

"AN EDUCATION FOR CRIME."

This a strong term to apply—as was done by Rev. Dr. Stephens at the N. Y. Church Congress—to the educational system of the United States: a system of education which leaves a large proportion of the children practically without any effective religious instruction at all. It is found that children who attend schools where religion is ignored as a factor in education learn to scorn religion in every form—scout and avoid both Sunday schools and church! In a country where—as an element of life—obedience to parents is almost unknown beyond a certain very tender age, the duty of church going is simply laughed at by young people: and if they go at all, it is for some form of amusement or recreation connected with the place of worship. This creates a demand for "entertaining" services in lieu of public worship—lectures for sermons, anthems for hymns. So this godless education drags the Church down to its own level!

THE CANADIAN SYSTEM

is not so different from that "across the border," that we can afford to proceed jauntily in the face of kindred menaces to our national welfare. As has been frequently pointed out in these columns of late years, the supposed recognition of religious teaching in our schools is so far worse than useless that it makes so many people imagine that the work is done, when it is not. There are doubtless some Utopian spots where the children are so amenable to religious influence that they voluntarily stay after school hours instead of rushing out—as an arrow from the bow!—to play and scamper homewards. Their name, we need hardly say, is not "legion." There are just about enough instances of this kind probably to "prove the rule" to perfection. Our close connection with Great Britain, the loving retention in Canada of the domestic and social traditions of "home," form a wholesome drag upon the wheels of irreligion here: but the grade is all down. Everybody feels that

"RELIGION HAS BEEN SHELVED,"

to put in a very telling popular phrase: it is seen not to be in the regular routine, but can be "procured from the side-boards" if you please! "What's the use of it anyway?" is about the way the average boy or girl in America is disposed to question the utility of "religious exercises" generally, and doctrinal teaching in particular. It is no use to call upon the preachers or ministers at large to "avail themselves of" and "utilize" the opportunities of religious instruction afforded by the trustees of various schools. To spend their time in trying to produce some impression under the given circumstances is such an atrocious waste of time that no thoroughly conscientious and energetic clergyman will submit to the farce. The sooner our cousins south of the Lakes recognize the fact that we have no such precious jewel of a system here, the better for themselves.

LET THERE BE NO HALF MEASURES!

All English-speaking communities should fall into line with the prevailing Church sentiment in the Old Country, and stand shoulder to shoulder in a plain demand for the right of having Church schools, wherever the rates can be allocated sufficiently to pay the expenses required by the public system. Our clergy fought bravely years ago for "separate schools," and would have had them but for the treachery, for cowardice, or false liberality of so many Churchmen. The objection to "separate education" is purely sentimental—unworthy of full-grown men and women, gifted with a fair share of common sense. There need be no

worse results from parallel sets of denominational schools than wholesome rivalry—if the line be carefully drawn where the question of adequate expense comes in. Every school should be equipped and taught up to a certain secular standard.

THE NATIONAL CONSCIENCE IS BEING EDUCATED.

Alongside of the downward stream of crime and criminality created by the lack of religious instruction in the public schools in any country, may be seen (thank God!) a counter-current setting back towards the "old paths." For a while, our Canadian people were staggered, almost paralyzed, by the blow so successfully struck at Church schools thirty or forty years ago: but the generation has not passed in vain, it has carried into clear evidence the conviction that to do with "common" education when religious education can be had, is a grave crime against the soul and spirit that men possess. People feel more and more that it is worth a good deal to get their children educated where the influences, at least, and sanctions of religion, have an over-ruling authority to leaven and modify all else that is taught.

HENCE THE TRIUMPH OF "CHURCH SCHOOLS."

