

(Continued from page 6.)

A part of the work would be, *saving* by children, for the financial interests of the church generally; or for the purchase of literature &c. in particular. A most essential feature of genuine religious instruction.

Should the period above named, be deemed too short, let it be extended—made, say, two or three months, instead of one. Each clergyman will suit himself in this matter. Provided he rigidly adheres to the general principle; and vigorously operates the main outline, details may be safely left to himself. To do otherwise would be far from wise. I only insist that all his "times and seasons" shall be **FIXED**.

Saturday, being a holiday in the Public Schools would be by all means the best day in the week for catechising from house to house, were it not for the fact that it stands next and before the clergyman's busiest day. This point is well worthy of full discussion by the Conference. In any case only half a day, a few times in the year, would be lost to each child as regards his secular education: *lost*; but, to be repaid a thousand fold. As an old schoolmaster I am aware of the very serious objections which lie against a single hour's absence from class; but these objections have less force in country schools than in the graded schools of the town. At all events there is no help for it. "Man shall not live by bread alone." The question lies between a very slight loss to the child's *secular* interests, and the all but total surrender of his *spiritual*. It is idle to ask which of these two considerations should carry the day.

(3.) As a variation of the scheme I would suggest that, where thought desirable and found practicable, the children of *two or more* neighboring families, with the consent of the parents concerned, might occasionally be congregated together *at one point*, for instruction. This would save the clergyman time and labor; but I would not, unless better may not be, make it a substitute for individual house visitation. Where neighbors are on good terms with one another, one house might be the meeting-place for several. If agreeable to all concerned, the parents and others might accompany their children on the day appointed—in the afternoon, to avoid the dinner hour. In this way a very pleasant and profitable neighbourly re-union might be enjoyed from time to time.

(4.) I now come to what I shall call the supplement, or completion of

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my scheme: *Catechising in the Congregation*. This would, as it were, round off and complete the work as a whole. It has the merit of being expressly sanctioned, nay commanded by the Church; and should be performed, as by the Rubric prescribed, after the Second Lesson. Indeed if not another thing were done for the religious instruction of the young; this, at least, *can*; and if we are honest men, it *will*. In regard to no question has the dereliction of duty on the part of the Clergy of the Church been more marked than here. Plead what we will, this is our plain, sworn duty. Distinctly, and most wisely, enjoined by the Rubric, what Clergyman obeys it, in Canada at all events? Hardly one! Yes; I know *one*. He has obeyed the Rubric for years; and with the most gratifying results. To this fact I can testify. I know the man and his work.

As a means of instruction in the principles of Religion generally, and the distinctive principles of the Church in particular, far too much reliance is placed on the *sermon*. The sermon is meant rather to *awaken*, arouse, stimulate to duties already known, than to inculcate fundamentals, or discuss polity or polemics. Its central function is exhortation, rather than patient teaching. To teach, you must catechise; and catechising in the congregation is by far the most faithful catechising of all. A more effectual method of teaching the adult members of the Church *indirectly*, whilst instructing the children directly, cannot well be conceived. True, it has fallen into disuse; but this is no reason why its use should not be revived. Of course I am aware that in these days of Ritual "bug-bears," its revival might encounter some faint opposition from certain quarters as a supposed "innovation"—or spice of "Popery in disguise"—but I cannot suppose that such antagonism, should it show itself, would prove either serious or prolonged. Parental interest will prove

more than a match for a groundless prejudice, when the father sees the pastor's disinterested efforts on behalf of his child. He will be all the more likely to be regular in his pew; and, when there, he will not only hear what could not be so well addressed directly to himself, but the instruction will find its way none the less easily to his own heart and conscience, because his beloved child has had a bite out of it while on its way to himself.

This would be the cope-stone to the building: the key to the arch. It would stand to all the rest as the University stands to the elementary and higher schools. Its lapse into disuse is a disgrace to the clergy. That lapse, together with the present difficulty of restoration, constitute a higher testimonial to the tyranny and power of custom than to the delicacy of the ordinary clerical conscience, or the independence and individualism of the clerical character. I must confess, however, that I am myself, "under a like condemnation."

But I must conclude. Before doing so, just allow me to say that, in the proper hands, I have the utmost faith in the feasibility of the scheme here outlined; although I regret that its exposition had not fallen to abler hands.

It now remains for this Conference to discuss, modify, adopt, or reject the scheme. One thing I must stipulate: that if my plan be rejected, as good or a better take its place. *Some* method is urgently demanded; and its adoption may be no longer delayed. The children of our parishes are growing up in ignorance of church doctrine. They are feeding on the mere "Crumbs" which fall from the table. In their homes "the light is neither clear nor dark"—a very dim twilight indeed. This is the sad fact: now, what is the *remedy*? What account shall we be able to give by and by to Him who took the little ones to His arms, and said "Suffer the little children to come unto Me?" Among whose last words on earth were these: "FEED MY LAMBS!"

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