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877TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD AT 12, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, LONDON, S.W.1, AT 5.30 P.M. ON
MONDAY, MAY 3RD, 1948.

R. E. D. CLARK, ESQ., M.A., PH.D., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

The CHAIRMAN then called upon Gordon S. Humphreys, Esq., M.A., to read his paper entitled "Use of the Bible in School Education. A Study of the Place of Religious Instruction in the State System of Education."

USE OF THE BIBLE IN SCHOOL EDUCATION.

A STUDY OF THE PLACE OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE STATE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.

By GORDON S. HUMPHREYS, M.A.

Head Master, Woking Grammar School.

RETROSPECT.

THE history of Education in this country could be summarised as the story of a growing sense of responsibility on the part of the State towards the young. As the years have passed, larger and still larger sums of money have flowed from the Exchequer to cater for the education of children and youth at all levels. The situation to-day is that the great mass of the children of the land are educated in State schools, from the nursery school stage through the junior and primary school, to the secondary school; and of those who proceed to the University, the great majority are assisted there by Government grants.

As the State has come to exercise a more comprehensive control of Education, it has been seeking to exercise its responsibilities very widely. Education is no longer thought of merely as a mental process, as the inculcation of the three R's. As

early as 1933, current opinion on this subject in respect of younger children was crystallised in the Board of Education's Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School (1933): "The schools have broadened their aims until it might now be said that they have to teach children how to live. . . . The 'primary aim' of the primary school must be to aid children, while they are children, to be healthy and, so far as is possible, happy children, vigorous in body and lively in mind, in order that later, as with widening experience they grow towards maturity, the knowledge which life demands may more easily be mastered and the necessary accomplishments more readily acquired."

In a similar way, a very broad interpretation of the responsibility of the schools towards the adolescent child has been consistently emphasised by educationalists and accepted by the State. It is recognised that there are many manifestations of the growth and development that accompany adolescence. The body, subject to considerable physical growth, needs careful feeding and exercise; the maturing sex organs influence outlook, interests and loyalties; the developing emotions may be a prelude to religious activity, the crystallising of a moral code; a social awareness arouses a sense of responsibility to the community of citizenship. In all these manifestations of growth, the State has become increasingly concerned.

The movement in educational thought has been markedly in this direction: that the State must have a responsibility towards the *whole* child. One is reminded of Plato's definition of a good education as one that "strives to develop in the body and in the soul all the beauty and perfection of which it is capable."

An examination of the provisions of the Education Act of 1944 will indicate how far the State has gone to implement the modern conception of national responsibility for the education of the *whole* child. Let us cite some examples. The Act empowers the local education authority "to make such arrangements for securing the provision of free medical treatment for pupils in attendance at any school or county college" (clause 48 (3)). Clause 49 imposes upon local education authorities "the duty of providing milk, meals and other refreshment for pupils in attendance at schools." Under clause 50 the authorities are given power, if necessary, to provide boarding accommodation. Clause 51 gives them the power to provide a child with clothing if he "is unable, by reason of the inadequacy of his clothing, to take full advantage of the education provided at the school."

Again, it is an obligation on the local authority to provide camps, holiday classes, playing fields, playgrounds, etc., etc. (clause 53). By clause 55, the L.E.A. is empowered to provide free transport, and by clause 56 to make arrangements if necessary for a child or young person to receive education otherwise than at school.

This long list of examples has been cited as an indication of the temper of our time in respect of education. The State, whilst recognising parental duties and wishes, feels it is highly responsible to make provision for the care and education of the *whole* child. It is not surprising, therefore, that the importance of the *religious* education of the child was not only evident in the passage of the new Act through Parliament, but that it is also reflected in the new statutory system of education.

PREVIOUS STATE INTEREST IN RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

For many years the Board of Education took no official interest in religious education in State schools. It was benevolent and advisory, but as no obligations were imposed upon it, there could be no official directives from it.

Whilst many individuals at the Board and among the Inspectorate might have had a very real faith in religious education, the Education Act of 1921 gave them no empowerment.

“The School shall be open at all times to the inspection of any of His Majesty’s Inspectors, so, however, that it shall be no part of the duties of such inspectors to inquire into any instruction in religious subjects given at such schools, or to examine any scholar therein in religious knowledge or in any religious subject or book.”

This Act also repeated the famous Cowper-Temple clause of 1870, forbidding the teaching of any catechism or religious formula which is distinctive of any particular denomination.

Therefore, in 1921, let it be repeated, there was no compulsion with regard to the provision of Religious Instruction by local education authorities.

During the last half-century European society has been in revolt against its own long-held and long-cherished traditions. We have witnessed country after country repudiate the official Christian yoke. Some went even further. In 1921, the Russian Government attempted to prevent public Christian witness. In

England, among other manifestations of this social change, there has been the decline in church attendance and the secularisation of the Sunday. It has been interesting to note, particularly in the last twenty years, the emergence of an interesting paradox.

On the one hand, there was throughout the country a general movement away from organised religion, a decline in church attendance and an increasing ignorance of the Bible. On the other hand, the leaders of educational thought were continually being heard emphasising the importance of Religious Instruction.

It will be advisable to examine these two aspects of the subject separately. It does not lie within the scope of a paper of this sort to give personal opinions, but to note events and to state facts. For instance, whilst it is generally agreed that there has been a considerable increase in juvenile delinquency, it is not my purpose to assess with any dogmatism the cause of it. There are those who would state that it is a direct cause of the war and war conditions. There are others who would say—and American opinion largely supports this view—that delinquency was not the result of, but was accelerated by, war conditions. Others cite other causes; the purely material reason of a reduced police force physically incapable of exercising a vigilant enough control, the attractions of artificial forms of entertainment, the decline in Sunday school attendance and church-going, economic stringency bringing the law into contempt, as irregularities and law evasions are considered clever. Whatever the cause or causes, it is important for our survey to note that delinquency is becoming a matter of increasing public concern.

