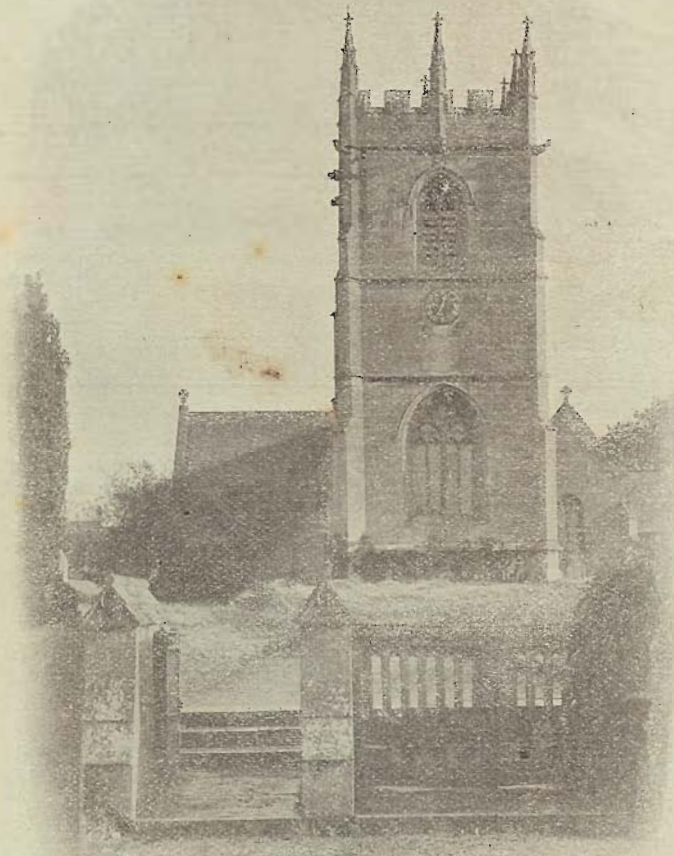


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Badsey with Aldington & Wickhamford Parochial Magazine.

THE EDUCATION QUESTION.

For purposes of reference we think it well to print the Petition which was recently circulated in Badsey and Wickhamford. It ran as follows:

"That your Petitioners, anxious that it should be possible in all public elementary schools for children to receive definite religious instruction according to the wishes of their parents, and that all grievance (whether Nonconformist, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or of the Church of England) should be removed, and that there should be an end of religious strife in National Education, earnestly pray that your Honourable House will not adopt any legislation

"1.—Which would either establish, at the expense of the whole community, a form of undenominational religion for all schools throughout the country, or would give to any denomination religious privileges not accorded to others;

"2.—Which would place the Bible in the hands of teachers whose belief in the Christian Faith, and whose qualifications and ability to teach religion may not in any way be ascertained;

"3.—Which would alienate property held in trust for giving religious education;

"4.—Which would interfere with the power to give in school hours by the Clergy and school staff (subject to a conscience clause) religious teaching in accordance with the Trust Deeds;

"5.—Which would withhold from Voluntary Schools any advantages extended to schools supported entirely out of the public funds;

"6.—Which would withhold from children attending schools supported entirely out of the public funds the right to receive during school hours definite religious instruction at the hands of accredited teachers of the religious body to which the parents of such children may belong.

"And your Petitioners will ever pray, etc."

This petition was signed by 279 adults, the number being made up as follows: Badsey 185, Aldington 31, Wickhamford 63. It is putting it quite moderately to say that the general sense of these parishes was in favour of the sentiments expressed in the petition, for the signatories represent a very large proportion of our adult population, and, had there been a little more time, additional signatures might certainly have been obtained.

No attempt was made to disguise the fact that the petition emanated from a Church source, but there was nothing in it to which the most firmly-convinced Nonconformist could reasonably

take exception, inasmuch as preferential treatment is desired for no creed; the House of Commons is merely to be asked to ensure the same impartial treatment of all religions and all denominations.

It is surely asking no favour to point out that, in cases where a school is built and the fabric maintained by a voluntary association or by a private individual, the maintenance of the staff and machinery of such school is a legitimate charge on the public funds. Yet, until the Act of 1902, schools of this type received no assistance whatever from the rates, which were levied on all alike. This meant that in cases where the same district was served by both a Voluntary School and a Board School, it was impossible for the two schools to compete on anything like equal terms unless the supporters of the Voluntary School were willing to defray almost the entire cost of the education of the children attending it, in addition to bearing their full share of the expense of the Board School.

