

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost. ON SPIRITUAL DEAFNESS. "Ephpheta, which is, be thou opened." (Mark, 7, 34).

Ephpheta, that is be thou opened, our Lord said when He performed the miracle of loosening the tongue of the dumb, and opening his ears, thus giving him speech and hearing. The same words have also been pronounced over us when the priest, in imitation of our Divine Saviour, in the sacrament of baptism touched our ears with spittle and said: "Ephpheta, quod est adaperire, that is, Ephpheta, which is, be thou opened. Yes, be thou opened, O ear of man, in order to understand them, keep them in your heart and obey them every day of your life.

Beloved Christians, the priest spoke these words when he baptized you, but has his prayer been also effectual? Did our Lord see you among His faithful disciples, when He said: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God" (Luke 11, 28), "and who in a good and very good heart hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience." (Luke 8, 15) Or did the Holy Ghost refer to you also, when by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, He said: "Who is blind but my servant, or deaf but to whom I have sent my messengers?" (Isaiah 42, 19) Alas, to how many hearers of the word applicable! Can we count the number of worldlings who for hours will patiently listen to the most fervent talk, but who will not listen to the word of God for one half hour, who can enjoy scurrilous lectures, but have as great a repugnance to the heavenly food of the soul as the invalid to the food for the body. Can we count the number, who intentionally neglect to hear the sermon on Sunday, who even leave the church when, during the holy sacrifice of Mass God's truths are dispensed to the faithful, because they are unwilling to listen to the words of eternal life. Can we enumerate all who have an aversion to hearing anything that pertains to God and to the salvation of their own soul? To what class do these indifferent hearers belong? To those who are of God, or of whom? Hearken to what our Lord says: "He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not because you are not of God." (John 8, 47) No, such deplorable of God's word are not of God nor will they come to God: their end is eternal destruction.

Again, there are many Christians who hear the word of God, but it does not produce in their hearts any fruit of eternal life. They listen to the sermon without attention, without due respect and without an earnest desire of hearing that which is beneficial for their soul. Or if the instruction, like the good seed, was received in their hearts, they permit the devil, the world and passion to pluck it out, and will not permit it to grow and fructify. The most serious truths may be propounded, they pay no attention, and act as if God's truths were announced for strangers but not for them. They may be repeatedly exhorted to do penance and amend their life, but they will produce at most only weak intentions, that are forgotten before they leave the church. Thus they hear sermons Sunday after Sunday from the beginning to the end of the year, and yet remain the same blasphemers, drunkards, spendthrifts and dissolute violators of every divine and human law.

What a disgraceful contempt of God's holy word! What a fearful responsibility for so many graces received and so shamefully abused. What can touch the sinner's heart if the word of God is ineffectual? What can open his eyes before which he stands, if divine truth no longer has power to enlighten him, correct and convert him? As long as man is susceptible of the word of God, Heaven is still open for him, even if he had lost it a thousand times by falling into mortal sin. If, however, the sinner has become deaf to the voice of God announced in His holy gospel, there is no salvation for him, for he will not hear until the terrible judgment will be given: "Depart from Me, you cursed into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25, 41)

Behold, you despiser of God's word, this will be your eternal lot unless you comply with the words spoken over you in the sacrament of baptism Ephpheta, be thou opened. Cast yourself, like the deaf and dumb man in this day's gospel, at the feet of your divine Saviour and beg of Him most fervently that He cure you of your spiritual deafness, open your ears that they hear the word of God and that it sink deep into your heart and bring forth fruit in patience. Say with the prophet Samuel: "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth." (I Kings 3, 10) But the faithful servant does not only hear the commands of his master, he also complies with them. Yes, O sinner, thus speak and act. We will open our ears and our hearts to the voice of grace, to God's holy word. We will earnestly desire to hear it that we may know God better, serve Him more faithfully, love Him more truly and thus requite His infinite love. We will receive every word that comes from the mouth of God as food for our souls, and as faithful disciples of our Lord preserve this word in a good heart, so that it may bring forth abundant fruits of virtues and graces for life everlasting. Amen.

A GREAT record of cures, unsurpassed in medical history, proves Hood's Sarsaparilla possesses merit unknown to any other MEDICINE.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

Ave Maria. An Anecdote of Goldsmith. Once there was in England a poor woman, who had often heard of the good deeds of a certain Dr. Goldsmith, and who felt emboldened to ask him to prescribe for her sick husband without an assurance of ever receiving any pay. "He has lost his appetite," she wrote to the poet, "and is in a very sad state, and we are very poor."