No matter what one has to say of church attendance on the part of young people, it has to be conceded that, examined at the most elementary level, it does bring children into touch with a written code of living which, all critics agree, is of a very high ethical order. Whilst the Christian knows that the Christian life is something more than the "moral" life, the biblical doctrines as enunciated in the Ten Commandments, the Prophets and in the Sermon on the Mount are linked with practical instructions for personal righteousness, moral relationships and social responsibilities. One recalls our Lord's declaration of man's threefold responsibility: to God, to his neighbour, to himself. "Thou shalt love *The Lord thy God* with all thy heart . . . and *thy neighbour* as *thyself*."

Apart from any other considerations, the reduction of contact

on the part of children with moral precepts of this standard would appear to have had an influence upon them. In his book, *How Heathen is Britain?*, Mr. B. G. Sandhurst gives an account of an interesting experiment that he made with a large group of young men, between eighteen and twenty-two years of age. Employing the methods of the Gallup Poll, he posed a number of questions to the group, taking the greatest care that anonymity and the confidential nature of the enquiry were preserved.

Among his questions was the following: "Your ancestors believed in the permanent standards of life because they were laid down by the Carpenter of Nazareth. Were they right? Were they wrong? Or do you not know?"

The result of this enquiry was that "half of them answered "Right," a third were doubtful, and less than twenty per cent. were positive sceptics." After a discussion of an hour and a half on the subject, "the Rights" increased to 73 per cent., the doubters were reduced to 21 per cent., and the hardy sceptics to a mere 6 per cent.

If we may be permitted to make a reasonable deduction from this enquiry and from other evidence, it would appear that there is a considerable and perhaps a majority body of opinion in the country that the Christian religion could continue to be our standard of personal and national life, *provided it is known, believed and followed.*

If, for reasons which it is not my province here to examine, the children are not receiving religious training through the home or a church ministry, where shall they, where must they, receive **it?**

During the last twenty years, therefore, it has become increasingly claimed that the State itself was under an obligation to make provision for religious education in its schools. Quite apart from the warning notes struck by the leaders of the churches, in press and pulpit, other voices were heard, authoritative but solemn.

A President of the Board of Education said in 1933: "No system of State Education can afford to ignore the vital element of religion in the face of the many disintegrating forces at work." About the same time, a President of the British Association wrote that "the aid that our educational system can increasingly give to this complicated social and economic transformation is being limited because we refuse to solve the fundamental problem

of religious instruction and to allocate to institutional religion its harmonious place in the task of training for life." The Hadow Report concluded its section on "Religious Education" with the words: "We would urge upon all responsible for the education and training of teachers, that adequate facilities should be offered for acquiring a sufficient knowledge of the Bible."

So the paradox persisted. In an age of increasing materialism and emptying churches, the local education authorities began to produce their agreed syllabi of Religious Instruction, some of them triumphs of co-operation between churches and the education committees. By 1934 two-thirds of the authorities were using an agreed syllabus in their primary schools. In the long and rich history of this island, the fiercest battles have been fought in the cock-pit of religion. But it would appear that men of vision sank differences in the face of a need they considered desperate.

The warnings of wise men, the advice of consultative committees and the suggestions of some of the teachers themselves, together, may we venture to hope, with the widespread sense of urgency on the part of a large mass of the people, yielded their fruit in the Education Act of 1944.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE 1944 ACT.

It has already been emphasised that the Butler Act of 1944 sought to provide for the education of the whole child and thus, *ipso facto*, for his religious education. It is laid down in clause 25 that,

"The school day in every county school and in every voluntary school shall begin with collective worship on the part of all pupils in attendance and the arrangements made therefor shall provide for a single act of worship by all such pupils."

And that

"religious instruction shall be given in every county school and in every voluntary school."

Although in most schools some form of religious instruction and some form of collective worship were common, it had never previously been a statutory obligation. The Board of Education, from 1944 the Ministry of Education, had official powers in the realm of Religious Education. Previously it was a matter of permission: since 1944 it was a matter of compulsion. Not without considerable resistance, however, was this effected.

Some teachers thought the compulsion unjustified, and their views were reflected in the press and in Hansard. Some thought it a slight on those teachers who had always undertaken their responsibilities with conscientiousness and effectiveness; others thought it disallowed freedom of thought.

The Government, however, stood firm. Probably the reply of Mr. Chuter Ede represented the majority feeling in the country at the time.

“There is, I think, a general recognition that even if parents themselves have in the course of life encountered difficulties that have led them into doubts and hesitations, they do desire that their children shall have a grounding in the principles of the Christian faith as it ought to be practised in this country.” (*Hansard*, March 10th, 1944.)

The Bill, of course, gives the parent the right to withdraw a child from “attendance at religious worship in the school, or from attendance at religious instruction in the school.” (Clause 25 (4).)

The Act proceeds to give further definition to its two main requirements in respect of Religious Education.

(a) *The School Assembly.*

Clause 26 requires that the collective worship shall not, in any county school, be distinctive of any particular religious denomination.

(b) *The Agreed Syllabus.*

The religious instruction “shall be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus adopted for the school . . . and shall not include any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of any particular religious denomination.

This would be, I judge, an appropriate point to leave the Education Act and to see it in operation, four years after its passage through the House of Commons. Before doing so, I think it would be fitting for me, in the presence of this learned assembly, to re-affirm our faith in the wisdom of this piece of educational legislation. Among us all it will be a matter of sober gratitude that during the years of war, when many traditional elements in our national life were sore pressed, a Government, representative of the three leading political parties in the country, made it an obligation on the part of the State to provide for the religious education of its children.

So we leave the House of Commons, the legislative assembly, for the local Education Authority whose responsibility it is to administer the Act.

THE AGREED SYLLABUS.

Under the Fifth Section of the Education Act, procedure is laid down for preparing and bringing into operation an agreed syllabus of religious instruction. The authority was instructed to form a committee consisting of persons representing :—

(a) Such religious denominations as, in the opinion of the authority, ought, having regard to the circumstances of the area, to be represented.

(b) Except in the case of an area in Wales or Monmouthshire, the Church of England.

(c) Such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, having regard to the circumstances of the area, ought to be represented : and

(d) The authority.

