

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

First Sunday of Advent.

PENANCE.

"When you shall see these things come to pass, that the kingdom of God is at hand."

It may seem strange to some that the seasons which precede the celebration of the great festivals of Christmas and Easter, festivals of great joy as they are, should be ordered by the Church to be kept as seasons of penance.

If the Church calls us to penance at these seasons it is because penance is the necessary means of obtaining divine peace and joy, and when we are, so to speak, at one with God, and free from the slavery of the kingdom of Satan, then is our daily prayer answered.

How does penance prepare one for such a state of exalted purity, of spiritual peace and joy? By removing all obstacles which stand in the way of the reign of God in our souls.

Then so many of us can never hope to get purity of spirit and feel ourselves fit for the near friendship of God unless we make war, so to speak, upon our spirit, upon our self-love, upon our self-interest.

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ORIGIN OF METHODISM.

Editor Intermountain Catholic: Who was the founder of the Methodist church, and why was it called Methodism?

The Methodist church in America presents some strange peculiarities in its origin and organization. It acknowledges as its founder and apostle, Rev. John Wesley, who was an ordained clergyman of the Established church of England.

Diligence led me into serious thinking. I went to the weekly sacrament and persuaded two or three young scholars to accompany me; and likewise to observe the method of study prescribed by the statutes of the university.

Both brothers real Catholic works, like the "Imitation of Christ," the "Life of St. Francis Xavier," etc., and distributed them among their followers.

Returning to England, he resumed his former work preaching in the open air and gained many followers. Through a strong advocate of apostolic succession in the Established church, yet when Anglican Bishops refused to ordain his followers, John Wesley resolved that they would be ordained in some manner for the American mission.

This arbitrary consumption of power and the adherence to the canons of the Anglican church so alarmed his brother, Charles, that he wrote a letter to Dr. Chandler in America stating:

"I can scarcely believe that in his eighty-second year, my brother, my old intimate friend and companion, should have assumed the Episcopal character, ordained elders, consecrated a Bishop, and sent him to ordain the lay preacher in America. I was then in Bristol at his elbow, yet he never gave me the least hint of his intention.

Lord Mansfield told me last year that ordination was separation! This my brother does not and will not see; or that he has renounced the principles and practice of his whole life; that he has acted contrary to all his declarations, protestations and writings; robbed his friends of their boasting; realized the Nag's Head ordination, and left an indelible blot on his name as long as it shall be remembered.

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ENGLAND'S FALL FROM CATHOLICITY

"The sudden falling away of a whole nation from Catholic unity," forms one of the most interesting chapters in the latest volume of the Catholic Encyclopedia and is contributed by W. S. Lilly, the well-known Catholic writer.

This falling off is not to be explained, he says, as rising wholly from "the selfish policy or brutal passion" as Macaulay styles it, of Henry VIII.

It was the culminating effect, Mr. Lilly shows, of a struggle between the Papacy and the civil power of England that had been going on for many centuries—even from the Norman Conquest.

Henry II. was not less desirous, it is shown, than Henry VIII, to free himself from the Pope's jurisdiction and his plundering of Canterbury was a case in point.

The greed of Henry VIII was another source of the de-Catholicizing of the country. Evidences of the wealth of the monasteries, he confiscated them, thus, as Mr. Lilly says, leaving the foundation of English pauperism, and throwing the people on their own resources, making the practice of their devotional exercises an impossibility.

From that time Catholic worship could only be performed by stealth and at the risk of severe punishment. Had it not been for the founding of the seminary of Douay in 1586, by Cardinal Allen, whose object was to perpetuate the faith in England by creating an apostolate, Catholicity could hardly have survived even in the small numbers which were present previous to the great nineteenth century revival following emancipation.

Under her successor, James, the Catholic clergy and laity faded almost as badly, the fact that his mother, Mary Stuart, having been a Catholic meaning nothing.

Under Charles I., however, only two Catholics suffered, the King's refusal to persecute being, says Mr. Lilly, one of the reasons of his downfall.

By the accession of Charles II., however, a strong anti-Catholic feeling had begun to assert itself in the country, and the King, with true Stuart perfidy, revolted against his Catholic instincts, he more than any other being the cause of the solidification of Protestantism and the decay of Catholicism, which was to remain thereafter a matter for penalization for nearly one hundred and fifty years.

The White Plague

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BODY OF BERNADETTE FOUND INTACT.

There is another and a very remarkable prodigy to be added to the record of Lourdes, says the Irish Catholic. The exhumation has recently taken place, in solemn canonical form, of the remains of Bernadette Soubirous, in religion Sister Mary Bernard, from the grave in the convent cemetery at Nevers, in which they have lain for three decades of years.

The body of her to whom, as an humble shepherd girl, the Blessed Virgin appeared and said, "I am the Immaculate Conception," was found to be absolutely intact. The miracle is a rare one; there are few like examples even in the case of the illustrious saints, and a fact of the kind is always specially noted by hagiographers as the most singular and a glorious testimony of heaven's favor.

A greater contradiction of the laws of nature cannot be conceived than a corpse, given up to the earth, should thus escape the natural consequence of death, decomposition.

She was never pointed out to her companions or to the public as the privileged child who at the beginning of her life had received the signal favor of an authentic vision of the Blessed Virgin; nor did she herself ever speak of the great favor of which she had been the recipient.

The recent exhumation of the once humble shepherdess, the holy nun, had to do with the gathering of evidence for the introduction of the cause of her beatification.

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