

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

TRAINING THE CONSCIENCE.
(St. Luke vii, 11-16)

The gospel of to-day places before us a very touching instance of a mother's affection for her son. Her tender-hearted interest in the young man's welfare excited Our Lord's attention, and for her sake He worked a great miracle. He raised the widow's son to life.

Dear parents, the practical way of manifesting an interest in your children nowadays is to secure for them a good, thorough-going education, which will not only enable them to fight their way through this world with honor to themselves, but will enable our Lord to raise them up at the last day to enjoy the glorified life of the blessed in heaven.

A thorough-going education consists primarily in the education of the heart—in teaching the child the doctrines of his religion, and instilling into his soul the fundamental principles of morality. It is a far better thing to teach him the difference between right and wrong, so that there will be developed in his soul a conscience that will be to him a practical judgment deciding the goodness or badness of his actions. Without such a conscience his knowledge becomes worse than useless to him. It is like a double-edged sword, capable of cutting both ways. It gives him greater facilities for doing evil. A child in whom a conscience is not developed by a good practical education is like a ship without a rudder. Such a vessel can cleave the waves with mighty speed, but it is just as liable to dash itself to pieces on the rock-bound coast as it is to keep to the deep waters.

Conscience is by all means the most precious thing a man can have. It is worth to him a thousand fortunes. A child who starts in the battle of life without a cent in his pocket, yet with a good strong conscience in his soul, is far better off than the child to whom his parents have left millions but have never developed in him a practical conscience. If a parent had the choice between filling the child's mind with knowledge on the one hand, and on the other of solidly anchoring his heart in the fundamental principles of morality, there is no doubt for a moment which the wise parent would choose. To impart to the child a knowledge of right and wrong, to teach him the way through the intricate paths of this world to his real home in heaven, to give him a means of fighting the enemies of his soul, is to give him wealth beyond measure. To leave to him as a precious inheritance a good practical conscience is to equip him well for the struggle of life. With it he is as rich and can stand as firm as a king. The old principle that was laid down by the wise men of old is just as true to-day, that a handful of good life is worth a whole bushel of learning.

CONVERT'S LETTER TO FATHER.

REPLYING TO A REPROACHFUL COMMUNICATION FROM HIS SISTER.

The following letter was written by a recent convert to Catholicism. The letter was occasioned by the receipt of one from the convert's sister, in which she remarked that her father was shocked on hearing that his son had subscribed to the tenets of the Catholic Church after over one year's study of Catholicism.

"Dear Father: Having at last obtained possession of your address, I will try to get these few lines off in the next mail. To compose an interesting letter of any length amid these uneventful surroundings is almost equivalent to producing something from nothing. However, among the few topics I deem worthy of notice, one stands out from the rest, transcending in importance anything that ever vitally concerned me before. I mean the fact that I have recognized and joined that infallible Church which was founded by Christ upon His apostles, and which is guaranteed eternal life and absolute triumph by the Holy Ghost, who reigns over it, speaking with infallible authority through his mouthpiece, the Pope, who is the Vicar of Christ on earth and the visible head of the Church.

By association with Catholics I long ago began to lose the ridiculous abhorrence I felt regarding them. I was treated with profound courtesy in the Orient by the inmates of Catholic institutions, principally those at Kamptee, India, and Aden, Arabia, where I was impressed by the manifest saintliness of those who have dedicated their lives to the cause of Christ. Our chaplain here is a priest, and over a year ago I placed myself under his instruction, with the result that the divine beauty and superhuman consistency of Catholicity was unfolded to me. I realized that my absurd bigotry and prejudice against the Church of Christ was the result of those diabolical delusions I had unreasonably cherished, caused by listening to the furious rantings of many misguided ones, who hurled their imputations against the holy Catholic Church, no more realizing what they did than those who crucified Christ realized what they were doing.