It is laid down as the duty of the Committee to seek unanimous agreement upon a syllabus of religious instruction.

In the event of a failure to secure unanimity, "the Minister shall appoint to prepare a syllabus of religious instruction a body of persons having experience in religious instruction, which shall, so far as is practicable, be of the like representative character."

When the syllabus is prepared and a copy transmitted to the authority and to the Minister, "as from such date as the Minister may direct, the syllabus so prepared shall be deemed to be the agreed syllabus adopted for use in the schools for which . . . it was prepared."

As has been already stated, before the new Education Act, a great majority of the authorities had either prepared their own Agreed Syllabus or had agreed to use that prepared by another authority. For instance, the Cambridgeshire Syllabus, first issued in 1924, revised under the chairmanship of Sir Will Spens, and published in 1939, was used by other authorities, and the authorities agreed to print as an appendix to the Syllabus a section dealing with the religious history of a particular area.

Other authorities approved the use of three or four syllabi in their schools, leaving the final choice to the teachers to choose

one or even all of them. Many teachers, especially in the secondary schools, valued this freedom as it gave a very wide selection for senior pupils.

The majority of the earlier syllabi had been designed primarily for elementary school children between the ages of 5 and 14. Some added a few sections for older pupils, but these were brief and sketchy in comparison with the detailed schemes for infants and juniors. The Cambridgeshire syllabus of 1939, in anticipation of the raising of the school-leaving age to 15, made provision for children in the secondary school to age 16, with suggestions for advanced courses. To a somewhat less extent, the West Riding and other syllabi made similar provision. The Sunderland syllabus, however, made detailed arrangements for children to age 16, on the basis of primary and post-primary, the dividing line being at age 11. It devoted twenty pages to "suggested subjects for Advanced Study, age 15 and over."

It is, of course, altogether impossible to attempt an examination of all the agreed syllabi at present in use in this country; that would be a task beyond the endurance of both speaker and listener here to-day, but from the many examined for the purposes of this paper, a selection is made from districts with varying characteristics. It will be interesting to consider the syllabi of some authorities in the industrial North, of others in the South, of others in the East of England, of one closely linked with an ancient University, of others in the West and others in the Midlands. It must not be imagined that the agricultural, industrial or academic interests of each area are represented in the syllabi, but it must be emphasised that each syllabus does indicate what local religious and educational opinion considers necessary for the growing child.

THE NURSERY SCHOOL.

The amount of attention given to the different age groups varies with the authority: some, for instance, give only broad suggestions for themes appropriate to the nursery schools, while others give definite lines of approach.

The majority of syllabi recommend for the nursery school, or class, that the first teaching about God should represent Him as a Loving Heavenly Father, with talks on the sun, moon, stars, the food, shelter and clothing He provides, and His loving care. The greatest gift of this loving Father is His Son, Jesus Christ,

whose life in the home as a baby and as a boy will be simply told. These lessons will be illustrated by talks on daily prayer, grace before meals, care of plants in the schoolroom, and kindness to others.

At the next stage, the infants of age five to seven, the children are now able to follow a story of greater length, and most syllabi recommend this as essentially the Bible story period, emphasised, where appropriate, with drawings on the part of the children, with little tableaux or short plays of missionary efforts. There will be some memory work of hymns and carols.

During this period the timeless stories of the life of Jesus will once more be told, His deeds of love, His stories, His suffering. The syllabi also recommend that the children should now be coming to have an acquaintance with the stories that the boy Jesus was told: Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, etc.

The children will be thrilled by the well-told story. In very many cases they will be hearing them for the first time. The syllabus warns us, however, that "it cannot be too strongly emphasised that Scripture lessons should lead to and give opportunity for definite service to others."

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL.

We have now reached the primary school age, where the syllabi insist that a carefully worked out plan is essential. The child is passing through a period when he is not only highly imaginative, but when he is also a very practical young person who will not take everything and everyone for granted. At this point in his development, whilst the syllabi are in broad agreement on the subjects to be covered, the order of treatment varies, and therefore six representative syllabi are tabulated (see p. 88).

THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

There is a measure of difference of emphasis noted in the Agreed Syllabi in respect of children of age eleven years and over. Some syllabi would appear to reflect the view indicated in the Spens Report, that Scripture "should be taught primarily with a view to the understanding of what the books of the Bible were in fact intended to mean by their authors. Such an objective treatment of Scripture reduces the difficulties in teaching it." Other syllabi attack the problem more boldly.

HNETS (1932).	CUMBERLAND (1934).	LINDSEY (1935).	CAMBRIDGESHIRE (1939).	BOOTLE (1946).	SURREY (1948).	YEAR.
—	Life of Christ. Parables.	Select Stories from O.T. and N.T. Lord's Prayer. Ten Commandments.	(a) Jesus in relation to his people, e.g., sick, poor, chil- dren. (b) Stories of early Hebrews. Abraham to Joseph.	(a) Life of Jesus, call of disciples, mira- cles. Sermon on Mount. (b) God's revelation to early Hebrews, Abraham to Joseph.	(a) The world God made. (b) God's love and care to O.T. patriarchs. (c) Loving deeds of Jesus. (d) Why He died. (e) Early disciples.	1
O.T. Stories.	Abraham to David. Life of our Lord. Stories of Saints. Duty to our neighbour.	Life of Christ. Parables. Episodes from Church History.	(a) Parables of Jesus. Stories from early followers of Christ: Peter, Barnabas, Mark. (b) O.T. Moses to Samson.	(a) Our Lord's Minis- try (particularly just before and just after Trans- figuration). (b) Beginning of Jew- ish nation. Moses to Joshua. (c) Modern Christian Leaders.	(a) Our Lord as Minis- ter and Saviour. (b) His passion and triumph. (c) Christian ministry and service. Christian prayer and conduct.	2
Christian Church. Stories from Acts. English Church. Missions.	Solomon. Prophets. Life of Our Lord. Duty to God.	— Church History. — —	(a) St. Paul. (b) Saul to Solomon. (c) Prayer. —	(a) Life of Christ, especially last events. (b) Judges to David. (c) Modern Christian leaders.	(a) Our Lord as King (power, humility), from John the herald — Ascen- sion. (b) The Christian Kingdom. How to achieve it— people who worked for it. (c) The spread of the Kingdom.	3 3
Prayer. Worship. Obedience. Service.	(a) God, Creator. (b) God, the Spirit. (c) Sin. (d) Paul and spread of Church. (e) Church in England.	Church History.	(a) Life of Jesus. (b) O.T. Prophets. (c) Psalms.	(a) Spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome. (b) David to Reho- boam. (c) Modern Christian leaders.	(a) Lord as friend and teacher. His work of teaching, includes refer- ence to Moses and prophets. (b) Spirit of Christ in the world. Lord's Prayer. (c) Holy Spirit.	4

