

Presentation to Rev. E. Inman 1882

On Wednesday, a considerable number of the inhabitants of this little village met their late esteemed Rector at the school room to present him with an address neatly engrossed on vellum by a parishioner, to the following effect:

Presented to the Rev E Inman, M.A. by the inhabitants of West Knoyle and School district on his departure, in grateful recognition of his arduous efforts in providing a new church and school, as well as of his kindly ministrations amongst them during the past 10 years With this was a clock of novel and elegant design, bearing the inscription: Presented to the Rev E Inman, M.A., by the inhabitants of West Knoyle and School district, in affectionate remembrance of his ministrations amongst them during the past 10 years, August 1882

Mr R C R Godwin was elected to take the chair. In the course of his remarks he spoke of the unhappy condition of church matters in the parish when they had no resident clergyman, having no house for him to live in. Even until Mr Inman came on the scene they had a church that was a bye word in the diocese and a reproach to the parish, but, thanks to his arduous efforts, difficulties had been overcome that few men would have cared to encounter. Money came in from unexpected sources, and the result was that they had now a church that was an ornament to the parish and a fitting memento of so good a man, and it would stand for ages to remind them and their children's children that this work was executed under Mr Inman's regime.

The school they were now in had been built during the same period. There was a time when there was no school worthy of the name, but there came the Education Act, which said, "You shall have one". This question of compulsion, offensive as it must have been, was pleasantly got over by this same good friend of theirs, who set about raising the money to meet the requirements of the Act, and although many of them had been called upon to make sacrifices rather than have a School Board, with all its expensive belongings, they had a school which was a credit to the parish and a boon to the parents in the district, and which had been maintained at considerable cost to him and a comparatively trifling cost to the ratepayers.

The Chairman here, in presenting the clock, said it had never been his lot to meet with so true and sympathising a friend as Mr Inman, and he had no reason to suppose but that they had each in their several positions had the opportunity of appreciating those qualities which had endeared him to them all. If Mr Inman were not present, language would fail him to express what he would say of him, but this he would say, "We shall not look upon his like again". The Rev E Inman, in an affecting speech, thanked his dear friends for their beautiful, costly, and useful present, and said he looked upon it almost with a feeling of regret, knowing how many amongst them must have denied themselves in order to give him pleasure, but he accepted it as a token of their kindly feeling and love towards him. He felt very deeply on the subject of leaving them, so his words would necessarily be few.

On his return to Wilton from his first visit here he had been asked how he could face the many difficulties which he would have to encounter before the parish would be in a condition in which any clergyman or churchman would like to see it. His answer was, "They are a most loveable people; I don't mind what I brave if only the people work with me". In all the 10 years of his residence here, the people had been his friends, working with him and aiding him in building church and school, so that he hadn't to work alone. Some of his hearers might wonder at his leaving when he felt such love towards them, and so he would speak to them on a subject which he had hesitated to make public before. He had looked round on his home and felt what peace, rest and comfort were his, and thought he had more of the blessings of this life than perhaps a minister of God should have, that his pilgrimage was altogether too smooth and pleasant, so he had made the subject one of deep and earnest prayer, and had asked God if He had any more arduous work for him to do to give it to him. If ever God's providence had ordered man's work his had been pointed out to him at Gillingham.

For his own pleasure, he would a thousand times rather have stayed amongst them. He then discoursed on the words of St Paul, 1. Corinthians, iii, "Everyman's (that is minister's) work shall he tried by fire, to prove whether it be of gold, silver, and precious stones, or wood, hay and stubble". He rested with the people among whom he had laboured to prove which his work had been, for they would be tried by the fire of temptation, and their actions would show whether his foundation had been made of gold, silver, and precious stones (things which endure the flame), or wood, hay and stubble (which are easily consumed by fire), and whether he should receive an overwhelming reward. In conclusion he once more thanked them for their beautiful present subscribed. Under the address were 72 names, practically representing the entire parish.

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