

for the question by the preliminary talk, the concise form in which the truth is embodied in the question and answer serves to fix it in the child's mind.

I can only briefly refer to one other point, and that is the importance of using a catechism as a help in the religious instruction of the young, and not as a substitute for such instruction. No parent or teacher should confine himself in the use of such a manual to the exact questions therein contained. If I may be pardoned for again referring to the Primary Catechism, shortly after it was issued the principal of one of our leading academies, who is also a Sabbath School teacher of very wide experience, wrote me that he had introduced it into his own home and into the primary classes of the Sabbath School with which he is connected, and that he was using it as the basis of oral instruction on the great subjects to which it introduces the child. I may here say that it was with this end in view that this little manual was divided into chapters with headings which might seem more befitting a more pretentious treatise. The exact words of the Catechism may serve to fix the truth in the mind of the child, but no teacher should confine himself to the limits of such a manual. One of these questions will suggest many others and form a sort of starting point for oral teaching along the various lines indicated.

If the above conditions are fulfilled, if the truth is couched in simple language, as far as possible the language of a little child's own vocabulary, if the way is prepared for each question by a preliminary talk upon the subject by the parent or teacher, and if the questions are made the basis of more extensive oral instruction, then I believe such a manual becomes a real help and guide to the more systematic religious instruction of the young.

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Forsamples of our Shorter Catechism, with and without proofs, and Carson's Primary Catechism, send postcard, Confederation Life Building, Toronto.

The Question of Attendance

By Rev. W. W. Peck, LL.B.

Whilst the command, "Go work in my vineyard," is one that has been heard, may we not hope, by all of our Sabbath School teachers and officers; and whilst a cheerful acceptance of this command has brought its own sweet reward in the presence of the Master, who is ever with His faithful servant, still it is well for us, at times, to look up from our work, lift our eyes to the fields "white unto the harvest," and think how we might do better the work allotted to us.

The General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee has tried to obtain a vision of its work and trust, and with gratitude to God for the great opportunity He has given, and confidence in the Christian spirit of its Sabbath School workers, wishes to present to them a statement of the present position and suggest certain lines of work.

The teachers and the Church will suffer four plain questions in reference to the number of scholars enrolled in our Sabbath Schools.

1. Has the attendance kept pace with the increased Presbyterian population of Canada?

According to the last census returns (1890) the population of Canada was 4,833,239. These returns also established that out of every 10,000 people in Canada, 1,563 were Presbyterians. In 1890, then, there were 755,326 Presbyterians in Canada, and of these 134,092 or less than eighteen per cent. were reported as attending our Sabbath Schools. The Dominion Statistician points out that four-tenths of the Canadian population is between the ages of five years and twenty years; if so, then in 1890 there were 302,130 Presbyterian children, taking that term as indicating those between the ages mentioned. In 1898, though it is estimated that the population has increased from 4,833,239 to 5,500,000, we reported to the General Assembly but 160,150 children in our Sabbath Schools.

2. Has the attendance in our Sabbath Schools kept pace with the increased attend-