AGE.	YORK (1930).	LIVERPOOL (1934).	LINDSEY (1935).	CAMBRIDGE (1939).	GLOUCESTER (1945).	DURHAM (1946).	ROOTLE (1946).	EXETER (1947).	SURREY (1948).
11+	Mark. Acts i-ix. Decline and Fall of Northern Israel, 933-722 B.C.	Abraham to Elijah. Mark. Geography of Holy Land.	Abraham to Elijah. Mark. Acts i-xii. Geography.	Mark. Acts i-iv. Patriarchal Age to Exile.	Life of Jesus in story form. Abraham to David. Heroes of the Kingdom.	Abraham to David. God and Man. Person and Character of Jesus. Heroes of the Kingdom.	Abraham to Moses. Life of Christ (1). Joshua to Solomon.	The Christian Faith. Christian Origins (O.T.). Outline of classification of books of O.T.	The Holy Land, its people, their lives and hopes. How the Apostles preached the good tidings. Men who helped to spread the Gospel in Europe.
12+	Luke. Acts ix-xvi. Story of Judah, 933-586 B.C.	Amos to end of O.T. Luke. Life of Paul.	Amos to Exile. Luke. Paul.	Exile to Herod. The Universal Gospel. Spread of the Gospel in Acts.	Mark. Acts i-iv. Solomon to Exile. How Christianity came to Britain.	Solomon to Exile. Mark. Earliest Church History. "The Gospel Reaches Northumbria."	Life of Christ (2). Acts i-viii. Joshua to Solomon. Acts viii to end.	The Christian Faith. Christian Origins (O.T.). Religion from early times to Moses.	History of God's Chosen People. Life of Our Lord in relation His Time and Country.
13+	John. Acts xvi-xxviii. Captivity and Return, 586-400 B.C.	Prophets of the Exile. Matthew. Epistles of Paul.	Exile to Macc. Matthew. History of Bible.	The Old Covenant. The New Covenant. The Church in the World.	Teaching of Jesus (Matthew and Luke). Post Exile Period and Apocrypha. Gospel reaches Gloucester.	Exile to Roman Period. The Kingdom of God. Notable Citizens of the Kingdom.	Teaching of Christ. God's Revelation to Moses—Division of Kingdom. Making of N.T. Teaching of the Apostles.	The Christian Faith. Christian Origins. Moses to Elijah.	What men in O.T. taught about God and His Will. The Teaching of Jesus about God's Will. How the Holy Spirit Inspired Men to Serve God.
14+	The Bible before Our Lord. The Bible after the days of Our Lord. The Bible in England.	Wisdom Literature. John. The Bible and its making.	Wisdom Literature. John. Bible studied as a whole.	The Apostolic Preaching. Development in Early Church. Unto all the World.	The Holy Spirit. Message of the Cross. Expansion of Church. Development of Idea of God in O.T. Making of N.T. Reformation.	Life and Teaching of Jesus. The Book about God. Christianity in England since days of Bede.	Making of O.T. Genesis. Selection from Epistles. Prophets.	The Christian Faith. Faith in Action. Place of Religion in Life of Man. Making of Bible.	Either the Gospel of John or the Synoptic Gospels or St. Paul. Either the Story of the Bible or Christian Work in the Modern World.
15+	Eighth Century Prophets. Sermon on the Mount. Study of the Epistle.	No provision made.	No provision made.	The People and the Book. The Christian life.	Letters of Paul. People and the Book. Modern Movements in English Christianity. Modern Church Missions.	Relevance of Christianity to Personal and Social Life.	Gospel of John. Psalms or Church History. Christian Life and Worship.	Various suggestions, especially in Devon Supplement.	What Jesus taught about God and His Kingdom. How the Revelation of God was explained and interpreted by the Apostles in their Letters. Christendom (Brief Historical Survey). Worship and Prayer.

Indeed, an examination of the syllabi in their chronological appearance reveals a most interesting fact. It is that later drafting committees seem to favour a more positive form of religious teaching. The old apprehensiveness seems to be going ; the anxiety that the teaching shall be purely literary or purely historical seems to have given place to a real desire for positive teaching.

For instance, a member of a drafting committee of a newly-produced syllabus wrote :

“ It was assumed throughout that the syllabus adopted a positive attitude, rather than a detached or objective one, on religious knowledge as a whole. Certain sections are mainly historical, and to that extent are treated objectively ; but all through there is at least as much stress on religious feeling and attitude as on information.”

One syllabus, used by schools outside the area of the authority besides those in it, states : “ The Christian faith is something definite, not to say dogmatic. In an age so untheological in its outlook as ours, dogma is suspect and sometimes rightly so. Yet a purely undogmatic Christianity is a contradiction in terms. . . . The Christian religion is not vague religiosity but a way of believing and living, revealed in the concrete stuff of history and mediated from generation to generation across the continents and the centuries in well-defined forms of thought and practice. It is not a colourless and inoffensive piety to suit all tastes, but a word of judgment and forgiveness and blessing proceeding from a Person in history, to believe in Whom is to believe in the living God ” (*see table facing*).

