

*THINGS WE OUGHT TO
KNOW ABOUT THE
CHURCH.*

THE "ORNAMENTS" OF THE CHURCH.

What are the "ornaments" of the church, I wonder. Are they the stained glass windows, the painting on the walls, the beautifully cut stone, or the carved wood?

No; strange as it may seem, none of these things are meant when we speak of the "ornaments" of the church.

This is a name given to certain special things used in the services; and some of these things we will consider in this paper. They shall be:

- The altar, or the Lord's table.
- The coverings for the altar.
- The cross above the altar.
- The candles.
- The font.

The Altar.—As soon as there were Christian churches there were altars. S. Ignatius, who is said to be the "little child" whom our Lord "set in the midst," wrote, "In every church there is one altar."

They were sometimes made of stone, sometimes of wood. In these days they are of wood.

The coverings.—In most churches the colour of the altar-cloth changes with the season. White is always used for joy, and therefore at Easter, Christmas, Whit Sunday, and great days you will see a white altar-cloth. Red is used for martyrs, so on S. Stephen's Day, for instance, you will see the altar in red. Violet is for times of mourning, such as Lent, and green is usually the colour for other days.

The cross above the altar.—The cross has always been the "sign of

the Son of Man," and wherever we see this sign, whether it is on the gable of a church, or on a grave, or made by the priest on a baby's forehead, we know that Jesus Christ has taken possession—just as one might write one's name on one's own book or paper.

Therefore it is that in the most sacred spot in the church the cross of Christ is placed, always to remind us that He is Lord and King. For centuries His sign has witnessed there for Him.

The candles.—Why are there candles, when, in many churches most likely, there is plenty of gas giving a better light?

The candles have another purpose. They are set there and lighted at a celebration of the Holy Communion to remind us that Christ is the true Light of the World. Like the cross over the altar, they bear witness for Him to the eye.

The font.—In the first days people used to be baptised in a stream, or pool of water, and were immersed (that is, put under the water) three times, in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. But in old countries there was great risk in this way of baptising for infants and weakly people, and the present way of *pouring* water was adopted, and fonts were placed in the churches, and there the priest christens the little ones in the Name of the Trinity, with a thrice repeated pouring of the water upon their foreheads.—*Mary Bell.*

An advertisement had been running in a Bristol, Eng., paper for the last year offering £50 reward for any well authenticated case of a child being carried away by an eagle, no matter in what country.