

"Many other children would have no other opportunity of being taught the elementary doctrines of Christianity, as they do not attend Sunday schools, and their parents, in the opinion of a number of witnesses, are quite unable to teach them.

(i) No efficient substitute for the system of utilizing school staff and the hours of school attendance for religious instruction.

"But those who contemplate this change and advocate the exclusion of religious teaching from all public elementary schools state that they look to supply the void thus created by other and, as they think, by better means. It is not asserted by them with much confidence that the duty of educating children religiously can be wholly left to their parents. Abundant evidence from all classes of witnesses is before us, tending to show that many parents are unable to undertake this branch of their children's education, even if they were willing, and that if it were left to them it would be omitted.

"We concur with those witnesses who gave it as their opinion that without the ordinary school staff it would be impossible to give efficient religious instruction on any large scale, to large bodies of children. The clerk of the school board of Liverpool expressed his conviction that ministers of all denominations would be quite inadequate to deal with the instruction of that vast and growing population, and that to forbid religious instruction during the regular hours of school would be most disastrous. * * *

"But after hearing all that could be said for it, we cannot recommend the plan thus suggested of religious instruction to be given by voluntary teachers, on the school premises, out of school hours, for the success of which, even those most anxious to try the experiment will not be answerable. It would, in our opinion, be no efficient substitute for the existing system of utilizing the school staff and the hours of school attendance for this purpose, a system which has taken deep root in the country, and appears to give general satisfaction to parents."

(j.) Greater support should be given by the state to the moral element of training in English schools.

"As to the moral training given in the schools, the opportunities permitted to Her Majesty's inspectors of inquiring into the efficiency of moral training have been under the existing arrangements necessarily limited."

"We are strongly of opinion that much greater support should be given by the state to the moral element of training in our schools. * * * We recommend therefore that general fundamental and fixed instructions should be laid down as to moral training, making it an essential condition of the efficiency of a public elementary school."

"And as we have found with regret that in recent years this branch of the inspec-

tor's duty has not received the attention it deserved, we therefore think it necessary to make it a distinct recommendation that it should be considered the first duty of Her Majesty's inspectors to inquire into and report upon the moral training."

"After hearing the arguments for a wholly secular education, we have come to the following conclusions:

"(1.) That it is of the highest importance that all children should receive religious and moral training. (2.) That the evidence does not warrant the conclusion that such religious and moral training can be amply provided, otherwise than through the medium of elementary schools. (3.) That in schools of a denominational character, to which parents are compelled to send their children, the parents have a right to require an operative conscience clause, so that care be taken that the children shall not suffer in any way in consequence of their taking advantage of the conscience clause. (4.) That inasmuch as parents are compelled to send their children to school it is just and desirable that, as far as possible, they should be enabled to send them to a school, suitable to their religious connections or preferences. (5.) We are also of opinion that it is of the highest importance that the teachers who are charged with the moral training of the scholars should continue to take part in the religious instruction. We should regard any separation of the teacher from the religious teaching of the school, as injurious to the moral and secular training of the scholars."

May I respectfully ask those who might read the above quotations to pause over the and say if really they could consider as unprogressive, or unreasonable, or adverse to the enlightenment of the growing generation, the men who conscientiously entertain the same views as the Royal Commission with regard to religious instruction in the elementary schools.

4.—CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.

Part VII. of the final report consists exclusively of a summary of leading conclusions and recommendations. It seems that the convictions expressed and the conclusions arrived at, as quoted above from Part IV. of the report, could be considered as sufficient recommendation on the part of the commission. The distinguished commissioners judged otherwise, and wishing to see their views carried into effect, they thought proper to have Part VII. of their report, exclusively filled up with their conclusions and recommendations. Some are mere repetitions of what had been said before; nevertheless, the commissioners attached such importance to them that they did not shrink from repeating them again.

They brought the same conclusions and recommendations from number 1 to 198. I will select out of them thirty numbers

which
certain
schools
number
follow
fully
be for
to p

fixing
teach
mine
appli
not
concl
with

supp
ture
lent

volu
to e
teach
grad
agen
that

faci
er o
mer
that
or n
show

low
tion
ligi
who

the
sch
stru
the
qui
una
iou
hig
the

the
fav
in
ed
vol
cov
ou
tha
me
th
ch

ca
of
ar
sic

w
to
li
ta
B