

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

First Sunday in Lent.

SERVING THE DEVIL.

Against the devil took him up into a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and said unto him: All these will I give thee, if thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus saith unto him: Begone, Satan, for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve. (St. Matt. IV. 8.)

This offer, my dear brethren, which the devil made to our Divine Lord, he repeats, in its measure, to each one of us. He is obliged to promise good wages to those whom he wishes to be his servants: he could get few, certainly, if any, who would serve him on his own account.

Does the devil, then, ask us to adore or worship him? Yes, he does. He does not ask us to build churches in his honor, or to say prayers to him, it is true; he knows that he cannot expect that. But he does ask us to be his servants, and to obey his commands; he wants us to take him for our master, though he does not care much whether we acknowledge him to be so. He asks for the substantial part of worship—our money, our labor, our time and our life: if he gets that, may he not well be content?

But does he offer us all the kingdoms of the world? Oh, no! He is not so foolish as to offer his whole stock in trade for what can be got for a trifle. He named this price to our Saviour because, though he did not know fully what He was, still he valued His services highly, and thought them worth any sacrifice to obtain; but for us very little out of his treasury suffices. Desiring us, he only promises us what he has good reason to think will be enough: a little sensual pleasure, a passing fame or notoriety, or even a few dollars, is the price which he generally names for our allegiance.

Thirty pieces of silver he found to be all that was needed for one of the Apostles; what wonder that he is not disposed to bid very high for us! Once the newspapers told us of a young man who shot an innocent passer-by simply to get reputation as a desperado. Fortunately, he did not live to shoot another one; he met the fate he deserved on the scaffold. Perhaps he thought that a grand thing, too; but I question much whether, in his secret heart, it seemed to him that moment worth while to be sent out of the world by an ignominious and painful death, and to go before God with murder on his soul, even for the sake of being considered an humble imitator of the lawless men of whom he had read.

And yet there are others following in his steps, many perhaps here in this city of ours—Christians, so-called at least, bought with the blood of Christ, and even having some knowledge of religion and its precepts, who would sell their immortal souls, and despise the crown of eternal life, to be distinguished as a burglar or a ruffian, or as the hero of a dime novel.

Now, this is absurd, foolish and contemptible enough certainly, to throw away salvation and the kingdom of heaven, not for a kingdom on earth, but for such inglorious things as these. We think, no doubt, that they would be no temptation to us; and, indeed, it is to be hoped that there are few, on the whole, to whom they would be. But, after all, what is the great difference, when we come to look at it fairly, between such things and those which do lead us to sin? Is the fame of a clever infidel much better worth the loss of the kingdom of heaven, than that of an abandoned outlaw? Or is any fame worth having, if we must sin to obtain it?

Or are riches worth possessing, if acquired by dishonesty, or if they take our hearts from the desire of true riches? Or is pleasure worth enjoying, if it takes away the happiness of the soul and the peace of God? Is the miserable pittance which the devil offers us, laughing at us for our folly as he does so, or is even all that he has to offer, worth the heavy price we must pay for it? Is anything worth loving and serving which puts out the love of God from our hearts, and takes us away from His service? I need not answer, for those hearts tell us that it is not; for it is plainly written in them, as well as in God's law, that the only thing to make us happy is to love God and serve Him alone.

The Confessional.

Experienced observers among Catholics concur in the opinion that the influence of the confessional has much to do with the purity of the Irish and the French-Canadians. Though they are a religious people they are probably not without the natural temptations of other races and creeds; but this moral institution of the Church safeguards them from danger. If a people, in whose religious life the confessional is so large a factor, thus evince a superior purity and chastity, how absurd are the anti-Catholic stories about the priests, nuns and the confessional. The very people who cherish this institution and who support convents would be the first to be shocked if their institutions were anything but good and wholesome. Here we have a case in which we can apply the biblical saying: "By their fruits ye shall know them."—Catholic Citizen.

"A crick in the back," a pain under the shoulder-blade, water brash, biliousness, and constipation, are symptoms of disordered stomach, kidneys, liver and bowels. For all ailments originating in a derangement of these organs, take Ayer's Pills.

