

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Quinquagesima Sunday. PREPARING FOR LENT. "Thy faith hath made thee whole." (Luk. xiv. 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 to-day'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 begin to 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 nature, 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 he has taken good men a lifetime to do? The dying sinner may persuade the priest that he has repented, but it is 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."

A MINISTER'S QUEST IN THE CATACOMBS.

DOES THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH EXIST TO-DAY IN ITS MINISTRY AND SACRAMENTS?

The controversialist of that "City of Confusion" known officially as the Protestant Episcopal Church, and called by several other names by its adherents, has his advantages and disadvantages growing out of the multitude of doctrines which are held and condemned at the same time by one or more of the varied schools of opinion or sects contained within this sect. While the Protestant Episcopal controversialist of the "Low" variety is shooting his arrows at Rome, for instance, he is likely to strike some of his brethren of the "High" Church, or in between. His opponent has some trouble in "getting back," because in attempting to strike the P. E.'s as a body he finds himself in the position of the Irishman who had counted all the pigs but one, which would not stand still.

These thoughts suggested themselves to a representative of The Catholic Standard and Times who attended two of a series of sermons on "The Catacombs of Rome" at the edifice located on Thirty-eighth street, above Chestnut, and called the "Church of the Saviour." These two sermons were, respectively, on the questions, "Does the Church of the catacombs exist to-day in its ministry and sacraments?" and "Is the Church in Rome the Church that was under Rome?"

As an introduction to the first of these discourses Rev. Dr. J. Sanders Reed paid his compliments to the "American Episcopal" Church and its "glit-edged piety," and asked how many of its twentieth century members would get up at dawn to attend divine worship underground. It is hard enough now, he said, to get a handful at a convenient hour on a fine day, with the church well-heated, the pews and kneeling benches cushioned and the music fine. The speaker could find no resemblance here to the Church of the Catacombs, but had he looked beyond his own sect he could have found a church whose members crowd

its humblest and coldest chapel before day.

He then took a shy at our Baptist brethren, stating that inscriptions in the catacombs showed burial of neophytes or newly-baptized Christians as young as twenty-one months, an argument for infant baptism; and spoke of a font found in the catacombs inscribed as having been used by St. Peter, said font being too shallow to permit of the immersion of even an infant. However, our Baptist brethren need not worry about this seemingly conclusive argument, since it was overlooked by the reverend doctor in his next sermon, one week later, when he denied that St. Peter ever was in Rome.

Again, he referred to paintings of St. John the Baptist pouring water on our Divine Lord's head as another argument against immersion, a representation to be seen on a stained glass window of a Baptist church a couple of blocks away from Dr. Reed's. Coming to symbols of the Blessed Eucharist found in the catacombs, he contended that it is more than a sign or a souvenir; that it is, in fact a central act of worship, yet a week later he said that there is nothing in the catacombs to indicate a belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation. What is left but a symbol where this doctrine is denied?

Allusion was made to services being held on the slabs of the tombs of martyrs and the possible reference in the Apostles' Creed to this, but the speaker neglected to state that under the altar stone in each Catholic Church there are relics of the saints—another similarity between Rome on earth and under the earth.

Reference was made to the love feasts, where rich and poor ate together after the service. And we have nothing like that to-day, said the speaker. And here again, he overlooked the Catholic Church, for its Holy Name societies, alumni sodalities and other bodies have breakfast reunions after receiving Holy Communion in a body.

The order of deaconesses, which he said had recently "been reintroduced in the church, to its good," was shown to have existed in the days when the primitive Christians worshipped in the catacombs. These "consecrated virgins" were engaged in works of charity caring for the poor and sick, and instructing the young. The reverend speaker did not deem it necessary to state that the Catholic Church had never found it necessary to "reintroduce" these "consecrated virgins," for the simple reason that they have never been left out of it. Besides, his phrase of "consecrated virgins" was rather at variance with his attack on celibacy a week later.

In concluding this talk, the speaker claimed that the church called to-day, in the New World, the Protestant Episcopal Church can trace back its lineage to the Church of the catacombs. But we shall see how he succeeded.

IS IT THE CHURCH OF ROME?

Is the Church in Rome the Church that was under Rome? attracted a fair crowd (for a Protestant church) on Sunday evening last, notwithstanding the intense cold. There is no concealing the fact that the religiously inclined of this "higher criticism" age are interested in "Rome," though they so frequently choose strange methods of learning of her. Few of them would go to an allopathic physician to get a fair exposition of homoeopathy. Some of the gentlemen criticizing "Rome" seem, from their special pleading, to be trying very hard to convince themselves.

