

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Second Sunday of Advent.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST OUR MODEL IN THE PROFESSION OF FAITH AND IN THE WORKS OF PENANCE.

"Behold, I will send my angel before thy face, who will prepare the way before thee." (Math. 11:10)

How glorious is not the praise which our Lord gives to St. John in the gospel of this day! He calls him the angel who goes before Him, and prepares His way; yes, on another occasion, He calls him the greatest born of woman.

Why has the illustrious precursor of Christ been worthy of such praise from the mouth of the Eternal Truth? The desert around the Jordan can give us the reason, for behold him there, in the rigor of his penance.

His garments are of camel's hair, his food is locusts and wild honey, the hard ground his bed. Behold him in his exalted mission as the Lord's preacher of penance! How, with divine power and unaction, he moves the most hardened sinners to tears of repentance, and now, behold him chained in Herod's dungeon, because he had the courage to tell a king to his face, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife."

Soon the doors of the dungeon will be opened, the executioner will enter to put him to death, and thus open to his holy soul, the way to the beautiful abode of bliss. Oh! a thousand times blessed St. John, you have glorified God like no other, by your angelic life: as a victim in the service of the Lord, you have received the crown of martyrdom, and, as a reward of your fidelity, are now enthroned with Jesus in the kingdom of the angels!

Oh! may we, not only piously revere thee, but be your faithful followers in the heroic profession of faith, and in the self-sacrificing zeal of penance.

Dearly beloved, neither the dungeon nor the block threaten us, on account of our faith, no bloody martyrdom awaits us, but we are often obliged to suffer contempt on account of our holy religion, yes, how often are Catholics obliged to endure, not only the greatest affronts, but the most unmerited slights and temporal losses on account of their very name! But let us have courage, brethren, we are disciples of Jesus Christ, we are the members of a crucified head. Is the disciple above his Master? If they have hated Me, they will also hate you, says our Lord.

"If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more (will they not call) them of the household." (Math. 10, 25.) Verily, to be a Christian and act as a coward, is a nonentity, it is a contradiction in itself. Whoever is ashamed of his Saviour or of His doctrine, thus denies Him, and renders himself guilty of the terrible condemnation in the gospel, that the Lord will also deny him before His heavenly Father, on the dreadful day of judgment.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

A GOOD ENOUGH BOY.

BY BELLE V. CHISHOLM.

Ben Marquand was a boy of more than ordinary abilities, and might have been a leader in his class had it not been for his lack of exactness in the minor details that is always necessary to secure perfection.

He was quick at figures, but never troubled himself to lock over an example that was only a fraction of a cent out of the way; and in writing his grammar test, if he were fortunate enough to arrange the sentences according to the rules, he was not in the least particular where he chanced to place the punctuation marks.

And so it was in everything he did. Even in his conversation, he did not always stick to the truth. I do not mean that he would tell things which he knew were not true, but he was careless about what he repeated, and did not always report things exactly as he had heard them.

His lack of reliability worried his parents considerably; but if it had not been for his Uncle Ben, it is quite probable his namesake would have attained his majority with this bad habit still clinging to him.

In his early days, Uncle Ben had been a carpenter, but for many years back his friends had honored him by making him their representative in Congress. He was a splendid business man, as well as a model Christian, and looked upon young Ben's loose habits much more seriously than did his parents.

One day, when Ben had been set to repairing the door of the pig sty his uncle made it his business to happen out in that region about the time he thought the work would be finished. Meeting Ben with his tools on his shoulder, he said:

"Well, Ben, my boy, have you made a good job of the work?" "Good enough for a pig sty," answered Ben, shortly, aware that his work would not stand inspection.

"Let me see," replied his uncle, opening the door as far as it would go. "It is not hung plumb; see how it swags," he added. "Give me your saw and hammer, and see if I cannot straighten it."

Ben handed him the tools reluctantly, and stood watching his uncle's nimble fingers as he deftly fitted the door to its place with as much exactness as if it had belonged to a mansion instead of to a pig sty.

"There! is not that better?" he asked. "You see, I am an old carpenter, and my hand has not yet forgotten its cunning."

"But, uncle, what is the use in taking so much pains with a pig sty? What do those plump, long eared fellows care about the looks of their home, provided they get enough to eat?" urged Ben.

"Nothing, probably; but Ben, I have my own self-respect to support, and what kind of a conscience would I have carried about with that door swinging the way I found it," was the answer.