As we are still dealing with the Agreed Syllabi, it should be stated that there is agreement among the drafting committees that a wider latitude should be left to the Sixth form teacher of Religious Instruction. Some syllabi merely give a list of subjects to be discussed, others by means of appendices give introductions to special courses. Of recent syllabi, Surrey gives a list of subjects with a bibliography attached to each subject, the books suggested referring to both teacher and pupil use. The subjects fall under four headings :

1. A detailed study of a book or a portion of the book, in the Bible, in relation to modern problems.
2. A subject of religious knowledge chosen by the pupils themselves with the teacher's guidance, *e.g.*, What is Christianity ? Christianity and Science/Humanism, etc.

3. A study of Church History as a whole or an outstanding movement or period in Church History.

4. Study of Christian Belief and Conduct. Under this section—to give an example of the literature recommended—the following Bibliography appears:—

For students' own use or possession :

(a) Christian Faith and Life ... William Temple.

(b) Christian Doctrine J. S. Whale.

or

Christian Belief and Modern

Questions O. C. Quick.

(c) Christian Behaviour ... C. S. Lewis.

(d) Getting Things Straight ... Christian Auxiliary
Movement.

Devonshire and Derbyshire give very full and detailed suggestions for Religious Instruction at this age range. As an example, let us consider the suggestions of the Derbyshire Education Committee. They indicate a number of themes which might be studied, suggesting that a minimum of two periods a week is required :

(a) The Book about God. How the Bible was made, and by its actual use, a discovery of what it is and what it does.

(b) The influence of the Bible on our life and thought. This is worked out in history, in literature, in thought and in everyday life.

(c) Comparative Religions.

(d) Study of Christian people and Movements of the last 200 years.

(e) Problems of Personal and Social Ethics, *e.g.*,

What is a Christian ?

Why should I be good ?

Is prison reform my business ?

(f) The Life and Teaching of Christ.

(g) The development of the conception of God from the Prophets to St. Paul and St. John.

(h) A closer study of selected works. One should be taken from the Old and another should be taken from the New Testament.

Each of the foregoing subjects is treated with some measure of detail with a useful bibliography.

Some general observations on the use of the syllabi in schools are obviously necessary at this point.

It is obvious that the intention of the drafting committees is to put in the hands of the teacher a foundation on which to build. He cannot and should not escape from his own personal responsibility of interpretation. The use and, indeed, the success or failure of the syllabus depend upon the teacher.

If he is indolent he will be disappointed that the syllabi do not do more for him; if he is timorous, he will feel in some cases that he is not given adequate lead; if he is unduly partisan, he may feel "cribbed, cabined and confined"; if he is keen, he will constantly feel, with Cecil Rhodes, "so little done, so much to do." If he is a poor teacher, no syllabus in the world will help him much. But if he is alive to his opportunity, he will find most of the syllabi an excellent framework on which to build. It will ensure, as the pupil moves through the school, that the main aspects of the Christian faith are considered, that he is brought face to face with the claims of Jesus Christ, that he understands in some measure the impact of Christianity upon civilisation, and that each Christian has a life to live towards God and his fellows.

BROADCAST TALKS.

It will be well known that for many years now school broadcasts have been planned and produced by the School Broadcasting Corporation in accordance with the educational policy determined by the Central and Scottish Council for School Broadcasting. The broadcasts "are intended to provide something which the teacher cannot normally give, and, in particular, to supplement the work of the school on the imaginative side."* Talks and lessons are given in English, History, Modern Languages, Geography, Music, Science, etc. But as far as Religious Instruction is concerned, the School Broadcasts have been limited to two items:

(a) A short religious service of twenty minutes' duration given twice a week.

(b) A series of Bible Talks to Sixth Forms of Grammar Schools.

* B.B.C. Broadcasts to Schools 1948.

(a) RELIGIOUS SERVICE.

Many teachers find great value in these services, especially where the conduct of school worship is made difficult by local circumstances, *e.g.*, accommodation, little musical ability.

The B.B.C. is right in limiting these broadcasts, as it would be unwise for any school to use these services as a regular substitute for a service held in the school for the school. The beauty and dignity of a B.B.C. service, appropriately conducted, can give interest and avoid monotony in school worship.

(b) BIBLE TALKS IN THE SIXTH FORM.

The Central Council for School Broadcasting has given the most detailed consideration to this now established feature. It consults teachers and religious leaders of all denominations before drawing up its programme. It seeks in the main to supply a basis of knowledge and interpretation of the Christian faith so that the Sixth former, who is always ready for a discussion, is equipped for intelligent thought and consideration of Christian belief and teaching.

The talks are usually given by a theologian or a recognised authority. The charge is sometimes levelled that the theologians know nothing about teaching and the teachers nothing about theology. In fairness it must be remembered that the standard of knowledge of matters relating to the Christian faith varies sharply between school and school. One Head Master has been heard to say that he uses the broadcast talks for his *Third* form, another that the lecturer was completely over the heads of his *Sixth* form.

As has been noticed in the evolution of the modern agreed syllabus, so, in School Broadcasting, the objective and often colourless lecture is now giving place to an examination of Christianity and its challenge. Sixth formers are not interested in academic irrelevancy, but they are interested in the personal and social implications of being a Christian.

The Central Council gives the schools adequate notice of their proposed list of talks and supplies valuable notes for the use of the class teacher. Although at present the number of Grammar Schools taking advantage of the Broadcast lessons is small in comparison with those taking broadcast lessons in other subjects, it is necessary for purposes of this study to state the subjects examined these last few years in the Broadcast Talks.

1945-46.

The world of the New Testament.

- Term 1. The New Faith in the Ancient World.
- Term 2. The New Faith and its Source in History.
- Term 3. The New Faith and its Development.

1946-47.

The newness of the Old Testament.

- Term 1. God of the Present. Presentation of outstanding ideas in the Old Testament about God.
- Term 2. People of the Past. Customs, ritual, etc., of the people of the Old Testament.
- Term 3. World of the Future. Indicates the way in which the Old Testament is a preparation for the Christian Faith.

1947-48.

The Relevance of the New Testament.

- Term 1. A general study—"The New Testament writers believed that God is purposefully active in human history and that his activity is seen in sharpest focus in the life of Jesus and the early Christian Community."
- Term 2. Study of one of the New Testament Letters (Romans) raising important contemporary religious, moral and social questions.
- Term 3. A study, based on a gospel (St. Mark), of the source of Christian, religious, moral and social judgments in the person and life of Jesus.

