

Our Weekly Sermon

SACRIFICES MADE FOR THE FAITH.

What has your religion cost you during the past year? Strange as this introduction may seem, I will, according to your answer, tell you whether your religion is only on the surface, or whether you are really and truly a Catholic at heart.

It is an open secret amongst those who have read history that never would the so-called reformation of Luther, or that of Henry VIII, have succeeded unless, for unfortunate conditions, which were, that the Church had slumbered in peace and tranquility in these countries, that the monasteries had grown rich, and the people, the Catholic people, had become indifferent, because their spirit of religion had not been stirred up and strengthened by opposition.

And with this before our eyes, we put the question: "What did your religion cost you during the past year?" Were you simply hot-house Catholics, those Catholics who go to Mass on Sunday when it is fine, but on rainy days or cold days, unfavorable days, remain away?

God's example and God's precepts are to the effect that we must love our neighbor. Yes, He goes farther than that, and insists absolutely that we must love our enemies. He tells us emphatically that we must do good to those who wrong us.

ing to do. And so, we might run through all the commandments, and all the precepts.

We might take up the vice, and after the other, and examining ourselves, find if the love for our religion had us in restraint or not. And we can judge infallibly of our standing to-day in the sight of God, as we would be able to answer the question honestly, Have I made a sacrifice for the love of religion, or have my professions been as the politicians' professions of patriotism, idle boasting?

How, then, has the year been spent? What have I merited? How do I stand? Is there in my heart that real, sincere, that deep piety and devotion which a Catholic should have? Or is it but an idle boasting of mine, the result of early education and association? If we are willing to and do make sacrifices, then our religion is sincere.

The business man makes his accounts yearly, takes stock, examines into his accounts, and knows positively at the end of the year, whether his ledger shows a debit or a credit. And we Christians, carrying on the business of saving our souls, will weight, measure, and add up and find if we stand debtor or creditor in the matter—whether we have gained or lost during the past year, whether we have gained God's grace or lost it, and we can tell infallibly how we stand by answering honestly the question: Has my religion cost me during the past year anything, and how much?

Now it perhaps strikes you that on considering closely your home life you will find much to improve, and at great personal sacrifice, which will make that great law of Christ and His Church more dear to you—that law of love. Let me suggest to each one, therefore, the question, "How am I acting? Am I kind, forbearing, charitable, generous, indulgent to those at home? My brothers, my sisters, my father and mother, my husband or wife as the case may be, or am I fault-finding, harsh, bitter, unforgiving, uncharitable, unyielding?"

LORD'S PRAYER FORBIDDEN IN ITALIAN SCHOOLS.

The latest illustration of the spread of anti-clericalism comes from Italy. An order for the discontinuance of the Pater Noster, which it has long been customary for the pupils to recite at the opening of the Italian lower schools, has been issued by the superintendent at Milan, where the schools are under the authority of the Municipal Council.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

THE SAND-MAN.

The Sand-man carries thine dream; He made of jangled thistle-down; All powdered o'er with pollen From drowsy poppies blown.

Come Whack-on-the-forehead, And Bump-on-the-nose, And Cut-on-the-finger, And Tiny stumped-toes,

Just lay your little head In your own dear mamma's lap And close the tear-glued lashes As if to take a nap.

GUNNING FOR RAIN.

Cleveland Moffett reports in the March St. Nicholas an interview with "Prof. Myers, the balloonist, in which he learned something about gunning for rain. One of the balloonist's first stories was about the rainfall experiments with balloons that he conducted years ago for the government.

"No," said Myers; "I should call it rather large." "The other man shook his head. "I'm afraid it won't make noise enough to lead our theory."

"Well," said the professor—I can see his eyes twinkling—"if this one does not make noise enough we'll get a bigger balloon."

"It wasn't much fun living down there," said the professor, "but we got rain whenever we wanted it."

COMIC CHIMPANZEES.

The keeper of the chimpanzees at the Zoological Gardens in Toronto placed a doll-baby in their cage one day. It was clothed in a red dress that attracted the attention of the animals in a moment. At first they stood at a respectful distance and joo-hooed at it to show that they had not fallen in love with it at first sight.

THE ANGELUS.

If the Mohammedan three times a day turns his face toward Mecca, and calls upon God and His Prophet Mohammed, how much more ought the Christian frequently to look up to Heaven during the day, and invoke the Divine Redeemer and His Blessed Mother.

The Angelus is a prayer, which is to be recited morning, noon, and night, when the bell rings, in honor of the Mother of God and in adoration of the mystery of the Incarnation.

The words are as follows: 1—The Angel of the Lord (the archangel Gabriel) declared unto Mary (announced that God had chosen her to be the mother of the Messiah), and she conceived of the Holy Ghost (through the operation of the Holy Ghost) she became the Mother of Christ; 2—Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word; 3—And the Word (the Son of God) was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

The custom of ringing the Angelus bell three times a day dates from the period of the crusades in 1095.

At first the bell was rung only twice a day, half an hour before sunrise and half an hour after sunset, to call upon the faithful to pray God for the success of the crusaders' arms. The third bell was added about three centuries and a half later.

In some places after the evening Angelus the bell sounds again to admonish the faithful to pray for the souls in purgatory.

Pope Clement XIII. granted an indulgence of one hundred days to all who, hearing the bell, should recite kneeling one Our Father and Hail Mary, with the virgale; "Eternal rest give to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them."

'TWOULD HURT DOLLY.

Among the stories which were told by certain aged physicians at a reunion of medical men of the times when surgical operations were conducted without anaesthetics, none were more touching than the following:—

A little girl, not more than eight years old, was injured in such a way that it was necessary to amputate one of her legs. She proved to have wonderful pluck, and instead of blinding her, as was customary in such cases, she was given her most cherished doll to hold.

Pressing it in her arms, she submitted to the amputation without a single cry.

"When it was done, the physician in charge, seeking to lighten matters up with pleasantly, said: "And, now, my dear, we will amputate your doll's leg."

"Then the little girl burst into tears. "No, no," she gasped between her sobs; "you should not—it would hurt her too much."

KEEPING OF SECRETS.

When Are We Bound to be Silent? Information of Value.

The Rev. Thomas I. Gasson, S. J., spiritual director of the Children of Mary, of the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Boston, recently gave a conference to them, in the course of which he treated of the duty of fidelity in the keeping of secrets.

It is a slander of course to say that women cannot keep secrets, he continued, but that all may realize the gravity of the obligation, he would define the various kinds of secrets, and how they bind the conscience.

First, there are Natural Secrets; as when we have learned by accident something about our fellow-creatures which he certainly does not desire to have known. We all have passages in our past life, faults, infirmities, personal and family disadvantages, which it would injure us to have made public.

Second, there are Secrets of Promise. The promise raises the obligation above that of the Natural Secret, and makes the crime of breaking it doubly grave. Alas! Many pious people have too little appreciation of the gravity either of a secret or a promise, and having received the one and given the other, behave like the "pious" but indiscreet woman, whose tongue made a church paper unnecessary in a certain district.

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