

bers, the chief one being that which was laid upon him after the Reformation, that he should "diligently upon Sundays and holydays, after the second lesson at evening prayer, instruct and examine so many children of his parish sent unto him as he should think convenient in some part of their Catechism." The Sunday school does not relieve him of this responsibility, but rather makes the efficient exercise of it possible, for it supplies the children with the religious knowledge on which his periodical instruction and examination may be based. It would be quite unfair to say that the establishment of Sunday-schools has had the effect of superseding the practice of catechising. On the contrary the revival of children's services in the Church of England has been coincident with the increase of efficiency in Sunday-schools, and has been due in no small measure to the prompting of persons interested in Sunday-school work.

It being admitted that it is the function of the Sunday school to supply the religious teaching which a careful mother would wish to impart to her own child there will be no difficulty in determining the course of instruction which should be followed in our Church Sunday-schools. Most children spend from eight to ten years of their life there, and in that time it should be possible to teach them the principal events of the Old Testament, to enable them thoroughly to know and understand the teaching of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, to encourage them to a private study of the Bible, and to implant in their minds an assurance that it is the Word of God.

It is in short her first duty to see that the children are trained up to be *Christians*. But her duty does not stop here. The days are long past when there was one undivided Church throughout the world, and however unwilling we are to magnify the differences which divide the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church, on the one hand, and from the various Nonconformist sects on the other, however tolerant we may be of those who think differently to ourselves in matters of doctrine, we must not fear to state that it is the duty of a Church Sunday-school to teach to the children under her care *most clearly and distinctly the doctrines of The Church*, and enable them to answer the question which many, who ought to know better, are unable to answer, "Why am I a Churchman?" And for this purpose the Prayer-Book has provided a manual of instruction which ought to be known through and through by every child who has passed through a Church Sunday-school. In her Catechism she puts forth in the clearest and yet simplest forms the truth with regard to the two Sacraments, she points out how the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel are taught in the Apostles' Creed, and that the Lord's Prayer contains a manual of prayer applicable to all the circumstances of the Christian life.

It may not be a *complete* exposition of Church doctrine, there may be other points with which, in view of the controversies of the present day, it may be regretted that its compilers did not deal, and the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury has endeavored quite lately to supply some of these omissions, but it speaks much for the respect with which this old manual of instruction is regarded that the Church at large has hesitated to endanger its position by adding to it any statements which might be looked upon by any school of thought in the Church as controversial.

This then is the purpose of a Church Sunday-school, so to instruct the children in Church doctrine that they may all come to Confirmation, and, becoming regular and intelligent communicants, may grow into full members of the Church; then to give them such a knowledge of Bible history, such an interest in religious matters as may encourage them, when they grow up to become themselves active Church workers, and lastly, so to influence

their hearts and minds that they may live sober, righteous, and godly lives amid the temptations of this evil world.

What machinery then has the Sunday-school for accomplishing this purpose? What ought the organization to be by which this object is to be attained? It is of primary importance that the Sunday-school should be not only under the nominal headship, but under the constant and earnest supervision, of the Incumbent of the parish. On him must rest the responsibility of selecting the course of instruction to be given, he should himself choose the teachers, and by gathering them together in periodical instruction classes, so imbue them with a knowledge of his own views of Church doctrine that they may be able to pass on this knowledge to their scholars, and so train them up to be loyal members of his congregation when they have passed out of the Sunday-school. He should have a thorough knowledge of the lines on which the school is worked and by frequent visits to the school see that it is being carried on in accordance with his wishes. However tempting it may be to the overworked town Incumbent to delegate his work to one of his assistant curates, he should resist the temptation. It can never be too often pointed out that the future of a country depends upon its children, and so a clergyman, if he wishes in years to come to do an effective work in his parish, must gain the respect and affection of the children in the Sunday-school, that they, when they grow up, may become constant worshippers in his church and earnest fellow workers with him in the parish. But having gained this general knowledge of the working of the school, having laid down the line of teaching to be given there he may wisely leave the details of organization to another; and the paramount necessity of a thoroughly efficient Sunday-school is a good superintendent. Teachers may possibly be manufactured, but superintendents must be heaven born. They must have qualities of a very high order perfectly to fulfil the duties of their position. Like a general they have to command men, and so must have the power of extorting obedience founded on respect for the character of the commander and confidence in the wisdom and justice of his commands. Their whole heart must be in the work; they must be the trusted friends of all the teachers; they should be personally acquainted with all the children. Every detail connected with the management of the school should be settled by them, after consultation with, though not necessarily in accordance with the wishes of, the teachers in their school. A superintendent should never be absent from the school, except from illness or during the few weeks' holidays which he may allow himself during the year, when he should see that an efficient deputy is there in his place; his whole heart should I say, be in the work, it should be his one interest, his hobby if you will, and therefore this work can best be done by a layman, and not by a clergyman who must necessarily have other parochial duties to share his interest.

