

194. Who would be capable of striking a light and communicating orally?—Yes.

195. With reference to your pupils attending religious services, in answer to Sir Edward Sotheby you said that they could not understand a sermon in Westminster Abbey. Is it not a fact that they must see the mouth of the speaker before they are able to understand?—Yes.

195A. Is it not a fact also that in ordinary preaching the mouth is not always visible to the congregation; sometimes the head is down, and sometimes it is turned on one side and sometimes on the other?—Yes.

196. And that is just the same as it would be if you took an ordinary book and held it before a sighted person, and then every now and then turned the book the other side, or turned it in front so that he could not see it?—Just so.

197. You said that the deaf on the sign-manual system could understand a sermon specially delivered in that system even at a distance. That would require somebody specially versed in that particular system, would it not, to give a particular service to the deaf?—Certainly.

198. The majority of those you have met with in the world are not conversant with that system?—No.

199. The majority that you meet with are conversant with ordinary speech?—Yes.

200. It is therefore more easy to imagine that a deaf person taught on the oral system would have the opportunity of attending an oral service, even if he understood it imperfectly, than he would be able to attend a service specially for deaf-mutes on the sign-manual system?—Yes.

201. *The Chairman.*] I suppose in New Zealand your churches are not so large as Westminster Abbey?—No, not quite.

202. *Mr. St. John Ackers.*] Is it not also a fact that those taught under the pure oral system can understand not only—as you said in answer to a question—if the speaker or if the preacher is using language suited to their capacity and looking straight at them, but is it not also quite possible for a parent or a relation of a deaf child to sit near that child and to interpret in plain and simple language what the preacher or lecturer is saying?—I do not know.*

203. Have you not done that yourself? When you go to church with these deaf children do you not interpret what is going on?—I may tell them in a simple way the heads of what is going on at the time. I could not explain it to those children at the same time that the man is speaking; I could not keep up with him.

204. But you could give a short outline of what he is saying?—Not at the time; I could not keep going fast enough.

205. I will put it in another way. Is it because your pupils are, some of them at any rate, those who have not got sufficient language to enable you to keep up with the preacher?—It may be that of course. I have got twenty children, and they are of different standards.

206. You have got the whole of those children?—Yes. If I had got three or four or six all in the highest state of proficiency, then it would be different altogether.

207. Now let us come to what it would be in after-life; take those who are orally taught, and have gone through their course of education: is it not possible for those deaf-mutes to get the benefit of ordinary religious services by coming with their parents or friends to church, and letting those parents or friends speak without voice to them, so that they may get the benefit of what they cannot see on account of the movement of the preacher?—I dare say it is quite possible in the case of those whose instruction has been finished.

208. Then, in fact, those who were taught under the oral system would have a very much better chance of getting the benefit of religious services than those taught under the sign-manual alphabet, who could only get it by going to some place where there was a special preacher in that system?—I believe so.

209. Have you any idea how many special services are held for the deaf-mutes in England?—I have no idea.

210. But at any rate a very much less number than would be held every Sunday for ordinary congregations?—Yes.

211. Again, take the question of religious instruction: could not any ordinary minister of religion prepare for confirmation or otherwise instruct those leaving school in a high standard, or before they have left school, on the pure oral system?—He could, undoubtedly, if they were properly taught.

212. That he could do in a comparatively short time?—Yes, when he has got used to the children. What I mean is this: I do not think it is possible under the pure oral system for a child to go into a lecture-room or a church and sit down and understand from the man's lips what is said to him.

213. *The Chairman.*] That is not so much, if I understand you, from any inability to read the lips as because those taught on the oral system, in common with those taught on the manual system, have not so large a vocabulary as the ordinary hearing public?—Just so.

214. *Mr. St. John Ackers.*] And also because they cannot see the lips of the preacher or speaker the whole time?—Yes. Of course I thoroughly believe in the oral system myself; it will do a very great deal, but it will not put deaf children on a level with hearing children.

215. In your opinion no system can do that?—No system can put them on a level with hearing children.

216. But do you consider that the oral system is that which gives the deaf the greatest facility of intercommunication with their fellow-creatures?—Yes, I do.

217. Now, to go to one or two other questions, do the ministers of religion ever make an effort to teach in your school?—No.

218. You are aware that Mr. Van Asch was educated at Rotterdam, where the system was for

* I think the deaf and dumb should worship in the church, and be taught out of it.—G.V.A.