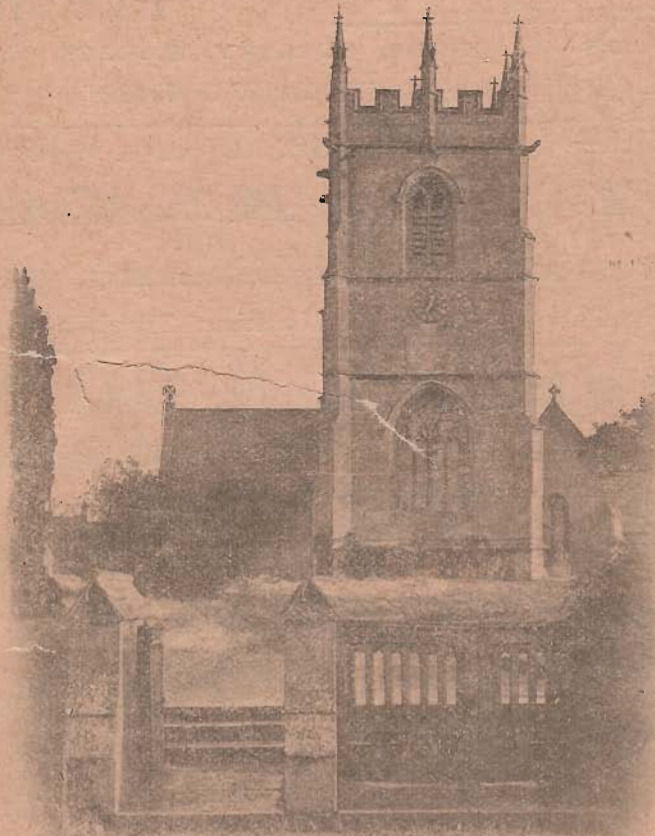


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CHRISTMAS SERVICES.

We are glad to be able to record an increase in the congregations at Badsey both on Christmas Day and on the following Sunday. At Wickhamford, however, the absence from home of several regular worshippers materially affected the size of a congregation almost invariably of modest proportions. As we are going to press in the middle of the octave, the total of communicants will be given in our next issue. The churches had been decorated for the festival by the usual helpers whose names are familiar, and evergreens and flowers were given by Mrs. Evans, Mrs. A. Sears, Mr. J. Marshall, Mrs. Lees-Milne, Mrs. Hartwell, Miss Pethard, and Mr. Staite.

BADSEY SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The Annual Prize-giving took place at the Old School on Sunday, Dec. 19th., Mrs. Henry Byrd kindly distributing the prizes which were awarded as follows:—

BOYS—Class i., Albert Keen, Arthur Keen.

Class ii., F. Dore, C. March, Edmund Jelfs.

Mr. Mustoe's Prizes (for Catechism) C. Agg, E. Evans, H. Marshall, W. Cleveley, C. March.

Vicar's Prizes: W. Cleveley, F. Dore, Edmund Jelfs, Eric Jelfs, Albert Keen, Arthur Keen, C. March, J. Perkins, H. Wheatley, E. Wilkins.

GIRLS—Class i, M. Ballard, E. Stanford.

Class ii, M. March, H. Grove.

Mr. Mustoe's Prizes: M. Ballard, G. Ballard, M. Cleveley, E. Stanford, M. Teal, W. Wilkins. N. Crisp, M. Marsh.

Vicar's Prizes: M. Cleveley, H. Grove, M. Jelfs, E. King, M. March, N. Moisey.

INFANTS—C. Sparrow, Eric Jelfs, G. Ballard, W. Sparrow, Ida Dore, D. Crisp, H. Marshall, F. Moisey, E. Agg, R. Nightingale.

Vicar's Prizes: E. Agg, N. Crisp, E. Dore, I. Dore, F. Moisey, R. Nightingale.

Mr. Mustoe's Prizes: E. Wilkins, F. Moisey.

WICKHAMFORD SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The Prizes were distributed by the Vicar after Evensong on Sunday, December 26th (S. Stephen's Day). The following were the prize-winners:—

BOYS— F. Cox, W. Cox, A. Cox.

GIRLS— M. Westwood, L. Bayliss, M. Heritage.

INFANTS—Alice Cox, H. Westwood, I. Bayliss, K. Hemming, S. Pitman, F. Westwood, F. Griffin, G. Hemming.

The School will re-open on Sunday, Jan. 2nd, at **2 p.m.**

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THE GENERAL ELECTION.

As soon as it was clear that there would be a contest in this division, the Vicar addressed the following questions to each of the candidates:—

1. Are you in favour of the right of the parents to determine the character of the religious instruction to be given to their children in Public Elementary Schools, and to have that instruction given in school hours by qualified teachers who believe in what they teach?
2. Are you in favour of equal financial and other treatment being given to all forms of religious instruction in Public Elementary Schools?
3. Will you vote for the above principles if returned to Parliament?

Mr. Eyres-Monsell has answered each of the questions with an unqualified "Yes."

Mr. Burt, the Liberal candidate (who, by the way, is a Churchman), does not see his way to committing himself to such a definite policy as the questions suggest. He thinks some compromise might be arrived at in which all could join. It should be remembered, however, that the last compromise put forward was very one-sided, and was frustrated by the concerted action of those earnest and determined Churchmen to whom, rather than to the House of Lords, the defeat of Mr. Birrell's Bill was also directly due. The demand of Churchmen who are fighting the school question is a perfectly fair one, viz: that the children of Church parents should be instructed in the religion of their parents, by believing teachers, in all schools for the maintenance of which Churchmen are taxed and rated.

On the other hand, the claim of the militant dissenter to have his religion taught at the public cost in all elementary schools, to the exclusion of every other form of faith, is one the inherent injustice of which foredooms it to failure.

Between determined men holding these two positions there is but small hope of compromise on any of the lines hitherto suggested.

It seems to us that the only solution of the question lies in the state endowment of all religions or the state endowment of none. The former alternative is the one which the majority of of Churchmen desire, but if the realization of it defies the wit of statesmen, and religion is driven out of the Schools, the responsibility will undoubtedly lie with the original authors of 'the religious difficulty.'

NOTES AND NEWS.

Neither the meeting on behalf of the Bishop's Church Extension Fund nor the Afternoon of Prayer can be described as having been a success if judged by the numbers present. The Afternoon of Prayer unfortunately coincided with the Grammar School prize-giving, but, after making all due allowance for counter-attractions, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that people in this deanery do not set a very high value on the ministrations of the Church, neither are they over anxious that such ministrations should be extended to others.

The Collections at Badsey and Wickhamford on Sunday, Jan. 30th, will, at the Bishop's request be given to the Diocesan Societies.