Ben looked a little sheepish, but before he had time to reply, his uncle said, very kindly, but with a serious look in his eye:

"Ben, I must acknowledge that I used a little deceit in happening out where you were at work this morning. The fact is I have been wanting to have a little talk with you, and knowing from what I have learned of your habits, just how you would hang that door, I came out to have an object lesson for my text, and you see I have not been disappointed."

"Your good-enough way of doing everything you undertake will certainly ensure your failure when you come to take an active place in life. Your lack of precision in your studies may pass in the school room, but you will find accuracy demanded when you enter into business with the world."

Among the first years that I was in Congress a little incident occurred that forcibly illustrates the value of exactness even in the most minute details. In a tariff bill that became a law that winter, one of the sections enumerated what articles should be admitted free of duty. Among the articles specified were all 'foreign fruit-plants,' meaning plants imported for transplanting, propagation, or experiment.

"Then you think an apprenticeship to some good old carpenter would cure me of untruthfulness?" said Ben, humbly, for, though wounded by his uncle's plain talk, he had the good sense to appreciate the kindness that had prompted it.

"It might," admitted his uncle. "But, Ben, if self-will is not brought into the contest, even the most skillful master would fall in his efforts to teach you to apply to yourself the stringent rules that make the work of the craft a success."

"I do not intend that self-will shall be left out of the struggle," Ben replied modestly. "I am going to turn over a new leaf this very morning, and if stretching lines and measuring planks will help it to stay turned, I am willing to begin an apprenticeship right away."

"And I'll teach you the secrets of the craft," said his uncle proudly, grasping his hand. He kept his word, and Ben showed his gratitude by proving himself worthy of his master.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE.

BY EUGENE FIELD.

Once upon a time the forest was in a great commotion. Early in the evening the wise old cedars had shaken their heads ominously and predicted strange things. They had lived in the forest many, many years; but never had they seen such marvellous sights as were to be seen now in the sky, and upon the hills, and in the distant village.

"Pray tell us what you see," pleaded a little vine; "we who are not as tall as you can behold none of these wonderful things. Describe them to us, that we may enjoy them with you."

"I am filled with such amazement," said one of the cedars, "that I can hardly speak. The whole sky seems to be aflame, and the stars appear to be dancing among the clouds; angels walk down from heaven to the earth, and enter the village or talk with the shepherds upon the hills."

The vine listened in mute astonishment. Such things never before had happened. The vine trembled with excitement. Its nearest neighbor was a tiny tree, so small it scarcely ever was noticed; yet it was a very beautiful little tree, and the vines and ferns and mosses and other humble residents of the forest loved it dearly.

"How I should like to see the angels!" sighed the little tree, "and how I should like to see the stars dancing among the clouds! It must be very beautiful."

As the vine and the little tree talked of these things, the cedars watched with increasing interest the wonderful scenes over and beyond the confines of the forest. Presently they thought they heard music, and they were not mistaken, for soon the whole air was full of the sweetest harmonies ever heard upon earth.

"What beautiful music!" cried the little tree. "I wonder whence it comes."

"The angels are singing," said a cedar; "for none but angels could make such sweet music."

"But the stars are singing, too," said another cedar; "yes, and the shepherds on the hills join in the song, and what a strangely glorious song it is!"

The trees listened to the singing, but they did not understand its meaning; it seemed to be an anthem, and it was of a Child that had been born; but further than this they did not understand. The strange and glorious song continued all the night; and all that night the angels walked to and fro, and the shepherds folk talked with the angels, and the stars danced and carolled in high heaven. And it was nearly morning when the cedars cried out, "They are coming to the forest! the angels are coming; this was true. And, surely enough, this was true. The vine and the little tree were very terrified, and they begged their older and stronger neighbors to protect them from harm. But the cedars were too busy with their own fears to pay any heed to the faint pleadings of the humble vine and the little tree.

The angels came into the forest, singing the same glorious anthem about the Child, and the stars sang in chorus with them until every part of the woods rang with echoes of that wonderful song. There was nothing in the appearance of this angel host to inspire fear; they were clad all in white, and there were crowns upon their fair heads, and golden harps in their hands; love, hope, charity, compassion, and joy beamed from their beautiful faces, and their presence seemed to fill the forest with a divine peace. The angels came through the forest to where the little tree stood, and gathered around it, they touched it with their hands, and kissed its little branches, and sang even more sweetly than before. And their song was about the Child, the Child, the Child that had been born. Then the stars came down from the skies and danced and hung upon the branches of the tree, and they, too, sang that song—the song of the Child. And all the other trees and the vines and the ferns and the mosses beheld in wonder; nor could they understand why all these things were being done, and why this exceeding honor should be shown the little tree.