It is not always simple for a school to arrange broadcast lessons, owing to time-table difficulties. Not only so, but where only one period per week is allotted to Sixth form Religious Instruction, some teachers prefer to use this period solely for teacher-pupil consideration of subjects and problems.

SCHOOL WORSHIP.

"The School day shall begin with collective worship on the part of all pupils." So reads the Butler Act.

In the main this statement was insisting upon something which was, in point of fact, a common practice in the schools. But even this part of the Act did not pass without gentle criticism.

Writes a contributor to *Religion in Education*, "The word is SHALL. We should have shown little surprise had such a command come from the Holy Church, for she has always been a little enamoured of authority and ever since the days of Moses has loved the sound of 'Thou shalt' and 'Thou shalt not.' But now the mantle has fallen from the prophet on to a new spokesman, and the voice comes not from Sinai or Rome but from Westminster."

It has to be admitted that the morning assembly in some of our State schools is conducted under conditions not at all conducive to a spirit of worship. The hall is often too small and the pupils stand in closely serried ranks; it is often used for many purposes—for physical training, for class lessons, for the school library, for school dinners. It is not always easy in such an environment for children to discover what the Cambridgeshire Syllabus calls "the deep things of God." Fortunate indeed the school having its own chapel with the "storied windows richly dight."

Nevertheless, in spite of these difficulties, in many schools of the country the morning assembly is effective. Services are conducted, calculated to aid children in their approach to God; there is a note of reverence, praise and consideration.

It is advisable if, in the religious instruction lessons, there is adequate teaching on the meaning, nature and history of Christian worship. In that way the assembly is not merely an opening ceremony, but a preparation for the day.

In some of the more comprehensive syllabi the teacher is given some suggestions on the conduct of the collective act of worship. Not only so, there have appeared numerous books and articles on the subject. As this is a survey of existing conditions rather than a further list of suggestions, we confine ourselves to painting the picture as we see it. In State schools, the morning assembly is usually conducted by the Head; a pleasing variant of this practice is that once a week or once a month the school meets in houses, and the Housemaster takes prayers.

The morning assembly comprises the following items:

- Hymn or Hymns.
- Prayers and the Lord's Prayer.
- Lesson.
- Head Master's Remarks.

Each school has its own order of service and there are, of

course, schools where invocations, sentences, chants, psalms and responses are introduced, but for our purpose the four items above-mentioned constitute the main elements.

(a)

There is a very wide selection of hymn books available for schools. Such excellent work has been done in recent years towards the provision of suitable hymns which, in respect of both words and music, are suitable for children. Some schools have their own collections; some still use Ancient and Modern and the Public School Hymn Book. Some of the popular modern collections are:

The Daily Service: Prayers and Hymns for Schools (Oxford).

Prayers and Hymns for use in School. (Oxford.)

Hymns of the Kingdom. (Oxford.)

Songs of Praise. (Oxford.)

The day of the "organist" hymn is waning in schools; children are no longer compelled to learn hymns and tunes which their elders value for sentimental reasons. Most schools are aware for instance, that the natural piety of little children responds to the wonder and beauty of nature. More than one child playing in the sunshine or in the garden quite naturally finds expression in the words of a hymn learnt at school:

God who has made the daisies
And every lovely thing
Now loves to hear our praises
And listen while we sing.

As the child grows older, and his religious experience matures, he is able to be brought into contact with some of the great hymns of the Christian Church. Teachers find that the morning assembly is less effective if the hymn chosen is not sufficiently known to the school, and for that reason some practice beforehand is required.

It is, perhaps, fitting at this point to emphasise the difference between the religious hymn and ethical verse. Some collections have an abundance of the latter. Ethical poetry has its place in the thought and experience of childhood, but for Christian worship the hymn chosen should lead to the worship of God and dedication to His service.

(b) Prayers.

It must be remembered that the Head is leading Worship and in Prayer. The prayer, therefore, should be appropriate to the occasion—to a child's needs, aspirations and intelligence, and also vocabulary. It should not be an indirect sermon.

Again, numerous excellent collections are available ; a few only are enumerated :

1. The Daily Service. (Oxford.)
2. The Oxford Book of School Worship.
3. The Daily Prayer. (Oxford.)
4. An Anthology of Prayers. (Longmans.)
5. A Book of Prayers for Schools. (S.C.M.)
6. A Chain of Prayer across the Ages. (Murray.)
7. Prayers and Hymns. (Oxford—an abridged edition of Songs of Praise.)

The Teacher who uses these collections finds full appreciation of the many aspects of prayer : adoration, thanksgiving, confession, petition. If systematic use is made of them, not only the child's spiritual needs and aspirations are made articulate, but also a wide range of his interests is also covered : his school, his studies, his games, his hobbies, his home, his career, his country and empire.

The Prayers are almost invariably followed by the Lord's Prayer. There is a danger here that if it is spoken too fast it becomes purely repetitive, mechanical and meaningless. Some schools, to avoid this, chant the Lord's Prayer on occasion. Short litanies, responses and chants are used in some schools.

THE LESSON.

At the morning assembly in the majority of schools, a passage of Scripture, usually from the Authorised Version, is read, either by a member of staff or senior pupil. The school has to choose between the superior literary quality and the traditional acceptance of the Authorised Version, and the greater accuracy of the Revised Version. In most schools careful attention is given to the selection of the passage to be read ; it must be a unit in itself, albeit part of a scheme ; must be appropriate to the understanding of the child, and it must be sympathetically and effectively read.

Most schools prefer to have the large pulpit Bible, as it lends a certain dignity and ritual to the occasion ; but some schools

use lectionaries and various collections of Bible passages. The following are some in common use :

St. Andrews Lectionary of Bible Readings. (Baskerville Press.)

The Daily Reading. (Oxford.)

The Little Bible. (Oxford.)

Short Bible in Authorised Version. (Blackwell.)

Little Children's Bible. (Cambridge.)

