

FIVE-MINUTES' SERMON.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, OUR TERRESTRIAL CANAAN.

"Go into the land of Israel." (Matt. 2, 20.) For centuries the children of Israel had suffered the bondage of Egypt, and our divine Saviour also passed several years of His childhood in exile in the same country, when the impious Herod sought His life. At last, however, God had compassion on His people, and they received the consoling mandate to go into the land of Canaan, which is the land of Israel, that glorious land which flows with milk and honey. The same cheering command was given to St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, by the angel, in the gospel of today: "Go into the land of Israel."

To day a similar command is given to you, brethren, by the angel's voice, through my mouth: Go ye into the glorious land of Israel! By that glorious land, however, I mean the kingdom of God, the Catholic Church. You will perhaps exclaim: What a singular exhortation, as if we had not entered that Church and long since become her children by the sacrament of baptism! I know that you consider yourselves born children of the holy Church, but are you true, living members? Are you, according to the Apostle St. Paul, "fellow-citizens with the saints, and domestics of God?" (Eph. 2, 19.) This is an important question, the answer to which will one day decide our eternal salvation. Let us answer it to-day before Him, who will then be our Judge.

The true Christian does not make himself known, merely by his baptismal certificate, but by his fidelity in keeping the faith. With unshaken loyalty, he adheres to the doctrines of the Church, and courageously professes his faith by word and deed before God and men. Well, then, my dear Christians, do you cling steadfastly to the faith of the Church? The Catholic Church, as you know, is the teacher of mankind, appointed by God. She is guided by the Holy Ghost, founded upon a rock, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. The Church is, according to St. Paul, the pillar and ground of truth. She is the bosom on the sea of life, to show us through mist and darkness the way to the haven of eternal happiness. Examine well, my dear Christians, if you are attached to this Church with all your hearts? Do you adhere to her doctrine with unswerving fidelity? Do you believe in her mysteries with entire submission of the intellect, and because God has revealed them, and because they are taught by the Church? Do you believe the Catholic faith as the only true faith revealed by God, and hold any other doctrine deviating from this faith as error, human invention, and, as such, incapable of leading to eternal happiness? Or, are you shaken by every breath of doubt? Do you count yourselves among the so-called liberals, who disdain to receive any instruction from the priests, the ministers of God's Church, who seek their knowledge from an infidel press, and who remark, with scornful mien, to be a Catholic or Protestant or anything else is immaterial, provided one leads a respectable life? Ah! woe to you, if you are believers of such doctrines. Your names then may, indeed, be written in the Catholic baptismal register, but they are not inscribed in the book of life. Woe to you, for you have not yet entered into the land of Israel, but you remain still in the darkness of Egypt.

The true Christian does not show his Catholicity merely by professing his faith, but by leading a life according to the spirit of the Church, that is, by taking part in the religious services, and in the celebration of the divine mysteries. Let me put this question plainly to you: Is the house of God your favorite resort? Do you hasten there with joyful anticipation on Sundays and holy days of obligation, to participate in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and to refresh your mind by hearing the word of God? Do you often approach the sacraments, those fountains of grace, in order to purify and sanctify your soul? Or, do you belong to that class of lukewarm Catholics who, occasionally, perhaps on some great feast, repair to the house of God? Do you belong to that number, who, by omitting their Easter confession and Communion, place themselves in the ranks of the heathen and public sinners, and who, in case of sudden death, compel the priest to deny them Christian burial? Ah! my poor brother, if this should be your Christian life, then I am forced to tell you with sorrow: You have not yet entered into the land of promise, you are still a stranger in Israel.

The Catholic Christian, finally, is known by his life according to the moral laws of God and the Church. Are these commandments the mirror into which you look every day, and according to which you regulate your thoughts, words and actions? Do you say your prayers daily, with attention and devotion, or is prayer a custom which has long since been abolished, as being fit only for the days of childhood? Do you still consider the name of God as holy above all things, or do you, like the devil, take His name in vain by cursing, swearing and blaspheming? Do you keep holy the day of the Lord, by assisting devoutly at divine worship or do you make it a day for Satan, by unnecessary work, or what is worse, by dissipation and debauchery? Thus, my dear Christian, go through the commandments of God and the Church, and compare your life with these precepts. Your interior monitor, that is, your conscience, will answer you if you really have entered into the terrestrial Canaan, the Church, or if you still sojourn in the darkness of Egypt.

