

## THE CHURCH AND THE CHILDREN.

The Church of to-day is awaking to the fact that nowhere does the Holy Spirit find so little stubborn opposition as in the breasts of children, and that no work yields a richer revenue of spiritual results than that bestowed on this fertile and promising field. We are coming to feel, as well as see, that we cannot save the world by saving manhood. True, we are not to neglect manhood, but we are to give more attention to childhood. Eli needed to be waked up the third time before he "perceived that the Lord had called the child." That Church is dozing, if not sleeping, that fails to read in the "signs of the times" the same divine call. When Jesus said "Suffer little children to come unto Me," He meant more than to have us afford them the negative help of standing out of the way. Standing rather in the place of Christ, the Church should call the children to her arms.

From whatever quarter the lingered skepticism on this point comes, it is not from the Bible, the nature of childhood, nor the history of the Church. God's covenant with Abraham, the *magna charta* of the Church of the old dispensation, emphatically embraced within it the children of the patriarch. The Christian dispensation broadened rather than narrowed the older covenant. It not only included children, but it made them, in a sense, a type and model, after which maturer disciples were to copy. Holding up a child, dimpled and blushing, as a living text, Jesus taught, not that children must wait till maturity to enter His Kingdom, but rather that maturity must turn back again to the spirit and temper of childhood to enter the gateway of His fold. "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." That "multitude which no man can number," is composed of those who are children in age or children in character. Some one says, "The door into Christ's fold is about three feet high; children can walk in, but we who are grown must stoop to enter."

Love, trust and obedience are the three conditions of salvation. Loving, trusting obeying are the three prominent characteristics of childhood. What wonder, then, that the young so often and so readily become disciples of Christ.—*Exchange*.

WISE WORDS.—We are not disposed, says *Church Press* (N.Y.), to join in any hue and cry against a priest of the Church who might differ from us upon theological or ritualistic questions, or who may choose to introduce a practice which borders upon innovation, with a view of increasing the order, and devotion, and efficiency of the Church, so long as it does not contravene the essential principles and formularies of the Church. There is, possibly, too great a tendency to suspect of heresy or superstition those who take an independent view of Church questions; and both the peace and progress of the Church are hindered by very needless disputes about matters of ceremony or terminology. It is well for us all to manifest a little more freely and fully that "most excellent gift of charity, which is the very bond of peace and of all virtue," and one of whose chief characteristics is that it "thinketh no evil." We must think, and let think.

ANOTHER subscriber, renewing for self and ordering a copy for a friend, writes: "I hope this will bring you a permanent subscriber, as I am sure they will not be able to give it (the *GUARDIAN*) up at the end of the year. I wish all church people would think it a duty as well as a pleasure to take so good a paper; and—subscribers may speak, may they not—I wanted to say how sincerely we like and admire the absence of sharp unchristian sarcasm so sad to see in the discussion of religious matters."

## A WORD TO SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS.

The following extract from an address delivered at a Sunday-school Institute meeting is commended to those interested in Sunday-school work:—

Teachers must first decide what they want to do. They are to work with the rector in impressing on the child's mind the most fundamental truths, to lead to confirmation, and to dispose the pupil to take a strong stand as Christ's faithful soldier and servant to his life's end. The teacher should be sure that his task is work, not play. He should take hold of it in a workmanlike way. He should weigh the importance of his office and be in earnest. He should allow nothing to interfere. No pleasurable engagements are broken on account of the same flimsy excuses that teachers often give. Such excuses are childish, unmanly, unwomanly, they are immature. Suppose a man should run his business in such a fashion! Where would he be in a month, or even in six days? The teacher often comes at the last moment, to ask where the lesson is. The root of the difficulty is that the Christian work is not taken up with seriousness and earnestness.

