

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ: the bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" A multitude of other passages would show that Sacramentalism runs through the whole of the New Testament—such as Rom. 6; 3, 4: Gal. 3; 27: Col. 2; 11, 12: Eph. 5; 26: Titus 3; 5: St. John 6; 32 58. These passages cannot be explained away, glossed over, or thrust out of the Bible, just to please the self-willed puritanic element, which in these last days has departed from the faith and therefore "cannot endure sound doctrine."

Enough has been adduced to show that those who oppose Sacramentalism are not only disloyal to the Church of England, but have set themselves in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of Christianity.

#### CHURCH THOUGHTS.

BY A LAYMAN.

No. 1.—Sunday Schools.

FEW phenomena of modern life afford such significant evidence of the progress of Christian civilization as the voluntary schools for religious instruction held under the roofs of the Churches of Christendom. One of the titles by which He who is supremely the object of Christian adoration and love is distinguished from all the Gods of history and idolatry is that noble one—Teacher; and no utterance of His shows a more profound knowledge of the needs of humanity in all time than the command, "Go, teach all nations." When to the breadth of this commission we add the height and depth of those special commands couched in Eastern imagery which may be modernised, "Teach my young followers," "Teach the mature members of my Church," we realize that He has created an all pervading atmosphere of instruction into which children should be born, and in which they are to live and move and have their being to their life's end.

It has been and is at times yet urged that the Sunday School is the scandal of Christianity, that it usurps parental responsibilities and thereby weakens the sense of home duty. The objection is better in sound than sense, for all non-parental tuition is open to it; yet the very placing of children under outside tutors is in secular things deemed the best evidence that parents are keenly alive to their children's welfare. But for the divisions of Christendom we freely admit that the ordinary day school should be a thoroughly efficient agent in imparting religious instruction, and every school is so where the guiding spirit of it is fit for so distinguished a task as the training of human minds and spirits and is not prohibited by the State from recognising Christ in His work—as are the teachers in the public schools of Canada. But as the ordinary parent is unable to educate his young in secular so is he in the vast majority of cases even more unfit to impart to children religious knowledge, and in yet rarer cases is he capable of stirring the young soul to the finer issues of spiritual life. To send a child then to a Sunday School is not to throw off responsibility but to recognize it, and every parent able and fit to instruct his own children in a Christian sense—to teach them in the name of Jesus—cannot help feeling that when so many young people are waiting to be taught it is an utterly unchristian act of private gratification and selfish isolation to spend over his own children the talents and influence which might in a school embrace with them the less fortunate children of his illiterate or careless-lived neighbours. Every teacher must find

his experience parallel to that of the Rabbi, quoted in Stanley's Jewish Church, "I have learned much from my Masters, more from my companions, most of all from my scholars!"

There seems to be a very general mistake as to the history of the founding of Sunday Schools. The venerable Raikes is almost universally spoken of as the originator of this institution. The error is a slur upon all preceding ages of the Church, and an imputation upon the wisdom of the Divine economy. It is strange indeed to find so many who leave out of sight the schools of Judaism, although indeed they rest on the same foundation on which ours are built and their life was drawn from the roots from which all Christian teaching arises, the obligations of a covenant between God and man. The rules for the religious education of children laid down in Deuteronomy are part of the Divine order for the Government of the Church in all ages, they are part of the covenant between God and His people: "The Lord made a covenant with Jacob and gave Israel a law, which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children; that their posterity might know it and the children which were yet unborn; to the intent that when they came up they might show their children the same, that they might put their trust in God and not forget the works of the Lord, but keep his commandments."

"At five years of age let children begin the Scripture," says an old Jewish maxim, and how it was observed we find in the words, "From a child thou hast known the Scriptures." That this instruction was not only domestic but publicly associated with the Sabbath is manifest not merely from the necessity of the case from daily week day toil leaving few parents with the requisite leisure for this duty, but is most distinctly shown by the catechetical element in the Synagogue services in which even children shared by not only hearing but asking questions. We trace then the Sunday School at work from the earliest days. As the calm of the Sabbath fell on the hosts of Israel in the wilderness and the imaginations of the young wanderers who were carried from the land of bondage were fired by the marvels of the flight by the Red Sea, the pillar of cloud and of glory heralding and guiding their way homewards, the Sabbaths would see gatherings of the young for instruction, to hear of their forefathers sojourn and deliverance, and from the encampments would sound forth songs of thanksgiving and the voice of melody hymning Jehovah's praise.