With an utter disregard of the feelings of his "higher" brethren, Dr. Reed spoke of the gulf that separates "Rome" from Protestantism, overlooking the fact that the gulf that separates "low" from "high" in his own denomination is wide and deep, and that practically all of "Rome's" tenets are held within that body officially known as the Protestant Episcopal Church.

The early Church, he said, was content to worship Christ in privacy and destitution, the inference being that "Rome" is not. Yet it is admitted that the members of no other Church make such sacrifices. Despite his own reference to St. Peter's font the previous week, he contended that St. Peter was never in Rome, and said it was a myth that he stayed there twenty-five years. Very little reference, he said, is made to St. Peter in the catacombs, and he referred to glasses, one of which showed St. Peter and St. Paul side by side, with Peter on the left hand. Here the speaker again forgot himself, saying that the only apostle distinguished from the rest of the twelve was St. Paul. St. Paul, of course, was not one of the twelve at all.

Panvinus, who is certainly as good an authority as Dr. Reed, says that the Cometerium Ostrinum is the oldest of the catacombs, because "it was in use when St. Peter preached the faith to the Romans." The Venerable Bede, whom perhaps some of the doctor's coreligionists would claim as one of themselves, speaks of the "Cometerium majus" as the one wherein Peter baptized (perhaps using the font Dr. Reed found on Saturday and lost the next). The one picture on glass showing St. Peter on the left seems conclusive to Dr. Reed, but the larger number of representations show Peter on the right; and in one instance the Blessed Virgin is in the centre, with Paul on the right and Peter on the left. Some represent our Lord himself at the foot of St. Paul, but our enthusiastic admirer of St. Paul (except in his love for celibacy) would not argue from that. Perish the thought!

St. Peter is represented as another Moses striking the rock in some cases, our Lord standing between Moses and Peter, evidently signifying that they are the dispensers, under God, of the Old and New Law.

THE DOCTOR IN REVIEW.

As our readers will remember, we went exhaustively into this question when Peter's primacy alone was in question. We may pass to other subjects. On that occasion Rev. William Downey, Methodist, told his congregation that we published the best report

of a sermon of his that he had ever had, but we then devoted four columns to tearing him out. In passing, we may say that the New Testament contains ample evidence of Peter's leadership. If the doubting Protestant will take a concordance and read each text referring to that saint.

That Peter was in Rome is admitted by such eminent non-Catholic writers as Grotius, Cave, Lardner, Whitby, Macknight, Hales, Cudius, Mynster, Schaff, Neander, Steiger, De Wette, Wieseler, Credner, Block, Meyer, Hilgenfeld, Rann, Mangold and Pearson. The last named writer says: "That St. Peter was in Rome is so clear in Christian antiquity that it is a shame for any Protestant to confess that any Protestant ever denied us. When the chair of Peter and the Cemetery of St. Peter and Marcellinus are also venerated by Dr. Reed, one wonders why he has not questioned the authenticity of the catacombs themselves.

When he accused the Church of Maroltry, and spoke of paintings exalting Mary above our Divine Lord, he forgot all about the catacombs, and quoted prayers alleged to be by St. Bonaventura and a Protestant hymn praising our Lord, altered by some Catholic in Albany, to sing the praises of the Blessed Virgin. Dr. Reed could find little reference to the Mother of God in the catacombs, and no "Ave Marie" among the inscriptions. The Archangel Gabriel's salutation would have furnished him with the latter, and the catacombs represent her in at least twenty paintings of the magi and others of the Virgin's first miracle.

The "Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple," etc. And she is particularly well represented in the pictures in the Cemetery of Priscilla. Mary is considered by Catholics the greatest of the saints and the most powerful intercessor among them, and, perhaps the marriage feast of Cana and others of the Virgin's first miracle there performed at her request, though he said His time had not yet come, should prove some excuse for such belief. To pay her divine honor would be idolatry in a Catholic; a "high" churchman, with his Lady chapel, might exaggerate the devotion and escape condemnation because there is no authority in his denomination to call him to account. But Catholics are authoritatively taught to distinguish between the honor due to God alone and that due even the greatest saint. Though flowers of rhetoric may at times deceive the non-Catholic into thinking that Catholics pay too much honor to the saints, it must always be observed that they are asked to pray for us. And the question naturally arises, "To whom shall they pray?" When that question is answered, all doubt as to proper distinctions should disappear.

