

THE SACRAMENTS.

No man is a Christian till he is baptized. It is Baptism which makes him a Christian. In Baptism he has been Christened or "Christianed." To be a Christian, one must not only believe in Christ, but must put on, be joined on to Christ; as the Church teaches, by Baptism.—"Man receives that which by nature he cannot have." In Holy Baptism he is new born, his sins are washed away, and he has become a member of Christ and child of God and a temple of the Holy Spirit. In Confirmation the Holy Spirit perfects His work in strengthening the Baptized person to walk unwaveringly to his Christian calling. But life once given must be sustained. Without the birth there can be no room for sustenance; and so, without Baptism, can there be no Communion, but neither will the birth support life without after nourishment, so neither will it avail to have been born even of God, unless the life which is of God be supported by the means appointed by God. It will not profit us to have been Baptized unless we continually seek renewal and strengthening of that life by His Body and Blood.

Although all shall not be saved who partake of the Holy Sacraments, there is no revealed method of salvation without them. There is no revealed salvation from original or actual sin (and this, parents should in these days well remember) without Baptism; without the Holy Communion there is no life.

EARTH'S RECORD.

Glancing over a daily paper this morning, I was forcibly struck with the contrast between two head-lines but a column apart. One was, "A Noble Life Ended;" the other, "A Wasted Life." Two obituaries of men who had lived and died among us. The one had lived gloriously. The other had passed a life of such open sin, that it would be useless for his friends—if he had any left—to try to gloss over his faults, now that his bloated face is no longer seen about our streets.

They died the same day, and their obituaries were side by side. But what a wide difference in their lives! Both had come to the same city in young manhood, the paper stated; but how different their record! "By temperance, frugality, and industry, he had amassed a large fortune," was the statement made in regard to one. And then, far more important, "He was the noblest type of Christian manhood!" Yes, column after column was given to the record of the good deeds of the one, whose place none can fill; and the best of it all is, eternity alone can do justice to such a life. It did not end when the pulse ceased to beat, but will live on and on.

The other obituary was painfully short. "Poor fellow! he was his own worst enemy. He was gifted by nature and fitted to occupy a high position among us, but he would drink, in spite of all his friends could do. Now we can only throw over his wasted life the mantle of charity."

Ah, yes, "a wasted life!" But that is not all, for that "gifted" but dissolute man must have left an influence behind him against which many a weak brother may be vainly struggling to-day. "Gather up my influence and bury it with me," was the dying request of a young man to the friends who were weeping at his untimely end. His life, too, had been wasted, and when it was too late to even attempt to change his wretched influence, he saw it all, as in review, those sinful years passed before him. In anguish of soul he cried out: "Gather up my influence and bury it with me!"

Ah, young people, it is a grand yet solemn

thought, that the influence of your lives cannot be gathered up like treasured keepsakes, and buried with you by your friends at death, no matter if you plead ever so earnestly.

Then strive to live, such noble, Christ-like lives that whether called from life's battle in youth or old age you may be a stranger to such a wish.

Live for Christ, and then when you are called from labour to reward, "a wasted life" will not be earth's record of you; but a noble life will have ended, and its influence will be unending.

JUST ITS INTENTION.

It is related on good authority that an elderly man from Western Pennsylvania, whose family were Presbyterians and whose only experience in a religious way came from attending a country church with them, was once on a visit to a brother who was a Churchman and a warden in a certain Philadelphia parish. Sunday morning came, and he was invited to go to church with his brother. He professed his willingness to do so if his brother would only post him as to what to do, for he had heard that "Episcopalians" were dreadfully formal. In church they sat right together. The service began with the sentences, then the warden whispered "kneel down." This seemed to be hard work. After the Lord's Prayer, on admonition, he "got up." Then "sit down," and so it went until after the Creed. When the "kneel down" then came it seemed too much for the visitor's patience, for as he was getting down he grunted in an undertone: "Well! this does beat the devil." "Just its intention," quietly whispered the warden, and after this the service went on without any further comment.

