

POSTSCRIPT

"From the Archives"

The writer of the note in last year's ANNUAL was dissatisfied with various solutions to the vexed question of the place of children at morning service. There are, however, still other possibilities.

In *Congregation A* the Sunday School has been closed, and all children attend morning service, which has changed somewhat in character and can now perhaps best be described as a highly successful children's religious entertainment.

In *Congregation B* the children, about forty in number, occupy the front pews below the pulpit at morning service, and spend the time lolling, inattentive, listless, bored. Except for good reasons, they are to be found in their places every Sunday, because at Christmas time, provided they have 75% attendance, they receive very valuable prizes.

Congregation C had a morning service based on the principles upheld by The Church Service Society and a fully graded Sunday School that must have been the idea of the Sunday School Organizer (the two for obvious reasons are often found together); but a new minister came to "C", determined to "integrate the Sunday School with the Church". He closed the Sunday School, which had taken his predecessor a lifetime to build up, and ordained that the children come to morning service. What has happened now is that the Sunday School is no more; the children do not all come to Church; and the morning service is punctuated by "calls to order" from the pulpit, and the devotional atmosphere, which it was naively expected would have a permanent influence on the young people has been lost.

Clearly these are solutions that are no more acceptable to members of this Society; and if, as the writer of last year's note suggested, we are to "return to sense and sanity in this regard", we must return to first principles, not just psychological principles - though these obviously have an important bearing on the subject - but Church principles.....

.....A minister of a rural parish writes: Most people will agree that children should, at as early an age as possible, be encouraged to participate in the regular worship of the Church. A Sunday School in some form is, no doubt, essential for instruction in religious knowledge, and it can afford a simple training in worship; but in itself it is not enough. An older generation was much wiser, in bringing the young into the family pew where, however imperfectly, they could sense the atmosphere of awe and reverence in common worship in God's House. Possibly much was beyond their comprehension, but the cumulative effect was there.

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