

that their children should receive religious instruction at the hands of persons in whom they had confidence.

DISTINCTIVE CHURCH OF ENGLAND TEACHING.

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Distinctive teaching is of course necessary if we wish to hand down to future generations the faith so dear to our own hearts.

In this age of inquiry and progress, Churchmen must have an intelligent conception of the fundamental principles of their religion; otherwise they cannot keep abreast with the times, or hope to secure the adhesion of the masses. I can quite understand that while all of us agree about the necessity of distinctive teaching, yet we are often perplexed as to the method we should pursue in order to glean from our work practical and desirable results. Any one at all acquainted with the present state of the Church of England in Canada must, I think, admit that it occupies, in some respects at least, a rather unfavorable position. So little distinctive Church teaching has been given in the past that many of the present generation, more especially in the country districts, have no real knowledge of or love for the Anglican Church. It is no easy matter to remedy this deplorable state of affairs.

It is all very well to say, we can educate the present generation through our Sunday-School agencies, and through the instrumentality of preaching, and thereby soon bring to an end this sad state of indifference and neglect. We might do so if we had only indifference and ignorance to contend with; but the question becomes very complicated when we reckon up the open opposition many members of our own Church manifest towards clearly defined Church teaching. One great difficulty that presents itself is the radical differences of opinion that exist among clergymen as to what is important and distinctive. What one clergyman emphasizes perhaps his successor may not even regard with toleration. I think the ordinary Church of England layman is often distracted by the contradictory teaching of different clergymen, and consequently loses confidence in his spiritual teachers. Before our teaching can be given with the same effectiveness as in the Baptist or Methodist body, we must, like them, agree to work upon some generally accepted plan.

The suspicions of our people make it a difficult matter to set forth the just claims of our Church without exciting opposition and being accused of Romanizing tendencies. There is no question that in many cases distinctive Church of England teaching has greatly thinned the ranks of our Church. Some say those members who leave the Church are not worth having. What sweet consolation such people must derive from a study of the census returns of this Dominion! I do not see how we can educate the masses and secure their adherence to Church of England principles unless there is more uniformity in the teaching of different schools of thought on the fundamental points of doctrine and the teachings of Church history than is characteristic of us at present. Perhaps these differences are a sign of health. Be that as it may, they certainly do not produce a healthy impression on the popular mind.

Bishop Melvaine says he is a poor husbandman who spends so much time upon tilling the ground that his enclosures are forgotten, or who thinks because the fence is not the grain it may

take care of itself. In teaching, however, it would be well to bear in mind what Hooker says: "There will come a time when three words, uttered in charity and meekness, shall receive a far more blessed reward than three thousand words spoken with disdainful sharpness of wit." Our people, young and old, should be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them. In this age of many organizations, it is of vast importance and comfort to be able to feel that we have something solid and substantial to fall back upon. As far as my experience goes, Church of England members are often in a state of gross ignorance concerning the past history of our Church. I have no doubt many are content to believe that it is a creation of Henry VIII.'s. I am convinced that a faithful presentation of the Church's history would quicken the pulse of many an indifferent Churchman, and make him realize the preciousness of his birthright in belonging to the grand old historic Church whose origin dates back to the Apostle times, and whose record shows that in many a dark day she was the herald of the coming light, and the champion of the weak against the oppression of the mighty. I believe it is something to be justly proud of, and for which we should be profoundly thankful, that we are able to trace our Church's life in the best records of our national history, and in the well-being of our national life. That sometimes she was influenced wrongly by the Church of Rome did not destroy her individual existence any more than pagan influences destroyed the individuality of the ancient Jewish faith.

