

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS. Fifth Sunday After Easter.

THE THREE STEPS TO HEAVEN. Blessed is the man whose help is from thee; in his heart he has proposed to ascend by steps. (Psalm LXXVIII, 5.)

Next Thursday the Church will celebrate the feast of the Ascension of our Lord; the day on which His sojourn in this vale of tears came to an end, when He entered upon the possession of that glory which He had won by His obedience in this world.

We hear a great deal of talk nowadays about the dignity of man, and there are some few people who maintain that we ought to make humanity the supreme object of our care and worship.

But so far from depressing and lowering man and his dignity, I venture to say that the doctrines and teaching of the Church raise him to a higher level, and place before him a higher motive and a loftier end than it has ever entered into the mind of any other time to conceive.

The first step in the Christian life is Faith. And what is faith? What does faith do for us? Faith is that virtue by which we accept as true those things which God has revealed.

The second distinctively Christian virtue is Hope. And what is hope? To what does it raise us? The light of reason teaches us, as I said before, that we are God's creatures and must be subject to Him, and if so subject will receive from Him a fitting recompense.

With reference to the third great Christian virtue—Charity—I have time only to mention that it makes the ruling motive of our lives the love of God for Himself because He is what He is. For before concluding, I wish to point out the greatest elevation to which we are raised. Take a man who is in the grace of God; what is his position? What does the possession of God's grace make him? I should not have dared to answer had it not been revealed by God and sanctioned by the Church.

As the strength of a building depends upon the solidity of its foundation, so health depends upon the condition of the blood. To expel impurities and cause the vital fluid to become vigorous and life giving, Ayer's Sarsaparilla is the most powerful and effective medicine in use.

The Proprietors of Parmelee's Pills are constantly receiving letters similar to the following, which explain itself. Mr. John Beach, Waton, Ont., writes: "I never used any medicine that can equal Parmelee's Pills for Dyspepsia or Liver and Kidney Complaints. The relief experienced after using them was wonderful."

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OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

Thus whispered one morning in heaven How the little child-angel May, In the shade of the great white portal Sat sorrowing night and day; How she said to the stately warden— He of the key and bar— "Oh! angel, sweet angel I pray you Set the beautiful gates ajar— Only a little, I pray you. Set the beautiful gates ajar."

Then up rose Mary, the blessed, Sweet Mary, the mother of Christ: Her hand on the hand of the angel She laid, and her touch sufficed. Turned was the key in the portal, Fell ringing the golden bar, And lo! in the little child's fingers Stood the beautiful gates ajar.

Not all the old heads are on old shoulders. A patent was recently granted to the sixteen-year-old son of J. F. Forward, of San Diego, Cal., for a propeller for boats, which is worked by foot power.

There is a pretty story told about the naming of the Marechal Niel rose. When the famous General Niel of the Franco-Austrian war, returning from the scene of his many victories, passed through a certain small town, one of the peasant women of the place presented to him a basket of beautiful yellow roses.

She was greatly pleased with the flower, and on inquiry found it had no name. She smiled at the general significantly, and said, "Then I will be the one to give it a name," and added, graciously, "I will christen it the 'Marechal Niel,'" and at the same moment she bestowed upon the man the jewelled emblem which revealed to him his promotion and gave him the title Marshal of France.

Every boy and girl should endeavor to have an aim in life. Poverty is no drawback to the ambitious. Shabby clothes only add dignity and worth to the poor boy or girl determined to receive a good education.

Idleness is the rock which has shipwrecked more ambitious boys than any other cause, with the exception of intemperance. Again a boy's or girl's manner tells. Fun and high spirits are in keeping with youth. It would be a dull world indeed if the shout of young voices played never greeted the ear of the old.

Our Pictures on the Walls. The frames are not expensive and the pictures are there where sunlight or the fire-light softly falls.

The frames are not expensive and the pictures are there where sunlight or the fire-light softly falls. The stranger would not note them, yet no hope of greed or gain Would make a man think of parting with our pictures on the walls!

Nay, we would have no changes in the portraits if we could, For, gazing on the faces, we can see them as they were; The father strong, and sisters in their lovely womanhood, The mother sweet and tender, and the baby in his chair.