Goldsmith answered this letter in person, and satisfied himself that the man was really as ill and destitute as his wife had represented. "I will send you some pills in an hour," remarked Goldsmith, as he took his departure.

In a short time the good poet's manservant arrived at the invalid's house with a small box, which when opened was found to contain ten guineas, and a card on which these words were written: "To be used as necessities require. Be patient and of good heart."

The author of "The Deserted Village" was often in sad straits himself, but sufferings and privations seem to have had the effect of making his heart all the more tender and compassionate.

A Noble Deed. There are several instances in history where men have refused a cup of water, although perishing of thirst, but have given it instead to a comrade whose necessities were greater. Here is a true incident, which may well take rank with those examples of lofty heroism:

The brave Sir Ralph Abercrombie received his death wound at the battle of Aboukir; and his faithful soldiers carried him to his ship on a litter, and placed a folded blanket under his dying head, that it might rest more easily.

"How comfortable my head is now!" he said, faintly. "What have you put under it?"

"Just a soldier's blanket," they answered, deeply touched.

"But whose blanket?" he insisted; "what is the man's name?"

"Duncan Roy, of the Forty-Second, Sir Ralph."

"Well, take it away, and have it sent back to Duncan Roy. If he gets through this day alive, I want him to have his blanket to night. I don't believe I could die in peace if one of my poor lads was deprived of a comfort for my sake."

Another blanket was found, but Sir Ralph was soon beyond aid. We can easily imagine how Duncan Roy, of the Forty-Second, kept his blanket, if he survived the carnage of the day, as a token of affection from the brave commander, who loved his soldiers more than his own comfort.

The Boyhood of a Famous Artist. "The great painting 'Christ before Pilate' had such an extended and triumphal experience in this country that many of our young readers doubtless had the pleasure of seeing it; to others it has become familiar through engravings and descriptions; therefore, to all a little story of the childhood of the painter Munkacsy will no doubt be acceptable.

When the Hungarian war was ended, the boy found himself an orphan. He was only seven years of age, and what would have become of him at the time if his good godmother had not flown to the rescue no one can tell. She, however, not content with merely giving the lad a home, undertook his education. She owned a beautiful estate up among the mountains of Gstaal; and there, for a little while, the boy who was one day to become a famous and devout painter roamed about at his own will, beloved by the servants, a playmate of the lambs and birds. But this was soon to end.

One night, when most of the villagers were at a distance attending some fête, a band of robbers came galloping down from their den in the mountains, and took possession of the good godmother's house. All of the servants were beaten until some of them died. Little Munkacsy, perhaps on account of being a child, was not hurt; but he was gagged and tied to one who was fatally injured. While lying thus bound he saw the marauders beat his poor godmother, trying to induce her to tell where the money and jewels were concealed. She held out bravely, only yielding when it was necessary to save her life. Then the robbers, having done all the mischief they could, took their booty and departed.

All night long the cruelly wounded people lay there upon the dining-room floor; and it was not until the light of day streamed in upon the awful sight that one, the steward, succeeded in extricating himself and setting the others free. A doctor was brought as soon as possible; but the godmother of Munkacsy was beyond mortal help, and in three days she died, leaving the little lad again to the mercy of the world.

The record of his life from that time was a sad one; and it was only after the most terrible privation and patient endeavor that he rose to the place he now holds in the world of art.—Francesca.

The Shepherd Lord. Every school-boy knows about the War of the Roses, but there are many stories connected with that long and disastrous contest which seldom come to the knowledge of any save those who love to ramble through the wayside paths of history. That of Henry Clifford, commonly called the Shepherd Lord, is one. The De Cliffords were firm adherents of the Lancastrian interests; and in battles which left the Yorkists victors and seated Edward IV. upon the throne, the little Henry, aged but seven, lost both father and grand-

father. Richard, still younger, was also missing. This was extremely embarrassing to the King; for the Clifford name was so hated by his party that nothing short of the imprisonment of the little lads would satisfy public clamor. They were sought high and low, but a mother's anxiety had promptly put them beyond the reach of revengeful persecution. When questioned she only said they had been sent beyond the sea to be bred there. Were they dead? She did not know. The truth was that the poor little Richard had escaped to a land farther than that beyond any sea; but the sturdy Henry was safe in his own England, in the family of a humble shepherd, fed, reared and employed like his own son. Here he stayed until he was fifteen years old, when, a rumor of his survival having reached the court, he was taken to the Scottish border. Here he passed fifteen years more, shepherding everything but blood; occasionally holding private communication with his mother, but having the mortification of seeing his lands and title pass into the hands of his hereditary enemies.