As Voluntary Schools were almost exclusively supported by one or other religious body, one effect of the Act of 1870 had been, so to speak, to put the religious convictions of supporters of Voluntary Schools to the test. It was open to them to either 'grin and bear it,' or become 'passive resisters,' or close their schools. The Nonconformists, who had a certain number of Voluntary Schools, in the majority of cases closed them in order to relieve themselves of financial responsibility. But in hundreds of instances, as the Bishop of Worcester has pointed out, the lovers of definite truth rose to the occasion and supplied the deficiency artificially created, by enlarging their existing schools or else building new ones. In one town where he was curate at the time when the Act of 1870 came into force, every Dissenting School was closed, with the result that the whole school accommodation was provided by the Church, a position which was afterwards quoted as a grievance by the very people who caused it. In most cases, however, it was quite impossible for Church people to provide immediately for the lack of accommodation suddenly caused by the closing of Nonconformist Schools, and then a Board School was built at the expense of the ratepayers, and its upkeep was made a permanent charge on the rates of the whole district. Now it is no abuse of language to describe such schools as Nonconformist Schools, when established in districts where Churchmen and Roman Catholics

were already providing for their own children, and towards the support of these Nonconformist Schools Churchmen and Roman Catholics were obliged by the law to subscribe. A very pertinent example is furnished by Stratford-on-Avon, where for years these two religious bodies have been supporting their own schools, and at the same time contributing towards the support of the Nonconformist or Board School; and, to show what sacrifices must have been made in this instance, it is only necessary to point out that, although enriched by gold extorted from English and Roman Catholics, the Nonconformist School has never been able to compete successfully with the Church Schools either in numbers or efficiency. What substantial grounds for "passive resistance" in this and numberless similar cases! But the victims of this legal tyranny chose rather to be "subject for conscience sake," until belated and partial relief arrived in the Act of 1902. To contend that this Act does more than justice to Voluntary Schools has been reserved for those who, in the words of the Bishop of London, "foul the waters of fair discussion by talk of grab and cartoons of robbery." The fact is, the Act of 1902 provides, not the maximum which supporters of the voluntary system ought to expect, but the minimum which they should be prepared to accept; and they are now losing no time in enunciating their views.

Roman Catholics are asserting their rights in no ambiguous terms, and have already raised the banner "No surrender."

Churchmen, too, are awakening to a sense of their responsibilities. At a meeting of persons interested in Church Schools, recently summoned by the Bishop of Birmingham to advise him, it was resolved *nem. con.*: "That this meeting of Churchmen recognises—that what are known as Church or National Schools are schools originally built, and subsequently maintained with great expenditure of money and trouble, in order to bring up children in the Christian faith as taught by the Church of England. That the purpose for which these schools are designed is in most cases safeguarded by definite trust deeds. That the Government of the country has encouraged the building, enlargement, and maintenance of these and other schools existing for the express purpose of what is called 'denominational education.' That there is in this country a very large number of parents who wish their children to attend schools where such education in the principles of the Church of England can be received. That, in view of these facts, this meeting pledges itself strenuously to support the trustees and managers of Church Schools in opposing to the utmost any attempt on the part of the Government to pass an Act of Parliament to

compel them to use, lend, lease or sell their schools for purposes inconsistent with the objects contained in the trust deeds. That this meeting requests the Bishop to summon a meeting of the trustees and foundation managers of the Church Schools of the diocese to organise opposition to any such attempt. That this meeting believes that Churchmen in general are ready to welcome any proposed arrangement, consistent with their religious responsibilities for meeting existing grievances of all parties."

It is certainly a source of satisfaction, too, to find that parents of all shades of thought are now asserting their right to have their children educated in their own faith in what are known as "Council Schools." Clause 6 of the Badsey petition puts forward this reasonable claim, and on Wednesday March 21st, a deputation from the Central Council of the Mothers' Union waited upon Mr. Birrell, at the House of Commons, with a view to emphasizing it. The deputation, which was introduced by Mr. J. G. Talbot, and consisted of Mrs. Sumner (central president of the Mothers' Union), Countess Waldegrave, Lady Addington, and Mrs. E. S. Talbot, claimed to speak as representing a society numbering over 250,000 members. The following points were submitted: That all forms or religious belief should receive impartial treatment by the State; that no scheme of national education can be established with justice, or accepted as permanent, unless full recognition be given to the right of parents to obtain for their children instruction in their own faith; that such instruction must, if it is to serve its purposes, be given within school hours; that it is a moral necessity that all religious instruction should be given by those who can give it with genuine belief; that the adoption of an exclusively secular system of education is opposed to the religious feeling of the nation, and would imperil the standard of morality. Mr. Birrell, in reply, expressed a hope that, when the Bill was issued, it might be found, to some extent at least, to contain terms that would be satisfactory to them.