The Boy Who Says "We." Don't laugh at the boy who magnifies his place. You may see him going to the postoffice with a big bundle of his employer's letters, which he displays with much pride as if they were his own.

Your Physical Condition. Needs attention at this time. If you are tired, weak and nervous, it is clear that your blood is impure, and without doubt there has been too much over-work or strain on brain and body.

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day to say "we" in earnest. The boy will reap what he sows if he has grit and sticks to his job. You may take off your hat to him as one of the future solid men of the town. Let his employer do the fair thing by him; check him kindly if he shows signs of being too big for his place; counsel him as to his habits and associates, and occasionally show him a pleasant prospect of advancement.

Major Skinner tells in his autobiography, "Fifty Years in Ceylon," how his prompt obedience to an order suddenly communicated made the governor of the island his friend. He was then Lieutenant Skinner, twenty-one years of age, a member of the governor's staff and of his military family.

The lieutenant was annoyed, for he was engaged to a dinner-party that evening, to which the Governor and Lady Barnes were going. But he mounted his gray Arab, who could do almost anything but fly, and as soon as he got clear of the fort started at a gallop. At every sixth mile he drew bridle for two or three minutes, to give the Arab a chance to breathe.

He reached Negombo at 4 o'clock, having ridden the twenty-three miles in two hours. In Ireland this idea of Mary became a dominant force. Over "the fair hills of holy Ireland" it fell like a benediction.

Exquisitely does the same poet show us the "Bell Founder" in the morning of youth kneeling at the altar vowing to offer some fruit of his labor to Mary the Mother Divine. In the May Carols of Aubrey De Vere, in the ringing verses of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, in the ballads of Keegan and Callanan, in the inspired translations of Mangin, everywhere we find the Irish music lending a sweet strain to Mary Queen of Mercy.

In England when the faith brought to the Saxons ripened to fruition they seized upon the idea of Mary and claimed it as their own. The name of Our Lady was on every tongue; it became a war cry. Kings fought under its protection: the poor scholar, subsisting in his eagerness for learning on the charity of the rich, sang at their door the "Salve Regina," and St. Richard, the great Oxford scholar, died with the words of a quaint Latin hymn to Our Lady upon his lips.

Charles Lamb has written: "Material lady with the virgin grace, Heaven born the Jesus semeth sure, And thou a virgin pure, And when the great Oxford scholar, died with the words of a quaint Latin hymn to Our Lady upon his lips."

Longfellow has several poems to the Blessed Virgin, one of which might well be used as an inscription to Murillo's Assumption:

Lady, thine upward flight The agonizing receive with joyful song, Blest who thy mantle bright May seize amid the throng. And to the sacred moment float peacefully along!

Other American non-Catholics like sides Longfellow have shown that they are not lacking in appreciation of the Virgin Mother. James Hillhouse, a native of Boston (1789-1811), in the land of Puritanism, has in one long poem this passage:

There is a significant passage in an article which Mr. Bernard Holland writes in the March issue of the National Review, of London. Alluding to Cardinal Manning's conversion, Mr. Holland, says: "Many roads, it would seem, lead to the spiritual city of Rome. Some men have taken the road of historic learning, others that of a deep and mystic philosophy. Some have been led, apparently, by love of the beautiful; others by the desire to belong to the widest fraternal association on earth, extending to people of all classes and all countries. Others, again, have followed the road of human affections and the lead of those whom they love or admire. Others, like Alexandrine de la Feonays, in the touching Recit d'une Soeur, in terrible suffering or affliction have sought divine consolation in a form of religion which, more than others, recognizes the power of intercession and spiritual communion between the living and the departed. The road taken by Manning was that of high policy, the theoretic route. He was attracted by the greatness and system, the antiquity and continuity of the Imperial Church of Rome. The nature of this attracting force, taking so many various forms, this kind of homesickness, which outsiders of very differing kinds have so often felt, is, at least, a fact which deserves careful study. Does the Anglican Church exercise this indrawing power, or does the Russian?"

