

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Quinquagesima Sunday.

PREPARING FOR LENT.

"Thy faith hath made thee whole." (Luke xviii. 42.)

Which of us, dear brethren, has such perfect spiritual health that he does not need to call upon Christ, our all-merciful physician? We are all crippled, blind and sick. The great remedy by which we must be healed is faith. We see how the blind man in today's gospel was made whole by faith. In another place we read of the woman with an issue of blood made well by faith. And in many other parts of Scripture faith is put down as our great healing remedy.

Thank God! we have received the great blessing of the Catholic faith. But is our faith what it ought to be? Is it a living faith? If we have a living faith it will show itself by our deeds. Let us examine ourselves to-day as to our intentions for the coming Lent. How much practical faith shall we find in ourselves? "Faith without good works is dead." How can we expect that such faith will make us whole? Are you dreading the approach of this season of penance? Are you calculating the easiest terms upon which you can get through it? Do you look upon it as an evil time, which must be borne with, but out of which you expect to get nothing but discomfort?

If you look upon Lent in this spirit, you are no true follower of Christ and the Cross — your faith is not a living faith. And a dead faith is worse than useless, for such a faith can abide only in the lukewarm of whom the Holy Ghost speaks thus: "Would thou wert cold or hot. But because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit thee out of my mouth." Beware lest your present lack of the Christian spirit of penance be the beginning of your casting forth!

But do not misunderstand and think that we must relish this coming season of penance, in our lower natures, just as a hungry man relishes his dinner. That is not the kind of relish we are bound to have. Although we may have an involuntary horror of penance, if we, nevertheless, appreciate our need of mortification, and are determined to make the most of this opportunity, all the more because we instinctively dread it, we show that God has at least a large part of our hearts. He wants the whole of them, saying: "My son, give me thy heart." But if we keep a part for our miserable selves, in His mercy, though grieved, He will not condemn us.

But if any one has not at least a determination to try, he may well tremble at his condition. If he thinks he can safely put off his repentance to his death-bed, he deceives himself. The odds against such a man's being saved are tremendous. Does it not stand to reason that an ordinary man who has spent his life in sin cannot, unless by a miracle of grace, accomplish in a short hour, or perhaps less time, what it has taken good men a lifetime to do? The dying sinner may persuade the priest that he has repented, but is it not because he has deceived himself in his fear of death? If we could test his repentance by offering him ten years more of life, would he persevere in his good intentions? If he has resolved not to sin any more for the sole reason that he has no chance left him for doing so, his repentance is a sham, and all the absolutions of all the priests that have ever lived cannot save his soul. "As a man lives, so shall he die." Is it not easier to repent now, while you are able, than upon your death-bed, when disease and sin have almost robbed you of reason?

Have a living faith which will show itself by deeds! And let the prayer of the blind man be the prayer of each of us: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy upon me." And let us not cease until Jesus answers us, "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

No Pope Joan.

Though the story has been refuted over and over again, there is still a widespread belief that there existed in the Middle Ages a female Pope. Pope Joan, as she is called, has given her name to a game of cards which is mentioned in Sheridan's "School for Scandal." The tradition with regard to the female Pope has been traced back to the eleventh century, but she is said to have lived much earlier, her pontificate having taken place in the ninth century and having lasted for more than two years. The name she is alleged to have assumed is John VII. At the last meeting of the Academy of Inscriptions, in Paris, M. Muntz dealt another blow at the story, which he characterizes as a vulgar fable invented in the Middle Ages. Never, he declares, after a careful study of the question, has a woman worn the tiara; and, moreover, there was no interregnum at the period when the pretended John VII. governed the Church.

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There is danger in neglecting a cold. Many who have died of consumption dated their troubles from exposure, followed by a cold which settled on their lungs, and in a short time they were beyond the skill of the best physician. Had they used Bjckle's anti-Consumptive Syrup, before it was too late, their lives would have been spared. This medicine has no equal for curing coughs, colds and all affections of the throat and lungs.

EARTH WITHOUT HEAVEN.

A REMINISCENCE.

(CONCLUDED.)