Pearson says: "Whatever Church pretendeth to a new beginning, pretendeth at the same time to a new churchdom, and whatsoever is new is none." We want to tell our people that our Church is not only ancient, but that it is the most scriptural in Christendom. By the Sixth Article, Scripture is set forth as the supreme standard of doctrine. In our Church service, very clearly, indeed, the leading doctrines of the Gospel are brought before us; The fall; redemption through Christ; the sacrifice of the Son of God; the blessed Trinity and the Godhead of Christ; the need of holy living; and the certainty of a judgment to come. Look also at the immense mass of Scripture interwoven with our service. "Of her we can truly say, she is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." Both in Church and in Sunday-School we should endeavor to give our people, old and young, very explicit teaching about the foundation points of the Church's doctrine. By inducing our people to study carefully the Prayer Book, I believe most of them would become familiar with the great foundation points of our faith. In the Creeds, the Liturgy, and the Thirty-nine Articles, we have the great storehouse from which to draw our distinctive teaching. Our teaching can be comprehensive and distinctive if we carefully bring out the lessons which the Church seasons invite us to consider. Thus, from Advent to Trinity, we shall have an opportunity of discussing with our congregations the fundamental doctrines on which our religion rests. In addition to this, I think we should frequently discuss certain prominent features of our faith, to educate the people to a clearer understanding of the position taken by our Church, and to incite a better appreciation of her character and aims.

Our people should have definite views about Baptism and the responsibility it entails. I admire the provision made in our Church for the education of the young. The child, by nature belonging to the kingdom of wrath, is in the act of Baptism brought into a new covenant, and sponsors promise, on behalf of the child, that his behaviour shall be in keeping with his new family connections. Furthermore, they answer for his religious education, agreeing to take care that the child be brought

up to lead a godly and a Christian life. We are only acting justly by our Church when, in season and out of season, we impress upon our people that every baptized child should be taught to look up to God as his father, and to obey the laws of his heavenly citizenship.

The Church should insist upon sponsors realizing their responsibility, and faithfully discharging it. It is necessary to direct special attention to the Church's teaching about human depravity—all men are conceived and born in sin; and coupled with this the necessity of a new heart, as is explained in the Tenth Article of Religion, and as is frequently brought to our notice in the Liturgy: "O God, make clean our hearts within us," "Create and make in us new and contrite hearts." Then justification by faith is a feature of Church belief that we should, in common justice, bring more frequently to the notice of our people than is generally done. "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings." "It is the judicial declaration of the innocence of the person justified." By faith in Christ and through connection with Him, the sinner is declared innocent from the guilt of sin, though not actually innocent in himself. By God's free grace we are pardoned, accepted, and taken into His favor, all sinful and unworthy as we are. Our congregations should be thoroughly familiar with this all-important doctrine. Our good people, even, are often in a state of religious ignorance. They are uncertain about having obtained pardon or being accepted through Christ. Confessing Christ—some of our separated brethren imagine that Church of England members make no profession whatever. I think they often make far more than their religious character justifies. Our young people make a profession of religion at the time of confirmation. Confirmation is a distinctive feature of our Church. We should aim at making it a truer test of religious life than it is. The thoughtless manner in which many young persons undertake this solemn obligation is simply shocking. We should live up to our principles, and make our congregations understand that Confirmation is only for those that are regenerate and forgiven all their sins.

Holiness of living is another prominent Prayer Book doctrine. Our services deal with various ages, from childhood upwards as a sort of progressive series.

The confirmed person, no doubt, is a child of God, with a religious experience, ready to be strengthened and refreshed by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and daily increasing in the Holy Spirit more and more till he come unto the everlasting kingdom. Our Church does not believe in sudden and remarkable experiences, but in steady growth in grace, in deep, heartfelt piety which is able to say, "Here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee."

The three ancient landmarks, the Creeds, will aid us greatly in making known the mysteries of God. Amidst all the destructive criticism of scientific men, the sneers of scoffers, and the indifference of the worldly, the Creeds stand forth bearing their unchanging testimony concerning the Fatherhood of God; the Incarnation, Atonement, and Resurrection of Christ; the blessed Trinity; the Divinity of Christ; the office and work of the Holy Spirit; and the certainty of a Judgment to come.

We are also called upon to defend our position and instruct our people in reference to the use and advantages of a liturgy. I have many times heard Church members express their appreciation of extemporaneous prayers, and speak disparagingly of our own. No doubt, their judgment was sadly at fault. We know that forms of prayer are not only of ancient origin, but have been generally accepted and used