

neither satisfies nor respects the consciences of any; but on the contrary sows the seed in the youthful mind of doubt and prejudice, which, if not checked, may in maturer years, produce the fruits of apostacy and infidelity! But I must not, in justice to the Common School system, fail in conclusion to notice one other regulation with regard to religious education from the Council of Public Instruction.

Passing on from the regulations already examined we find no alteration or amendment until 1855: and on the 13th Feb. of that year a minute was published recommending the "opening and closing of the schools by reading a portion of Scripture and by Prayer." This was a step in the right direction; but owing to the differences on religious matters, it has only been partially adopted. Trustees in my own superintendency and elsewhere have assured me that in the face of prevailing prejudices they have been deterred from carrying out so good an arrangement. The regulation moreover upon which we have already dwelt respecting *religious recitations* has now, for whatever reason, been expunged; and the only substitute is a change in the religious *Instructors*.

In the year 1857 we thus find by a minute dated 22nd April:

"That in order to correct misapprehensions, and define more clearly the rights and duties of Trustees and other parties in regard to religious instruction in connection with the Common Schools, it is decided by the Council of Public Instruction, that the *Clergy* of any persuasion, or their *authorized representatives*, shall have the right to give religious instruction to the pupils of their own Church, in each Common School house, at least once a week, after the hour of four o'clock in the afternoon; and if the Clergy of more than one persuasion apply to give religious instruction in the same school house, the trustees shall decide on what day of the week the school house shall be at the disposal of the clergyman of each persuasion, at the time above stated. But it shall be lawful for the Trustees and Clergymen of any denomination to agree upon any other hour of the day at which such Clergyman or his authorized representative may give religious instruction to the pupils of his own church, provided it be not during the regular hours of the school."

1. The first objection to this regulation is of the same nature as that made to the concluding part of a former one, namely that the time appointed for religious instruction "must not be during the regular school hours." This gives *religion* an *inferior* place in the daily course of instruction. It almost discards in fact the *religious element* altogether.

2. Again, the appointment of 4 o'clock as the hour for such in-