



Anniversary Meeting of Salisbury National Schools

Our readers will observe by an announcement in another column, that the Anniversary Meeting of the Salisbury National Schools will be held on Sunday, the 30th, instead of on Thursday, the 27th instant, as previously announced, on which occasion a sermon will be preached in the Cathedral, by the Rev. W. E. Hony, Rector of Baverstock. We trust that the friends of this valuable Institution will make a point of attending the meeting, and that the result will be a valuable accession to the funds, which, we are sorry to learn, stand greatly in need of liberal support of a Christian, and consequently a benevolent public.

Salisbury and Winchester Journal, Monday, 24 September 1838

A notice of the anniversary of the Salisbury National Schools will be found in our second page. We were so delighted with the sermon preached on this occasion by the Rev. W. E. Hony, the Rector of Baverstock, that, having taken a few notes, we were induced to place a sketch of it before our readers. Should they in its perusal experience a tenth part of the gratification felt by us in listening to the original, we shall be more than recompensed for our trouble.

Anniversary Of The Salisbury National Schools

The anniversary of the Salisbury National Schools was held on Sunday, Sept. 30, on which occasion the children and their friends and patrons attended Divine worship in the Cathedral. We were happy to notice that the congregation was at once numerous and highly respectable, and we are hence led to hope that the services of that interesting day will have the effect of adding to the number of those who feel an interest in the prosperity of the schools, the funds of which have, unhappily, of late suffered a great and melancholy diminution. Previous to the discourse (of which we subjoin a sketch), the old Hundredth Psalm was solemnly and impressively sung by the children accompanied by the whole congregation – after which, the Rev. W. E. Hony advocated the claims of the Schools to public support in an able and deeply-interesting sermon, from Prov. i.7, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.”

The grand subject of education naturally divided itself into the three heads of Instruction, Discipline and Example. On the first head, that of Instruction, the Preacher spoke of the paramount importance of bringing up the young in the fear of the Lord, and making them good Christians, without which foundation every system of education must fail in its great object – adding, that if the education of the poor had failed in the effect, and in any instances experienced a want of success, it must be owing to the fact, that the vital truths of religion had not been taught, or, if taught, had been conveyed as mere matters of knowledge, and had not reached the heart. Those vital truths formed the foundation of the instruction afforded in the National Schools; and if in some few instances the task had been imperfectly accomplished, it must be attributed, not to the system itself, but to a want of piety or ability in the teacher. It should also be recollected, that the large masses of children brought together in populous towns did not present so favourable an opportunity for the successful issue of Christian and scriptural education as the smaller schools, since in the former there was not that connexion between the children and their teacher and Minister which existed in small parishes. The children were frequently withdrawn from school at an early age, and lost sight of in larger places – while in the smaller ones, although the children left, the Minister still kept up the connexion, which did not, and ought not to cease until he had brought them to Confirmation – and led them to the table of the Lord.

With regard to the second point – that of Discipline – he did not allude to punishment or severity, but to that constant check and superintendence, which suffered nothing to pass unnoticed – to that regular system which was established in most of the National Schools, the tendency of which was to fix the most valuable habits in the young, and which ought not to be confined merely to school hours, but to be carried on at home by parents, who possessed the best opportunities of ascertaining the tempers and inclinations of their children, and whose neglect of that important particular formed one of the chief causes of the failure of school discipline to effect the permanent improvement of the young.

This led him to the next point – Example – a matter in which school and home ought to be joint workers together, and the want of which was the cause why many were no better for what they had been taught. At school, the children were instructed never to swear or take God's holy name in vain – while at home, it but too frequently happened that the commandment was broken – that the most dreadful oaths and imprecations were uttered by those whose imperative duty it was to set a good example to their children – and that all was wrangling, bitterness, and wrath. Were the lessons taught at school to be exemplified by the conduct of the parents at home, they might hope to see a better result than at present to the efforts making for the education of the young. But the influence of example was not confined to home. When the children were placed out at service, it too often happened that all instruction ceased, and that masters and mistresses proved remiss in their duty to those committed to their charge, so that the children became careless and indifferent, and were at length brought to pay little or no heed to what they had been taught. The careful superintendence of kind and careful masters was a matter of great importance to the young, since, deprived of this, the temptations of the world often proved too powerful, and triumphed over the principles which had been taught at school. Since religion alone could give a child the chance of escaping the snares and temptations of the world, they ought to redouble their efforts for the diffusion of religious principles. Even should the children in after years unhappily swerve from the right path, an hour of reflection might and probably would arrive, in which they would call to mind the peaceful and virtuous lessons of their youth – and they would thus possess a great advantage over those whose minds, for want of instruction, presented only a melancholy blank.

The Preacher, in conclusion, uttered an affectionate exhortation to the children seated before him, reminding them, that if they were not better they would be worse for the instruction afforded to them, since they would have to give an account of the talents committed to their care. Education was worth nothing unless it made them religious. Let them, then, pray to God for his blessing on the instruction they received; let them call upon Him to teach them their duty, who had promised all things to sincere and fervent prayer. All could thus lend their aid, by imploring God's blessing on their charitable undertaking – since it was from that source alone that they could entertain a well-grounded and rational expectation of success.

The sum collected was £36 12s. 3d. The plates were held by Mrs. Wyndham and Miss Denison, supported respectively by I. H. Jacob and Wadham Wyndham, Esqs.

Salisbury and Winchester Journal, Monday, 8 October 1838