"The astounding and unspeakably consoling truth of transubstantiation, or Real Presence in the Eucharist, which is a veritable miracle wrought at every Mass; the profound knowledge of angels and saints, whose power is manifested by many miracles; the sublime privilege of invoking their intercession; the indispensable strength accessible only through the seven sacraments, which represent the seven keys concerning which I had heard so much silly nonsense; the privilege of approaching the Real Presence in person the sanctuary, and the knowledge that heaven itself is the essence and fountain head of Catholicity—all these and countless

other miraculous proofs make it perfectly clear why the Catholic Church marches on to absolute triumph and victory.

"Now, regarding that favorite theme of heretics and fanatics—confession, I go to confession frequently, and my life or scalp has not once been threatened, although my saintly confessor is a Jesuit, exiled from France. He has never charged me a cent, neither has he attempted to bully me out of my watch and chain by threatening to transform me into a toad or to cast me into hell.

"I did not forget to ascertain the truth regarding the Spanish Inquisition and other atrocities which the Church could not at once check, and which have been greatly exaggerated and maliciously laid to her charge. I also found that history's pages are strangely mute regarding the far more brutal English Inquisition, in which Catholics were the victims. Eternity is too short to permit me to discharge my debt of gratitude to our chaplain, by whom I was baptized and confirmed (although he is but a priest; by reason of there being no Bishop assigned to this locality, he possesses jurisdiction for administering Confirmation) and under whose instruction I was and am still being enlightened.

"I have received the true interpretation of that chapter of Daniel with which the Adventists endeavor to give us the 'blessed' that chapter in your Bible on which that evangelist, Mr. N.—used to harp, regarding the mark of the beast, etc., which his sect construes into a dark prophecy of ecclesiastical tyranny in America at the hands of Rome.

"I was frankly told during my preparatory studies that I must be prepared to make sacrifices, and I am. The beautiful letters and handsome Catholic Bible I have received from Mrs. McC—, a Protestant lady, afford me that gratifying assurance that my sacrifices, if there be any, shall not take the form of a change in the attitude of my friends.

"Nothing can disturb or counteract the indescribable feeling of relief, triumph and ecstasy one feels who, after having floundered for years among vague, conflicting, warring creeds of human origin, ephemeral existence and precarious destiny, finds himself guided at last into the unmistakable way of truth, which made radiant by the spiritual manifestations of its heavenly guardians, and which has those four marks by which it may always be known; i. e., it is one, holy, Catholic and apostolic.

"How comical would be the ludicrous calumnies of heretics were it not for the baneful fact that millions of souls are thereby deluded and deprived of their birth-right, the value of which can never be known by those outside the Catholic Church.

"The book I am sending you, which is by the learned and eloquent Cardinal Gibbons, is not sent with the idea of converting you, but I think it may interest you by elucidating the much misunderstood principles of my chosen creed."—Catholic News.

EDUCATION.

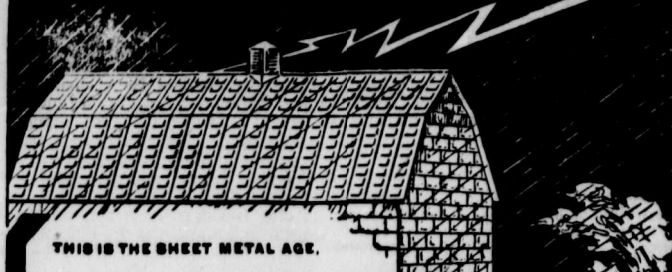
The schools have reopened again, and, once more, our boys and girls will wend their way to the class room. This thought brings forcibly to our mind the weighty and all-absorbing subject of education. The proper education of the young is of paramount importance; for, upon it depends not only their temporal, but also their eternal welfare; upon it depends the future of the common weal, and the decision whether the State shall be ruled by unscrupulous grafters or by law-abiding citizens.

A well-known educator, realizing in a prophetic glance, that nothing but good could accrue to the State from a properly educated youth, says: "Give me the training, that is, the education of the youth, and I care not who makes our laws." What then shall the education of our youth be?

