

but also because in the long years preceding his active ministry,—the silent years at Nazareth—he met and mingled with men and women in that great school which we call the school of experience. Are we in any way belittling him as “the Son of God with power,”

if we assume that he “knew what was in man” in part, at least, because he used, as no one before or since has used, those opportunities for mental and spiritual enrichment which daily life brings to us all?

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## Class Instruction and Class Activity

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Our ideals for the Sunday School are growing. The time was, not as long ago, when most churches were content to gather their pupils each Sunday, to be instructed for a brief period in the Uniform Lesson which the International Lesson Committee had promulgated for that day, and which the teachers had studied together at some time during the previous week. The work of the Sunday School was conceived to be that of instruction merely; and the Biblical material selected for this purpose was ungraded.

To-day, the phrase “religious education” has become current among us. It stands for two ideas that are ultimately one: for the inclusion of religion in the education of our children, and for the use of educational methods in the propagation of religion from generation to generation. Churches have come to see that they have an educational as well as a religious function in the community; and that there is a sense in which they share with the public school a common task. So we have come to look upon the Sunday School as the church's school of religious education, and to expect it to match up, at least fairly well, with the public school.

The application of educational principles and standards to the work of the Sunday School, in our day, has brought about expansion in several directions. It has introduced graded lessons and graded departmental organization. It has brought better methods of instruction, and has encouraged initiative and experiment in the field of religious pedagogy. It has secured new buildings and more adequate material equipment. It has enriched the curriculum by the addition of such extra-Biblical material as is needed to fit young people to know and to do God's will in these days of world-wide missionary effort, of vast social problems and of possible social regeneration that may bring the world measurably nearer to the Kingdom of God. It has helped us to realize the necessary place of activity, as well as instruction, in the educational work of the Sunday School.

Education in general is by activity quite as much as by instruction, by training in habit as well as by the acquiring of ideas. Indeed, ideas that come to us, just by hearsay are never quite as clear as those that are wrought out in active experience; and instruction

seldom “takes” that does not rouse the pupil to some form of activity. This is pre-eminently true in the field of moral and religious education. We gain religion, not just by hearing and talking, reading and writing, about it, but by living as children of God. We become Christians, not merely by comprehending Christian doctrines, but by doing Christian deeds in Jesus' way.

But, it may be answered, this is nothing new. The church has long recognized this principle in dealing with its children as well as with older folk. Within the last half century, especially, there have sprung up within and about our churches a great many organizations for the training of children and young people in wholesome living and in the attitudes and habits of Christian service. Boys' clubs and girls' clubs of various sorts, gymnasium classes and athletic teams, Junior, Intermediate and Senior Societies of Christian Endeavor and other young people's societies of various names, temperance societies, Bands of Hope, Bands of Mercy, Boys' Brigades, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, Pathfinders, Bluebirds, Knights of King Arthur, Queens of Avalon, King's Daughters, mission study groups, mission bands and, missionary societies of various ages—the list might be multiplied almost indefinitely.

All this is true. The rise and prosperity of these organizations is evidence, on the one hand of the inadequacy of the Sunday School's policy of mere instruction and on the other hand of the church's recognition of the principle of activity. These organizations have met real needs, and they have rendered, and are rendering, splendid service to the children and young people of this land, and through them to the kingdom of God.

But the time has come to take the next step; and churches everywhere are beginning to take it. There are limitations in the common situation where the Sunday School does nothing but instruct and the active Christian life of its pupils is shaped by these other organizations. One is, that in some churches these organizations operate more or less independently, without relation to the Sunday School, and with policies and programmes determined far more by their district, state and national affiliations than by their place within the local church's educational system. Another