After another absence of some months, I visited her again, and at once noticed a change in her countenance. Not that she looked happy, or even less wistful and crushed and careworn than usual, but still there was that in her manner which gave the idea that she had once more something to live for; and this proved to be the case. After I had been with her a few minutes, she pulled a letter out of her pocket—a letter from India. It was from her eldest daughter, the soldier's wife. She said there was news in it. After being married eight years without having children, this daughter was now about to be confined, and both her husband and herself, she said, were overjoyed at the thought of it. "To think of her having a child, and for me to be a grand mother!" The poor woman repeated these words with something almost like a smile. It seemed like a gleam of light piercing for the first time through the darkness of her grief. Her whole heart fastened with intense feeling on the hope of seeing one day this expected child. And in due time another letter came, which announced the birth of a little girl, "the most lovely babe," the father wrote, "that ever eyes had beheld." From that day I had only to speak of the Indian baby, as we called it, and a real smile lightened the gloom of the sad face, as a gleam of sunshine brightens a rugged landscape. Each letter—and for two years they came at no very distant intervals—told wonders of the little child born far away on the banks of the Ganges; of its first taking notice, its laughing and crowing, its first teeth, its first steps, its first words. Never did a baby appear to be more worshipped by its parents. One day I was greeted with the tidings that there was something for me to see—that I should never guess what it was. There was an eager, touching reliance on my sympathy which affected me, and I must confess that I took a real interest in the little child I had so often talked of with my poor friend. I can see her before me now untying the tiny parcel of silver paper which contained her treasure. There are few hearts that have not known what the possession of such a treasure is. This one was a lock of soft, curling, auburn hair. The sight of it conjured up the vision of a delicate, pretty little creature. It was so glossy, so smooth, so bright. We felt as we looked at it that the eyes and the little mouth must match it; that the little hands and feet must be in keeping with it. Oh! how the riven heart, with its unhealed wounds, clung to that vision, and what depths of tenderness were revealed in the few words uttered that day. And when, shortly afterwards, the news arrived that the regiment was ordered home; that on its arrival in England leave might no doubt be had for some weeks, so that the soldier and his wife and their little child would be able to visit her native place, and mother would then see what a beauty baby it was, it seemed as if the poor cottage looked bright for once, and the careworn face also. They were hoped to arrive in October. It was about midsummer then. By October the weather would be getting cold. The Indian baby would feel it very much. She would want a lot of things to keep her warm. So flannel and pieces of stuff were purchased, and wool whorl to knit socks for its little feet and legs. Never was present more thankfully received, and after her hard day's work the poor woman made her grand child's clothes, and counted the days, and was glad to see them shortening.

Again, after another absence, I visited the cottage. The transient sunshine had vanished; no smile greeted me this time. I almost felt before she spoke the cold chill of disappointment which had fallen on that poor heart. I looked an enquiry, and she told me the last news. Just as the regiment was about to sail for England, it had been ordered to New Zealand, where war had broken out. There had only been time enough to write a few lines before its departure. I said, "Let us hope," but I did not feel any. Hope deferred it was Hope against hope—hope of hearing, and not hearing, save that the newspapers spoke of the sufferings of the troops in New Zealand, and of much bloody fighting with the natives. Time went on; more than a year elapsed, and no tidings came to put an end to this terrible uncertainty. Enquiries were made at the War Office. There was no return of the soldier's death; that was all that could be learnt. At last—that at last which, though it seems as if it would never come, does end by coming—a letter arrived. It was in his handwriting. He was alive, then. Yes, he lived to tell a sorrowful tale. He had been ordered into the interior of the country, and marched against the enemy, leaving behind him his wife and child. When he returned, several months afterwards, both were dead. He feared, from what he heard, that they had suffered much in many ways. He was shown the place where they were buried. There was an end of hope and of fear. The long suspense was over. The double blow had fallen. The last possibility of earthly joy departed from a life on which sorrow had set its final seal. She bore it calmly. She did not weep much. I think, or complain of her fate. Her heart seemed to fix itself on the return of the widowed soldier, which his letter announced. Before it arrived her husband died. He had a long illness,

during which she nursed him assiduously, and spoke of him with gentleness. "Poor man!" she said. "He was so quiet at the last; so different from what he used to be; so different from—"

"Did he show you," I asked, "any kindness during his sickness?" "Yes, he did," was the reply. "He spoke quite kind one day. 'I had cooked some potatoes for him, and he said as how he could not eat; but 'Wife,' says he, 'you should eat them yourself.'"

I said nothing, but thought this poor long-suffering soul had done what many a woman has done before her, and will continue to do to the end of time—

"She had poured her heart's rich treasures forth. And been unrepaid for their priceless worth."

After awhile her son-in-law did come home, and was very good to her. He obtained his discharge, and she went to live with him in a cottage not far from her old abode. Even those who may have known the original of this sketch would perhaps hardly recognize it; and yet I believe it is a true picture, and one which I often revert to as an example of what this life would be without the Hope of Heaven."

NOTES ON "THE IMITATION."

X.