When the morning came the angels left the forest—all but one angel, who remained behind and lingered near the little tree. Then a cedar asked: "Why do you tarry with us, holy angel?" And the angel answered: "I stay to guard this little tree, for it is sacred, and no harm shall come to it."

The little tree felt quite relieved by this assurance, and it held up its head more confidently than ever before. And how it thrived and grew, and waxed in strength and beauty! The cedars said they never had seen the like. The sun seemed to lavish its choicest rays upon the little tree, heaven dropped its sweetest dew upon it, and the winds never came to the forest that they did not forget their rude manners and linger to kiss the little tree and sing its prettiest songs. No danger ever menaced it, no harm threatened; for the angel never slept,—through the day and through the night the angel watched the little tree and protected it from all evil. Oftentimes the trees talked with the angel; but of course they understood little of what he said, for he spoke always of the Child Who was to become the Master; and always when thus he talked, he caressed the little tree, and stroked its branches and leaves, and moistened them with his tears. It all was so very strange that none in the forest could understand.

So the years passed, the angel watching his blooming charge. Sometimes the beast strayed toward the little tree and threatened to devour its tender foliage; sometimes the woodman came with his axe, intent upon hewing down the straight and comely thing; sometimes the hot, consuming breath of drought swept from the south, and sought to blight the forest and all its verdure; the angel kept them from the little tree. Serene and beautiful it grew, until now it was no longer a little tree, but the pride and glory of the forest.

One day the tree heard some one coming through the forest. Hitherto the angel had hastened to its side when men approached; but now the angel strode away and stood under the cedars yonder.

"Dear angel," cried the tree, "can you not hear footsteps of some one approaching? Why do you leave me?" "Have no fear," said the angel; "for He Who comes is the Master."

The Master came to the tree and beheld it. He placed his hands upon its smooth trunk and branches, and the tree was thrilled with a strange and glorious delight. Then He stooped and kissed the tree, and then He turned and went away.

Many times after that the Master came to the forest, and when He came it always was to where the tree stood. Many times He rested beneath the tree and enjoyed the shade of its foliage, and listened to the music of the wind as it swept through the rustling leaves. Many times He slept there, and the tree watched over Him, and the forest was still, and all its voices were hushed. And the angel hovered near like a faithful sentinel.

Ever and anon men came with the Master to the forest, and sat with Him in the shade of the tree, and talked with Him of matters which the tree never could understand; only it heard that the talk was of love and charity and gentleness, and it saw that the Master was beloved and venerated by the others. It heard them tell of the Master's goodness and humility,—how He had healed the sick and raised the dead and bestowed inestimable blessings wherever He walked. And the tree loved the Master for His beauty and His goodness; and when He came to the forest it was full of joy, but when He came not it was sad. And the other trees of the forest joined in its happiness and its sorrow, for they, too, loved the Master. And the angel always hovered near.

The Master came one night alone into the forest, and His face was pale with anguish and wet with tears, and He fell upon His knees and prayed. The tree heard Him, and all the forest was still, as if it were standing in the presence of death. And when the morning came, lo! the angel had gone. Then there was a great confusion in the forest. There was a sound of rude voices, and a clashing of swords and staves. Strange men appeared, uttering loud oaths and cruel threats, and the tree was filled with terror. It called aloud for the angel, but the angel came not.

"Alas," cried the vine, "they have come to destroy the tree, the pride and glory of the forest!"

The forest was sorely agitated, but it was in vain. The strange men plied their axes with cruel vigor, and the tree was hewn to the ground. Its beautiful branches were cut away and cast aside, and its soft, thick foliage was strewn to the tender mercies of the winds.

"They are killing me!" cried the tree; "why is not the angel here to protect me?"

But no one heard the piteous cry,—none but the other trees of the forest; and they wept, and the little vine wept too.

Then the cruel men dragged the despoiled and hewn tree from the forest, and the forest saw that beautiful thing no more.

But the night wind that swept down from the City of the Great King that night to ruffle the bosom of distant Galilee, tarried in the forest awhile to say that it had seen that day a cross upraised on Calvary,—the tree on which was stretched the body of the dying Master.