MOSTLY BOYS.

THE WAGER OF GERALD O'ROURKE.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

By Francis J. Finn, S. J.

It was five minutes after 9 on the morning of December 23d, when a small boy, with an expression akin to the pathetic upon his smug features, entered the Second Academic classroom of Marquette College, Milwaukee, and handed his teacher this note:

9 O. A. M.  
Gerald O'Rourke, late.  
Please admit.

A. Mosher, S. J.  
Mr. Lawton read this communication with a frown. He was impatient of late-comers, as are all earnest teachers. His frown quickly disappeared, however, as a grin at once cheerful and deprecating came upon Gerald's upturned face.

"Don't mind it this time, sir: I was up late last night practising the Christmas Mass, and mamma couldn't get me up this morning. I've got to stay after class for Father Mosher anyhow."

And then Gerald's face, which had grown gloomy as he recalled his after-class engagement with the reverend prefect of discipline, lighted up with a smile as he caught the teacher's assumed expression of delight at this announcement.

With a cheerfulness that expressed itself even into levity in his walk, he went to his seat beside Maurice Desmond, and giving that young classmate a stealthy but sharp dig in the ribs, he unstrapped his books and prepared himself for the labor of the day.

"Are you kept in?" whispered Maurice, as he brought his head below the lid of his desk in simulated quest of a penholder.

"Sure!" Maurice grinned, and was about to duck his head again, when he noticed that Mr. Lawton was taking an exaggerated interest in his movements. Maurice grew very solemn and attentive. Having in a very short time thus regained the confidence of his teacher, he slowly and surreptitiously composed the following note:

Dear Gerald:—I'll bet you one pair of heads that you'll be late for the 4 o'clock Christmas Mass.  
Maurice Desmond.

Gerald after the consumption of much time and patience answered:

Dear Maurice:—I take your bet, and go you one more pair that I call at your house and wake you up at 3:30 Christmas morning.  
Gerald O'Rourke, Esq.

Half an hour elapsed before Maurice had succeeded in penning this delectable answer:

Dear O'Rourke, Esq.:—You're out of your senses, you old sleepy-head; but I'll take you anyhow. You'll say those two pair of heads Christmas day, and don't you forget it either.  
The Honorable Maurice Desmond, L.L.D.

At this stage of the communications Mr. Lawton broke in:

father, mother, uncle, and two sisters broke into a laughter. The idea that any alarm clock could produce the least effect on Gerald, once he was asleep, struck them as being exquisitely ridiculous.

Uncle Edward clothed this idea in words.

"If you were to stack your room from floor to ceiling with alarm clocks, and if you had the biggest kind of an alarm clock for a bolster, and if all these alarm clocks were, I don't say to go off, but to explode at 3 o'clock tomorrow morning, I'm willing to bet anything I own that you'd snooze right along till your mother got at you."

Again the laugh arose: Gerald was in a hopeless minority.

"Huh!" snarled Gerald. "Confound you girls—" you see Gerald chose to shower his wrath upon his sisters, who, to tell the truth, were loud est in their merriment—"Huh! I will be up, and," he added with striking inconsequence, "I can dress six times over while you two are combing, and pinning, and banging your hair."

Then changing his tone, the orator addressed himself to the grown-up members of his family.

"You needn't think that I'm trusting to that alarm clock alone. That's only part of the plan."

"Indeed! Let's hear the other parts," chuckled Uncle Edward.

"I—er—I got it from my teacher. You see he knows all about that bet, because he captured the notes about it, and could hardly keep from laughing when he read 'em. Well, he said, 'Just set your alarm clock for 3, and ask the souls in purgatory to see to it that you hear it go off. If you promise in turn to do something for them, they'll be pretty sure to take care of you.' And I've done it too—and I'll be up on time to-morrow as sure as—"

"What were you going to observe?" asked Uncle Edward.

Gerald had been on the point of saying "as sure as shooting," but there was in the family what he considered a prejudice against boyish slang; and so, at a loss for some less commonplace expression, he paused, unable to conclude his peroration.

"But what was it you promised?" continued Uncle Edward.

