

## THE HOLY COMMUNION.

BY THE REV. J. M. KOEHLER.

We wish to impress upon our dear friends who have made the vow of Confirmation, that they ought to receive the Holy Communion as often and as regularly as they can. Some we are sorry to say, do not realize their obligation to keep the solemn promise they made when confirmed "to keep God's Holy Will and Commandments."

Our Lord Jesus Christ commands us to receive the Holy Communion in remembrance of Him. Consequently the neglect of this Sacrament shows that Christ has been forgotten, and that the Christian life is not followed. He says (St. John vi., 53) "Except ye receive the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you"; that is, no spiritual life, which comes through faithfully receiving the Holy Communion; for this Sacrament is God's appointed means of nourishing our spiritual life. Those who have promised to live a Christian life should go often to the Holy Communion for strength and comfort, or they will become spiritually dead, that is without "life." The words of Christ are a fearful warning to those who refuse or neglect to come to the Lord's table. How terrible it is to think that they have "no life" in them!

We have been speaking particularly of those who neglect their opportunities for receiving the Sacrament. There are others who seldom or never have such opportunities although they earnestly desire to receive the Bread and Wine of Life. For such there is no condemnation. "They are not under the law" as St. Paul tells us. The Prayer Book says that when the Sacrament can not be had, a man earnestly repents of his sins and has a lively faith in the death of Christ upon the cross for him, "earnestly remembering the benefits he has thereby, and giving Him hearty thanks therefor, he does eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the Sacrament with his mouth."

These words refer only to those who desire the Sacrament, but cannot receive it by reason of physical infirmity or the absence of a minister. For all others, who have the opportunity but neglect it carelessly or indifferently, there is no excuse.

We have met some who plead their deafness as a reason for not going to the Holy Communion, except when the service is interpreted for them. To such we say—Do not stay away because you cannot hear. With your Prayer Book, you can easily follow the service, if you really wish to. If you find any difficulty, ask some one to show you the places in the book. Do not hesitate. People will be glad to assist when they know that you need help. Your pastor or rector will gladly give you any information about the service if you only ask him. If you have no Prayer Book, he will readily furnish one, or you can write to your Missionary, who will supply you. With a little practice, you will soon learn from the position of the minister what part of the service he is reading. We know some deaf-mutes who use the Prayer Book as readily as any hearing person. In the case of those who have not learned to read, true faith and sincere desire are sufficient; indeed, these essentials everyone must possess in order to obtain any benefit from the Sacrament.

Sickness does not excuse neglect of the Holy Communion. If you are unable to go to Church, your pastor or your Missionary will gladly go to you, if you will inform him. And surely of all times the hour of sickness is the most proper time to seek forgiveness, comfort and peace in that religion of which the Holy Communion is the highest act of devotion.

Nor, finally, is the feeling of unworthiness a proper excuse for remaining away from the Lord's table. If you are convinced of sin, you must repent; and the Holy Sacrament is expressly offered for the comfort of those who are sorry for their sins and wish to do better. Herein lies the power and blessing of the Holy Communion, in that it strengthens our good resolves, and enables us to resist sin better. And the oftener we receive it truly, the better our lives become, and the more worthy we are to be called the children of God.

If, however, you cannot quiet your conscience, that is, if you cannot satisfy yourself that you are worthy to receive the Holy Communion, go to your pastor and tell him your doubts or difficulties fully and freely, and he will aid and comfort you.

Then stay away no longer, but come and say once more from the heart "and here we offer and present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto Thee."

## THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD (DR. MACLAGAN) ON CATECHISING.

*My Reverend Brethren*,—I have been pleased to learn that in several parishes of the diocese the suggestion has been adopted which I made in my letter addressed to you last month, with regard to the systematic teaching of Christian doctrine from our pulpits, and especially during the Holy Season on which we have now entered. I have no doubt that this has been the case in many other parishes from which I have had no communication. I desire now to follow up what I have said by reminding you that this work is as much needed among the young of our flocks as among our adult parishioners; and that the Church herself has pointed out very clearly the means by which this want may be supplied. I have frequently urged upon you the practice of *public catechising*, not only as an act of *obedience* to those directions in the Book of Common Prayer which we are solemnly bound to observe, but also as by far the *most effective means of building up the children of God in the fear of Christ*. I do not see how we can believe that we are fulfilling our obligations as Ministers of His Church if we neglect this important work. No Sunday-schools or other efforts of a similar kind can supply the place of that public instruction *within the House of God* which the Church provides for her baptized children. I would also wish you to observe that this is the only kind of teaching which the Ordinal assigns to our deacons as appertaining to their office, and that it devolves upon them to give themselves diligently to this work. But my object in reverting to this subject at the present time is to point out to you how fitly the work of catechising might be commenced in parishes where it is not already carried on; and how admirably it would strengthen and extend the systematic teaching of Christian truth which so many of you are, at present, giving in sermons to your ordinary congregations. And this instruction will not benefit the *children alone*. It is not impossible to induce parents to be present when their own children are being catechised; and it might often happen, especially among the less educated classes, that they would learn more from this simpler kind of teaching than from the more formal sermon. In every parish the two ought always to be carried on together. It would maintain the *method and continuity* of our pastoral teaching. Our people would be more deeply and intelligently interested in the truths which we put before them, and would, as St. Peter speaks, grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is quite possible that many

of the clergy, who have not been accustomed to catechising, may not see their way to begin it at once as a permanent part of their Sunday work; but they might be willing to undertake it on the Sundays of the Lenten Season. If this were done, and careful efforts made to render it as effective and interesting as possible, it is not improbable that in many instances the way would be made clear for continuing a work which, as time goes on, become not only more easy but more delightful to the catechist, and more profitable for the children. There may, however, be some parishes, where from various causes the clergy could not themselves conduct the catechising. Under such circumstances I should be prepared, at the request of the parish priest, to sanction the employment of a lay catechist; provided that in that case the catechising should not take the place of any of the regular services of the church, but should be altogether additional to and separate from them; and that no lay catechist should on any account be employed who has not received from me a special license after due inquiry and examination. This would be in some measure a return to the practice of the early Church, and an adaptation of it to our own circumstances; for although there does not seem to have been any distinct order of catechists, yet the work was often entrusted, and the name applied, not only to the ordained clergy but also to readers and others in the Minor Orders of the Church.

I desire then to commend this matter to your careful consideration and to your earnest prayers. On you, as on myself, there rests the solemn obligation expressed in the words of our Lord—"Feed My Lambs;" and the Church of Christ, informed by the Holy Spirit, has not only taught us how this may best be done, but has enjoined upon us the doing of it. May he ever give us grace, as faithful and true pastors, to fulfil all the trust that He has committed to us, for the glory of God and the salvation of His children.—Your faithful and affectionate Brother and Bishop.

W. D. LICHFIELD.

*Lichfield Diocesan Magazine.*

The Easter Number of *The Young Churchman*, (Milwaukee, Wis.), is the most beautiful and well devised paper of the kind that we have seen. Happy should the Sunday-school children be who received it as their Easter Card! But we refer to it also to note the statement of the wonderful and deserved success achieved by this ever attractive Sunday-school paper. The publishers say 60,000 copies of their Easter number were issued, and they add:

"What hath God wrought!" is the exclamation as we look upon and contemplate the vastness of the figures. To those who read the paper to-day, it is nothing; but to us, who seventeen years ago carried the first little bundle of two hundred copies of the first number from the printing office, which was the whole edition required then, the change is greater than we can express in words. And more than that: when we realize that that beginning was the foundation-stone of what is now "*The Young Churchman Company*," of which this paper is only a part, then truly does our heart swell with gratitude to Almighty God that all this hath been permitted to grow, and the work to be carried on to the glory of His name and for the good of His Church."

Now why should not the Church in Canada have a similar Company? doing like good and permanent work for Her? We have long desired to see such a Company formed. Such a work commenced: one that should embrace a Church paper, a Sunday-school paper, Sunday-school Leaflets and literature of all kinds, viz.: start a "*Church Printing and Publishing Company*." What do our subscribers say?