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EDITORIAL.

Our Church History Notes.

On another page will be found the first of a series of articles on the history of the Christian Church. It is surprising, to say the least, what lack of knowledge exists, not only amongst the members of bodies outside the Church, but amongst members of the Church, regarding the history of the Christian Faith subsequent to the Acts of the Apostles. It may, indeed, be fairly questioned whether we can at all rightly understand and estimate that volume of the Scriptures it we are in ignorance more or less complete of the sub Apostolic age—not necessarily ignorance of facts, but, it may be, that worse form which consists in a disregard of facts. Of this last an example is before us in the statement made recently by an English Bishop that the evidence of the New Testament is against the opinion of the Church that the Holy Communion is the central act of Christian worship. Such a view seems to ex-

clude all life from the Church since the conclusion of the New Testament canon, and to neglect the fact that the Divine Scriptures are historical in their very essence, even in the poetic and didactic portions. So that for their right interpretation we must look not only to themselves but to the history of that Body which holds the Faith of the Scriptures by historic descent.

Again, the study of Church history is beneficial as a corrective to popular prejudices. There is a tendency in every age to self satisfaction, and we are apt to think of ourselves as having not simply superior opportunities but superior enlightenment in spiritual things. But to one who for the first time reads the story of Christian life and practice in by gone centuries, there often comes a sense of having entered into a clearer and healthier and more bracing atmosphere, even after allowing for all the mistakes and superstitions incident to people recently emerged from heathenism. And although this impression may not be absolutely true, yet there is a nobility of self-forgetfulness arising from a steadfast faith in the invisible and eternal of which we must often feel the lack in our hearts and around us in these latter days.

Best of all, Church history helps us to realize the doctrine of "the Communion of Saints"—to "recognize amid the aisles of our churches and along our cloisters, about our ancient tombs, and in ruined and desolate places, which once were held sacred, not in cold poetical fancy, but by the eye of faith, the spirits of our fathers and brethren of every time, past