This, however, I must tell you in the name of God, and as a priest of the Church, if your Christianity consists in your baptism only, and not in your faithful adherence to the doctrines of the Church, and in living up to its precepts, you hope in vain to enter into the Heavenly Canaan. You will, on the contrary, experience the terrible punishment pronounced by our Lord: "That servant who knew the will of his Lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes." (Luke 12, 47.) Awake, therefore, arise from the sleep of your lukewarmness, return to the fervor of the days of your childhood, and become indeed, what your holy name indicates, a Catholic by faith, a Catholic by participating in the life of the Church, a Catholic by a life devoted to good works in the service of God. Then only will the Catholic faith be for you in death the portal by which you will enter into life everlasting. Amen.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS. THE CRUSADER.

The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. He will save; He will rescue thee with His goodness; He will be silent in His love; He will be joyful over thee in praise.—(Soph. iii, 17.)

You all know how in the eleventh century, when Jerusalem was in the hands of the infidels, and the holy places defiled, the voice of Peter the Hermit rang throughout Christendom, and how from their peaceful farmsteads in England, the sunny slopes of Italy, the vineyards of France and Spain, the forest-grown mountains of Germany, noble and peasant, king and serf, rose with one accord in answer to the call.

You know further how Richard Cœur de Lion became the terror of the very children of the Mohammedans, and how he and brave St. Louis of France esteemed illness, sufferings, and privations of all kinds as nothing, that they might win from the enemies of Christianity the places hallowed by the footsteps and sufferings of Christ.

Now, in the reign of Richard Cœur de Lion, there lived in his castle in the moorlands of Yorkshire a very powerful lord, Robert of Keneathstone. He owned the broad lands from Wytheb's de to the foot of the Elwer Crag, and in time of war could muster five thousand retainers under his banner. Naturally, when Richard Cœur de Lion was on the point of departing for the Holy Land, he looked for aid from all his barons, and we know how eagerly and generously they answered to his call. But Robert Lord Keneathstone was very ill and unable to stir from his bed; and he had only two sons, the eldest of whom, Wilfred, had not yet completed his twelfth year, and was moreover very slightly built and delicate in health.

What was to be done? Robert of Keneathstone could not suffer that his name should say there was none of his name to lead out his retainers and fight for the cause of Jesus Christ, and yet he could not move; and Wilfred was reduced to a shadow by a violent cough which threatened at times to be his end. Robert stormed and swore, and the Lady Margaret, his wife, prayed day and night, but the malady grew rather worse than better, and it was evident would chain him to his couch for many a weary day.

At last Wilfred vowed that he himself would go; and though his mother wept and entreated him on her knees, and his father derided him and called him a girl, he persisted in his resolution, and finally his father, seeing that the lad was really in earnest, gave his consent.

He could hardly tear himself away from his weeping mother when the last day came, and he buckled on his armor, and proudly donned his helmet and the shield with the coat-of-arms of the Keneathstones and the motto "Loyal unto the end."

"See, gentle mother, he said, leading her, or rather supporting her, into the little chapel of the Nativity, in the castle, 'here will I hang my shield and my helmet on my wall, in honor of the infant Saviour and His Mother, whose soldier I am.'

"Here I will come every day to pray for thee, my son. Oh my son, would I could go out to shield thee from dangers; to die for thee, if need be, O my son."

"Nay, gentle mother," said the boy, "fret not for this unworthy son. If it please the Lord that I pass from His army on earth to the host of glorious conquerors in heaven, thou hast still thine Alfred left to comfort thee and to sustain the glory of our house."

With a long, tender embrace, he tore himself away, received his father's blessing, and rode out at the head of his brave soldiers.

The journey passed all too slowly for the brave boy, impetuous and eager for the sound of battle; but at length they arrived at Joppa, disembarked, and joined Cœur de Lion's army at Ahmed niven Kirra, and Wilfred's desire was realized, for a bloody skirmish took place between the Christians and the infidels, and Wilfred, in defending a wounded soldier from the cruel foe, was taken prisoner.

