

W. AND O. FUND.

SIR,—The state of the Widows' and Orphans' Fund of the Diocese of Ontario, published in a circular, and read in Church on Sunday, 20th, will, I hope, set the wheel of thought in motion, whereby the fund may be raised to a higher standard than it now is. In connection with this, permit me to give one or two ideas, with the hope that some cleverer pen will improve on them.

For example, suppose the Diocese is composed of 100 clergymen, we are informed only 60 pay or take any interest in the fund, what benefit does the fund derive from the other 40? None. These 40 at \$5 a year would make \$200, enough for one widow. Now, if a Canon was passed in Synod that every clergyman should be taxed, that no one, married or single, poor or rich, should hold a parish until he had paid his subscription to this fund, all would then bear the burden alike. Again, a man after entering the diocese may not marry for seven or eight years, so he argues, I want nothing from the fund so I will pay nothing. What selfish reasoning. Another may be paying to insurance companies and lodges to the injury of the Church, depriving the Church's sources of assistance, of his money, while he is receiving his living from the Church. Secondly, cannot the subscription be raised to \$7. No man in the receipt of an ordinary stipend but can lay by \$7, the extra \$2 from the 100 clergy will maintain another widow. I strongly agree with the expression in the circular, which has been always that of the Bishop, that the laity will never allow the fund to suffer. But why expect the laity, when the clergy are so careless? Who receives the benefit but the clergyman's wife? Where will a widow naturally turn for comfort and assistance after her husband's death, but to the Church that has given him support, and to the Bishop and clergy with whom he has associated. We are proud to hear the Diocese of Ontario called the first in the Dominion; then let her stand first in the good management of the Widows' and Orphans' fund, and let our gifts and prayers be one united offering through out the diocese, and God's blessing will rest upon us.

Yours,
FAITH.

THE CANADIAN CHURCH UNION.

SIR,—Allow me to heartily commend the above named society, to the favourable consideration of all church-members. One very significant feature about it is that it has been organized and is now officered by laymen. Priests are, however, eligible for membership. This society it seems to me supplies a long felt want and affiliated branches should be formed in every parish. Mr. W. J. Imlack, of London, will supply all necessary information. I should earnestly recommend my brother priests to write for copies of the constitution and distribute them among their people.

Yours,
A PRIEST OF HURON.

NO LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

SIR,—Within the walls of the church there are no ladies and gentlemen, we are all women and men, females or males, or girls or boys. I notice in your paper the other week in an account of a confirmation service, that there were so many ladies and gentlemen I hope in future you will have it corrected before being printed, as it gives a bad idea to those outside the fold. I would respectfully ask secular papers to please take the hint. Yours truly,

F. DEALTRY, WOODCOCK.

PLEASE EXPLAIN.

SIR,—Will you, Rev. Mr. Wilson, or His Lordship the Bishop of Algoma, kindly explain to us Mr. Wilson's government scheme in connection with his Indian Homes at Sault Ste Marie? Does Mr. Wilson propose to hand over the property to the Government, and make the homes unsectarian boarding schools for Indian children, or will the property continue to be, what I suppose it now is, Church property? Many of our Church people who have contributed for the erection and support of these Homes, are asking for a fuller explanation than is to be found in the leaflet just issued from the Shingwauk Home? Truly yours,
March 22nd, 1887. W. R. CLARK.

RECEIPTS PUBLISHED YEARLY.

SIR,—The suggestion made by Mr. W. H. Plummer in the "Algoma Missionary News," that receipts for the Diocese, should be published monthly could not well be adopted; but, certainly, both receipts and expenditures should be published every year, including those of the two Homes for Indian children, and stating salaries paid to missionaries, to teachers and agents, and to the chief superintendent of the homes.

AMICUS.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

PALM SUNDAY.

APRIL 3RD, 1887.

The Night to be Remembered.

Passage to be read.—Exodus xii. 21-23, 29-31, 40-42.

This is Palm Sunday, the beginning of the Holy Week, in which we are once more reminded of the sufferings and death of Christ. This lesson has been selected for to-day, because it tells of an event in the history of the Israelites which typifies the atonement of the Saviour, and sets forth in figure a way of escape from condemnation.

You remember that God sent nine plagues on Egypt, their object being to show the Egyptians the power and greatness of the one true God. Now the last is at hand. It differs from the others in that it is wrought directly by God Himself. This judgment falls alike on Israel and Egypt, but God has mercifully provided for the former a way of escape.

1. *The Stroke of Judgment.* On the 14th day of the first month [for the beginning of the year was now changed Ex. xii. 2] all preparations had been made by Israel for the impending blow. Egypt had been told of it also (xi. 4, 5), but her king and people were indifferent and unbelieving as before. They went to rest as usual, when night came, but Israel was awake and watchful.

The still hour of midnight comes—God's hand is stretched over the land in judgment, and there is no way of escape. Swiftly and silently, in every Egyptian house, the first-born is smitten. There is not a house where there is not one dead! The whole land is filled with mourning, lamentation, and woe! Imagination cannot paint the awful scene. "From the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon the throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that was behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts" all are smitten with swift and sudden destruction.