Files Cured Without the Knife, by Dr. A. W. Chase's Ointment. Mr. George Browne, painter, of Woodville, Ont., Victoria Co., says: "For thirteen years I was a sufferer from bleeding piles and the intense agony which I passed through during those years and relief I obtained by Chase's Ointment prompts me to give this testimonial. My physician wished me to have an operation but I felt I could be cured without the knife. Three boxes of Dr. Chase's Ointment stopped the bleeding and effected a permanent cure.

If you have catarrh, don't dally with local remedies, but purify and enrich your blood with Hood's Sarsaparilla.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

Nothing More Useful.

I can conceive nothing better or more satisfactory in the life of a man than to be able to assist young men to live a noble life.—Gov. Ramsdell.

Be Sincere.

Be honest with yourself, whatever the temptation; say nothing to others that you do not think, and play no tricks with your own mind. Of all the evil spirits abroad this hour in the world insincerity is the most dangerous.—James Anthony Froude.

One Fall Leads to Another.

It is easier to escape habit than to conquer it. Many a one who reads these lines will bear witness with the writer to the words of one who says: "I know from experience that habit can, in direct opposition to every conviction of the mind, and but little aided by the elements of temptation, induce a repetition of the most unworthy actions. The mind is weak where it has once given way."

Advice to Young Men.

Foolish spending is the father of poverty. Do not be ashamed of hard work. Work for the best wages you can get, but work for half price rather than be idle. Be your own master, and do not let society or fashion swallow up your individuality—hat, coat and boots. Compel your selfish body to spare something for profit's sake. Be stingy with your appetite, but merciful to others' necessities. Help others and ask no help for yourself. Be proud. Let your pride be of the right kind. Be too proud to wear a coat you cannot afford to buy, too proud to be in company that you cannot keep up with in expenses, too proud to lie or steal or cheat, too proud to be stingy; in short, be a man of integrity and individuality.—Catholic Monthly.

Keep Still.

In one of Dr. Burton's Yale lectures is the following advice to young men: "When trouble is brewing, keep still. When slander is getting on its legs, keep still. When your feelings are hurt, keep still, till you recover from your excitement, at any rate. Things look differently through an unagitated eye. In a commotion once I wrote a letter and sent it, and wished I had not. In my latter years I had another commotion, and wrote a long letter; but life had rubbed a little sense into me, and I kept that letter in my pocket against the day when I could look it over without agitation and without tears. I was glad I did it. Silence is the most massive thing conceivable sometimes. It is strength in its very grandeur. It is like a regiment ordered to stand still in the midfury of the battle. To plunge in were twice as easy." Imprudent speech has done more harm than has gun-powder.

The Teacher of Athletics.

The time has come when one of the most important members of a college faculty in the eyes of the undergraduates, and undoubtedly the most popular in many colleges, is the professional athletic trainer who sees to it that the baseball, football and rowing men give a good account of themselves when brought in competition with other colleges. Within the past week the engagement of such a trainer by a large college conspicuous in athletics has been announced, and it is stated that his salary is to be \$3,000 a year. There are many members of the faculty of this college who do not get as large a salary though their dignity is greater. Not a few of these professional trainers now are college men, and the field for this kind of work is broadening. A man who gave himself up to this kind of work twenty years ago would have been looked upon as little better than a prize fighter, but it is a recognized branch now. Half a dozen college girls have gone into this kind of work and have succeeded much better than the girls who have devoted themselves to teaching classics and mathematics. This is an era of athletics and of physical development, and the effects are good.

Farmers or Clerks?

The Montgomery, Md., Advertiser answers affirmatively the question, "Does farming pay?" and adds: "Why, then is it that life in the country is tabooed and a young farmer—one who can manage labor successfully and conduct a plantation in a practical manner—looked upon as an object of curiosity, mingled with a suggestion of pity? There are a few men in this immediate vicinity who have the sagacity to perceive that the prospective advantages of agricultural life far outweigh the future in the business of mercantile field. They are in active charge of plantations near the city; they are making practical farmers of themselves; they are leading independent, healthful lives, and buying more land each year with their earnings. Their comrades have gone, as clerks, into the railroad offices or the stores of the city; are earning but little more than the bare cost of living; are accounted most fortunate if in two years they get a week's vacation in which to spend all their earnings, and are frightened at the unexpected approach of their employer at all times. In fifteen years they will be worn out old men—mechanical contrivances for doing a certain stipulated task—barely living within their modest income, and in continual fear lest their place shall be filled with a younger man. And the young man on the plantation will be influential land owners, with an assured income—a 'sound mind in a sound body'—both prosperous and

happy, of use to themselves, their families and the communities in which they live."

