

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Palm Sunday.

SERVING GOD FROM THE HEART. "Hosanna to the Son of David." (St. Matt. xxi.) To day, my dear brethren, we are reminded of that hour in the life of our Lord on earth in which He was receiving from the people of His own nation all the honor they could render Him. He then entered the chosen city of God in triumph over all who had opposed Him. Thousands surrounded Him, went before Him and followed after Him. They paved the road before Him with their own clothing and with the branches of trees, that they might thus make His entry into Jerusalem as glorious as possible.

In a few days, when He had been arrested by His enemies, where was this great crowd? Where were those who had cried out so fervently, "Hosanna to the Son of David?" But few could there be found. The rest had either deserted Him or joined in with the crowd that mocked Him even while He was dying on the Cross. Nearly all had abandoned Him in the day of His adversity. The first trial of their faith in Him, the first trial that proved the strength of their love for Him, found them entirely wanting in that characteristic of true love, fidelity to the end.

Is it impossible for us to do as they did? No; it is not impossible, for many who are Catholics born and bred do the same thing now. But who are these? They are those who fail to keep the Ten Commandments of God and the precepts and laws of the Church. Every Catholic who breaks the Commandments of God and refuses to obey the laws of the Church does worse than those who deserted our Lord when He was condemned and crucified. With their lips they declare they are Catholics, and in this way cry out "Hosanna to the Son of David," but in their hearts and lives they live and associate with the enemies of Christ.

But why are these men worse than the others? Simply because they received the graces of Christ in their baptism, in their confirmation, and in their first Communion, as well as in their many Communion thereafter. In Communion they receive our Lord Himself, the Lord of eternal glory who is eternal life itself. These have been, in truth, members of the kingdom of heaven, but have cast themselves out by not keeping the Commandments of God, by not obeying the laws of the Church. Truly does the Scripture say of many of them: "He that wanders out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead." For dead many of them are apparently—dead eternally. They seem to be in the spiritual slumber of eternal death. They appear to be eternally judged; their eternal fate already sealed.

Why do I say this? Because nothing can move their hearts to return to God. Missions, sermons, exhortations, threatenings, warnings, counsels, the prayers and entreaties of fathers, mothers, kindred, and friends are all unheeded by them, are all in vain. Even the tears of their fathers and mothers, and the blushes of shame whenever they are alluded to by friends, have no effect upon them, none whatever. They will not return to God.

OUR WESTERN WAITS.

BY FRANCIS J. FINN, S. J.

"Oh, come let us worship!" sang a little lad at the head of the surprised choir-boys, as they marched in solemn procession up the deserted cathedral aisle of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral. His notes were clear, low, full, and golden. "Oh, come let us worship!" he repeated in a rich alto to the silvery voice of the solo soprano who walked beside him. "Oh, come let us worship Christ the Lord!" chorused forth twenty pure, fresh voices; and the stately pile rang with that sacred melody, which, when uttered by childish trebles, is, perhaps, the nearest approach to the singing of the angels that can charm mortal ear.

Softly the chorus died away, as the procession moved into the vestry, where, presto! these pseudo angels became very real boys, and doffed their surplices with all the varied and inexhaustible accompaniments that animal spirits so lightly create. "Hasn't Harry Conway come, sir?" inquired he of the golden alto, appealing to Mr. Gibson, the choir director. "No, Willie; it's the first time he failed to be on hand."

"It's too bad," commented Willie. "We've but three quarters of an hour to have our last rehearsal of those Christmas carols, and without Harry we'll feel lost. What a gay voice he has! It's the prettiest soprano I ever heard."

"Yes," assented Mr. Gibson warmly; "and his disposition is as charming as his voice. He's an honor to his Church, too. You remember, when I asked him to help us out in our Christmas singing, how he answered modestly that he wouldn't do so because he was not a Catholic. His manner was good, and his answer showed character."

"Well, boys," continued Willie, "we'll have to get along without Harry. Even as it is, we'll barely have time to run through our carols." And in the fulness of the Christmas spirit these animated music-boxes gave themselves to their singing with a zest; and, for the brief time allotted them, charmed the air with the sweet and simple melodies of Noel.

But Harry Conway was not charmed into appearing; and so when the choristers had resolved themselves into the regulation small boy, with his shout, hop, and a jump, Willie Simms leaped upon his pony and cantered off toward the outskirts of the town. His acquaintance with Harry Conway, whom he had met but four times, had come about in this way: Willie's father, desirous of reviving ancient Christmas customs, had presented the surprised choir with a number of old English carols, with the understanding that the singers were to have them ready for a parlor concert on the afternoon of Christmas. How he happened upon Harry Conway, Willie knew not; but Mr. Simms it was who, on their meeting for their third rehearsal, had introduced Harry to them—a modest, decently clad boy, with a voice such as none of them, accustomed as they were to beautiful sounds, had ever heard. Willie was at once taken with the sunny faced soprano, and their brief acquaintance had already ripened into a sort of intimacy.