It is devoutly to be wished that Mr. Birrell's hopes may be realised. But, if the new Bill is one intended to impose a State-made religion upon all public elementary schools, i.e., to make the State the Church so far as six sevenths of the child's life are concerned, it is doomed to encounter a most determined opposition. The Church has seldom been co-extensive with the State, even when the legal aids to conversion have been the rack, the thumb-screw, and the stake, and the more prosaic substitutes of to-day are scarcely better calculated to enforce uniformity. But speculation is rather beside the mark when the Prime Minister has promised to relieve our anxieties before Easter; we will wait until the Bill is before us, and then, to quote our own Bishop, "we shall see what we can welcome, what we do not welcome but can accept, and what, on principle, we shall resist."

ANCIENT HISTORY.

We must apologise for omitting to chronicle an interesting event which happened as long ago as January 30th. On the evening of that day Mr. Mustoe most kindly entertained the Vicar, Churchwardens, and Choir of Badsey (boys as well as men) to supper. Needless to say the supper was above criticism, and a thoroughly enjoyable evening was spent, most of the elders present contributing to the flow of harmony. Miss E. H. Mustoe sang two songs which were much appreciated. Mr. Mustoe's health was proposed by the Vicar, and accorded musical honours, the proposer pointing out that such hospitality as they had enjoyed was only typical of their host's generosity, the Church in Badsey boasting no more liberal supporter than Mr. Mustoe.

LAY REPRESENTATION ON CHURCH COUNCILS.

The Worcester Diocesan Conference has recently reformed its own constitution, and that of the Ruri-Decanal conferences in this diocese hitherto parochial representatives to both these bodies have been elected at the annual Easter Vestry. Although this method of election has in the majority of cases worked well, and the choice of electors has usually fallen on representative Churchmen, the system has logically nothing to recommend it, and it would be just as reasonable to confer on the Easter Vestry the privilege of sending representatives of the various dissenting bodies in a parish to their respective conferences. The reason is to be found in the fact that the parochial vestry is a meeting, not of Churchmen, but of ratepayers, and any ratepayer, be he Jew, Turk, Infidel, or Heretick, has the right to vote in all its proceedings.

To alter the constitution of vestries would require an Act of Parliament. The Ruri-Decanal and Diocesan Conferences are, however, voluntary associations, and their constitution may therefore be modified without reference to the State. A move has consequently been made to ensure the return to these bodies of persons essentially representative of the Church.

The annual election to the Ruri-Decanal Conference is to be made at a meeting specially convened for the purpose in each parish some time during March or April. Such meeting will be open to all adult male parishioners and all women ratepayers having the status of communicants, that is to say, who are either actual communicants or who have been baptised and confirmed and are admissible to Holy Communion, and who do not belong to any other religious body. A declaration to this effect is required to be openly

made or signed before anyone is allowed to take part in the proceedings. The number of representatives to be returned by each parish will depend upon the population according to the last available census. Parishes with a population under 500 will elect one, under 1,000 two, under 2,000 three, and under 3,000 four.

On the Diocesan Conference the Rural Deaneries only, and not individual parishes, are to directly represented. Each Ruri-Decanal Conference is to elect one quarter of the whole number of parochial representatives to serve on the Diocesan Conference.

Meetings in accordance with these new regulations will be held at Badsey on Easter Tuesday, and at Wickhamford on Thursday, April 19th. In each case the chair will be taken at 8 o'clock punctually, in order that the business of the meeting may be transacted before the hour fixed for the Easter Vestry.

EVESHAM COTTAGE HOSPITAL.

From the Annual Report recently published it is clear that this excellent institution has no more loyal supporters than the church-goers of Badsey and Wickhamford. It appears that on Hospital Sunday, 1905, Badsey Church alone contributed more than any other individual place of worship with the exception of Oat-street Chapel, where the sum of £8 14s. was collected for the Hospital. The combined contributions from our two churches, however, exceeded those from any other association of churches, amounting as they did to £9 5s. 7d., whilst All Saints and S. Lawrence (Evesham) came next with £8 15s.