The ideal is a high one, but the matter is one of supreme importance. A strong superintendent makes a disciplined and efficient Sunday-school; the best staff of teachers will fail if their chief is weak. I have dwelt rather strongly on this point, because if the organization of a school (which depends mainly on the superintendent) is satisfactory, everything else will fall naturally into its place and work smoothly. The teachers will be influenced by the example of regularity and punctuality, the children will acquire habits of discipline and attention and the wheels of the machine will work smoothly.

In every school there should be a teacher for every ten children at the most—eight is better. Subject to the general rules of the school teachers should be allowed perfect independence in the management of their class, and should be considered wholly responsible

for its discipline. Except in very exceptional cases the superintendent should not interfere between the teachers and their class; all directions by him to the children should be given through the teacher. There ought to be a regular course of lessons, selected by the Incumbent of the parish, and so arranged as to cover in a course of years the whole range of Scripture and Church teaching of which I have before spoken, and the course of lessons must be the basis on which the instruction is given may, subject to its being in conformity with the doctrinal views taught in the parish church, be left to the discretion of each individual teacher. One will prefer the catechetical mode of teaching, another may have a greater gift for imparting instruction in the form of an address. Though I am myself a strong believer in the superiority as a rule of the former mode, the intellects of the children being sharpened, their interest excited, their attention maintained, the teaching being, as it were, drawn out of themselves by means of questions and answers; still there are teachers who can keep a class in enraptured interest by putting their lesson into the form of a narrative, who would fail altogether if they attempted the catechetical mode. The children should be encouraged to learn something by heart during the week to say to their teachers on the Sunday—the Collect for the day, a portion of the Epistle or Gospel, a few verses of a hymn—and marks should be given for these lessons as well as for punctuality of attendance and for conduct; and, where prizes are given in a school, as will probably usually be the case, every child who attains a certain standard should be entitled to receive one. It is, to my thinking, a mistake to give a fixed number of prizes to each class, irrespective of the degree of proficiency and regularity of attendance attained by the children of that class. The more satisfactory plan is to give every child an opportunity of gaining a reward if they are so minded.

In one school with which I am acquainted a special distinction in the shape of a medal is given to every child who is not absent from the Sunday-school once during the year, that is, attends 104 times, and so successful has this plan been in encouraging a regular attendance that, while in a school of 200 boys, the distinction was, during the first year after its inauguration, only gained by three boys, the number has steadily increased year by year, until seven years later it was obtained by no less than fifty, or a quarter of the whole school. A boy obtaining this reward for the second time receives a bar, like that placed on the ribbon of a soldier's war medal, and I know one boy who possesses a medal and six bars, which shows that during the whole seven years of which I have been speaking, he has not been absent on a single occasion from the Sunday-school.

A most important feature in connection with a well organized Sunday-school is the children's service. It is unfortunately the case that this is very commonly held in the school-building itself, in the same room in which the school itself is held. Although it may sometimes happen that there is no alternative, I would urge the extreme desirability of a great effort being made by every parish clergyman to hold these services in the church itself. It is very difficult to get the children to be really reverent in a room which is associated in their minds with the daily drudgery of learning the three Rs, and the Sunday-school has failed in one of its most elementary duties it does not instil in the minds of its children a reverence for divine worship. Then over and above these weekly children's services, there should be once in the month a public catechizing of the children in church. It is by means of this that the Incumbent will keep in touch with the school, will be able to satisfy himself that the prescribed course of lessons is being rigidly adhered to, is being faithfully and