Children's Bible. (Cambridge.)

Two-minute Bible Readings.

It will be found in schools where considerable importance is attached to this act of collective worship that there is correlation between the hymn, the prayers and the passage selected. Frequently a scheme of readings and hymns is drawn up by the scripture and music master in collaboration, and the Head Master introduces, if necessary, prayers which are appropriate to the themes indicated in the hymn and lesson.

A plan such as this also serves the purpose of ensuring that a wide range of both hymns and Bible passages is covered and that the service is not spoiled by ill-considered or hasty choices.

Last of all, there are the remarks of the Head. The criticism is often expressed that the inevitable school notices spoil the atmosphere of an act of collective worship. Their number, it is found, tends to increase rather than decrease. Nothing really should be introduced which might mar the dignity and effectiveness of the school service. Heads and teachers have often discussed this problem. Here are some of the solutions offered :

(1) Keep the notices to one day a week and let there be a recognisable pause at the end of the Act of Worship.

(2) Let the break be made distinct by the retirement of the Head Master at the conclusion of the Act of Worship, and let the second master, duty master or some other person make the day-to-day announcements.

(3) Let the children be made to feel by training that, as notices relate to the school and its welfare (for which prayer is constantly being offered), therefore school announcements are a natural part of the collective act of worship. Supporters of this view will remind us of the insertion of practical details in St. Paul's richest passages of Christian dogma. For instance, after his eloquent declamation on the doctrine of the Resurrection in I Cor. xv, he proceeds : " Now concerning the *collection* for the saints."

Christian teachers are aware of their very great obligation in giving a lead to their pupils in the matter of worship. If the attitude of the staff is born of reverence, interest and responsibility, it will be recognised and followed by the school. If it savours of unwillingness, indifference, cynicism or hostility, it were better if they were excused attendance from what is probably the most significant few minutes in the school day.

THE TEACHER.

It has been apparent throughout this study that whatever assistance is given him, the success of the religious teaching will be measured by the quality of the teacher. In some schools the subject is taken by the form master ; in others it is taken by the Scripture specialist or specialists. It would appear that it is less common than formerly that a teacher takes Religious Instruction because he is so directed by the Head. Increasingly it is true that the subject is taught by those who are interested in it. As the Scripture lesson is the focal lesson of the week, when the spiritual aims of the school are made articulate, it is essential that it should be taught by an able and competent teacher. In a great number of schools, the Head himself takes charge of the subject and does some of the teaching himself.

The teacher must be qualified for his work. He must be equipped with adequate knowledge of the Bible and its teaching, and be conversant with some of the problems of Christian faith and conduct. Not only so, he must understand something of child psychology, keenly aware of the correct approach to religious matters at various ages. He must be a man of religious conviction himself, one who knows God and walks in His precepts. And above all, like Chaucer's "poore persoun," it must be true of him :

But Cristes lore and his apostles twelve
He taughte, but first he folwed it him-selve.

In recent years many of the Universities have made provision for courses in Religious Instruction. Many teachers have taken advantage of these and, in order that this survey should give as complete a picture as possible, a list of courses and certificates commonly taken by teachers is appended :

1. Lambeth Diploma in Theology.
2. Archbishop's Licence to teach Theology.
3. University of London Diploma.

4. University of London External Diploma.
5. University of London Certificate of Proficiency.
6. Associateship of King's College for Non-Theological students in Religious Knowledge.
7. University of Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in Divinity.
8. University of Oxford Diploma in Theology.
9. University of Durham Testament in Biblical Studies.
10. University of Manchester Certificate in Biblical Knowledge.
11. University of Manchester Certificate in Theology.
12. Bristol, Leeds, Dublin Diploma in Biblical studies.
- *13. Selly Oak Diploma in Religious Education, Birmingham.
14. Some Universities include Divinity as a subject for a Pass Degree.

In addition, a number of holiday courses in Religious Education are held annually by the Ministry of Education, the Institute of Christian Education and by the Christian Education Committee. These last two bodies, the one with a liberal approach and the second with a more conservative outlook, have both produced most adequate handbooks to the Agreed Syllabus which are used by thousands of teachers. The I.C.E. also acts as a clearing-house of information for members. Besides giving replies to specific questions, it publishes bibliographies on various connected subjects, which, being in typescript, can be kept up-to-date. Also in some districts (*e.g.*, Liverpool) there is a Joint Diocesan Board which arranges evening lectures for teachers and Sunday School teachers, under the ægis of the local C. of E. and Free Church authorities.

The teacher, therefore, has ample opportunity of equipping himself for his work, and there is every reason to believe that the number of uninformed and disinterested teachers of religious instruction is very small.

CONCLUSION.

This study has, I venture to believe, indicated that in the matter of Religious Instruction in the schools, the door is open,

* For fuller treatment cf. *Christian Education*, published by the Christian Education Committee.

never more widely. The question that will be asked us: To what extent are we entering in?

It is, of course, difficult to answer. There are hundreds of teachers who conscientiously and effectively are facing their responsibilities and discharging them. Not only are they seeking to teach Christian doctrine, but they seek to encourage young people in Christian behaviour and service. Many schools interest themselves in medical missions, social work, settlements, orphanages and train their pupils in applied Christianity. For all this let God be thanked.

As these lines are being written, we are seeing the advance of materialism and irreligion across large territories of Europe. How far will the shadow creep? It can only be halted by the clear-sounding message of the faith as it is in Jesus Christ. This obligation lies upon every Christian, clerical or lay. But upon those who are in contact with the young, the obligation lies heaviest; for, if we fail, the lights will surely dim over Europe, and perhaps go out.

Wrote St. Teresa: "God has no body now on earth but yours; no hands but yours; no feet but yours; yours are the eyes through which is to look out Christ's compassion to the world; yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good; and yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now."

DISCUSSION

After the Chairman (Dr. R. E. D. CLARK) had spoken briefly, drawing attention to the immense change which had come over the Christian attitude towards education in the past century, the meeting was thrown open to discussion.

Mr. W. E. LESLIE: Religious education in schools raises various problems not touched upon in Mr. Humphreys' Paper. Here are a few of them.