On the accession of Henry VII. the young shepherd took his place in the House of Lords; but so rigorously had his seclusion been maintained that he was unable either to read or write, which caused him at first to be held in derision by the educated peers. The ridicule, however, soon ceased. He had studied a book, of which Nature tells his story; and his knowledge of the natural phenomena, especially of the movements of the heavenly bodies, supplemented by the learning which he took immediate steps to gain, soon placed him beyond the scorn of any one. The most learned monks of the kingdom were employed to instruct him, and his proficiency was such that before long he became an authority even to the scholars of the land.

In another direction he became skilled. Shepherds are not warriors. He could tend and fold and shear his sheep, but he could not use a sword; yet he became an experienced soldier, fighting with distinguished bravery, at the head of a large retinue, at the battle of Flodden. He lived to be seventy years old, none the less happy or useful because of the thirty years spent in seclusion.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES. It is a true saying that opportunity is kind, but only to the industrious. The Persians have a legend that a poor man watched a thousand years before the gate of Paradise. Then, while he snatched one little nap it opened and shut.

Do we always take the best possible advantage of our opportunities? Is every means placed within our reach utilized by us for the purpose of attaining the end for which we were created? When this important question is fully considered, many instances are recalled to mind wherein moral advancement and intellectual development might have been promoted by opportunities disregarded by us. When these advantages are within easy reach, we sometimes consider them as matters of minor importance, but let the opportunity pass, and the advantages are lost forever. Nevertheless, this realization of our own thoughtfulness is very often not conducive to our amendment, since this negligence is of repeated occurrence.

Day after day the same opportunities present themselves, and as often do they glide by unheeded. Many persons are in such a position as enables them daily to participate in the most important practices of their religion, but seldom do they think of taking advantage of this most favorable opportunity. Many can attend Mass and evening devotions every day, but such a golden opportunity is entirely disregarded. Many others can, without any inconvenience whatever, approach the sacraments monthly, but their conduct in this respect too often does not meet the requirements of the Church. Now let these persons be placed in such a position as will prevent frequent participation in these practices, and immediately will they come to the sorry realization of their indolence—soon is their conscience filled with shame and remorse. How often will they exclaim, "What a treasure of spiritual wealth might I have placed to my credit had I realized the importance of taking advantage of such favorable opportunities."

How many more names of brilliant minds would shine on the pages of history had the intellectual faculties of many a gifted man been properly developed? Often we hear exclaimed, "What a clever man that Mr. So and So would be if he only had a chance?" Assuredly, he had a chance but neglected to take advantage of it. Perhaps in his school days, when he should have been storing up abundance of useful knowledge, he spent much of his time in devising plans by which he might escape from attending school. How many times did he play truant? How many days did he attend school and did not pay the least attention to the salutary instructions of his teacher?

True, all may not have had the advantage of attending school, but in the great majority of instances, the above is the case. Again, many a youth is sent to college. His parents are rich, and he has no fears for the future, considered from a worldly point of view. He pays little or no attention to his studies, and thinks only of having "good time." Too often he spurns the boy whose share of worldly

goods is more limited than his own, but whose application to study and exemplary conduct is a model for all his companions. Now let both be placed at the mercy of the cold, unfeeling world, and in most cases the latter youth is found equal to every emergency. The strained circumstances of his boyhood days forewarned him of what he might expect from the world, and, since "to be forewarned is to be forearmed," he is fully equipped to encounter all difficulties. His habits of close study and his strict observance of rules, laid the foundation of the man, hence he is able to read human nature and to conduct himself as becomes a well behaved and worthy citizen.