A second qualification relates to character. The teacher to often "doesn't care." But he should care, and can't do good work until he does care. He should have courage, hopefulness, enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is most important. Have you your work enough at heart to want to do it better? If this is the temper, do try to cultivate cheerfulness and hopefulness. Do not say, "I can't awaken the interest I wish to. I am not the right person, have not the right gifts." God is not a taskmaster, exacting what we cannot give. He takes us as we are now. He expects us to work, wants our work, not that of some one else. Don't worry that you can't do some other one's task. We are not responsible for some things. Look up, not down. Lay before God the best you have and can do, and then be courageous and hopeful. The speaker then took the word *Teacher* as a sort of text, and drew out the lesson from words of which the letters are initials. *T* is for *Talk*, don't preach. *E* is for *Explain*, take up details and make a picture out of them. *A* is for *Apply*, not in class but outside. *C* is for *Catechize*, i.e., question. A question opens a window and lets in light. *H* is for *Having patience* and *Holding on*. *R* is for *Responsibility* for earnest work. Responsibility and duty should flower into privilege. There is joy in impressing God's truth on the heart of the young.—*The North East*.

## THE WEEK OF DEATH-SHADE.

The power of Holy Week to elevate and strengthen humanity lies in its witness of the divine self-identification with man in the hour of bitterest agony. It is witness of the meaning of the Psalmist's knowledge of the comfort of the rod and staff of God in the valley of death-shade. For it is not the hour of death that tries men's souls, but the gloomy valley of the *Shadow of Death*: when the darkness of death, as death would be had not Christ died, is projected into this life with its crushing weight of hopeless woe. Many a one who has struggled to the gate of death, in terrified agony and pain, is ready to cry "it is finished" with a sense of rest and thankfulness that it is nearly over. But death in all its possibilities and most terrible meaning,—death as God knows it—apprehended by the soul, sustained by all the vigor of the fullest physical life, with its instinctive resistance to the thought of extinction or worse, is "a horror of deep darkness" that is crushing in its heaviness.

Many a one whose faith is strong in the hour of dissolution, is dismayed, overwhelmed in the time of bitter darkness while life is strong. Then the hold on Christ is lost. The night encompasseth and the compass fails to guide. The roaring only continueth which may be the token of the wind that will overwhelm, the wave that will engulf, or the raging surf that will swallow up our precious bark—and He seems asleep. Here lies the weakness born of the independent self-reliance of our modern life. We can surrender when death comes to lay us low and find our comfort at the last in submission to the Father's will. But to-day we fight, resist and struggle. We summon our manhood to sustain, our courage or stoicism to bear us through. We agonize and sweat the blood-drops, but the angels come not to minister to us, because we have not risen to the grandeur of the "Father not my will but Thine." To teach this lesson, which the world has always needed, but never more than now, Holy Week is kept with its awful memories. Lent, rightly understood, teaches not merely a temporary experience of living, but the very story of life, man struggling against odds with sin. And Holy Week and Good Friday, reveal not merely God suffering for man—we none of us doubt that witness—but God once and always in sympathy and power, suffering with man, and in that companionship in sorrow bestowing the abiding presence—nearest when the night is darkest. What utter sadness must come to the Saviour's loving heart, as so oft His children, saved truly now, saved consciously at last, in Him—yet lose the comfort which to-day is theirs and which to-day He longs to bestow, by endeavoring that which He only could do, the treading of the wine-press alone, the standing in the fiery furnace without the conscious presence of One whose form is like the Son of man.

Lent fails. Lent must fail, if it cometh to us as a passing season. But Lent grasped as a revelation of life here, will deepen into the awful sadness, that is glorious with the Master's presence, of the Conflict, the Garden and the Cross, will lead through the death of the old into the eternal birth of the new, and make Easter the assurance unto us, in all darkness that life yet holds in store, of Him, who knew the depth of agony and its issue into the Eternal Day, in whom we live and by whom we are untiried though the darkness be heavy upon us, as it so links us to Him that we realize, and need to realize nothing save "Jesus only" with ourselves.—*The Church Record, Conn.*

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## TO CORRESPONDENTS AND OTHERS.

Owing to the special plan adopted for this week, we have been obliged to hold over a quantity of interesting matter *Home Field and Correspondence*.

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