

## Religious Education in Public Schools.

SIR.—Theoretically, "A Mother" is quite right. Practically, she is quite wrong. The responsibility of educating children in every way rests primarily upon the parents. But "A Mother" evidently does not think she evades this responsibility by sending her children to day school for secular education. She recognizes that she herself is incompetent to teach them all they should learn. Is she not equally incompetent to teach them all about religion? She herself admits that it is so by speaking of "instructions they are able to give." And as we have to face "facts, hard facts," such as that very few parents know their own Bibles, and still fewer understand them thoroughly, we cannot surely be satisfied with home training. Often, indeed, the Sunday-school has to counteract the home influence, which is either indifferent or downright bad. I have had some eighteen years experience in England and Canada, and can safely say that the instruction given in school or Church is with the great majority (at least of the poorer classes) the only religious instruction given at all. How would "Mother" remedy this without more religious schools?

ROBT. W. RAYSON.

## Is the Church of England Catholic or Protestant?

SIR.—For many years I regarded the agitation over ritual in our Church as a battle concerning trifles, and devoid of any deep significance. In the light of later developments I see my mistake. True, an ornate ritual may quite consist with the strictest Protestantism; and services even gorgeously ceremonial may be free from the faintest trace of doctrinal error. Ritual of this mild, though florid type, may be fairly held to be innocuous, and largely a matter of taste or predilection. Not so the ritual rooted in transubstantiation. The idolatrous Church of the dark ages—the whole fabric of Mediævalism—rested on this rock. It was, and is, the main pillar of Romanism. Wyckliffe loosened it, and Cranmer tore it out, to the down-fall of the walls and towers of superstition. The "Oxford Movement" meant simply a replacing of this stone, and a re-erection thereon of the old edifice of error. And the ritualist clergy of to-day are at work on this building, diligently restoring the ruins. The question is: Shall the work go on? If so, where will it end? Is the Church of England to topple back into the slough whence the Reformers plucked her? It looks like it; that she is reeling to that fall is only too clear. The "Oxford Movement" had Rome for its goal, whether visible or not to its authors. The logic of Tractarianism lands it under the dome of St. Peter's. Short of that there is no rest for the sole of its foot. Newman went, and Pusey stayed, their logic being unequal. "Full Catholic ritual" means, at last, full-blown Mediævalism: that is to say, the pure, sweet, simple doctrine of the Gospels buried under mounds of priestcraft's idolatrous inventions. This is just what the vaunted "Catholic revival" means. A hard saying, but true. At the first this final issue was not so clear, but now, from mid-journey we see the end. From high noon we have sped back to dusk, drifting towards midnight; Newman as pilot; Pusey at the helm, most of the passengers and crew quite unconscious of the destination! Our younger generations, duly drilled, march Romeward with facile step, not knowing whither; and under officers in like case with themselves—so all-permeating is the delusion. From the Oxford of fifty years ago flows a stream of theology tainted at its very source, and doubly be-fouled in its later affluents, from which all but all now drip, from college down to peasant's child. Theologic hall, pulpit, treatise, review, Bible-class, Sunday-school, Church literature generally—all tinged or saturated with a teaching utterly erroneous, because based on a false premiss. If this sounds immodest from little me, then let rubric, article, homily speak. If these be right, Tractarian doctrine and practice are wrong—wrong throughout, because wrong at the start. What is that start? A mediating priesthood. This first link, connecting an otherwise valid chain with Bible truth, is a gossamer filament. This premiss, on which the new teaching wholly rests, and which, by an inexorable logic, lands us in the Vatican, is simply and utterly worthless. For—a mediating priest does not exist. If he does then is Protestantism an impertinent and rebellious impiety? Given such a personage, all the rest of necessity follows. From this premiss the new apostasy started. It is the corner-stone on which rests the stately edifice of the Tractarian Theology. Take it away, and down tumbles the structure. And what is easier to do? In fact this stone is nil. In all Christendom is no such thing as a mediating, sacrificing priest. Since Christ was slain on that last altar at Golgotha, there has been no altar, no victim, no priest save Himself. The New Testament knows of no priest in the Church of Christ. The undeformed Church of England had neither altar