On the other hand, consider, for a few moments, the youth whose object was to have a "good time." He finds himself thrown on his own resources—a ship without a rudder at the mercy of the waves; no port in sight, nor means to reach one, would circumstances permit. The clouds of delusion roll away and the uncertain flickerings of his vain folly enter the windows of his remorseful soul. Too late, alas! too late, he comes to a sudden realization of his utter helplessness! Now he deprecates the loss of many valuable hours. He lives to long repent the folly of his youth.

Again, we often come in contact with persons who have received a fair intellectual training, and who employ it only to boast that they possess such an education. They manage somehow to eke out a miserable existence. Drinking and carousing, they never think of providing means to support themselves in their old age, and when this period of life has arrived, they are thrown, a miserable burden, upon their kindred.

How many instances are there in which grown-up persons could easily promote the improvement of their mental condition, if they were only alive to the importance of taking advantage of the opportunities afforded them? It would be much more profitable for "corner loafers" to be at home reading some good book or paper instead of standing on the corners or lurking in the alley-ways, cursing, swearing, or engaged in immoral conversation. How much more advantageous would it be for many country youths to spend their evenings at home in perusing the pages of some useful production, instead of roaming about the lanes and highways, shouting, and singing offensive songs, to the great annoyance of their neighbors.

Many young men who do utilize their leisure moments in reading, too often squander many precious hours in devouring the purposeless pages of the dime novel, or the endless columns of love stories in trashy magazines.

How can the heads of families give sound advice and point out to those under their care their errors, if they themselves are not well instructed? How can the elder members of the family teach the younger ones and show them good example if they themselves do not learn salutary lessons and govern their actions accordingly? Many instances could be adduced wherein people have become renowned personages by making good use of timely opportunities. Charles Dickens was a poor boy, but through his own exertion, he became the most popular novelist of his day. Columbus was poor and friendless, but through courage and enterprise, gave to us a new world and at the same time cast around his name a halo of unfading glory. Numberless examples might be shown, but let these suffice.

It is plainly evident that our duty in this respect is to be always on the alert, and not let one opportunity pass without deriving some good from it.

Let each one, therefore, endeavour to take the best possible advantage of the opportunities which God places at his disposal, in order that he may do honor to God, to his neighbor, and to himself.—Adapted from The Collegium.

THOROLD CEMENT. Fenwick, Ont., Jan. 16, 1899. Estate of John Battle, Thorold, Ont.: Dear Sirs,—I built in the year 1877—twenty-two years ago—my residence, which is a concrete one, out of your Thorold Hydraulic Cement, and I give me pleasure to state that after nearly a quarter of a century, the building is still in first-class condition. I have often wondered why, when building houses, people do not go more into the use of concrete, as I consider a building made of this material is much more durable than one of brick, stone or wood. I have much pleasure, therefore, in recommending your Thorold Cement to any person who is engaged in the erection of residential or farm buildings. Yours truly, W. H. F.

P. S.—Permit me to add that I prefer it to brick, as the nature of it is cool in summer and warm in winter, and when built with a smooth finish it is more attractive than brick. I intend to build another house of the same material. W. H. F.

If you wish to get a nice little library, the best thing to do is to become a subscriber to "Boys' and Girls' Own," the new illustrated Catholic monthly. For every new subscription you send, you will get a 50-cent book free. Five in postage stamps, sent to Benziger Brothers, 36 Barclay St., New York, is the easiest way to pay for a year's subscription. Write for sample copy.

There are so many cough medicines in the market, that it is sometimes difficult to tell which is the best. If we have a cough, a cold or any affliction of the throat or lungs, we would try Birkle's Anti-Consumptive Syrup. Those who have used it think it is far ahead of all other preparations recommended for such complaints. The little folks like it as it is as pleasant as syrup.

Mother Graves' Worm Exterminator does not require the help of any purgative medicine to complete the cure. Give it a trial and be convinced.

The never-failing medicine, Holloway's Corn Cure, removes all kinds of corns, warts, etc.; even the most difficult to remove cannot withstand this wonderful remedy.

What It Will Do. Polson's Nervine, the great pain cure, never fails to give prompt relief in the following complaints:—Sprains, bruises, cuts, rheumatism, neuralgia, toothache, lumbago, sciatica. Buy today at any drug store a 10 cent sample bottle and test it in any of the above complaints. It never fails. For Nervine is composed of the most powerful pain subduing remedies in the world. Get a bottle at any drug store. You will be made happy. Ten and 25 cents a bottle.

