

D. C. M.

- NOVA SCOTIA

Church Chronicle.

VOL. II.

HALIFAX, FEBRUARY, 1866.

No. 2.

"Ad protectum sacrosanctæ matris ecclesiæ."

PUBLIC CATECHISING.

WE desire to call attention to a duty which has been omitted by our Clergy, and a custom which has been allowed by our people to fall into disuse. We allude to the duty and custom of public catechising.

Enjoined by rubric and by canon (and therefore termed a duty), aforesaid universal in the Church, as universally acknowledged to be most beneficial, it is strange that this good practice should have been permitted to fall practically out of our Church's system. For when we come to consider the matter we find there are no good reasons given to excuse the omission; no really formidable objections against the continuance of public catechising. It is usually alleged by way of excuse and objection that our Clergy have not the gift of catechising, or that our people are so advanced in their ideas and such lovers of the sermon that they would not appreciate or endure the olden practice.

With regard to our Clergy, it is enough surely to say that we believe them to be equally gifted with those of former times, who seem to have succeeded in public catechising, and that if they will only give the same will, and thought and time to preparation they will without doubt attain to the same success as their forefathers in the art. The Clergy of the 17th and 18th centuries were not peculiarly gifted, and yet they officiated as catechists. Why therefore should the Clergy of the 19th be afraid to take up the same work? Why should they not hope for the same measure of success?

With regard to our people it suffices, we think, to allege the example of our neighbours in the States. They are usually considered to be as far advanced as ourselves—to be as modern in all their thoughts and ideas—to be as fond of forcible and eloquent discourses and addresses; and yet there at this present time the most popular services in some of the churches that we might name, are those in which the children are publicly catechised.

These objections evidently therefore are not sound—they will not hold, and if not, and if there are in reality no others, why should we not restore the good old custom to its proper place in our system? Again and again we lament the ignorance of our children and our people in first principles. Why not take care to lessen that ignorance and instil Church principles by the most effectual means—public catechising? In the opinion of the early Church, of our later reformers, of many amongst us now who have thought much upon the subject, in their opinion the only effectual way of grounding our people in the faith is by sounding down into their ears "the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judg-