

FEATHER HILL SCHOOL, WOODHOUSE, LEEDS.

The annual meeting of the sick society connected with this school, was held on Wednesday evening last. The children belonging to the society had tea, and afterwards the parents and visitors, to the number of nearly 300, sat down to tea. The arrangements and the provision gave general satisfaction, and when tea was over, and the tables removed, the business of the evening was proceeded with. The Rev. JAMES FAWCETT, incumbent of Woodhouse, in the chair.

From the report of the society it appeared that the funds are in a very flourishing condition, the number of members being about 240, and the amount of sickness during the past year having been unusually small. The benefits of this society are two-fold, being designed both for the advantage of body and mind, the library, now containing between 400 and 500 volumes, having been associated with it, and one subscription giving the privilege of both.

The Rev. W. T. DIXON, incumbent of Buslingthorpe, pointed out the thankfulness which ought to arise from the small amount of sickness stated in the report, and strongly urged upon the parents who were in attendance their duty towards their children, that they should both by precept and example help the work which the teachers in the schools were so anxious to promote for the good of their children.

The bibles assigned to this school by the distributors of Lord Wharton's Trust were then given to the boys and girls who were entitled to them, after which

The Rev. EDWARD JACKSON, incumbent of St. James's, addressed the meeting, pointing out how all were in duty bound to use the talent which was committed to them for the good of others, as well as for their own. If any were disposed to plead "Am I my brother's keeper?" they might hereafter have the terrible answer, "Therefore the voice of thy brother's blood doth cry unto me from the ground."

The CHAIRMAN, having distributed rewards to the boys and girls who had done well in a recent examination, said that he would take that opportunity of making a few remarks on what had been said and done at a meeting held in Woodhouse a fortnight before. And he did so because for months past he had so frequently heard of the same things being said in reference to himself that he could not but suppose he was there personally alluded to. Though he was not so tender in his feelings as to care much about it, yet he thought it well to allude to the subject, not by way of apology for what he had said or done, but to make better known what were his views and feelings on the subject. (Hear, hear.) As to the Mechanics' Institution, it was his decided opinion that a well-managed Mechanics' Institution was very beneficial to any place in which it was established. This opinion was not hastily taken up, but adopted after careful examination and inquiry. For this reason, though his peculiar duties had prevented his hitherto taking any active part in the proceedings, he had become a member of the Leeds Institution, and done what he could to induce others of the clergy to adopt the same course. (Applause.) What was good for Leeds, it would be said, was good for Woodhouse; and that he thought so would appear from the fact that some time ago he signed a memorial asking for ground on which to build one for Woodhouse. Moreover, he had repeatedly expressed his willingness to use any influence he had to procure the use of the premises at Feather Hill, if they could be made available. But the case was very different, in his opinion, with the Temperance Society, or, as it was commonly called, the Teetotal Society. (Hear, hear.) For many years he had watched its operations, and read many of its publications. He had in its early years in Leeds attended its meetings, and had been brought to the conclusion that he could not conscientiously and consistently give it his support. (Hear, hear.) Some might ask why? He would tell them. If any thought it was from a wish that men should indulge in drink, they were much mistaken. (Applause.) None would more earnestly press upon all working men never to enter the door of a public house. Further, if any persons felt they were peculiarly in danger from the snare of strong drink, his advice to such would be never on any occasion to touch it, lest the temptation should be too strong for them; and he could not see any objection in such a case to persons binding themselves by a vow or pledge that they never would taste it. But when men went beyond this, and prescribed rules not only for themselves but for others, a rule also which was nowhere found in the Word of God, he thought they were wrong. He could not see that they had any right to pronounce all to be committing sin who did not take their rule as a guide. (Applause.) There were one or two things connected with this subject which had weight in his mind, and having entered upon it he would advert to them. It appeared to him that there was a great danger of giving more weight to a pledge made to man than to the solemn pledge resting on all Christians, and which is made to God. Moreover, the latter is to renounce *all* sin, and he feared it might in many instances be practically superseded by the pledge to man, to forsake *one* sin. (Hear, hear.) There was also great danger arising from the spirit of confidence in human strength being encouraged. We are taught in scripture that he who trusteth his own heart is a fool, that he who thinketh he standeth should take heed lest he fall, that we can only be preserved from falling by the power of God, by his grace given to us; and he could not but tremble for any who depended on their own strength, or any human strength, to keep them from falling into drunkenness or any other sin. He could not but fear that plans so at variance with the spirit of the gospel would be so frustrated that it would be shewn how vastly the counsels of God were wiser than the counsels of man. Some years ago, the secretary of a society of this kind when urging the chairman to take a part in the proceedings, had said to him that the temperance society had done what the gospel of Christ had been unable to do. This and similar remarks had made him feel that it was assuming the position of a rival of the gospel, and as such he could not give it any countenance. He had often felt that it was revolting to Christian feelings to see men proclaimed in handbills, and parading themselves on platforms, as reformed drunkards. If there was a right feeling and true repentance, instead of coming forward to amuse an audience, such men would rather walk before God in deep humiliation and sorrow of heart for their grievous sin. These reasons, the Chairman said, weighed in his mind so that he could not join or support the society, he had therefore long ceased to do so, but he had never taken the position of an active opponent, nor was it his wish or intention; but there was one thing not necessarily connected with it, but acted upon here, which he had opposed whenever he had an opportunity, and would continue to oppose, he meant the Sunday classes for instruction in arithmetic and similar subjects, classes professedly formed for keeping men from the public houses, but yet held when the public houses were closed, and places of worship all open. This was so contrary to the command to keep that day holy, that he would strongly protest against it; yet he had great hopes of better things. It had been stated that nothing was yet settled as to Sunday classes; there was reason to believe that many of the managers were anxious to do away with what was objectionable. The opinions of those who had largely contributed, and would not have done so had they known of the Sunday classes, were entitled to consideration, and he hoped would have weight. The Chairman, therefore, concluded with the expression of a strong hope that such plans would be adopted as would promote peace and goodwill, and remove what at present he could not but look upon as a grievous blot on the new institution.