"Say, ma, I want to get a piece of bread and butter, please, I'm almost starving," cried Gerald as he hurried from the room, feeling that he had already said too much. Like many a good, pious, Catholic boy, he was, while over-earnest in general, somewhat reticent in regard to his devotions, and in his joyous little breast was enshrined many a pretty little practice of piety about which even his mother knew nothing.

However, before retiring, he communicated to her that should he win his bet, he was going to give a dollar out of his Christmas money to the poor for the benefit of the suffering souls.

Mrs. O'Rourke kissed him.

"And say, mamma, what are we going to have for dinner to-morrow?" This was his last question.

But it was not his last thought; for Gerald made it a point on the eve of a Communion day to try to think of nothing, once he was snug in bed, but the Blessed Sacrament, and he actually succeeded in this, though I am bound to say that he seldom lay awake for more than four or five minutes.

On this blessed night he had just put his mind into this pious frame, when there came a sharp knock at his door, followed by the entrance of his father.

LEO XIII. ON SOCIALISM.

The Kind of Socialism That is Consistent With Christianity.

A French paper reports a long conversation which Deputy Paul Vigne, Radical Socialist, had with the Pope during his recent visit in Rome. In answering a question concerning Socialism His Holiness said: "If Socialism means the efforts made to improve the condition of the poorer classes in a progressive, prudent and reasonable manner, if you apply that idea to whatever has been done to realize more social justice in the government of men, then it is impossible to pursue a nobler aim. Such was the work of Christianity, which inaugurated the era of clemency and pity and true fraternity at a time when cruel paganism was supreme and when the pitiless Roman world was in apogee. To occupy one's self with the social question, with a clear conception of the grave responsibilities resting on all who hold wealth and authority, is to continue the work of the Divine Master. It is what I have not ceased doing since my advent to the throne.

"As to the parties in France to which the name of Socialist is given, I think their work will be sterile, and they will be powerless as long as they do not lean on religion for support. Violent opposition to the Government by those parties in France and Germany may be increasing and redoubtable, but it will all be vain, because religion has vanished from them. Your republic is a very acceptable form of Government despite its errors, and I love it more than is supposed in France. Why should it not be religious? To seek to govern men without religion is the most dangerous of chimeras.

As to science the Pope declared: "The abyss between it and religion, which some have created, it is not natural. Science can and ought to march with religion. The discoveries in the one can be nothing but the glorifying of the other."

INFLUENCE OF CONVERTS.

It Comes From Experience Which the Born Catholic Cannot Acquire.

The movement to obtain free permission from the Bishops for Catholics to attend the universities is causing some comment in the Protestant press. There is one remark made by the *Church Times* upon it to which we desire to draw attention because it contains a half-truth, and half-truths are often dangerous. Speaking of the strength of the Catholic Church in this country being due to the converts, and particularly to such men as Newman and the Oxford "perverts," as the *Church Times* calls them, it proceeds to say that these owed their strength not so much to their education as to the fact that they had been English Churchmen.

This, we say, is a half-truth. Converts from Anglicanism do owe their strength in dealing with Protestants partly to having been English Churchmen; for this reason they have recognized their own errors and the errors of other Protestants, judging from personal experience, and no amount of university or any other education could have given them this knowledge. It is an advantage which the born Catholic can never acquire, either from books, universities or personal intercourse with Protestants. All converts have it more or less—the laundress and the cultured woman, the laborer and the future Cardinal. The mental environment and mental attitude of Catholics and Protestants are so totally different that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for those who have not passed from one to the other to understand them.—Liverpool Catholic Times.

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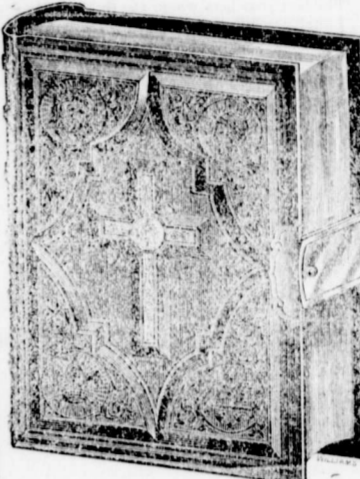
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