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Kilskeery Annual Prize-Giving



Primary school singing

The annual prize-giving for Kilskeery Sabbath school, children's meeting and Christian day school was attended by some 170 adults and children on Friday 23rd January. Amongst those attending were some first-time visitors as well as a large turn out of parents and friends. The pupils from our Christian school sang some psalms and hymns under the direction of Mrs. Ruth Daly and Mrs Eileen Wilson and the organist, Vice-Principal, Miss Amanda Dane. The Principal, Mrs. Ann Foster, gave her annual report on the activities of the school year. The preacher was Rev. Ivan Foster, school Administrator.

After welcoming those in attendance, Mrs Foster expressed her appreciation for their support and prayers. Referring to Pslam 112: 1-3, she commented on the blessing that comes upon children whose parents fear and delight in the Lord. She thanked all the members of staff who had faithfully continued to fulfil their duties in the classroom and in the school office. Congratulations were offered to Mr. Selwyn Daly on successfully completing five years of Open University study.

Three new pupils were enrolled in September 2003 but due to six pupils having completed their education, enrolment has fallen to 52 pupils. However, the number of pupils being home-schooled, who receive notes and guidance from our school, has increased by three to a total of twelve.

Pupils in the Upper Secondary benefitted from work experience in various locations and business firms. The school is grateful to those employers who accommodate our pupils and provide a worthwhile work programme for them. These include the Erne and City Hospitals, Enniskillen Museum, Crossgar Pharmacy, J & R Electrical, McMurray Joinery as well as local firms such as SwiftSoft Computers, Dunlop Kitchens, Brown's Agricultural Engineering, Ann Street Dental Practice and Maguire Car Body Repairs. Mention has also to be made of the regular visits of a group of pupils, led by Mrs. Eileen Wilson, to Coolaness Nursing Home to sing hymns to the residents.

Inspection

The school was inspected by the Department of Education Inspectorate and received a very favourable report. We were pleased with a change of attitude toward our school as the visiting inspectors were most helpful and unobtrusive, unlike some previous inspectors who were obviously antagonistic.

School trips continued to enhance the educational experiences of the pupils. Visits were made to the UCAS Careers Convention, QUB's Open Day, Glambia creamery and Enniskillen Post Office sorting office. In March, a five-day combined Christian schools trip was made to France, visiting the 1st World war Somme battlefield area, the Sea-Life Centre in Boulogne and Paris. Results in external examinations continued to be good, with pupils gaining better grades than forecast. John Gray, who received good grades at 'A' Level is



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

continuing his studies at Coleraine University. Four of our pupils are combining work with further study and two have returned to school to study 'AS' Level. The school shield for best GCSE Candidate has been awarded to Stephen Crawford who gained 1 A*, 3 A, 3 B and 1C grades. The Melanie Scott Memorial Cup for Maths has been awarded to Melissa Daly who scored a total of eight B grades. Thanks were expressed to David McConnell who made and donated a beautiful display cabinet for this cup.

Pupils who gained GOML, Clait, IBT Text Processing and Word Processing certificates, Scripture Recitation and Spelling Prizes and Sports Trophies were also congratulated.

Sermon

After the Principal's report, Rev. Ivan Foster preached from Psalm 144:11-15 on the subject: "The godly parents' desire for their offspring and the only means by which it may be achieved."

Mr. Foster said that it is right to harbour ambitions for our children. Though we must be sure to harbour those ambitions which will be owned of God. He continued: "Here in this psalm, David the king outlines in prayer his desires for his people, his national family. What honourable desires they are. Would we had leaders who longed for similar blessings upon Ulster. Let us place on record the fact that as we meet tonight, we have leaders who are more like David than those we have had to endure for many a long year. For that we give God all the honour. May He strengthen the hands of our leaders and grant them grace to trust Him rather than the strategems of politics for good success in our Province. These verses have much to say to us regarding Christian Education.

I. Here are godly parents' ambitions for their children.

That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace, verse 12. These two analogies sum up what all Christians should seek for in their children.

- A.** Youth is the time for growth. They will grow according to the influences upon them. Whose hand guides your child?
- B.** Youth is the time for establishment. The word plant, means that fixed or secured. It is the time for the minds and hearts to be formed.
- C.** Daughters are to be as corner stones. Unifying and strengthening influence.
- D.** They are to be polished. Polishing brings out the inner beauty of the stone. So is true human beauty, 1 Peter 3:3-4. (Ps 45:13.) Note girls, it is polishing not painting!!

II. For such ambitions to be accomplished a deliverance must take place.

Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood, verse 11. David could see his godly ambitions accomplished for his children, only if there was a removing of the power and influences of the ungodly from the life of his children.

- A.** We live in a world dominated by the hand of strange children. By that we mean that in-



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

fluences and notions utterly alien or strange to the mind of God dominate the thinking of men around us. As John states it in 1 John 2:16.

B. We live in a world where the lie pre-dominates. Verse 11. We are surrounded by the lie. It is by the lie that men propagate their alien philosophy and thinking. The hand of the wicked would enforce the lie upon us.

C. This deliverance must be wrought by the Lord. If we are to see our children grow as we should wish, then they must be delivered out from under the evil influences of the evil world around us. Even David, a sovereign king could not order his kingdom so of himself. Only God can create and sustain such a community as we seek in the midst of the instinctive opposition of the world. This He has promised to do. All this argues for Christian education. State education is very much under the influence of the lie. None can gainsay that. Its philosophy, its curriculum, its textbooks are very much the fruit of those who are antagonistic toward the gospel of Christ. Their religion, at best, is that of ecumenism. There is little if any place for the great doctrines of grace within the state system of education. Indeed, even Christian teachers are strictly forbidden to evangelise. There is no place for a call to repentance and faith.

III. It should be noted that this deliverance from the rule of the wicked is the forerunner of greater blessing.

The rest of the psalm consists of a series of blessings anticipated as flowing from the deliverance sought in verse 11. The five-fold list of blessings starts with our children and ends with our streets. How powerfully this verse should speak to us today in our land of "troubled streets!" It is only under this deliverance that true prosperity, peace and happiness may be enjoyed. How triumphantly the psalm concludes. "Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD." The first step toward that happiness must involve the promotion of Christian education. May Christian parents everywhere come to this psalm and learn that lesson that David obviously had learned and may their children benefit from them learning that lesson.

A tape of the sermon is available from our school, price £2 post paid.