He was carried away by the enemies to a stronghold at a long distance from Ahmed niven Kirra, and was imprisoned in a little narrow room, with hardly any light, in the castle. A soldier came to bring him his food, but Wilfred could hardly eat; he was very ill, and never thought to see his home and his mother any more. Still every day he prayed as his mother had bid him do, morning, noon and night; and sometimes when he thought how she too was praying for

her son, he hoped against hope, and dreamed of the happy days when he would clasp her in his arms and kneel with her in the little chapel to give thanks to God and Our Lady for his safe return.

But as the days went by he counted this as an idle dream, and resigned himself peacefully and even happily to die; for his cough was more and more violent every day; he could hardly stand upright, and his bones seemed starting through his skin, so emaciated had he become.

One day, as he was kneeling in a corner of the room praying for resignation and patience even unto the end, the door was opened and a strange man entered with his food. He stood looking at the boy, and saw him make the sign of the Cross ere he began to eat.

Then he came close to him and whispered:

"Listen, boy, I am a Christian; I spent a long time in the English camp as a prisoner, and there I learned the true religion. Now, for the sake of Jesus Christ, I will save you. Tonight, therefore, I shall come and let you out, and you must fly, that you may be leagues hence ere the morning.

He left Wilfred alone as he heard the chief calling for him. The poor boy thought to himself that he would never be able to get away with his racking cough and extreme weakness, but he knelt and prayed until even-tide.

Hope beats high in the breast of youth, and when at nightfall his deliverer came and led him down the steps to a doorway, and slipped some money into Wilfred's hand, urged him to fly for dear life, the boy sped on, and praying fervently, he felt a supernatural strength enabling him to fly in the direction the man had pointed out.

For three nights and days he pursued his course to the east, and on the fourth day arrived at a port in the possession of the French crusaders. For two months he lay almost at death's door in the house of the Count Simon de la Rochefoucauld, and at last God heard his prayers, and he recovered sufficiently to be able to embark on a vessel starting for France with all the sick and wounded.

Eight long months from the day he left his father's home he arrived once more before the castle gate, and entered the chapel as High Mass was being sung on Christmas Day in the morning. And after Mass the Te Deum was chanted, while he hung shield and sword before the altar of Our Lady; and he grew stronger and more manly, and did many brave and noble deeds before he too slept with his fathers and left to his children the glory of an unsullied name.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

Have an object in life? Resolve to do something and to be something. Set a goal for yourself and plan to reach it. Don't drift. Don't let circumstances rule your destiny. Pull against them if they flow against your purpose. Don't lose heart. But look to the end and go towards it with grim persistence. That is the summary of this article on

Why Some Men Fail. Life wrecks result largely from vagueness of purpose; or granting fixed purpose at the start, from lack of perseverance; or, in men of good parts from the silly notion that genius works only when the fit is on it, and always independent of method and divorced from business like habits and shrewd forethought.

Set sail without pre-determined port, but content to drift with wind and tide, and who can marvel when the fair, white ship dashes itself to pieces on the treacherous rock. Or, however well equipped, however ultimately destined, if it turn aside from its course to question the promise of every beacon light, to test the delights of every verdurous isle, is it strange that a hundred clumsy but more steadfast crafts should distance it, and when, at last, it reaches port, 'tis but to find the prize it sought to gain borne off by others, and beyond recall forever.

"A man with a purpose," said a noted ecclesiastic recently visiting this country, "is a power on earth." And he bade saints and sages pass before us and show us the mainspring of their immortal life-works, in proof of the truth of his words. In contradistinction, the man with a purpose is also a power on earth—but a power for evil to those who come within the influence of his pernicious example.

We should make up our mind, and find out that calling for which, through the aptitude God has given us, we are destined; fix our eyes on the goal; make steadfastly toward it, let nothing divert our interest; resolve on success, and it is ours. We shall not gain it without weariness and suffering. Pain and labor alone can purchase lasting profits. The beautiful allurements that rise between us and the term of our endeavor must fare no better than the dragons—the merciless sword for both. A hard saying, and who can hear it. In the temporal, as in the spiritual order, the wise man builds not till he has counted the cost of his tower. The end crowns the work; let that lead to them.

