

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

This church aims to offer, what is the great need of our times, a common ground of fellowship to all who "love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." She rests her claim to this ministry of reconciliation upon the following possessions:

I. The historical fact that she is the Mother Church of the English-speaking race.

II. Gospel teaching, embodied in a Creed of Apostolic origin, so simple that a child can learn it, so definite that unbelief cannot get around it, so comprehensive that nothing essential to the soul's health is left unsaid.

III. A reverent and solemn Worship, wholly free from crudities of thought and expression, enriched by the devotional experience of the past, and suited to the daily wants of the present; most truly a "Common Prayer," since it belongs to minister and people alike, and allows the living voice of the congregation to be heard.

IV. A Christian Nature that cares tenderly for the lambs of the flock; teaches them from the first that as baptized children they belong in the Good Shepherd's Fold; brings them up to the love and reverence of what is holy, pure and honorable; and aims to make them God-fearing and high-minded men and women.

V. A Christian Year with its Christmas, Lent, and Easter, to hallow and bless the passing seasons by associating them with the events of our Saviour's life on earth, and with the great facts of Redemption. This quickens the memory; satisfies the instinctive desire of believers for special seasons of devotion; gives balance and symmetry to the thoughts; and is a guard against narrow and one-sided views of revealed truth.

VI. Simple and Scriptural terms of admission to sacramental privilege. The practical recognition of the duty of every man, woman, and child, baptized into the Body of Christ, to lend a helping hand in the work of building up His Kingdom.

SHALL THE CHILDREN COME TO THE SAVIOUR?

A TRUE INCIDENT.

There was much trouble and sickness, in a cottage in the parish, where a widow woman and her seven little children lived, and naturally enough, the clergyman was constantly a visitor there.

The mother, ill herself of an incurable disease, was pleased to be read to and prayed with, but on one point she stood out against all prayer, all teaching—her seven little ones were all unbaptized, and nothing would induce her to allow them to be brought to their Lord in baptism. She "did not hold with that sort of thing."

Their father had been a Churchman, but a careless one, and he had died without fulfilling this important duty to his children. The mother was a Baptist by birth.

Days and weeks went by, the clergyman was unwearied in his attention to the sufferer. Then the baby fell ill, and, sad to say, died.

Now ensued a painful scene. The little one needed burial, and its mother desired to have it laid in the church yard, and the Church's service read over it. While violently opposed to bring the babe to its Saviour in life, she would have it acknowledged as a Christian child in death.

The clergyman was not called to judge, whether or no, he should entertain this request of a dying woman; he simply looked to the orders of the Church, to which he belonged, and saw written there, that the Office for the Burial of the Dead is "not to be used for any that die unbaptized," and he gently told the miserable woman, that he might not read the words of our service over her child.

Of course the enemies of the Church made a great outcry; the clergyman was cruel, so to distress a bereaved mourner. They chose to overlook the fact, that the woman had been earnestly entreated to have her child brought into the Church of Christ, and had refused. Some over-zealous people even went to the magistrate about the mat-

ter, to no avail. The minister of Christ had only done his duty, they were told.

Why these people, so earnestly desired Christian burial for a poor lifeless body, and denied Christian baptism to a living child, it is hard to say.

Hardly had the grief of this loss, softened in the mother's heart, when the child next in age to the baby, sickened, grew rapidly worse, and was soon pronounced to be dying.

Again the clergyman entreated to be allowed to baptise the poor little fellow, and now the mother was half persuaded. She felt as if these crushing blows, one following another, must mean something.

She still hesitated. What would her friends say? Those who had so hotly and mistakenly attacked the clergyman in her cause?

There was a struggle in her breast. What should she do? How decide? The priest of God could say no more; he waited in silent prayer for her decision.

Suddenly a strange sound broke the stillness of the sick room. The dying child lifted his plaintive voice, "Do, mother, have me baptized," he said: "I want to be baptized."

That was a cry that could not be heard unmoved. The poor woman burst into tears, clasped her child in her arms, and resisted no longer his being offered to God, in His own appointed way.

Before long her stubborn will entirely gave way, and the other children were also brought to baptism in the parish church.—*Echoes.*

ASH WEDNESDAY.

BY THE REV. JOHN ELLERTON, Rector of Barnes.

This is a strange name. What does it mean? Why are the churches open to-day?