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

There is one great difference that we must see at once between the service of the Holy Communion and all other services; and that is, that this service was started by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and is His own service, for we do it in obedience to Him, because He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

The word "service" itself speaks of our "serving" God. We are His servants, and we serve God best when we are obedient to Him and do what He tells us. And so when we offer the Holy Communion we are offering to Him the service that is most pleasing to Him, for of this service, and this alone, has our Lord said: "Do this in remembrance of Me." And when we faithfully join in this service we are in truth His obedient servants, offering Him a willing service.

This makes the Blessed Sacrament by far the most important service that we have. It is really and truly the Christian service, and no other services are of any importance at all compared with it.

EARLY COMMUNION.

Its value is thus beautifully expressed by the late Canon Liddon: "A Christian of the first or second century would not have understood a Sunday in which, whatever else might be done, the Holy Communion was omitted; and this great duty is best complied with as early in the day as possible, when the natural powers of the mind have been lately refreshed by sleep, when as yet the world has not taken off the bloom of the soul's first self-dedication to God, when thought, and feeling, and purpose are still bright and fresh and unembarrassed; then is the time, for those who would reap the full harvest of grace, to approach the altar. It is quite a different thing in the middle of the day; even when serious

efforts are made to communicate reverently. Those who begin their Sunday with the Holy Communion know one of the deepest meanings of that promise. 'They that seek me early shall find me.'—Easter in St. Paul's, p. 286).

A KING JUSTLY REBUKED.

Once upon a time Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, invited one of his generals to breakfast at a certain hour, but he excused himself from coming, then, as he was going to receive the Blessed Sacrament at the hour. When he arrived at the palace he found the King and his officers assembled, and many of them spoke profanely and irreverently of Jesus and His Sacraments. Then the old general rose from his seat, and said to the King: "I am bound to honour and obey you as my master, but I have another and a greater Master still, and I will not stay here and permit Him to be insulted."

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

No conclusions of criticism can alter the fact that the Old and New Testaments are one. The Christianity which is subduing the world unto itself stands upon the double foundation of the two volumes of revelation which confirm and interpret each other. But the fifteen hundred years which are represented in the growth of this wonderful Book have developed a final and complete religion, which is acknowledged by the greatest thinkers and students of the world's religious history to be the highest possible expression of man's religious nature, and the fullest manifestation of the Divine Mind. How can we then resist the evidence of special authority in such a revelation? It stands supreme, and it is the manifest product of ages of divine intercourse with man. It comes to us not as a collection of mere human thoughts about God and the results of the contemplations and experiences of a number of the best men of the race, but as the records of supernatural facts, and the spiritual outcome of a life which was lived on earth by One who was Himself above all other men, and left behind Him a kingdom which cannot be moved, and which shall fill the world.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

Beware of building the walls of your home so thick that you cannot hear the cries of the homeless. See the Lazarus at your gate. Do not treat him as Dives did. Let brotherly sympathy go out of your homes in bulk—in coal, and food, and clothing, and comforts for the sick. Let these things be the fruits of self-denial. Spend less in dressing and entertainments. Some so-called Christian homes spend more in one night on the pomps and vanities and frivolities of the world, renounced only in name, than they give to the Church and Charity in a year. These are amazing delusions—the leaks in the ship.

ADVENT POINTS TO CHRIST.

As St. John the Baptist after he had led men to repent of their sins, and pointed them to Christ, with "Behold the Lamb of God," so now the ministers and stewards of God's mysteries ought and will (if faithful) call men to repentance and point them both to the Babe of Bethlehem, the Lamb of God, the Ascended Lord, the Coming Judge. Oh! may this Advent lead us to Christ, closer to Him than ever before, and to join the company of those who can pray: "Even so, Lord Jesus. Come quickly. Amen."