

FEB 18, 1888.

SHORT INSTRUCTIONS FOR LOW MANNERS.

N. Y. Freeman's Journal. Delivered by the Rev. James Donohoe, pastor of the church of St. Thomas Aquinas, Brooklyn, N. Y.

SUBJECT AND EFFECTS OF THE SACRAMENTS.

By the subjects of a sacrament is meant a person who can lawfully receive it. The first condition for receiving any sacrament is to be living. The dead cannot receive any sacrament. All can receive the sacrament of Baptism. Indeed, before receiving Baptism no other sacrament can be received, for Baptism makes us members of the Church, and the other sacraments were instituted only for children of the Church. Hence Baptism is very properly called the door to the other sacraments. Children who have not attained the age of reason cannot receive the sacraments of Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, or Matrimony. According to the discipline of the Church, it is not allowed to administer the Holy Eucharist to persons not having the requisite religious instruction or sufficient intelligence. Women cannot receive Holy Orders. Extreme Unction can only be received by persons in danger of death from sickness.

All the sacraments have the effect of conferring grace, and of three of them impart a character, and of three of them confer grace, but they do not confer it in the same way. Baptism and Penance are called sacraments of the dead, because they give what is called the first grace. They restore the soul, dead in sin, to the life of grace. The remaining five sacraments were instituted in order to increase in us the life of grace. That is, to receive them properly our souls should be free from mortal sin. Our souls should already be in the life of grace. This is why they are called sacraments of the living. There are exceptional cases in which the sacraments of the dead confer the first grace, and vice versa, but this will be explained more fully when we are treating of the sacraments in particular. To understand the difference between the sacraments of the living, represent to yourself a person in a comatose condition. Animation is suspended for the time being; there is no sign of life, no pulse, no respiration. A skillful physician administers some powerful drug, and all at once the heart beats, the blood circulates in the veins, the eyes open, and members move. This is what Baptism and Penance do for the soul dead in sin, the only difference being that the soul in mortal sin is really dead, but the soul in mortal sin is really dead. Baptism and Penance, the sacraments of the dead, restore it to the life of grace. Now, those new animating forces must be sustained, repaired, increased, otherwise there would be no growth, and the soul would have no existence, languishing and about to be annihilated. This is why our Lord instituted the sacraments of the living, which give an increase of grace to the soul and preserve its life. Besides this increase of grace, each sacrament, when received with the proper dispositions, confers a special gift, which is called sacramental grace. It would ask you to try and get a certain idea of what is meant by sacramental grace, because, once you get it, you will receive it frequently. Let us try and bring this home to you by a familiar example. I have heard many persons say that whenever they enter their church they are impressed with its beauty. Now, my brethren, bring about this beauty, many kinds of work were required. Some built the walls, others put on the roof, others built the altars, others stained the windows. It is the combination of these widely different kinds of work that produce the harmonious beauty of the edifice. Now, our sanctification is an edifice which we wish to construct. Good works are the materials we must employ, and it requires all the energy and industry and mathematical precision, and, I will particularly add, all the comprehensive-ness of the accomplished architect, aided by his skillful bands of workmen, to so use these materials as to produce from them an edifice that is not weak or unsightly or angular, but solid, safe, full orbed, and equally rounded. Brethren, where shall we obtain these various gifts? Do not be alarmed about their possession. We see the young girl leave school and go to work. Her father is sneered at, and her religious practices ridiculed by her companions and her employers. She is not ashamed to profess her faith openly. Whence came to her this courage? Ah! it is a gift, a precious gift of the Holy Ghost. It was given her on the day of her confirmation. From time to time she detects in herself weakness in a new strength, a new determination to persevere, has come into her soul. Where did she obtain this gift? At the altar, where she received Holy Communion.

A sutor comes, and offers her his heart and hand. New and perplexing duties arise, duties towards her husband, duties towards her children. Young and inexperienced, it almost seems like insupportable, the perfect manner in which she fulfills these duties. But it is not instinct. It is a gift she received through the sacrament of Matrimony. And so with the other sacraments, each confers a special gift, which is called sacramental grace.

Three sacraments, namely, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, imprint a character upon the soul. This character is indelible. It will never be effaced, in time or eternity. Hence those sacraments can only be received once. In St. Augustine's time some heretics and ill informed people advocated the repetition of the sacrament of Baptism. "Suppose," they said, "a man be guilty of enormous crimes; suppose he renounce his faith; should he not, on being received into the Church again; be re-baptized?" "No, no," replied St. Augustine, "the seal of his baptism is ineffaceable." The Romans imprinted a mark on the body of each soldier. If one of them were made prisoner, or went over to the enemy, he was not to be marked anew when he returned, because the old mark was sufficient. Remember, dear people, that our souls have received this

character. In Baptism, the cross of Jesus Christ has in some way or other been imprinted on our souls. Confirmation has marked us out as soldiers of Christ, and these marks will remain for all eternity. They will remain to bring us shame and sorrow if we go to hell. They will remain to be a source of glory if we go to heaven.

The Feast of the Epiphany.

From the Church News. Our Saviour loves you, and loves you tenderly. If He does not make you feel the sweetness of His holy love, it is because you are not humble and more to render you more humble and more to subject in your own eyes. But do not neglect on that account to recur to His holy bounty with all confidence, above all now at this time when we represent Him to ourselves as He was a little infant in Bethlehem; for, my God, why does He take this sweet and amiable condition of a little child if not to induce us to love Him confidently, and to confide lovingly in Him. Remain, then, by the cross of the Saviour, in the arms of His love, and you will find there the gold which the Magi have left. If you love the perfume of holiness, you will there find that of incense, and if you love the delectations of sense, smell there the odorous myrrh, which perfumes the whole stable. Be rich in love for this dear Saviour, who is rich in the familiarity you have with Him in prayer, and satisfied with the joy of feeling within you the holy inspirations and affections of being one with Him.

As for your little tempers, they will pass away, or if they do not, it will be for your discipline and mortification. In fine, since without reserve you wish to be all for God, do not trouble your heart; and in all the trials which come to you, be firm in living in the arms of His love, and you will find there the gold which the Magi have left. If you love the perfume of holiness, you will there find that of incense, and if you love the delectations of sense, smell there the odorous myrrh, which perfumes the whole stable. Be rich in love for this dear Saviour, who is rich in the familiarity you have with Him in prayer, and satisfied with the joy of feeling within you the holy inspirations and affections of being one with Him.

The author of the "Manual of the Anti-Masonic League," at a recent conference implored the Pope to grant an indulgence to the faithful who would indulge to become affiliated with Freemasonry, and who would combat this organization. The request has been favorably received by the Holy Father. He has granted on the ordinary conditions—first, plenary indulgence to children who, at their First Communion, shall undertake never to enter a secret society, and who will combat this organization; second, plenary indulgence to all the faithful who, on a date specified for the future, shall make or renew an engagement never to become a member of the Masonic sect.

But give me for my friend one who will unite heart and hand with me, who will throw himself into my cause and interest, who will take part when I am attacked, who will be sure before-hand that I am in the right, and who will be as bold as a lion in the face of the world, as he may have occasion to be towards a being of sin and ingratitude, and a wish that others should love me as hearily as he—Cardinal Newman.

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