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POETS' TRIBUTE TO MARY.

Perfection of Womanhood the Theme of Noble Singers.

Mary, the most perfect of created beings, is the idea which has entered into Catholic literature, Catholic thought and Catholic sentiment down through the glorious ages of faith to our own day. It rose in hymns and canticles from quiet cloisters throughout the length and breadth of Europe. It penetrated into the Sagas of the North and was sung there by Olaf and Vladimir, sweetly displacing the old pagan Freya, who, perhaps, had her origin in some glimmering of this truth.

In Ireland this idea of Mary became a dominant force. Over "the fair hills of holy Ireland" it fell like a benediction. Irish heroes, the O'Neills, the O'Donnells and the Geraldines, unfurled their banners for "God and Our Lady." Irish women honor Mary most by their imitation of her. From childhood till the green grass of their ancient grave-yards covered them they looked up to the "Virgin ever blessed" as their model, their keeper, and their sympathizing friend.

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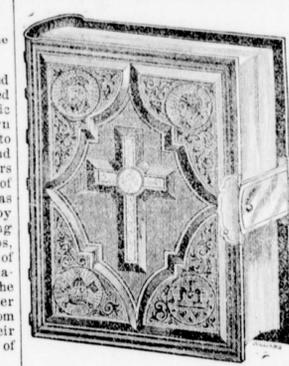
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My soul, lest it should truant be, Thy grace did guide to thine and thee; Now sitting beside the Throne, Darkly my presence and my past, Let my future radiant shine, With thy sweet hopes of thee and thine!

Lord Byron's "Ave Maria": Ave Maria: blessed be the hour, The time, the clime, the spot where I so oft Have felt that moment in its fullest power Sink over the east and west! While swung the deep bell in the distant tower!

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Mother of the fair delilith, Though I amid perfect in God's sight, Now sitting beside the Throne, Thyself a woman Trinitly, Being a daughter born to God, Mother of Christ from stall to rood, And wife unto the Holy Ghost, Oh when our need is uttermost, Think that to such as death may strike, Thou once wert sister, sister like! Thou headstone of humanity, Grandsonhood of the great mystery, Fashioned like us, yet more than we!

Ab! knew'st thou of the end when first That Babe was on thy bosom nursed? Or when He tottered round thy knee, Did thy sorrow dawn on thee? And through his holy eyes, by year, Gazing with Him the Passover, Didst thou discern confus'dly, That holier sacrament which He, The latter cup about to quaff, Should break the bread and eat thereof?

What human tongue can speak That day when death came to break From the tir'd spirit, like a veil, Its covenant with Gabriel Endured at length unto the end? What human thought can apprehend That mystery of motherhood, When by thy beloved at length renewed The sweet Communion was? His left hand underneath thy head, And His right hand embracing thee? Lo! He was time and this is He!

We will conclude with these lines from a German Catholic poet whose name is unknown to us: O Mary, so gentle of mien and most sweet, My love and devotions I lay at thy feet! In art thou my Mother, thy child I will be, In life and in death I will love only thee.

O Mary, for this is each heart beat of mine? No breath that I draw but is measured by thine. For ever and ever thy love will I crave, In life and in death and beyond the dark grave.

The sweet consecration, O do not deny! May thy name guard my heart as the years hasten by, When I call thee in dying, reach forth thy dear hand, And lead me at last to that heavenly land. —Yonkers' Catholic News.

Dana on the Bible. In a recent address, Charles A. Dana, the well known editor of the New York Sun, speaking of books which every one should read, placed first in rank the Bible, considering it not from a religious but from the standpoint of literary utility.

"There is perhaps no book," he says, "whose style is more suggestive and more instructive, from which you learn more directly that sublime simplicity which never exaggerates, which recounts the greatest event with solemnity, of course, but without sentimentality or affectation, none which you open with such confidence and lay down with such reverence; there is no book like the Bible. When you get into a controversy and want exactly the right answer, when you are looking for an expression, what is there that closes a dispute like a verse from the Bible? What is it that sets up a right principle for you, which pleads for a policy, for a cause, so much as the right passage of Holy Scripture?"

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