It is popularly thought that not to have sinned is to be without sin. We might imagine a sort of happy valley in which a person is enclosed, all remains of sin being cut off. But there remains the stock of passions, tendencies, inclinations—all the capabilities, in short, for sinning. Mary Lamb said shrewdly enough of Queen Caroline, wife of George IV., when it was urged that the cause against her had not been made out: "I do not think any better of her for that." Meaning that her character was vicious; the possible guilt made little difference. Part of the discipline of life is to enfeeble or wholly suppress these earthly dispositions; otherwise we would take our whole stock with us into the next life.

Our author is very fine and reasonable on this subject of temptation, which he holds to be a grand test. Without encountering occasions of temptation, we should not know what we are. We give a taste of our quality: as he says: "Fire trieth iron, and temptation a just man." And, better still: "We know not what we can do, but temptation discovereth what we are." A fine form of phrase. Of course we should fly, as the gospel says, when we are weak; but we should not be weak—in essentials, at least. "In temptations and tribulations it is proved what progress a man has made; and therein also there is greater merit, and virtue is made more manifest." No theory will teach swimming: we must go into the water. Hence those given to emotional piety may prove to be wretchedly weak when the time of trial comes. As he says: "Nor is it much if a man be devout and fervent when he feels no trouble; but if in time of adversity he suffereth patiently, then will there be hopes of greater profit." He notices sagaciously enough how some are overthrown by great attacks, but by "daily little ones"; that thus humbled, they may never presume upon themselves in great trials. "All which is most wise." "The measure of each man's virtue is seen in occasions of adversity." As he puts it, almost epigrammatically: "Occasions do not make a man frail, but they show what he is."

He uses the word "temptation" not exactly in its popular sense of *tempting*, but in that of *proving* and *trial*. This analysis of the processes is one of the most acute passages in the Book. All the saints, he says, were thus proved, and "profiteth" thereby. "They that could not support temptation became reprobate and fell away." "By flight alone we can not overcome." And then comes this all important truth: "He that only shuneth them outwardly, and doth not pluck out their root, will profit little; nay, temptations will the sooner return, and he will find himself in a worse condition." There is the whole philosophy of it. And how is it that persons are thus exposed to trial and temptation? From "inconsistency of mind and little confidence in God."—Perey Fitzgerald in Ave Maria.

How O'Connell Squelched a Bigot.

Appropos of the recent reign of religious intolerance in public affairs, there is a story told of an episode in the parliamentary career of Daniel O'Connell.

An English member named Thomas Massey, a fanatical opponent of the Church, moved in the House of Commons that the Catholic word "Mass" should be discontinued as part of the word Christmas, and that the festival should thereafter be called by the more Saxon appellation of "Christ tide."

O'Connell rose to reply. He called the honorable gentleman's attention to the fact that his own name was "deplorably Popish," and suggested that to be consistent, he should henceforth eliminate from it the syllable that offended him in the word "Christmas," and substitute the Saxon "tide," thus transforming "Thomas Massey" into "Thotide Tidey."

Mr. Massey's motion never reached a vote. That the blood should perform its vital functions, it is absolutely necessary it should not only be pure but rich in life-giving elements. These results are best effected by the use of that well-known standard blood purifier, Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

DR. BATAILLE.

The Devil in the 19th Century.

In the chief room of the Palladists at the Masonic Temple of Charleston several great curiosities or relics are preserved that deserve special attention. One of these is the Golden Chair. Formerly this was a massive oak armchair belonging to Albert Pike and used by him when presiding at the Supreme Council of the Scotch rite. Hear what Palladists say about this chair: When General Pike was perfecting his new reformed rite of the Palladium in 1870, and came to write the ritual of the elected magician (3rd and highest degree), the pen broke in his fingers once, again and again. He called up a spirit to find out the reason. The spirit told him: "Go to Charleston." Thither he went at once to consult Dr. G. Mackay, who had prepared a room to hold the first meeting of that new degree. The two went to this room alone, knelt down in prayer to Lucifer that he might enlighten him why or by whom he was prevented from composing the ritual.