The Catholic Boycott.

The Derry Journal says: In an article under the above heading the Irish Catholic and Nation of the present week incorporates an exhaustive table showing the relative numbers and salaries of the Protestant and Catholic officials of the several Irish Government departments. The table is in the highest degree instructive, and for the information of our readers we give the appended condensation: Chief Secretary's Office—Protestant, 20; salaries, £10,442; Catholics, 3; salaries, £1,281. The Justiciary—Protestants, 14; salaries, £41,100; Catholics, 3; salaries, £13,100. Legal Officials—Protestants, 27; salaries, £18,403; Catholics, 7; salaries, £3,548. Local Government Board—Protestants, 20; salaries, £12,700; Catholics, 7; salaries, £6,300. Fisheries Department—Protestants, 3; salaries, £2,100; Catholic 1; salary, £306. Public Record Office—Protestants, 9; salaries, £4,477; Catholics, 2; salaries, £1,857. Public Works Office—Protestants, 5; salaries, £4,100; Catholics, 2; salaries, £1,857.

The total number of Protestant officials is 98, who get £99,222, and of Catholics 25, who receive £26,842. The Protestant officials, therefore, are in the ratio of about 4 to 1, although the Catholics number about 75 per centum of the population, or 4 to 1 of all other denominations, which means in plain words that the Catholics have only one-twelfth of their equitable representation. Religion's Loss of Social Prestige.

Whatever the reasons—and they are many—religion has ceased to hold that high, unquestioned social position assigned to it in former ages; yet it remains, in the midst of all our modern worldliness and unbelief, one of the greatest concerns of individual souls and of the public mind in the civilized world at large, and most notably in this country of ours. Whether firmly held or anxiously sought for; whether as an occasional impulse or as an habitual practical profession, some sort of faith underlies the existence of almost all. After the imperative needs of bodily life, that of religion, of one kind or another, is perhaps the most widely felt. For the thousands interested in politics or in the pursuit of wealth, there are millions concerned about their ultimate end. A proof, or at least a sign, of this may be seen in the curious fact that among the books sent forth year after year by the press, there are more devoted to religion than to any other individual subject. The sacred books of all nations, above all the Bible in its diverse parts and viewed under every conceivable aspect; the teachings of the Gospel in its manifold bearings;—such are the subjects which continue to draw the minds of the most cultured and the most thoughtful.—Abbe Hogan, in March Donahoe's.

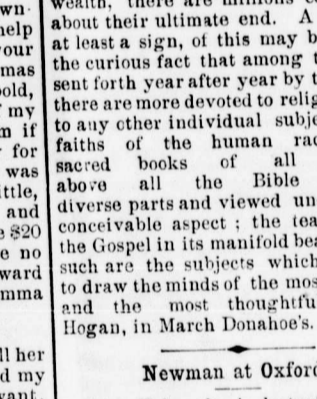
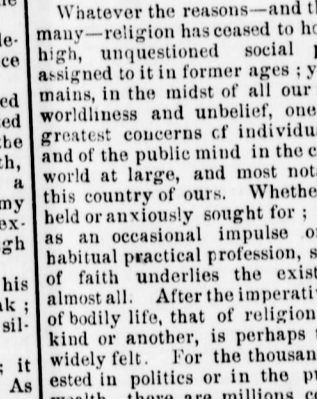
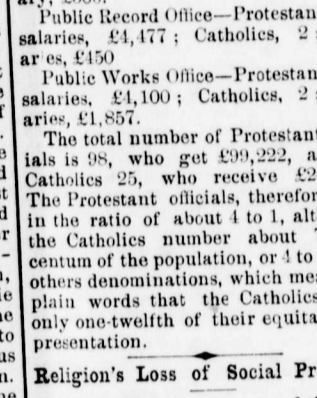
Newman at Oxford. Dean Hole, who is lecturing in this country, was at Oxford with Newman. He says: "Although Newman wore, when I saw him first, the costume of the clergy then in use, but now relegated to the respectable waiter, dress coat, low waistcoat, and white neckerchief, clumsily tied, a brief inspection convinced you that he was a man of exceptional power and purpose. Intellect looked out of the windows of his eyes, ere it came forth from the door of his lips. The expression of the thin, ascetic face was grave and thoughtful, but ever and anon a brief smile of humor came like sunshine on dark waters in our April days. You saw at once that he must be an ecclesiastic, and if you had met him for the first time in his shirt sleeves you would have said—That man is a priest. He preached with a plaintive pathos, that tone which the French describe as 'tears in the voice,' which fascinates like the notes of the nightingale when he presses his breast against the thorn and sings."

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