nor sacrificing priest, nor sacrifice, save that "of praise and thanksgiving." Deliberately, and of set purpose, did she cause the table to displace the altar? And she has never restored it. How then has it got back, to stand in almost all our chancels? Smuggled back with other contrabands. Why? Because consistency demanded it. What was a priest without an altar? An altar without a sacrifice? A sacrificing priest must have somewhat to offer, and something to offer it on. So the altar was re-built when this new priest arose. Now he is ready to offer. Offer what? A ram? A bullock? No. Christ, the Son of God! Of wine and water he makes his God, and sets Him on the altar! Either he has power to do this, or he has not. If he has, he towers above earth's greatest princes and Heaven's Archangels; and are not his prostrations most seemly, his rituals a necessity? If he has not this power, what words can paint the awfulness of the pretence? But he has not. His Prayer-Book tells him he can make no God; for that, after all his manipulations, "the bread and wine remain still in their very natural substances." Could he, the ritual follows; and because of this vain pretence it exists. Cut out this fatal false doctrine, and its ritual off-shoots will die. Banish the mediating priest, and with him go altar, incense, genuflections, absolutions and the rest. But do the Tractarian clergy believe in transubstantiation? Perhaps some of them do not. This I know: the belief is general in something so like it as not to mar the cogency of my argument. There is a suspicion of vagueness in the dogma as held by some of them, yet is it sufficiently definite to form the root, heart and centre of an extensively empoisoned teaching, utterly alien to the Church's voice. From this dogma, whether nebulous or clean cut, flows all, as does itself from that of a mediating priest. The priest sets God on the altar, or not, at will. Surely one who can do this may take His place in probing consciences and pardoning sins! And if so, secret confession is not optional, but imperative. As a matter of course the priest shuts and opens—holds the keys of heaven and hell. So we are home at last with St. Peter's successor—so direct, so inevitable the steps from Oxford to Rome. First step, the priest; second, the altar; third, the sacrifice; fourth, confession; fifth, absolution; sixth, the keys; seventh, the Vatican. All sedulously taught to day in the English Church; and all flat against her mind as voiced in rubric, article, homily and canon. Perchance the new light has shown these latter to be all wrong; then, why not burn them as their authors were burned? Right or wrong the portentous fact stands out, clear and incontrovertible, that the whole trend of the "Anglo Catholic" theology is antagonistic to the faith and practice of the English Church as settled at the Reformation, and utterly subversive of the great emancipation. Truly Newman and Manning and Pusey did not live in vain, whatever may be said of Cranmer and his co-martyrs! *Sic transit gloria ecclesiae.* The outlook is dark. And the gloomiest feature of the situation is the wide spread infection of the young with this deadly disease. This being ever increasingly the case, arrest of the distemper seems hopeless. Meantime their less teachable elders are driven forth. I have been denounced for ascribing Church losses to a neglect of conversion. I ought to have coupled with it Romish teaching. The two combined thin the ranks daily. Simultaneously we build up Rome and Dissent. We lead one man to Rome. We goad another to Geneva. We repel a third, never in history, but for this bar, so ready as now to enter our fold—a three-fold process, whose net result is numerical retrocession. Unconversion and priestcraft drive out the ins, and keep out the outs. All of which will be questioned. Well, I leave the verdict with the people. At any rate, whatever the cause, our Church does not grow as she ought. From the nature of her public worship she ought to be the most popular Church in Christendom—the one Church that gives the people a full share in the service. Surely, above all others, she ought to "draw." And yet, which of them draws so feebly or drops so freely as she? Surely there is a solution of this enigma? It is not to be found in her polity, in her Prayer-Book; nor yet in the social environment of a democratic age. Two words solve the riddle: Unconversion and priestcraft. Upraise conversion and sink the priest, and the Church is saved.

JOHN MAY.

## Algoma General Mission Fund \$6,000 in Arrears.

To the Clergy and Laity of the Church of England in the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada.

