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Gurney, Archer Thompson

(1820–1887)

G. C. Boase, revised by Leon Litvack

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Gurney, Archer Thompson (1820–1887), Church of England clergyman and hymn writer, was born at Tregony in Cornwall on 15 July 1820. His father, **Richard Gurney (1790–1843)**, was vice-warden of the stannaries of Devon. In 1830 he claimed to be elected member of parliament for Tregony in Cornwall, but did not succeed in obtaining the seat. He died at Bonn, Germany, in 1843.

Archer Gurney became a student of the Middle Temple on 29 April 1842, and was called to the bar on 8 May 1846. His career as a lawyer was short, as in 1849 he was ordained to the curacy of Holy Trinity, Exeter. In 1851 he took charge of St Mary's, Crown Street, Soho, where he remained until 1854, when he obtained the senior curacy of Buckingham. He was appointed chaplain to the Court Chapel, Paris, in 1858, and lived there until 1871. After his return to England he served as evening lecturer of Holy Trinity Church, Westminster (1872–4), curate of Holy Trinity Chapel, Brighton (1874–5), and curate-in-charge of St Andrew's, Hastings (1877–8). He assisted at St Katharine's Hospital, Regent's Park, London (1879–80), was curate in charge of Rhayader, Radnorshire (1880–81), and was curate in charge of Llangynidr, Brecknockshire (1882–3). His wife, Catherine Harriet, died in 1876, and in his last year he lived at 7 Keble Terrace, Oxford. Gurney died of disease of the kidneys at the Castle Hotel, 4 Northgate Street, Bath, on 21 March 1887, and was buried in Bath.

Gurney was a prolific pamphleteer and polemicist, but was most notable as a hymn writer, contributing 147 compositions to *A Book of Praise* (1862). Of these the most widely known was his Easter hymn 'Christ is risen, Christ is risen'. He also wrote plays, including *Turandot, Princess of China* (1836) and *Iphigenia at Delphi* (1855); dramatic poems, such as *King Charles the First* (1846); as well as songs and the words to Horsley's *Gideon, an Oratorio* (1859). His daughter-in-law, Dorothy Frances, *née* Blomfield (b. 1858), who was married to his son Gerald, was also a hymn writer.

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Wealth at Death

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Branford, Victor Verasis (1863–1930), sociologist and businessman

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