Do All the Good You Can.

It is a solemn thing that centuries hence the man of that future time may be helped or hindered by deeds and words of ours spoken or done to-day. A solemn thing that we influence people every day, and that influence may be perpetual in its consequences. A word may live in a heart for years and result in multiplied good deeds; an evil example may bear fruit in evil that will endure. Let us do all the good we can to all the persons we meet. We know not, any of us, how soon the night may come in which no man can work.

I remember some years ago there was one of those large Thames pleasure steamers, called "the Princess Alice," going down the river, when it collided with some other boat much larger than itself, and in an instant hundreds of pleasure seekers and excursionists were struggling in the water. I dare say some of you may remember that awful catastrophe—how the pleasure that day was turned into mourning in hundreds of families. How the husband, the mother, the daughter, that went out in the morning came not back at night, or came only as a lifeless body from which the soul had fled.

"A worn-out fetter, which the soul Had broken and thrown away."

When the catastrophe took place some little help was at hand, but not much; and there was one man who, happening to be in a small rowing boat, pulled up to the place and rescued, as many people as he could. All around him were men and women fighting for dear life, the drowning clutching hold of the swimmers and overwhelming them in their own death. Skirting about on the edge of the struggling mass the man picked up all he could carry safely, and, as he pulled slowly off, agonized cries came to him to save "just one more." It was told by one of the survivors that the poor fellow, pulling at his oar choking with emotion, sobbed out to himself: "Would God I had a larger boat!" It was an awful thing to pull away with the few and leave the many; to help the units, and leave the hundreds.

But at least the man did what he could. His power of help was limited by the size of his boat. But what would you have said of him if he had drifted idly by and made no attempt to help his fellow-creatures? Does not this accord with the life of some of us? There are souls around you going to ruin, and you hold out no hand to help; there are hearts that love you and would listen to what you have to say, and you remain voiceless and dumb; forgetting that a man's life consisteth not in that which he possesses, but in the power that he exercises for good.

MANY GO INSANE.

WOMEN'S BURDENS ARE HEAVY AND HARD TO BEAR.

Unless Dodd's Kidney Pills are Used, Then Diseases of Women are Cured, and Suffering Ceases—Mrs. Ellen Dowson's Case.

Toronto, Nov. 28.—The daily papers from day to day contain reports of the wrecking of once happy homes, through the insanity of mothers, whose reason has been destroyed by illness.

Women's burdens are many and heavy, and hard to bear. They are, as a rule, borne in silence, for women don't want to incur the expense of calling in the doctor; they don't want to worry their husbands. They continue suffering in silence, while their ailments are sapping their strength, undermining their health, and reason, and hurrying them to the grave.

It is needless to call in a doctor in most of such cases. The suffering woman can cure herself at very small expense. Dodd's Kidney Pills are the remedy she needs.

In ninety-nine of every hundred cases of "Female Complaints," the trouble has its origin in diseased Kidneys. Very soon the urinary, and reproductive organs are involved, and the sufferer becomes a frail and wasted shadow of her former self.

By restoring the Kidneys to sound health, and so ensuring their prompt and proper action, "Female Complaints" can be quickly, thoroughly and permanently cured. Mrs. Ellen Dowson, 640 Gerrard St. E., has discovered the value of Dodd's Kidney Pills in these cases. She writes: "For over six years I suffered intensely with Palpitation of the Heart and Female Weakness. One of Toronto's best doctors attended me, and I used many different medicines, but got no relief, till I used Dodd's Kidney Pills. I have taken eight boxes, and am completely cured."

Dodd's Kidney Pills will do for all suffering women what they did for Mrs. Dowson. Test them. They'll convince you by curing you.

THINK about your health. Do not allow scrofula taints to develop in your blood. Take Hood's Sarsaparilla now and keep yourself WELL.

Warm cases feverishness, moaning and restlessness during sleep. Mother Graves' Worm Exterminator is pleasant, sure and effective. If your druggist has none in stock, get him to procure it for you.

Advertisement for Colman's Salt, THE BEST Colman's Salt.

Globe Loan & Savings Co., cor. of Victoria and Lombard Sts., Toronto.

E. W. Day, Manager Globe Loan & Savings Co., says: "I consider Dr. Chase's Ointment invaluable." We have thousands of testimonials from prominent business men all over the Dominion.

NERVES must be fed on pure, rich blood. Hood's Sarsaparilla is the best nerve tonic. By enriching the blood it makes the nerves STRONG.