Church has spent, since 1811, the enormous sum of over £36,000,000, and every year sees her making fresh efforts in the cause of education.

In the present century she has built and restored nine thousand churches and cathedrals. The expenditure on these Houses of God between the year 1840 and 1874 amounted to £34,000,000. Since 1874 the offerings of Churchmen for Church building have averaged a million pounds a year. In the last fifty years in London alone, 480 new permanent churches and many temporary ones have been erected. Five thousand parsonage-houses have been built in places that before had no resident clergyman. Over four millions and a half pounds were subscribed between 1837 and 1-85 as endowment for new parishes, and Churchmen are giving now at the rate of £151,000 a year for the endowment of benefices. During the same period the number of Clergy has enormously increased, all of whom are maintained by the offerings of Church-people. We had 5,776 beneficed clergy in 1841, now we have 14,000, beside the still greater number of curates. All this shows how the Church is striving to bring the means of grace, the Holy Sacraments, within reach of every soul in this densely populated land of ours. But besides this ministrations to those who have settled homes, she sends her shepherds after the sheep that wander hither and thither. In hop garden and fruit farm, at racecourse and fair, in canal boat and gypsy tent, in casual ward and tramp's lodging-house, the Clergy and agents of the Church are seeking the lost and straying, pointing the sinning and the dying to the cross, rescuing the perishing, teaching the children. The Clergy board the outgoing and incoming vessels on our coasts, speaking words in season to sailor, emigrant and stranger; they follow in the Church's ships and fishing boats toiling on the stormy north seas, helping soul and body; they journey from east to end of the world in emigrant vessels, using every effort to strengthen the weak, confirm the faithful, warn the sinner, comfort the saint. On distant shores the Church has built homes where the emigrant may rest and be advised; from priest to priest she commends her wandering children in Canadian Northwest, and Australian Bush. Fifty years ago there were only seven Bishops and 172 Clergy out of England, now there are 147 Bishops, 7,000 Clergy, and three millions of lay agents, labouring among our colonists and the heathen.

For the 25 years between 1868 and 1893, the free-will offerings of Churchmen for Church building, education, hospitals, missions, temperance work, were £81,573,237.

In 1884 Church-people contributed £3,863,499 to the same objects, and that is now about the yearly average.

These are only a few items gathered from the Church's account book, but far beyond what statistics can show is the great unseen work, the spiritual influence of the Church on the nation. Let us strive to be worthy of our inestimable privilege as English Church-people, and live up to the high standard of Christian life which she sets before us, telling us in our baptism that “our profession is to follow Christ and be made like unto Him,” teaching us in our Catechism, rich and poor—for the Church knows no difference between her people, and will have no drones in her hive—to learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me.”

The destinies of this glorious Church, the Church of Alban, Augustine, Aidan, Cuthbert, Alphege, Langton, Grossetete, Laud, Herbert, Wesley, are in our hands, humanly speaking. To us is entrusted the duty of handing on to future generations unharmed, this great inheritance. It is our duty to cling to her, work for her, defend her; and, if need be, die for her. To strengthen the Church's work, to advance her cause, which is the cause of Christianity in England, is the duty of every man, woman, and child baptised in her holy faith, and not of the Bishops and Clergy only. “Up then, and be doing; do not wait to see what others are doing, do something yourself.” Let each one strive:—

- (1) In the power of the Holy Ghost to sanctify their own body, soul, and spirit.
- (2) In the name of Christ and Holy Church to stretch out hands of help and sympathy to all around.
- (3) To pray daily that God will evermore cleanse and defend His Church (Coll. xvi. Trinity).

So living, working, praying, shall we be helping on the day when the Church Militant shall become the Church Triumphant, and our ancient and loved Church of England, her warfare accomplished, her victory won, shall with the whole Catholic Church exchange the spotted robes of her pilgrimage for the Bride's glorious raiment, and be claimed for His own in the sight of men and angels by the Heavenly Bridegroom.

WHY DO WE BELONG TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND?

THE Annual Church Congress, held at Exeter on October last, in no way fell short of the interest shown in former years. The range of subjects considered were exceedingly wide and varied. Questions on matters of interest to the Church were dealt with by experts, and fully discussed. The widening of view which must result from these meetings is calculated to be of inestimable service to the Church.

At the working men's meeting Mr. Alderman Phillips gave an address in reply to the question, “Why do we belong to the Church of England,” which we think well worth reading.

He said he was “a Churchman from principle.” “You know that if you are merely a Churchmen from preference you may become something else from preference next week or the week after. We ought to have an anchor away deep down beneath the water, an anchor that holds us.” First of all he was a Churchman because he believed that the Church of England was God's true Church as founded by Christ and his Apostles. “I remember that down at the Town-hall at West Ham, where I live, I was