2. *The Safe Shelter.* How fares it with Israel? All is peaceful and calm—not a sound of mourning is heard. Why not? They have obeyed God and sprinkled the side posts and the lintels of their doors with the blood of the slain lamb. That blood represents another's life for theirs, and typifies the one great sin offering, the sacrifice of Christ (Heb. x. 45). Into none of the houses of Israelites did the Destroyer enter. Seeing the blood, the Angel passed over, and then all are safe under the shelter of the blood. That was God's way of escape.

3. *The Chain Broken.* The last stroke has fallen to sever Israel's chains. Ere the dawn of that next day, all Egypt was stirring, and the one cry, "get rid of Israel," mingled with lamentation for the dead. At last Israel is free,—God's word is fulfilled. His promise to Abraham has been kept, "Jehovah hath triumphed; His people are free."

We must all remember the story of the ever-memorable night. It is deeply interesting and very striking and wonderful. But there are better reasons for keeping it in remembrance.

There is a stroke of judgment ready to fall now. God has warned us again and again (See St. Matt. iii. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10). God had provided a way of escape, the blood of the slain Lamb, the all-atoning sacrifice of Christ. What a day, when He, the Son of God, died. What a night, when He was laid in the sepulchre. What a joyful morning when he rose again!

We must take shelter under His blood. Let us fly to the Cross of Christ. Under its protection we shall be safe. Israel put the blood of the Passover lamb upon their doors, because God had commanded them to do so, and had said that by it they should be safe. They believed His word. And if we are trusting in Christ's death for salvation, we, too, are under the shelter of the blood, and shall be safe (Rom. iii. 25). By Him we shall be brought out of a kingdom of darkness and led into His glorious light, to lead a new life, to be his chosen followers, and at last to enter the Heavenly Canaan (Col. i. 13; 1 St. Peter ii. 9; 2 Cor. v. 15; Rev. v. 9-12).

Family Reading.

CONFIRMATION.

BY THE REV. A. W. LITTLE.

Confirmation is an Apostolic Sacramental Blessing given to those who have been baptized, conveying to them grace and spiritual strength from God the Holy Ghost, to fit them for the worthy receiving of the Holy Communion and the daily living of the Christian life. It is the completion of Holy Baptism, a sort of lay-ordination to that "royal priesthood" which is the privilege of all believers. It was typified by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon our blessed Lord after His Baptism in the River Jordan. It was implied in the words of St.

Peter: "Be baptized, every one of you . . . and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

It is variously called confirmation or the strengthening, from the idea conveyed in Eph. iii. 16; the seal, from Eph. i. 13, and iv. 30; and the "laying-on-of-hands" from Heb. vi. 2, where it is associated with repentance, faith and baptism, as being "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," the "foundation" of the Christian life.

The seven-fold gift of the Holy Ghost is "the inward part or thing signified," the laying on of Apostolic hands is "the outward visible sign or form."

That it was the custom of the Apostles themselves to confirm, is clearly shown in the 8th chapter of the Acts. St. Philip the deacon went down to Samaria, preached the Gospel, and baptised many converts. As a deacon he could preach and baptise, but could no more confirm than he could ordain. What was to be done? St. Luke tells us: "Now when the Apostles, which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John; who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost; then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

"Through the laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given." Unless confirmation had been an important rite, one of "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," the Apostles would hardly have taken the trouble to send two of their most prominent bishops, SS. Peter and John, to administer the rite to the baptized converts of St. Philip.

Nearly twenty years after this, St. Paul, passing through Ephesus, baptized twelve men. After that, he "laid his hands upon them," and they received the Holy Ghost. (Acts xix. 6.)

These allusions to the Apostolic custom of confirmation in the New Testament, are corroborated by the universal practice of the Church ever after. Baptism was held to be the initiation of a child (or an adult) into the Church; but baptism was invariably followed, either at once or after an interval, by the laying on of the bishop's hands. In cathedral towns and in small dioceses, where the bishop himself could be present at christenings, whether of infants or adults, the laying-on-of-hands appears to have followed immediately after the baptism, so that it came to be looked upon as almost a part of it. But where it was impossible for the bishop to be present at the baptism, the laying-on-of-hands was deferred until he could be present and perform the act in person "after the example of the Holy Apostles." Thus arose the system of regular Episcopal visitations in every parish, that all who were admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion might be brought *en rapport* with the chief pastors of the church, might receive the touch and the benediction of an apostle. All this may be gathered from a few passages from the fathers.

Tertullian (born A.D. 135), after speaking of baptism says: "Next to this the hand is laid upon us, calling upon and invoking the Holy Ghost through the blessing." St. Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage, (born about A.D. 200) says: "The custom has also descended to us that those who have been baptized, be brought to the bishops of the church, that by our prayers and by the laying-on-of-hands, they may obtain the Holy Ghost." St. Jerome (born A.D. 340) says: "It is the custom of the churches that hands be laid on those who have been baptized and the Holy Ghost invoked over them." But lest anyone should imagine that this laying-on-of-hands was administered by the presbyters or deacons, he says explicitly: "This is the usage of our churches. The bishop goes forth and makes a tour in order to lay his hands and to invoke the Holy Ghost on those in the small towns who have been baptized by our priests and deacons."

But why multiply instances? Let it suffice to have seen that St. Paul declares this laying-on-of-hands to be one of the "principles of the doctrine of Christ," that the allusions in the Acts show that it was the practice of the apostles to lay their hands on the baptized. In addition to which the testimony above cited—of one who lived on the verge of the apostolic age, of another in the next century and of another in the century following—shows