Because he can do much with but slight effort, the man of genius is peculiarly tempted to recognize no law in labor but the law of his moods, to trifle with precious time, to procrastinate; and defend himself on the plea that genius can't be bound, Pegasus never wore a harness.

It is almost trite to say that the man of moderate talent, but of stern perse-

verance and capacity for plodding, must soon distance the idle or spasmodically working genius. Patience is genius. Capacity for hard work is genius. Love of order and system, if not genius, are at least its able allies. Have a purpose in life, therefore, and keep everlastingly at it! — Church Progress.

Don't be a Growler.

The young man who is dissatisfied with his employer is not an uncommon type of humanity. He is looking for perfection in a world where no such quality exists. He is so independent that he wants to do what he pleases, regardless of the wishes of his employer, the person who pays salaries and who has to carry the weight of the business upon his shoulders. Now this is very foolish. The young man will discover this if he ever becomes an employer himself, which he is not likely to do while he continues in his present complaining frame of mind.

The young men who get on are those who do what they are told to do, as long as there is nothing dishonorable proposed, without consulting their own feelings in the matter. They feel that they are hired to do certain things, and they perform their duties to the best of their ability. They are like the brave soldiers at Balaklava who obeyed the command to charge, though they knew that some one had blundered.

Theirs not to make reply, Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do and die; Into the valley of death, Rode the Six Hundred.

If a young fellow is engaged to work in any position he should obey those above him. It is barely possible that in some respects they may be no more intelligent than he, but they are in authority, and their will should be law. Many of our public officers, we will say, are far from being all that they should be, but they have been elected to carry out laws, which, maybe, ill informed legislators have made, and they should be respected in their official capacities until the bad enactments have been repealed through the force of public opinion. One must render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's.

Therefore, the young man owes obedience to his employer as long as he takes money for labor he has promised to execute. If he thinks that the man in whose service he is engaged sleeps on a bed of roses, he will, probably, if he takes the pains to investigate, find out that he is very much mistaken. I have heard many a person in business say that he would rather be working for an assured weekly or monthly salary than endure the uncertainties and anxieties which attend the usual course of trade or manufacture. If he fails he not only suffers himself, but he causes others to suffer, and, consequently, he has to be constantly on the alert, and passes many sleepless nights in his efforts to command success. He never can calculate accurately what his profits and losses may be, and enterprise that promises to be prosperous may end in disaster, through no fault of his own. If he knew that he had a certain sum coming to him at stated periods he could then regulate his expenses according to his income, and be comparatively happy. Here the man on a salary has the advantage. If he is wise and prudent he can calculate to a certainty almost, unless sickness or loss of employment intervene, how much he can spend and what he can lay up for rainy day.

So that if a young man has plenty of good paying work, he has little real cause to grumble at those to whom, for the time being, he owes strict faithfulness, no matter how little the opinion of those by whom he is employed agree with his own. I do not ask him to be a slave—he could not be that in this land of liberty—but I do ask him not to be a chronic growler. — Benedict Bell in Sacred Heart Review.

A CHINESE MISSION.

Thrilling Story Related by a Franciscan Laboring Among the Celestials.

Rev. Placido Slykerman, a Franciscan missionary in Southern Chan-Si, has, says the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, written as follows to Bishop Hofman, Vicar Apostolic of that district:

One day as I was going out two of my school children brought me a poor old man who had passed the night in the open air and was drenched. He knelt down, bowed most humbly and explained the motive of his visit. I did my best to understand, but the old man being toothless, I could not catch a word of what he said despite all my efforts.

"He wants to become a Christian!" the children cried out.

"We shall see later on," I replied. "However that may be, the poor man appears to be starving and he is very wet, so the first thing to do is to feed him and change his clothes."