Up and down our land there are schools started under Church auspices—carefully "feeling their way" at first—and after a while flourishing. This is true of boys' schools as well as girls', and it is true of all types of Churchmanship. It is true of every class of citizenship as low down as the fees can reach. People have to pay their taxes for the support of the "godless system," but they pay school fees besides rather than submit their children to the malign influences of a "common" school. The only question is how low can the fees be brought and yet furnish enough to pay the way for the schools' success. It is a shame that this tyranny of the majority should oppress a section of people, but it is bravely borne with. Meanwhile, we should be organizing for better subsidy or better system of support. The work of Sisters ("Kilburn," "St. John the Divine," etc.) is the ideal for the poorer classes: but even they must take some fees. We need both "swords and trowels" for this work! One day we shall be able to demand our rights. Even dissenters are learning—though slowly—to look at these matters as we do: and they will ultimately be with us, for they mean well.

"WHAT WENT YE OUT FOR TO SEE?"

BY LEX.

May I use your valuable space to draw a short pen picture of John the Baptist, and show if possible that he has many a living disciple in the so-called evangelist or revivalist of our day? The usual tests of the right of a sectarian preacher to be called a Christian minister, are as they are fond of putting it.

- (1) The spiritual call from God to preach.
- (2) The recognition of that call by fruits.
- (3) The test of an exemplary life in the preacher.

John was called of God, for we read, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John"; and I need not carry your readers over the miraculous conception, birth and presentation in the temple, nor yet the prophecies foretelling the coming of this forerunner John. Then we read of the fact that he was in the desert until his manifestation, and we read (Matt. iii. 1-10) that John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand"; and also we have a slight insight as to his mode of life, "Raiment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat locusts and

wild honey." This account is also repeated in the Gospels according to St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, so we can take it as a settled fact that of all teetotallers and rigid renouncers of the world and the flesh John the Baptist has never been excelled by any sectarian of any day; while they may in a weak way imitate his example and follow his precepts, none has yet equalled him, and he would perhaps be looked upon by any modern evangelistic revivalist as a perfect specimen of what a Christian should desire to attain to, so we can leave the one test as satisfactorily complied with: John had a call from God to preach. Now was he successful? Yes, by all means, for we read (verses 5, 6, and 7) that he drew great audiences; "Jerusalem and Judea and the region round about Jordan" went out to hear him; fancy a whole city moved in a body to go out into the wilderness to hear this preacher; no theatre, rink, or pavilion could have held them; open air and in a wilderness, and not only the whole city but the nation of Judea moved, and the regions round about; fancy Sam Small with such success; fancy the collections for Hunter and Crossley with such congregations. Was he sensational? Well, "Ye generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come," is about as strong language as I have ever heard, and strange to say, that sentence gives the test of membership of the Methodist body to-day, "Are ye desirous of fleeing from the wrath to come?" so the similarity of preaching is very close. Then the test before being accepted as a disciple of John—"Were baptized of him in Jordan confessing their sins"; open confession of sins past or repentance was all, and as the modern revival meeting is conducted, this is the great thing sought for, and after that baptism unto repentance and nothing more is claimed for or sought in a sectarian revivalist.

Now can we apply the test of a life of devotion, self-sacrifice and true loyalty to John, without one and all hanging our heads before one who sought not wealth, comforts or society, feared not to tell his message even to Herod, and thereby reaped the fruit of imprisonment and subsequently death, and who could say of our Saviour, "His shoes I am not worth to unloose, and he must increase and I decrease."

Such was the most wonderful preacher, excepting our Saviour Himself, that ever lived, and of whom our Blessed Lord Himself said, "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist," and while in all honesty perhaps trying to follow his bright example as a great preacher and teacher of morals, what modern revival preacher can claim his "call to preach," his "great success in winning followers," or can say one word against the test of his remarkably moral and austere life?

Can there be a truer Methodist than he? No worldly pomp; teetotaller; an abstainer from any and all worldly pleasures, not given to dress nor gluttony, and a consecrated life to the missionary work of a preacher; a mover of men to repentance and forsaking of their sinful ways, and yet for all that John the Baptist could not make a Christian. Read Acts xix. 1-7. St. Paul found twelve disciples of John at Ephesus who believed (v. 2), had faith enough, had repentance, for they had been accepted by John and baptized by him, but who had not the gift of the Holy Ghost, and mark the answer they gave St. Paul, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." How many who attend the modern revival would answer in the same way? They, like the Ephesians, may have repented, believed in

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