Mr. F. A. PAYN, in an earnest speech, supported the views of the chairman, and cautioning against the dangers of infidelity, illustrated his arguments by the case of one whom he had known, a respectable hard-working man, a teetotaler, who gloried in his teetotalism, but who had nevertheless been drawn aside, from not having the protection of religious principle, he being an unbeliever, and consequently he became a drunkard, and miserably so as such.

The CHAIRMAN then, at the request of Mr. Campbell, explained that the Mechanics' Institution and the Teetotal Society, in Woodhouse, are distinct, being managed by separate committees, though using the same premises. He then called upon

Mr. G. LUCAS, who wished to make some remarks. He thought misapprehension might arise from some things which had been said by Mr. Payn, as if teetotalism necessarily produced, or tended to produce, infidelity, which he strongly and earnestly deprecated. He also put it to the chairman, whether it would not have been better to warn the young persons present against drunkenness. Mr. Lucas also remarked, that though some persons might glory in, and trust to their teetotalism, and so not look to religious principle, it did not follow that such was a part of the system.

Mr. PAYN explained that he did not find fault with persons being teetotalers, but for resting satisfied with it when they did so; as far as they were endeavouring to counteract the dreadful sin of drunkenness, he heartily wished them success.

The CHAIRMAN, in reference to Mr. Lucas's remarks, said that he did constantly warn against drunkenness, but not against that only; he warned men that no drunkard could enter the kingdom of heaven, and asserted that we are bound by a solemn vow to renounce *that* and all other sin. As to any remarks he had made, he was jealous of any other strength being trusted to than the grace of God, because he was sure that no other would be sufficient. (Applause.)

In conclusion, the Chairman alluded to some strange perversions which had been circulated in Woodhouse of remarks which he had made on Mormonism last year, and requested that if any thing he had said was repeated, it might be as he had said it.

The thanks of the meeting were given to Mr. Hubblethwaite for his very valuable services in the school in the superintendence, Mr. H. being about to take a different department.

During the evening Mr. Rider, Mr. Wornald, and other singers enlivened the entertainment by pieces of sacred music between the speeches, and the party broke up about ten o'clock, much gratified.