The servant understanding my intentions, looked only half-satisfied. He is an excellent fellow, but has one great defect—he imagines that every Chinese he meets must be an impostor. "This man looks mild enough," he said, "but still one must not trust him too much. You will see that he is either a beggar or a vagrant looking for a shelter under pretext of becoming a Christian. I would advise you not to give him any clothes." "You must not thus judge people you do not know," I answered. "He is poor, and we must have pity on him. Be more charitable in the future, and make haste to bring him some food and clothing."

Without any further discussion, my servant opened his box and gave his own clothes to the old man. He ran to

fetch a bowl of tea, prepared some vegetables, spread his wet clothes before the fire—in a word, showed quite a maternal solicitude towards the stranger.

In the meanwhile the old man kept scolding the children, who came round him in large numbers.

"In truth," he said to them, "you have no heart, no pity."

The children laughed all the more. "He has been sent here by a sorcerer," one of them said to me, understanding the old man's language better than I did.

But the old man was not insane; he was simply poor, oppressed and unjustly persecuted. He had been rich, his son has been carried off by people of bad faith, who had appropriated to themselves his house and field with the aid of counterfeited documents, and to crown all his misfortunes, he had been mixed up in a ruinous lawsuit. The Mandarin, after making him pay a heavy sum, decided the lawsuit in favor of his adversaries and ordered him to be severely flogged.

Abandoned by all, the poor old man went to a sorcerer, hoping to learn from him by what means he could keep his wife and children from dying of hunger. God had waited for this moment! Contrary to the general rule, the sorcerer had given him excellent advice.

"Old friend," he had said, "go to the Tien-tchou-Kiao (the missionary of the Lord of heaven); perhaps he will help you."

Forthwith he started off, wandering at random for five days. He had thus accomplished a journey of more than a hundred and twenty miles, selling his clothes and keeping only his trousers and an old shirt. How happy he was to find himself well received when he reached us, wet and hungry.

The next morning our guest assisted at Mass with great respect, remaining motionless all the time on his knees and with clasped hands. He came to see me after breakfast.

"Well, my good friend," I said, "your losses are difficult to repair. Nevertheless, I will look after your case, without, however, promising you any success. As to your becoming a Christian, that is easier; you have but to desire it and you will never repent of the decision. I shall give you a letter of recommendation to the catechist of Siao-nan ling, where there is a Christian parish. It is the nearest to your home."

The letter was given and the old man set out, quite happy and deeply grateful.

Once back in his family, he related the sorcerer's advice and the joy he had experienced on meeting the missionary.

"Let us hasten," he said, "to learn the prayers that the catechist has given me. The God of the Europeans, who is so good and powerful, will come to our aid."

His constancy, however, was to be tried first. I had set to work, had examined the ins and outs of their law suit from beginning to end—had written letters, said all I could to the Mandarin, but without any success; the case seemed lost. However, the poor family, resigned to the will of God, lived quite content in their new religion.

The father, mother and two children had been converted for about three years; the eldest son had been carried off no one knew where, and there remained one daughter, married about five years previously to a pagan in a neighboring village. This daughter came one day to see her parents and learned they were Christians. She allowed herself to be instructed and went away a Christian at heart. Her husband and his parents had never heard our holy religion spoken of. The wife related all she knew and recited some prayers.

"What do you say about it?"

"Do as you like in the matter," was the reply.

The new convert believed herself quite free to practice her religion, but this happiness was not destined to last. She was expecting a baby, her first child; would it be a boy or a girl? Her pagan father and mother-in-law, impatient and anxious to know the future, went to seek out a sorcerer. The latter questioned about the young woman and, on learning she was a Christian, "If she perseveres in her errors," he said, "if, instead of burning incense with you in honor of the gods, she says prayers alone, she will never give birth to a son."

The family believed in this oracle, and when they returned home they said in an imperious manner to their daughter in law: "You must leave off worshipping the God of the Europeans and return to your old practices, otherwise the sorcerer cannot promise you a son."

The Christian woman laughed at the oracle and when evening came knelt down to say her usual prayers. As soon as her husband saw her he came into the room, seized her angrily by the hair and dragged her about the room. On hearing the noise the mother-in-law rushed in.

"We had ordered you not to pray," she cried, "and you still continue. Promise you will not begin again?"

No answer came.

