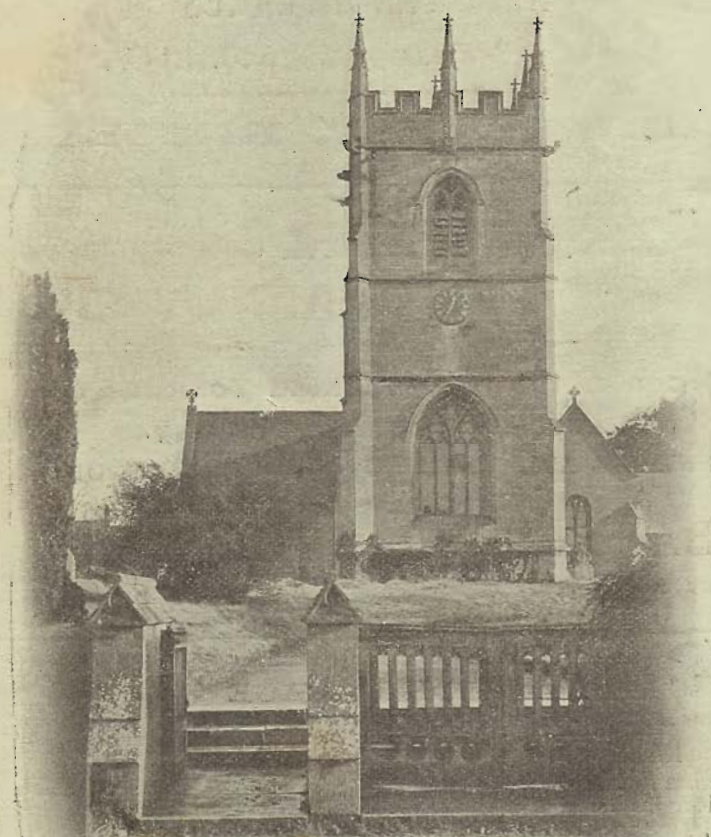


VOL. 9, NO. 5.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

MAY, 1906.

Badsey—with—Aldington and Wickhamford
Parochial Magazine.



EVESHAM :

W. & H. Smith Ltd., The Journal Press.

Badsey with Aldington & Wickhamford Parochial Magazine.

MR. BIRRELL'S BILL.

Mr. Birrell's speech in introducing his Bill has been described as witty, and so it certainly was. But the levity displayed by the Minister of Education in recommending a measure calculated to rob the Church of England of one of her most valuable assets was scarcely worthy of so serious an undertaking. Mr. Birrell's jesting was, however, not confined to his speech; there is at least one clause in the Bill quite as significant of "a pretty wit" as anything in the speech. Section 40, sub-section 2, states that "this Act may be cited as *the Education Act 1906*." Those who are in the habit of using words according to their accepted meanings would more reasonably describe the Bill as *The Nonconformists' Endowment Act, 1906*, and to have given it such a title would have been less misleading and more honest.

Briefly put, and leaving out of consideration the grant of Educational Home Rule to Wales, Mr. Birrell's Bill proposes to do two things—

(1) To compel the trustees of Voluntary Schools to surrender such schools to the Local Education Authority.

(2) To establish a state-made religion (Nonconformity) in all elementary schools.

As regards the first proposal, the promoters of the Bill earnestly hope that trustees of Voluntary Schools may be terrified into submission by the threat that on and after January 1, 1908, no untransferred Voluntary School will receive "a penny of public money from rates or taxes." Should this threat prove powerless to move the more conscientious to a breach of trust, the friends of religious liberty have devised a scheme for giving effect to their wishes. A Court of High Commission is to be established, and armed with singular and despotic powers to compel the surrender of any desirable school building. It is only to be expected that they will desire those schools for the efficient equipment of which Churchmen and other voluntarists have made the greatest sacrifices.

With reference to the second proposal, one need have no hesitation in describing the State-made religion which it is proposed to establish as Nonconformity. Though any mention of the Bible or of Jesus Christ has been skilfully avoided in this Bill which deals principally with the subject of religious instruction, Mr. Birrell tells us quite definitely that one plain object of the Bill is to establish throughout the length and breadth of our land a system of "simple Biblical instruction" to be given by teachers into whose belief no enquiry is to be made. Now in spite of Mr. Birrell's protests to the contrary this is practically the very essence of *modern* Nonconformity. It is not so theoretically, for every dissenting congregation professes adherence to certain doctrines, which are formulated in the Trust Deed of each particular chapel. But so long as a Dissenting minister is "acceptable" to his congregation he may practically teach what he

likes. So long as thirty years ago a leading Congregational minister said, "When you look over our denomination you find that many of our best and ablest ministers quietly ignore and *repudiate* the doctrines of their Trust Deeds. If we were to appoint a commission for the enforcement of our Trust Deeds we should empty nearly all the best-filled pulpits in the denomination." If Nonconformity thirty years ago meant the private and irresponsible interpretation of the Bible, it is quite certain that it approaches no nearer to-day to the Church's idea of the Christian religion. Archbishop Bourne has styled the proposed school religion Birreligion—its real name is Nonconformity.

So far from recognizing the right of parents to have their children taught their own faith in *all* elementary schools where such teaching can be provided, it is even denied them in transferred voluntary schools. An exception is made in cases where four-fifths of the parents desire their children to be taught the faith of those who founded the schools, *provided* there is school accommodation in the neighbourhood for the remaining fifth. That is to say, where Churchmen or Roman Catholics have built a school, if the Nonconformists of the district can succeed in sending one child for every four Church or Romish children, the intentions of founders are frustrated, and Nonconformity is established. We have heard much of the Nonconformist conscience, but it has never before been so nicely gauged: it is just four times as sensitive as any other. Moreover, Mr. Birrell's dictum, "All minorities must suffer; it is the badge of their tribe," is obviously not regarded by him as applicable to Nonconformists. In cases where they are Nonconformists who happen to be in the minority the privilege of suffering immediately becomes the honourable "badge" of the majority.