From a Conservative Evangelical point of view most modern Bible teaching is erroneous and misleading.

We are told that the teacher must be "a man of religious conviction." If he has no religious convictions, and is not prepared to take part in religious services, the fact is hardly likely to help his career. Does not this place a premium on hypocrisy?

The author emphasises the command to love one's neighbour as oneself, and refers to "social responsibilities" and the "social implications of being a Christian." This is crucial. Unfortunately the religious education that has been given for very many years has created the impression that this great commandment is a social platitude which does not go beyond a high standard of "good form"—which is good so far as it goes. But the idea that Christians should in actual practice live in such a way as to show that they love their neighbours as much as themselves is rarely found in Christian teaching: indeed it would be hotly resented. Hence the empty churches, and "the advance of materialism and irreligion across large territories of Europe," which Mr. Humphreys deplures.

Mr. F. A. RAYNER pointed out that the modernist-fundamentalist controversy left the youthful mind in a state of confusion, as did also teaching of evolution by biologists and other specialists.

Mr. CHARLES H. WELCH asked whether a teacher today was at liberty to expound the Christian message in terms of a personal challenge during the Scripture lesson, provided this was relevant to the reading for the day.

Mr. R. MACGREGOR urged the need for evangelistic teaching for children.

Rev. A. E. HUGHES again emphasised the desirability that those who teach Scripture should themselves have a saving faith in Christ.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Mr. F. F. BRUCE: That a paper on this subject should be included in the programme of the Victoria Institute is most gratifying, for I am persuaded that, under the conditions brought about by the passing of the Butler Act, the position of Christian education in the schools of this country is one which contains rich promise of a Christian future for British life and thought, provided that the opportunities now presented are intelligently grasped. There is no more fertile or more encouraging field for true evangelism to-day

than in our national schools, and the vision with which many Christians who have the necessary vocation are setting themselves to this service is most heartening to all who have a concern for the Christian good of our land. Mr. Humphreys has shown us the situation from the viewpoint of one who has both that vision and inside experience, and he merits our gratitude for what he has done.

I should like to mention that to the list of University and similar courses open to teachers should now be added the Certificate in Biblical History and Literature awarded by the University of Sheffield by examination after two years of part-time study.

Mrs. R. E. D. CLARK : I have taught Scripture in two modern secondary schools for a number of years, using the Cambridgeshire Syllabus. I am sure that for the modern school the syllabus is far too advanced and complicated, especially in view of the fact that Scripture specialists are rare in modern schools and the form mistress is usually expected to take the subject.

With regard to dramatisation, it would appear that this tends to give children a passive enjoyment of entertainment value, rather than an incentive to understand the underlying truths of the Bible and to apply them to their own lives. It must be nearly impossible to get a true dramatisation of Bible characters or to "relive" the actual scenes. A musical setting, moreover, tends to "romanticize."

The old-fashioned language of the Bible presents the teacher with a formidable difficulty—for it is nearly unintelligible to the modern school child. Modern translations, if used, may solve the difficulty at school but are scarcely a preparation for worship in church.

Whilst we may recognize with thankfulness the great opportunity presented by the modern situation, these facts should not be overlooked by the Christian teacher.

Mr. L. E. PORTER : I have read with great interest Mr. Humphreys' able and comprehensive survey of the present position of Religious Instruction in the State Schools.

I feel that the great scarcity of qualified teachers needs to be much emphasised. It is a deep source of satisfaction that so many teachers are taking advantage of the courses, etc., mentioned by

Mr. Humphreys, but it remains true that, generally speaking, teachers are much less competent to teach Scripture than they are to teach any other subject, especially at the Senior School stage. To give an example, almost all the syllabuses examined in the present paper include either the Prophets or later Old Testament history for study sometime before age 15-*plus*, *i.e.*, at a stage which *all* pupils must take, in view of the raising of the school-leaving age to 15. Now either of these two topics presupposes a knowledge on the teacher's part of the historical facts of the Divided Kingdom, the Exile and the Return in their setting of world-history, at least equal in detail to the knowledge possessed by the general subjects teacher of, say, the history of England from 1066-1485. Can we claim that teachers of Scripture are thus well equipped?

It may be true that "the number of uninformed and disinterested teachers of Religious Instruction is very small"; it is, alas, true also that the number of reasonably qualified teachers in this subject is by no means large. Much has been done, there is much more yet to do. The certificates, courses, etc., mentioned by Mr. Humphreys are of immense value, but before the position is satisfactory there must be a steady flow from the training colleges of teachers with qualifications in religious instruction comparable with those in the other subjects they offer.

Meanwhile, all the aids referred to must be used to the full, and Local Education Authorities should be encouraged to provide help, such as lectures for teachers, as allowed for in para. 2 of section 29 of the 1944 Act.

By all these means, of course, it will not be ensured that every teacher of religious instruction will be "a man of religious conviction himself, one who knows God and walks in His precepts"; but it ought to mean that conscientious teachers will be thoroughly grounded in their subject, and competent to impart to their pupils a balanced knowledge, at all events, of "the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Mr. E. H. BETTS wrote commenting, especially, upon the value of the daily service irrespective of whether it was held in a school

hall or a chapel. He felt that the service was an act of dedication for the day's work so that the daily notices about school routine found their natural place at prayers.

A communication, covering the same ground as that covered by other speakers, was also received from Mr. A. CONSTANCE.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

The problems that had been raised should be examined against the proper background. In 1944 it was a matter of *either . . . or*. There was either to be an accepted compromise on the part of religious leaders in the matter of religious education in the schools or education would be secularised in the manner we find it in some European democracies to-day. Critics should not expect, in an age when only 10 per cent. of the population attend church, that each school should be a centre of evangelism. What they should rejoice to know is that the Bible is read over a planned course in every school, that there is an adequate syllabus upon which to work and that worship and prayer form a part of every state school in the country.

I agree that in the final count the responsibility lies with the teacher and I venture to hope that, as the opportunity is realised, there will be an increasing number of Christian teachers taking up the work of religious instruction in the schools.