The Catholic Church, in answer to this question has always maintained that education, without religion, is faulty and insufficient; that to the three R's, a fourth R, namely, that of Religion, should be added, and that it should hold the first rank. She has maintained that education, to be complete, must be based on, and permeated with good, moral and religious principles. In conformity with these sound tenets, she has consistently and generally without remuneration from the State, supported her own schools. She has fostered and nurtured with maternal care and solicitude, the many teaching orders of men and women, who, with unparalleled zeal and self-sacrifice, have devoted themselves to the religious education of the young. Well may she point, with pardonable pride, to those monuments of architecture erected in our cities all over the land, and exclaim: "Behold how I value the education of the youth! See how I have spared neither cost or expense to build these stately edifices for the proper education of the youth of the land. But do not linger without the precincts of those hallowed walls. Enter rather within, and see with what painstaking devotedness my teachers acquire themselves of their noble task. They sacrifice all their talents, their health, yea, their very lives, that my children may obtain a thorough religious, as well as secular education; and of its results I may well be proud!"

For many years past, the Public Schools or secular education has been the fad. It has been weighed in the balance, and, by deep thinking minds, it has been found wanting. One by one they have come to the conclusion that there is something lacking in the system; that secular education is not all-sufficient; that something nobler, something higher must be aimed at; that not only the mind, but also the heart must be educated. Not long ago a writer in the "Colonist" asked: "Wherein lies the fault of these existing evils?" referring to "national unrighteousness." And she answers: "Without doubt it can be traced in the system of education, which provides well enough for the mental needs of our children, but neglects to great extent the cultivation of the moral faculties."

Religious denominations likewise gradually range themselves on the side of the Catholic Church and begin to clamor



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for religious education in the schools. At the pan-Anglican congress, recently held, we learn, from the press despatch, that the conference resolved also that the purely educational systems are educationally, as well as morally, unsound; and that no teaching can be regarded as adequate, unless it be religious teaching.

This should be sufficient argument for our Catholics to send their children to a Catholic school wherever opportunity is offered.—B. C. Orphan Friend.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND CARDINAL MANNING.

Cardinal Henry Edward Manning, of England, was ordained in the Episcopal Church in 1833, and after serving that church in various high capacities for eighteen years, was ordained a priest of the Catholic Church on June 14, 1831. In 1845, he succeeded Cardinal Wiseman as Archbishop of Westminster, and was created Cardinal in 1875. He died January 14, 1892.

The Cardinal gives the account of the earliest stage of his conversion in these words:

"I was at Rome, visiting the Museums, the Bains, the Churches, following the ceremonies like all my compatriots, studying the city in all its aspects.

I never had even a shadow of a doubt of the truth of the Protestant Faith, of which I was a minister; never even the most distant thought that I could change from that religion. Nothing that I had seen had made the slightest impression in that direction, and I was as far from Catholicity as when quitting England.

One morning I entered the church of St. Louis of the French. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed on one of the altars, probably for a novena. Nothing could be more simple; some candles were lit, the clergy were in simple choir habits kneeling upon the ground; there were a few of the faithful in the nave. There was a great distance from this to the Pontifical Offices of St. Peter's but it was God's moment. I felt in the bottom of my heart a mysterious commotion, half light, half attraction, and for the first time in my life it seemed to me that, perhaps here was the Truth, and that there would be nothing impossible in my one day becoming a Catholic.

It was not yet conversion; it was, I repeat, the first appeal of God, as yet from the very afar. I have not been unfaithful. I have prayed. I have sought. I have studied with all the ardor and all the sincerity of which I was capable. Light every day increased, and there was a great distance from this to the Pontifical Offices of St. Peter's but it was God's moment. I felt in the bottom of my heart a mysterious commotion, half light, half attraction, and for the first time in my life it seemed to me that, perhaps here was the Truth, and that there would be nothing impossible in my one day becoming a Catholic.

Our Blessed Lord is really and substantially present in the Blessed Sacrament. Our faith does not make him present to us. He is there independent of that, there by an official act of His priest. He condescends to reside in the Tabernacle that He may draw to Himself in love, the souls of men. There He is ever the missionary for thirsting souls, pleading with us to save our own, sweetly coaxing us to devote our lives to assist in the salvation of the souls of others. No doubt, many of us, will recall with gratitude a favorite visit to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament in which we generally decided to make some sacrifice for Him and for souls, who became a great missionary. "It was God's moment."—Denver Catholic Register.