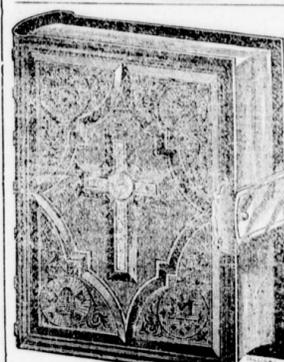
Rising from their prayer they were stupefied to see the oak armchair changed into solid gold. On the chair they found a volume in morocco binding and steel corners. On the outside of the cover was the shining signature of Baal-Zebub in Palladist hieroglyphics. Opening the volume they saw that it was the ritual, composed and brought by Lucifer, which Pike had tried in vain to write. Still more wonders. For the next day Pike and Mackay called five of their fellow-Palladists together to read the new hell-born ritual and institute the first Perfect Triangle according to it. At the meeting Pike was to preside and took his seat on the miraculous golden chair, but was immediately thrown out of it as if by some strong, mysterious power. Each one of the other six in turn attempted to sit on the chair and all were similarly thrown off. Who then was to preside? Suddenly the hall became brilliant with light and behold, Baal-Zebub himself in the chair visible to all who were present. The devil came personally to initiate the faithful to this important degree and he still appears for the same purpose whenever anyone is admitted to this degree. He himself examines the candidate, receives his oath of allegiance and gives him the kiss of friendship.

The golden chair, called holy chair, is shown to initiated visitors and can be moved about at one's pleasure. But no one, except Baal-Zebub, can sit on it. Doctor Bataille examined the chair thoroughly. It is really of massive gold. He sat on it and was thrown off five or six feet. There can be no trick about it. A Chicago brotler, who believed that the miracle was produced by electricity, provided himself with rubber-lined silk pantaloons before sitting down on it. He was thrown up to the ceiling and falling on the floor broke his leg. Now it is customary among Palladists to say of lame members that they must have tried to sit in the golden chair in silk pantaloons.

Another important relic in the Charleston temple is preserved in the Sanctum Regnum or Palladist Holy of Holies. This is the original Baphomet or statue of Lucifer said to have been used by the Knights Templars before their suppression in 1312. The globe on which the goat is sitting is hollow and contains the "sacred books" of the Palladium. Before this idol the Supreme Grand College of the Palladium assemble once a week, and here Lucifer, their *good god*, regularly appears to them, it is said, in the form of a beautiful man of about thirty years and instructs them briefly and clearly what they are to do, encouraging them and assuring them of the final success of his cause. These visits are short, never over thirty three minutes, often shorter; and frequently Lucifer disappears breaking off suddenly in the middle of a sentence or a word—thus indicating that he is subject to a higher power.

J. B. Molay's skull is another of the great relics at Charleston. Here is briefly what Palladists believe and say about it: When Molay, the last Grand Master of the Knights Templars, was burned to death, some of his friends saved his skull from the fire and carried it, with the original idol Baphomet to Scotland, where it was religiously kept until Isaac Long, a cabalistic Jew, brought it to Charleston in 1801. Here he established the Supreme Council of Scottish Freemasons. Dr. Gallatin Mackey, a very prominent Freemason, was born at Charleston, on March 11, 1808. On his second birthday he began to pronounce continually the word *Mura*. On his 12th birthday he fell into a rigid, death like swoon, which lasted an hour, and this happened thereafter on each successive birthday to the end of his life in 1881. Having become a prominent Freemason he told General Pike about this occurrence in 1848. Pike consulted one of his familiar spirits, and obtained the answer that Mackey was predestined for great things, because he had Molay's skull. Pike also found that the mysterious *Mura*, pronounced by little Mackey, was the name of *Murat*, the restorer and first Grand Master of Scottish Freemasonry in Naples, who on that very date, March 11, 1808, invaded Spain to destroy the terrible Inquisition. On the 11th of March, 1849, Pike and Mackey held a meeting with about forty other prominent Masons in Charleston before the skull of Molay. At the usual hour Mackey fell into his swoon, and suddenly the skull emitted a strong fire through the eyes and nose in ever-varying colors. While thus burning, the skull uttered heavy groans mixed up with strange blasphemies, and answered any ques-

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tions that Pike asked it. After an hour Mackey came to, the fire in the skull ceased, and no more questions were answered. This performance was annually gone through with on the same date as long as Mackey lived. In closing the first of these meetings in 1840 Pike said: "Brothers and sisters, let us not forget our oath to avenge this holy martyr; having destroyed Royalty we must exterminate the Church; we are the avengers of the Palladium." True justice through Lucifer.

Dr. Bataille examined the skull very closely and witnessed the strange phenomenon of the fire as well as Mackey's swoon and the answering of the skull. He claims that the skull is by no means that of a European, but could not discover any trick about its strange performances.

Palladists believe that after the death of Mackey the soul of Molay entered another man's body and they are diligently searching this new "Molay" all over the world. What gross superstition! And these are the men who accuse and persecute the Church on account of her superstitions—men whose watchword is "Liberty," and "Enlightenment," but who are the slaves of their devilish hatred of God and His Church, who spread their nefarious doctrines and practices in the dark, and exercise a tyranny over their followers more severe and galling than has ever been experienced in the history of mankind!

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