

about the young man's feet, the meshes of which it was difficult to escape, and if he got clear of that there was another net, the net of God's judgments. Gloomier and gloomier grew the prospect as the preacher went on. To one who had not for many years heard such a presentation of Satan's all-mastering and next to omnipotent and omnipresent power, it seemed that the only fit conclusion would be for the congregation, if they believed these things, to shrink away in silent terror, for the world was no longer God's but the devil's. They did not do this, however. On the contrary they stood up and sang with great heartiness and vim, that bright and hopeful hymn of the Anglican church:

Brightly gleams our banner
Pointing to the sky,
Waving wanderers homeward
To their home on high.

And Mr. Jordan sang with as much heartiness as anybody else. Looking back on his sermon I think it shows that he is a master of the art of preaching. All that he says is put clearly, decisively and definitely. There is no muddle. Every word has its due place and every word tells. The consequence is that his discourses are easily remembered. He is deeply imbued with the traditional theology of his communion, and it is not likely that any doubt will be expressed as to his complete orthodoxy. A kindly man and a strong, who finds in the Bible a sufficient rule of faith and practice, and who is entirely unswayed by the speculations of these later days, and who will not swerve from declaring what he believes to be the "whole counsel of God."

The congregation, though not crowded, was large and eminently respectable, people of a high and intelligent type, who are accustomed, to judge from their appearance, to plain living and high thinking. Living the higher life of self-restraint and faith in God leaves its mark on the outward appearance of men and women just as every other sort of life does, and you may remark that as you look around the pews of the St. James Square Presbyterian Church. There is no ornate singing—the quaintly paraphrased psalm at the beginning of the service, and plain, old-fashioned, but well beloved hymns, with a voluntary and interlude on the organ while the collection is being taken up, make up the musical part of the service. The church is a handsome building and the acme of compact comfort. There is but little colour in its decorations, but it has much architectural beauty and fitness. The thought occurs to you that it was designed by an architect who loved gothic, but had been brought up a Presbyterian. I went to hear Mr. Jordan preach there some time ago, on a Sunday morning, but his place was occupied by a stranger. In the pew before me, on that occasion, I noticed Sir Oliver Mowat, who, I believe, attends this church.

J. R. N.

Religious Education in Schools.—II.

THE advantages of giving religious education in separate or denominational schools are obvious. There a definite creed can be taught to those who are willing to accept, to children whose parents consider themselves bound to have their offspring instructed in the faith to which they themselves adhere. Could not this system be further extended? This is the question which naturally occurs to the mind. And some proposals were made, a year or two ago, in the Anglican Synod, with a view to obtaining for members of the Church of England in Canada the same privileges which are enjoyed by members of the Church of Rome. There is very little doubt that if Anglicans could agree among themselves, and if they were as resolute in demanding denominational education as the Romans have been, they could get it. But these conditions are not likely to be fulfilled. The Church of England boasts of her comprehensiveness, and she has some right to do so; but she must also pay the penalty. She has "the faults of her qualities."

Then, with regard to the other reformed communions, there is not the least prospect of their demanding or wishing for separate schools; since the great mass of them—all, in fact, except the Unitarians, and perhaps the Baptists—would be contented with the same kind of school, their religious opinions not being so far different as to necessitate separate instruction for their children.

Since, therefore, there is small prospect of the extension of the denominational system, the question comes as to what should be done. That this subject is worth considering few

will deny. Doubtless there are many quite convinced that nothing more can be done. There are even some few who believe that nothing more ought to be attempted. But few, at least, can be satisfied with the present state of religious knowledge among the young. The condition of things is better here than in the United States. Of this statement the truth seems to be absolutely certain, judging from the testimonies which come to us from men of all shades of opinion in the American Republic. But very few will allege that the knowledge of the Christian religion possessed by the children attending our public schools is anything like satisfactory. Most of them do not possess a superficial acquaintance even with New Testament history, to say nothing of Old.

Now, it can hardly be contended that the history of the origin of the Christian religion is a matter of indifference. Shall children be taught the story of the American Revolution, and the English Revolution, and the Great Rebellion, and learn nothing of events which not merely revolutionized states and governments, but which lie at the foundation of all reforms and beneficial revolutions? Christianity is part of the history of the world, and the most important part, and should certainly not be ignored. Something more should be done, therefore, than is now done, and it should be done more regularly and systematically. But how?

In the first place, it is quite obvious that no one would wish to impose religious instruction of any particular kind, or at all, on children whose parents disapproved of it. But it is equally apparent that such children should be put to study some other subject during the time of religious instruction. The children who are taught the elements of Christianity should not be made to feel that the hour or half hour appropriated for this purpose is taken out of their play-hours, and that there is a penalty to be paid for being a Christian.

In the second place, the time given to religious instruction should be at the beginning of the day, in the first half hour of the morning's work, and not at the end of the forenoon or afternoon when the child is fagged and his attention must be languid. On every account this is desirable; not only because of the freshness of the children's minds, at the beginning of the day, but because the very contact with such subjects may be expected to prepare the scholar for more conscientious attention to the work to be done afterwards.

So far, perhaps, there need be no great difficulty. But it is different when we begin to ask what shall we teach, and how shall it be taught? Let us begin with the Bible, and herein with the "Scripture Readings for use in the Public and High Schools of Ontario." The revised edition of this book now lies before the writer; and it is not only better than the first edition particularly in giving references to the books from which the extracts are made, but it is a very good book indeed. It is absurd to complain that it has extracts only, and not the whole Bible. Every church follows the same course. The English Church and the Roman Church have selections in their office books; and the communions which have no Liturgies practically follow the same course. Anyone who really knew the contents of this volume would have a very good knowledge of the Bible.

The book, however, is a somewhat costly one; and therefore it is suggested that only the teachers should have copies; and that the children should be provided with copies of the complete Bible, which can now be had for almost nothing. If any human being is so constituted that it would hurt his conscience to have Bibles supplied free, as grammars and geographies are supplied, it would be quite easy to provide copies of the sacred volumes at the expense of the churches.

But now we come to a more difficult question, and perhaps it will be necessary to return to this again. Few will be contented with the mere reading of Scripture extracts, and how is it possible to supply instruction in doctrine? Different methods have been suggested, all presenting certain difficulties. But it is not proved that these difficulties cannot be surmounted.

In the first place, it might be possible to draw up a statement of Christian doctrine which no ordinary Christian would object to, and the extraordinary one might be provided for by a conscience clause. The Nicene creed will be accepted by all Christians, Roman Catholic and Reformed, except Unitarians. And, if that were not approved, some other Formula of Concord might be agreed upon.