REV. AND DEAR BRETHREN,—I am confronted with a financial crisis which demands the most serious attention of the Church at large. My "General Mission Fund," from which grants are made towards the stipends of the clergy, the erection of churches and parsonages, and other diocesan objects, is now

\$6,000 in arrears. Such was the intelligence with which our diocesan treasurer greeted me on my return, when about to resume my missionary work with new heart and hope, in the health and strength which God has, in His great goodness, restored to me. The causes leading up to this lamentable condition of things are manifold: (a) The extension of our work in the occupation of new missions, and the sub-division of old ones, involving a corresponding increase in the number of my co-workers.

(b) A very serious diminution of late years in the sums received from the D. and F. M. B., consequently, I am informed, on the great shrinkage in the amount of undesignated funds placed at the Board's disposal.

(c) A marked reduction in the contributions of individuals, attributable to (1) an idea, wholly unfounded on fact, that Algoma ought by this time to be all but self-supporting. (2) to the fact that ever since the Board declared against appeals, for individual fields, as not consistent with an even-handed justice to the whole area of the Church's domestic missionary enterprise, Algoma has almost totally abstained from them. (3) to the diversion of the support of former sympathizers into new channels, created for the maintenance of foreign missionary work.

(d) Add now to all this the recent receipt of an official notice from the committee of the S. P. G. of a serious reduction in their annual grant, and of its intended total withdrawal in 1900. These then being the facts of the case, and their assignable causes, what is to be the solution of the grave financial problem which confronts your missionary diocese?

1. Algoma is willing to help herself to the full extent of her ability—I can answer for it—but her ability is very limited. (a) Several of her stronger parishes, at centres such as Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay, Bracebridge, etc., are just now struggling to enlarge or rebuild their churches, and the effort completely exhausts all their available resources. Until they have succeeded in it, I cannot, with any justice, call on them to increase the local quota to their clergyman's stipends. (b) In the rural districts the farmers have a hard struggle to maintain themselves and their families, what with light crops, mortgaged farms, heavy taxes, hay, e. g., \$18 and \$20 per ton last winter, and feed, therefore, so scarce that many cattle died—three-year-old steers were sold for \$12, horses for \$10, etc. Nor are the prospects much more favourable this season. Yet despite all this we are doing our utmost to develop our local resources, deputations being appointed to visit the missions, and a pastoral letter issued urging the laity to increase their contributions where at all possible, and so relieve the pressure on our "General Mission Fund." 2. Yet another solution has been suggested, viz., the reduction of our expenditure by the contraction of our work. Should the consensus of Church opinion point in this direction, so be it, but otherwise I shrink from taking the responsibility of such a retrograde step, involving, as it must, the cutting down of my staff of co-workers—injustice to a number of faithful and devoted missionaries—the abandonment of promising fields of labour—the consigning of hundreds of loyal sons and daughters of the Church to spiritual destitution, and, last but not least, deep reproach and dishonour to the Church of England in Canada. These, then, are the simple facts of the case. I submit them for the consideration of the clergy and laity. Action is needed and that immediately. Justice is not being done to the missionary diocese of this ecclesiastical province. The pledges entered into fourteen years ago are not being redeemed. Far off fields possess more attractions than those nearer home. The Church is wearying of her firstborn. If this be punishment for neglect or unfaithfulness on our part, we will accept it without complaint. Otherwise, while very grateful for past assistance, we claim the continuance of it as our rightful due.

July, 1896.

E. ALGOMA.

## Voluntary Church Schools.

SIR,—I present herewith a synopsis of the scheme for voluntary Church schools presented by Mr. Baldwin to the Toronto Synod, and to consider which a committee has been appointed. I welcome the publication of this scheme for many reasons, notably because for the first time the Church public are enabled to grasp what voluntary schools mean, and just how much or how little they need interfere with the present public school system. What is the scheme like? I have no hesitation in saying that the scheme in its broad principles is an admirable one. It throws the burden of building Church schools where it properly belongs, on the shoulders of Churchmen. It claims boldly the right of Churchmen to share in the public taxation when they are doing a public work. It minimizes as much as possible the difference between the public and voluntary schools, and keeps them in direct competition with each other by means of inspection and examination. It conserves the right of every parent to have a controlling voice in the religious education of his