Well, if you will look into your Bible, you will see that ashes were an old Jewish type of mourning or sorrow. When Job felt his own sinfulness as he had never done before, he said, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Instead, then, of saying Ash Wednesday, suppose we say Sorrow Wednesday, or Mourning Wednesday.

Now why are we asked to be sorrowful or mournful to-day?

Well, what is the great source of sorrow in the world? Not sickness, not poverty, not the loss of those dear to us. I have known some who were enduring all these troubles at once, and yet whose faces were full of peaceful light, because their hearts were full of the Peace of God. But there is one thing which is at the bottom of all the sorrow and mourning in the world. You know, I think, what I mean. It is Sin.

And why does sin bring all sorrow with it? Because sin separates us from God, and it is God only who can make us happy and keep us happy. Peace with God, through Jesus Christ; and then Peace from God, shed into our hearts by His Spirit. To have these makes a sick bed, a work-house lodging, aye, even a dear grave-side, a happy place.

But separate from God, you never will, never can be happy. Many years ago there lived a wild, careless fellow, whom all his companions used to call the "happy Rake." He found out, long afterwards, the true way to be happy; and he used to own to his friends, that many a time, when every one thought him the life and soul of mirth, he had been so miserable within, that he could not look at a passing dog without wishing he were that dog. For he was without God in the world.

Now those who come to church to-day hear a service read which a great many people do not rightly understand. They hear the clergyman read out a list of sins, and begin each with saying, "Cursed be the man that" doeth so and so. Some people call this "cursing their neighbors." It is a very foolish thing to say. For what this service really tells us is that if we are guilty of sin we are ourselves "cursed;" and "cursed" just means what I have said all sin makes us to be, it means separated from God. Ash Wednesday is a day then on which the Church asks you to come and

hear about what separates you from God, and so what is the true, secret cause of every sorrow and unhappiness you have.

But is this all? Ah, no! When the sad list of sins is read out, and in that list there is, I think, something or other which comes home to everybody (at least I have always found it speak home to myself), then we all kneel down, and say together a prayer to God that He would make us clean hearts, and put right spirits in us, and make us hear of joy and gladness. And who put that prayer into men's minds? Who gave it us to be written down, and kept, that we might often and often repeat it? God Himself! That prayer is from God's own Book; it is the Fifty-first Psalm.

Do not you think it will be good for you to come into church to-day, and think about the real source of your troubles, and get at the bottom of them, and tell them all to God in such words as those?

One thing more. Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent; the first of forty days during which you are asked by the Church to come and do what you have been asked to do to-day; think of your sorrows and the sins which caused them; turn to God, and seek for His forgiveness, and for peace with Him. And why for forty days? To remind us of what our dear Lord, who gave Himself for us, once did, when he was on earth. He went for forty long days into a wild lonely country, where none but wild beasts were round Him, that he might pray to His Father in sorrow of heart; sorrow, not for any sins of His own, but for yours and mine, that He might know what it was to be tempted to sin, as we are, that He might feel our unhappiness, and not only think about it. For His sake we keep the forty days of Lent. His prayer for us those long days brought peace and love into His soul. If we try, in our poor way, to follow His example, God's peace will be given to us too.

TEMPTED BY DEGREES.

John Newton says Satan seldom comes to Christians with great temptations, or with a great temptation, or with a temptation to commit a great sin.

You may bring a green log and a candle together, and they are very safe neighbors; but bring a few shavings and set them alight, and then bring a few small sticks and let them take fire, and the log be in the midst of them, and you will soon get rid of your log. And so it is with little sins. You will be startled with the idea of committing a great sin, and so the devil brings you a little temptation, and leaves you to indulge yourself. "There is no harm in this," "no great peril in that;" and so by these little chips we are first easily lighted up, and at last the great log is burned. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.

If all those who are keeping up appearances would sensibly reduce their expenses there would be plenty of respectable company for all. One of the great points is to begin right. A little house means less trouble to take care of it, and a knowledge of cooking implies the ability to use moderate-priced materials. The wearing of unfashionable and well-mended clothes proclaims the independence of the wearer. The cutting down of minor expenses implies strength of character. And this putting down, to be worth anything, must be done systematically, and not by fits and starts, and its object explained to the family. Character and conduct, what one is rather than what one has, is the real test of standing in any community.

The whole life of Jesus in the days of His flesh was a following of the strayed.—*Trench.*

—Drink St. Leon Water for dyspepsia or weak digestion after each meal.