In the list of country collections on Hospital Saturday Badsey-with-Aldington leads with £2 15s. 0½d., Wickhamford bringing the total up to £3 3s. 9d.

These facts are very gratifying. We must not, however, take too much credit to ourselves, for the subscription list only reveals the name of one local subscriber—who ought really to be credited to Evesham—and out of a total of 78 cases treated at the Hospital during 1905, no fewer than 9 came from our two parishes.

NOTES AND NEWS.

On Thursday, March 15th, the anniversary of Mr. Price's death, there was a celebration of Holy Communion at Badsey at seven o'clock, at which twelve communicated.

The Parish Library is now closed for the summer months.

The Vicarage Sewing Class has now finished work for the session. Miss Pendlebury has for sale a good supply of useful garments which she will be happy to show to prospective purchasers.

The Vicar has received £1 from Mrs. Bowden in aid of the Nursing Club. It will be remembered that the formation of a Nursing Fund was under discussion at the time of Mr. Price's death, and this £1 was sent by Miss Hunt to be applied to such a fund when formed.

The offerings at Badsey and Wickhamford on Good Friday will be given to the Bishop of Jerusalem's Fund. The duty of the Christian Church towards those "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came," is one plainly emphasized in the New Testament, but not always recognised. The conversion of the Jew was made by Christ a "first charge" on the energies of the Church, and although responsibility for the Jew rests upon all Christendom, England's share in that responsibility has been for years increasing; socially and politically England is the Jew's best friend, and spiritually the Church of England should be his best friend, too.

The Badsey Easter Vestry will be held in the Parish Room on Easter Tuesday, April 17th, at 8.30 p.m., and that for Wickhamford at the same hour on Thursday, April 19th, at the Manor House.

It is hoped that a dance may be arranged to take place in the Old School on Wednesday, April 18th.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER.

The hours of service will be as follows:—

	BADSEY.	WICKHAMFORD.
Monday, Tuesday	8 Holy Communion. 8 Evening Prayer and Reading	10 Morning Prayer and Reading
Wednesday and Thursday in Holy Week.		
Good Friday		
	8 Altar Prayers	9.30 Morning Prayer, Litany, and Altar Prayers
	11 Morning Prayer Litany, and Altar Prayers.	
	6.30 Evening Prayer and Sermon	3 Evening Prayer and Sermon
Easter Eve	8 Altar Prayers and Reading 8 Evening Prayer	10 Morning Prayer and Reading

Easter Day	6 Holy Communion 7.30 Holy Communion (Choral) 11.0 Morning Prayer and Litany 11.45 Holy Communion 6.30 Evening Prayer and Sermon	9.15 Morning Prayer and Litany 10 Holy Communion 3 Evening Prayer and Sermon
Monday & Tuesday in Easter Week	8 Holy Communion 8 Evening Prayer	10 Morning Prayer

THE REGISTERS.

BADSEY.—BAPTISM.

March 18th.—Ronald William Agg.

BADSEY.—BURIAL.

March 28th.—John Kyte, aged 85 years.

WICKHAMFORD.—BURIAL.

March 5th.—John Lawley, aged 66 years.

OFFERINGS FOR THE MONTH.

	BADSEY.			WICKHAMFORD.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
March 2.—Sick and Needy ...	0	2	10			
„ 4.—Sick and Needy ...	0	5	0	0	3	4
„ „ Church Expenses ...	0	11	5			
„ 11.—Sick and Needy ...	0	1	7½			
„ „ Church Expenses ..	0	13	0	0	2	10½
„ 15.—Sick and Needy ...	0	4	3			
„ 18.—Sick and Needy ...	0	1	8½	0	9	8½
„ „ Church Expenses ...	0	8	11			
„ 25.—Sick and Needy ...	0	1	10			
„ „ Church Expenses ...	0	12	8	0	6	4
	£3	3	3	1	2	3

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Careful Reader.—No. The exorbitant charge of 8s. for lamp-oil has no bearing whatever on the question of Tariff Reform. It was merely the ambition of that little figure "8" which prompted him to aspire to a rank in life, for which he was obviously unfitted. Had you considered the confusion which must have resulted from leaving him in that exalted position, you must have seen that he was entirely out of place.