ON CATHOLIC LAYMEN.

The greatest need of the Catholic Church in America to-day is not more priests or more money, though the lack of both retards many a good work, but more loyal, energetic and enlightened co-operation on the part of laymen.

Within her own sacramental sphere the Church continues and develops herself by virtue of Our Lord's promise, and twenty centuries of law and discipline have bequeathed to her teaching and governing body a wisdom and strength unique in history. So divinely aided and well ordered is her system that any priest, almost irrespective of mental ability, provided he be obedient and zealous, can perform his essential duties in a fitting manner. The priest never stands alone. Back of him is Christ and the grace and power of Christ's Church giving a force to his words, a strength to his hands and fruit to his labors far out of proportion to the effort made.

Far different is the case of the layman. Whatever he does over and above his bare duty is voluntary personal ser-

vice. Personality and individual effort means much. Strictly interpreted his duty is easy—attendance at Mass, Communion at Easter, proper money support. Many are content with this minimum and grumble at that. To them the parish is an institution managed by priests, the duties of laymen being limited to attending services and paying dues.

This is a low ideal for an educated and prosperous layman. It was never the norm in Catholic countries in the days of faith. It is a relic of immigrant days, the outcome of primitive and passing conditions. Once the priest had to be the factotum for the people were poor and illiterate. They are not so to-day. The composition and environment of the average parish are far different from those of half a century ago. There are many things that laymen can do for a parish if they have good will and right dispositions.

Every parish includes Catholics of wealth, education and ability who often do little more than the poor laborer, but devote their energies to a vain attempt at scaling the social ramparts. The Church foreseeth must rest content with the prestige of writing their names on the parish register.

Some would co-operate if they could run the parish, others if the parish would help them in business, others if the pastor were removed; they cannot see the Church because of some priests. Some stand aloof nursing some ancient grudge or hasty word and contribute nothing except criticism.

So the priest must do everything precisely as did his predecessors when as yet the congregation was composed of poor immigrants. The parish has grown, its responsibilities have increased, problems gather, and a prosperous and educated laity give no more and no less personal service than their ancestors fifty years ago.

It is not now a question of interference of trustees system, of parish advisory board. We have done with that, let us hope forever. It is a question of permissible and needed co-operation in proper lines. These lines are many but for the present, we shall take one, charity.

Outside the Church charity has become a highly organized and specialized profession. All that is left of Protestantism has been poured into the cup of humanitarianism. The activity of these agencies is incessant. Money, workers, system, are all ready to their hands. On the other side stands the priest alone.

The Conferences of St. Vincent of Paul could be made real dynamos of charitable energy, but laymen decline to give personal service to the work, which falls by default into the hands of a few well-intentioned folk who do what they can and that is little enough. You may find on all sides non-Catholic professional and business men whose every hour is valuable, giving their time without stint to philanthropic work, but Catholics of the same class seem to consider such service degrading. There are many societies exclusively Catholic in membership and they do singularly little as a rule for charitable works. There is in every parish a many-sided and sore need for charitable activity, yet the average layman takes little more interest in it all than he does in the politics of Tibet. The Church here will never reach her full stature and power for good until laymen do their part.

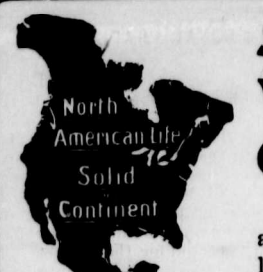
Why this endless counting of heads? It is not skulls but the quality of their contents that count. Numerically we may be strong, but dynamically we are puny. This is the reason for "Federation." The laymen must be awakened



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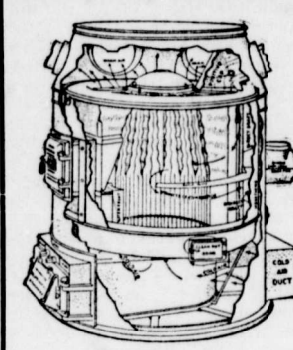
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