How natural then for the early Church to carry on the catechetical instruction of the young as we know was done, and how strange a portent, how scandalous a departure from primitive usage; nay, more, how sinful a neglect of a Divine ordinance for the Church to overlook the charge given under the old covenant to teach the children diligently and in the new to feed the lambs of the flock. Yet how general even now is this neglect, in how indifferent, perfunctory a manner is the spiritual training of children yet performed in hosts of parishes so that it is a very unusual experience to find adults who have had in early life a thorough grounding in the principles of the Church, or efficient instruction in the historic bases of the Christian faith.

To us it seems a matter for no surprise that the youths and adults of the community are so devoid of religious life or knowledge. There has been a tacit consent given in act to the abominable modern notion that the spirit of God dwells not save in souls that have by some convulsion, some self-conscious, self-evolved action in mature

life become Christian. If that theory, the theory which is at this hour threatening in our Church to revolutionize the gospel method of salvation by grace, be sound, then the statement that John "was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb" is a falsehood, for the Spirit, according to this sectarian philosophy comes only as the product of spiritual conviction, comes only after the soul has invited His presence, comes not as a covenant gift to our children, as the promise was, but comes only in response to some intellectual desire, some effort of the will in mature life. Against that folly the Church is a living witness for God by her assuming after Baptism the duties of a spiritual mother to her spiritual offspring, duties the very essence and motive of which flow out of the recognition that the baptized ones are children of God, members of the family of Christ, heirs to the promise of the Spirit, and therefore claimants by imperious right to the freest privileges of fellowship in that work of education and edification which it is the function and glory of the Church, her labor alike and her reward, to carry on in the souls of men in the name of, for the sake of, by the direct guidance, inspiration and power of Jesus Christ. The child born and bred in a family wherein every influence is instinct with refinement and culture is a different being to one less happily circumstanced, it acquires a grace and calm dignity which cannot be acquired in mature life. Let the world teach the Church in this a lesson, into the noblest of all families, one which is the very fount and spring of all the beauty and purity of social life, every child is introduced by baptism, and it is the office of the Sunday School to so surround that young member of the family of Christ with holy influences, to afford it such spiritual culture, that it will grow up radiant with virtue and godliness, a speaking, living likeness of Him whose name it bears for honor or shame, according to the degree and fidelity shown by the Church in the discharge of her duty as a nursing spiritual mother.

#### Diocesan Intelligence.

##### NOVA SCOTIA.

(From our Own Correspondent.)

**SPRING HILL.**—The unwearied efforts of Rev. E. H. Ball appear likely to bring about the desired object of a church in Spring Hill. Mr W. Black has given \$400 and the people are collecting another \$150 these sums united will go far to complete the fabric already begun.

**DIGBY.**—Return of the Rev. John Ambrose.—The parishioners of old Trinity Church, Digby, gave their rector—Rev. John Ambrose, M. A.—a magnificent reception on his return from England after an absence of eleven months. The welcome meeting was held on Wednesday night, when after ample justice had been done to the good things provided by the ladies, Mr. T. C. Shreve read a very flattering address signed by 125 parishioners and presented Mr. Ambrose with a purse containing \$45. The right rev. gentleman made an appropriate reply. He been in England collecting funds to build a new church at Digby.

**MAITLAND.**—Rev. A. D. Jamison lately delighted his parishioners with a vivid description of his travels through Canada by way of Metapedia the St. Lawrence and Niagara.

**SHELBURNE.**—The venerable and beloved Rector (Dr. White) and his excellent Curate, Rev. C. Wiggins, prepared work for the Bishop on his late visit to the parish.

##### QUEBEC.

(From our Own Correspondent.)

The following is the address presented to the Lord Bishop and referred to in our last issue:—