Impurities of the Blood.—When the action of the kidneys becomes impaired, impurities of the blood are almost sure to follow, and general derangement of the system ensues. Parmentier's Vegetable Pills will regulate the kidneys, so that they will maintain healthy action and prevent the complications which certainly come when there is derangement of these delicate organs. As a restorative these Pills are in the first rank.

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"OCULT POWERS."

Somebody has written a book with the purpose of showing people how to acquire "occult powers" so that they may use those powers "to achieve success in business, to recover health and to protect themselves from disease." What a tremendous amount of dreary nonsense our age is guilty of! Bitterness is what the old philosophers used to call certain classes of metaphysical vagaries. Surely the solemn follies of the present day, such as are propounded in this book on "occult powers," are only folly described by this old appellation. Listen to this bit of unadorned foolishness from "occult powers" after saying the essence of every material atom is vibration, the luncy runs thus: "Your atoms constantly change to the poles of your thought. The occultist's power is only the action of instructed thought, etc." The gibberish of a baboon is on a plane with this "yet stuff of this kind is seriously accepted by some people and is tolerated, if not welcomed, as a contribution to thought in this century, so staidly pouring forth from a sleepless printing press. The chaos of the intellectual world is something appalling. Nothing but flossam and jessam strewing the highways to the realm of thought (God save the mark!) has become simply chaos of thought. Everybody thinks as he pleases, and as a result most of the thinking is nonsense. Same thought, same logic thought is out of court. Any vagary, any absurdity finds vogue, applause and sale. Christian Science, Occultism, Buddhism, any old or new is taken up with acclamations and had as a great success. There seems to be more lunacy outside of insane asylums than in them.—Church Progress.

A BIT OF WISDOM.

In that admirable serial of priestly wisdom, now running in the American Ecclesiastical, under the title "My New Curate," the following bit of counsel should be printed in letters of gold: "Better talk over their heads, young man, than under their feet. And under their feet, believe me, metaphors, they trample the priest who does not uphold the dignity of his sacred office of preacher." "Come down to the level of the people," preached the great St. Ignace, who people, "come up to the level of your priests, and be educated and refined," they say: "To do so, the people must be elevated. As it any priest went down in language and habit to the people's level who didn't go considerably below. Never were truer words spoken, and none more needed at the present time. The great fault in the world is going down to the people's level, until everything is dragged into the mud of vulgarity and music are in the mire in consequence. We are the victims of an absurd democracy, which has immersed us heels and head in the low average of humanity, are the arbiters of taste is a fallacy, which our clergy, as natural leaders, should above all others combat and root out. Refinement and elevation come from the cultivated, who are the few. Preach high, and the people will soon learn to appreciate. This does not mean to preach abstrusely on metaphysical topics, but it means to preach on elevated themes in a becoming manner, to cultivate an accurate and refined imagination with which to illustrate and concretely illumine doctrine. And so in the pulpit, we are now the victims of beer hall music. The people are easily led upward by a leader whose aspiration is lofty and whose judgment is clear.—Church Progress.

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BOYS' AND GIRLS' ANNUAL FOR 1899.

THIS BEAUTIFUL AND VERY ENTERTAINING little ANNUAL for 1899 contains something to interest all boys and girls, and as it costs only the small sum of FIVE CENTS it is within the reach of all. The frontispiece is a very nice illustration of St. Anthony proving by a public miracle the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. How Jack Hildreth Freed Whitman from the Comanches, by Major Anna Taggart, author of The Blissylvania Post Office; Three Girls and Especially One, by Francine River, etc., etc.; Fast Asleep (illustration); Past Mending (illustration); Mary, Queen of Heaven (illustration); You're Out (illustration); Paying with Kitty (illustration); Stolen Fruit (illustration); An Army of Two; A True Story; Our Blessed Mother and the Divine Infant (illustration). This little Annual has also an abundance of games, tricks and puzzles—The Magic Dart, Shadow in Disguise, The Impossible Cat, Fire, The Inverted Glass, A Home Telephone, To Preserve Flowers, Another Way To Keep a Bouquet Fresh; as well as splendid recipes for Home-made candy. Altogether it is one of the nicest little books that we know of, for the price—five cents. Orders mailed at once on receipt of price. Address: Mrs. Coffey, CATHOLIC RECORD OFFICE, London, Ont.

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