"You refuse to obey? Wait a moment and we will soon make you forget your prayers!"

With these words the mother-in-law and her son pulled off her clothes and fastened her to a press.

"For the last time we command you to burn incense!"

"No, I will not do it!"

Wild with anger at this point blank refusal, they fell to beating the unfortunate woman. In a twinkling her body was covered with livid strips.

After this her persecutors left her, in the heart of winter, all bruised and naked and tied to the press until morning. Only on the following day did she receive permission to dress herself. "You will burn incense in honor of our gods?" they asked.

Again she refused. This time they did not insist.

The poor young woman was very hungry, but there was neither bread nor rice nor meat within her reach—all had been taken away. Did they hope to force her to abandon her faith by starving her? Some hours later:

"Will you obey now?" inquired her mother-in-law. "If so, I will bring you some dainty dishes."

"With the help of God," she replied, "I shall always remain faithful to His law."

On hearing this the mother-in-law shut the door angrily. Towards evening the husband again appeared with his parents. Again the same questions, again the same answers. The husband, with his mother, was getting ready to strangle the unfortunate young woman when, suddenly, the father interferred. He had so far kept silent, as it is unheard of for a Chinese father to meddle in his married son's private concerns.

"No," he cried, "do not kill her! Put her out to night; no doubt she will go to her parents. They are far away, as you know. The road is full of danger, on account of the precipices and wolves—above all in the night. If she escapes the wild beasts, she will die of cold and exhaustion. Thus we shall have got rid of her without having committed murder."

"That is very well reasoned," returned the son. Then looking at his wife: "I will not take your life, wretched Christian," he said, "but get away from here as fast as you can and woe to you if you return."

Saying this, he thrust his wife out of doors.

Our Heavenly Father watches over His children and He deputed His angel to guide our poor heroine's steps. About midnight she reached her parents' home, exhausted from fatigue and suffering, but without meeting any unpleasant accident. You can easily conceive the sorrow of our neophytes. The father had lost everything; it was therefore impossible for him to provide for his ailing daughter as he wished.

Happily the catechist, who came the following day, had her carried to his home, where, under his wife's care, health soon returned. The young woman remained there a month, during which time she learned the catechism thoroughly. Then she returned to her parents, where she gave birth to a son! By this fact the sorcerer was convicted of lying.

The news soon spread abroad. On learning it the husband became indignant.

"The sorcerer is only an impostor!" he cried angrily.

"I have a grandson! I have a grandson!" cried the grandfather. "My name will not die out! Go quickly and bring back your wife and child!"

"I drove her away from here," exclaimed the son, weeping. "Perhaps she will not come back."

After much deliberation it was settled they would go and consult the Kiu jen. The Kiu jen is a man of great experience and full of kindness. He is deeply esteemed and considered by all the inhabitants and his advice is followed as an oracle. After having examined all the circumstances of the case he pronounced the following: "The husband will declare publicly his regret at having treated his innocent wife in such a disgraceful manner. In expiation of his crime he will carry an offering to the temple of the outraged God. The wife will return to her husband as soon as these conditions have been fulfilled."

Both sides were equally satisfied with this decision.

Since that time the young couple live together in perfect harmony and the husband is now a zealous Christian. The sorcerer's impostures, the prayers of his saintly wife, and above all, the action of divine grace opened his eyes. All his family became Christians and a number of pagans have followed their example.

Nor have I related all. During the course of this story I have almost forgotten my poor old man and the many tribulations through which he passed. I no longer hoped that any justice would be done him; my intervention had been quite useless. But the Lord, who sends us trials, has likewise His own time reserved for consolation. The lawsuit was revised and the success this time was complete; the house and field were to be given over at once to their legitimate owner. And the owner—the poor old man—full of gratitude, has parted with his house. One portion of it serves as a chapel, the other is used as a school. All this locality, hitherto completely pagan, is now a flourishing parish. This year we have had forty baptisms, and the number of catechisms is always on the increase.

Handsome Features.

Sometimes unsightly blotches, pimples or sallow opaque skin, destroys the attractiveness of handsome features. In all such cases Scott's Emulsion will build up the system and impart freshness and beauty.

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