Such a Bill as the one now before the House of Commons would have done credit to its promoters in the worst days of religious intolerance. Should it be forced through the Lower House by the sheer weight of numbers, the House of Lords would be fully justified, both constitutionally and morally, in either rejecting it altogether or sending it back amended past recognition.

If ever there was a time when Churchmen were called upon to put religion before politics, it is the present time, and we hope that Badsey and Wickhamford Churchmen and Churchwomen will avail themselves of the opportunity shortly to be afforded them of publicly recording their disapproval of this unjust and tyrannous measure, promoted though it be by the leaders of the political party to which some of them belong.

EASTER.

Easter passed off very happily with good congregations and hearty services. The morning congregation at Wickhamford on Easter Day and the 11 o'clock congregation at Badsey were both

much larger than usual. The number of communicants at Wickhamford showed an increase on last year, but there was a slight falling off at Badsey. Though this latter fact is to be deplored, it was, we fear, to be expected, as the first Easter after a large confirmation usually indicates the high-water mark until the next confirmation. Our Easter communicants were, however, substantially in excess of those of all years previous to 1905, and quite a considerable number were unable to communicate through unavoidable causes. The numbers for the two parishes were:—

	Badsey.	Wickhamford.
Easter Day, 6	42	
„ 7.30	53	
„ 10		30
„ 11.45	20	
Easter Monday	1	
Low Sunday	10	
Private Communions	6	
	132	30
	162	

The singing at the choral celebration at Badsey was better than usual, and the musical portions at the other services were creditably rendered. The anthem was Elvey's "Christ being raised from the dead," the verse part being taken by Mrs. Hands, Miss L. McDonald, Mr. G. E. Jones and Mr. L. Sparrow. Want of space forbids the publication of the names of those who, as in former years, kindly assisted in cleaning the two churches, tidying the churchyards, and decorating the churches for the Easter Festival.

EASTER VESTRIES.

The Badsey Easter Vestry was held at the Vicarage on Easter Tuesday, at 8.30 p.m., the Vicar presiding. The accounts showed that the year's receipts for Church expenses amounted to £32 12s. 5d., made up as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Balance from 1904-5	0	3	11
Collections in Church	30	11	11
Rent of Church Land	1	10	0
Donation	0	5	0
Sundries	0	5	6
Total	£32	16	4

The year's expenditure amounted to £33 16s. 10½d. leaving an adverse balance of £1 0s. 6½d. But for several items of expenditure such as are not likely to appear again for some years, the balance would have been on the right side. Still, £33 is not an extravagant sum for the annual upkeep of a parish church, and the payment of clerk, sexton, and organist.

The year's collections for special purposes were as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Sick and Needy	9	7	4
Evesham Cottage Hospital	6	13	8
Missions to Seamen	1	8	5
Foreign Missions	2	0	2½
Missions to Jews	1	1	1
Vicar's Easter Offerings (in lieu of Dues)	2	19	0½
Total	£23	9	9

The total of the Church collections for the year was thus £54 1s. 7d.

The Vicar presented the following balance sheet of the Sick and Needy Fund:—

RECEIPTS.	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE.	£	s.	d.
Balance from 1904-5	2	6	0	Disbursements	11	10	9½
Collections 1905-6	9	7	4	Balance	0	2	6½
	£11	13	4		£11	13	4

The following elections were made: Churchwardens, Messrs. J. Sladden and H. Keen; sidesmen, Messrs. C. A. Binyon and A. Sparrow.

The Wickhamford Easter Vestry was held at the Manor House (by kind permission of Mr. Idiens) on Thursday, April 19th, at 8.30 p.m., the Vicar presiding. The accounts showed that the year's collections for Church expenses amounted to £8 7d. This was rather less than the previous year's total (£9 18s. 7d.) owing to the fact that during the winter months the offerings on alternate Sundays had been devoted to the Sick and Needy Fund. The year's expenses, however, amounted only to £7 10s. 1d., leaving a credit balance of 10s. 6d. The collections for Church expenses averaged 4s. 7d., which is 5d. in excess of the previous year's average.

The collections for special purposes were as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Sick and Needy	6	15	9
Evesham Cottage Hospital	2	11	11
Missions to Seamen	0	4	7
Foreign Missions	0	12	6
Missions to Jews	0	6	3
Vicar's Easter Offerings (in lieu of Dues)	1	0	5
	£11	11	5

The total amount collected in Wickhamford Church during the year thus amounted to £19 12s.

The Vicar stated that the Sick and Needy Fund stood as follows:—

RECEIPTS.	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE.	£	s.	d.
Balance from 1904-5	4	0	0	Disbursements	9	6	0
Collections, 1905-6	6	15	9	Balance in hand	1	9	9
	£10	15	9		£10	15	9

Messrs. J. Idiens and F. I. Hooper-Ingledeu were re-elected Churchwardens, and Messrs. G. Agg. J. Newman and R. Taylor, were re-appointed Sidesmen.

PAROCHIAL REPRESENTATIVES.

At meetings specially convened for the purpose, Messrs. Binyon and G. E. Jones were chosen to represent Badsey on the Ruri-decanal Conference, and Mr. Hooper-Ingledeu was elected to represent Wickhamford.

ASCENSION DAY.

On Ascension day (May 24th) the services will be:—

BADSEY.	WICKHAMFORD.
5, Holy Communion.	8, Morning Prayer.
11, Morning Prayer.	8.30, Holy Communion.
11.30, Holy Communion.	
8, Evening Prayer.	