

W. Jull (who has proved himself a most energetic parishioners' warden) was re-elected; Messrs T. A. Hogg, R. H. Wedde, W. Kittow, E. A. Banks, L. Grenside, H. J. Pratley, J. Thorne, G. Coles, E. Bibby and R. J. Pedler were elected vestrymen.

It was decided to apply to the Diocesan Trustees for a loan of £100 to help pay off the debt to the Abbotsoford Lodge.

The balance-sheet showed a credit balance due to the generous gift of £200 last year from the Rathbone estate; without this there would have been a big debit balance. Efforts are to be made to organise the parish finances on a better basis. It is urgently necessary to raise £200 to pay for the new car.

A Boy's Difficulties.

In some very helpful articles published in recent issues of the "Church Times," Canon Underhill deals with the spiritual training of Boys. The following extract on the difficulties with which a boy communicant has frequently to contend, should rouse us to sympathy with boys who, in New Zealand as much as in England, have a hard battle to fight against the pernicious influence of un-Christian homes and companions. It should also serve as an appeal to indifferent and thoughtless parents not to put stumbling blocks in the way of their children's religious progress.

"Few of the laity realise what a young communicant goes through in an indifferent or hostile home. It is not only that the parents care nothing whatever about the boy's Communion; it is not only that in very many cases the parents utterly refuse to call him on the morning of his Communion. It is more than that. I have known many instances in which a boy or girl has been reviled, even beaten, for waking the rest of the family by going out early on Sunday morning. Moreover, an impossibly high standard is expected of the Communicant in the home. The slightest fault of temper or untruthfulness will rouse indifferent parents to scorn and bitter mockery of the boy and his religion.

When we add to all this the other difficulties, at work, in the street and indeed everywhere, the temptations of the boy's own interior life and all the other pitfalls which beset him, we may deplore the lapses which occur, but they can hardly surprise us.

In many of these home cases the hostility of the parents may partly be traced to unconscious jealousy. "The priest," they say, "thinks the world of the boy, but does not seem to trouble in the least about the boy's father and mother," and so they are indifferent or bitter.

But if the priests who read this article will consult the lists of the boys whom they prepared for the Sacrament in past years, they will find that the overwhelming majority of those who have "stuck" come from homes where one or both of the parents are faithful Church people, or at least friendly to the Church; while those who have lapsed are those who have no such home influence.

No doubt even in the best cases you will sometimes get lapses, and also there are wonderful instances of continued faithfulness in apparently impossible home conditions. But I would suggest that our objective is the home, and that we should not trust to our large Catechism for the continued faithfulness of that delightful boy of thirteen from the indifferent home. We must visit and visit and again visit the homes and the parents of our children. We should at least get to know them as well as they will let us; and if we can make them into communicants and churchgoers so much the better for their boys. I am convinced that this is the kind of work which enables us to keep our boys from lapsing as nothing else can do."

Our Sunday Schools.

The agitation about Socialist Sunday Schools in N.S.W. calls for two observations. The general public had little anxiety when "Agnostic" Sunday Schools were opened to undermine religion and teach blasphemy and atheism, but as soon as these developed into Bolshevik Seminaries there was an immediate outcry. Yet the general public claims to be Christian! Which is of more importance, reverence for God and righteousness which lie at the root of all morality and civilisation, or orderly government? Secondly: Why this anxiety over the teaching of Socialist Sunday Schools? People are at last beginning to realise that the character of beliefs imparted to children will mould their whole future lives and conduct. Education, and especially religious or anti-religious education, is really the most important question of the day.

Is it not time that Churchmen realised the immense importance of our

Sunday Schools? Instead of being a mere appendage to Church work left in the hands of a few enthusiastic parishioners, mostly zealous young girls themselves untrained, ought they not to be reckoned as the most valuable instrument in the parish for teaching the Christian faith and building up the Church and congregation? Ought we not to bend all our energies towards making them efficient? Do we not want the very best and highly trained teachers in them? Should not their work be organised to the highest point of efficiency, and a syllabus of teaching be laid down by the highest Church authorities calculated to make them the nurseries of true and loyal Churchmen? Too long have parents regarded the attendance or otherwise of their children as unimportant, and Churchmen in general, vestries and others, looked upon them as outside the sphere of active interest.

Why are our Sunday Schools starved for funds when they are one of the most essential parts of our Church machinery? The State is waking up to the supreme importance of its schools, when will the Church do the same? A few town parishes put their Sunday Schools in the first rank of their activities, but in some of them the Sunday School is still regarded as a little "side-show." While the country vicar who can never get into his Sunday Schools himself, sees the children of his flock at the mercy of inefficient teachers unsupported by parents and without the guidance of an authoritative syllabus. The Church herself needs to take up this subject vigorously. We need urgently in this diocese an organising teacher and inspector of Sunday Schools. We need a regular syllabus. We need Summer Schools or Winter Schools for teachers, not only in Napier, where few can attend, but, at some period of the year in every main centre, e.g., Gisborne, Bay of Plenty, and Southern Hawke's Bay. We want something definite to be taught, teachers instructed how to teach it, parents interested and enthusiastic over the education of their children, and expert supervision of it all to see that it is efficient and practical. People are afraid of Socialist Sunday Schools because they teach and train the children to practice disloyalty. We should find some encouragement in our Sunday Schools if, instead of wasting time in teaching stories, hymns and texts, they taught the vigorous practice of Churchmanship and Christian living.