The beliefs in a purgatory and prayers for the dead are necessarily related. The latter implies the former. Some of the optant in the catacombs, not only show those doctrines in the primitive Church, but also the custom of invoking the saints, of whom Dr. Reed might admit the Blessed Virgin to be one. How much of present-day Catholic custom and liturgy is shown in these.

"Mayest thou live in the Holy Spirit."

"I commend to thee, Basililla (Saint Basililla) the innocence of Gemellus" (O. his tombstone).

"Lady, (Saint Basililla), we, Crescentinus and Lucina, commend to thee our daughter Crescentina."

"Pray for thy parents."

"May thy spirit rest well in God. Pray for thy parents."

"May God refresh thy spirit."

"Refresh, O God, the soul of—"

"Vicentia in Christ. Pray for Phoebe and her husband."

"Holy souls, have in remembrance Marcianus Succensus Severus and all our brethren."

"And in your prayers pray for us, because we know you (to be) in Christ."

In concluding his sermon, Dr. Reed said the Reformation was not a new departure, but a disinterment of the body of Christ, which had been buried alive, and that the Church which the apostles left was the Church of Cranmer, Koble, Kingsley, etc. It was not a reformation, but a resurrection. But there is an awful gap between the apostles and Cranmer. Dr. Reed's theory buries the Church for more than a thousand years. However, he filled a part of the gap, for in quoting Pope Gregory, "the servants of the servants of God," as rebuking a Bishop claiming superiority, he spoke of him as sending Augustine to England, and yet, and yet—Rome did not have the primacy. The next time a member of Dr. Reed's congregation wants to know something about the catacombs, let him read "Rome's Secret." But why should a good Protestant leave the Bible as a rule of faith and take up a cemetery? Come, let us go to one of

the Protestant cemeteries of to-day and see how much Protestant Episcopal doctrine it has for the ages to come. The Reformation had a subterranean source, no doubt, but it was not the catacombs. —Philadelphia Catholic Standard and Times.

"KNOWLEDGE IS POWER"

Catholic Universe.

"Knowledge is power."—Bacon. This expression is founded perhaps in the passage from the Bible, "A wise man is strong." It reminds us of a story. Some rolling mill men were seeking to separate a mastiff and a small dog which he appeared to be about to eat. Though the men pulled and pounded and threw water on the mastiff, they could not succeed in making him let the small dog go. A dude coming along and noticing the commotion stopped. Taking in the situation, he said to the muscular men about him: "Stand back! Stand back! I will separate them." The men looked at him contemptuously and said: "What! You separate them?" "Stand back! Stand back!" he said. Reaching into his vest pocket he took out a little box and uncorking it took therefrom a pinch of something. He held this to the nostrils of the mastiff. In a moment the large dog sneezed the small one half across the road. The little dog took to his heels and, yelping, passed out of sight. While the mastiff continued to sneeze and the mill men looked on with surprise, the dude put the box again into his vest pocket and as jauntily he started away, he said in a mingling tone: "Knowledge is power. Knowledge is power!"

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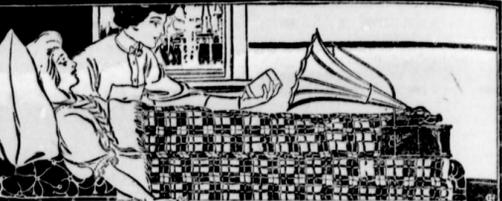
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SOME RESULTS OF LAST YEAR'S OPERATIONS

Table with financial data: Total Cash Income \$1,815,097.69, Increase over 1906 68,553.69, Total Assets 8,735,876.08, Increase over 1906 936,811.63, Net surplus to policy-holders 613,556.04, Increase over 1906 23,346.96, General Expenses 321,393.95, Decrease as compared with 1906 26,918.17, Payments to policy-holders during the year 607,347.44, Insurance in Force 39,335,212.00

Pius X to the Editors and Contributors of The Catholic Encyclopedia

Most Reverend John M. Farley, Archbishop of New York, Most Illustrious and Reverend Sir:

Through your good offices the Holy Father has lately received the first volume of the (illustrated) Catholic Encyclopedia which is to be followed by fourteen other volumes. Quite apart from the rich binding especially prepared for His Holiness, and from the numerous remarkable illustrations which enhance the value of the work and which charm the reader by their perfect artistic finish, the Holy Father notes with a special satisfaction the importance and practical utility of this new encyclopedic work. To collect and publish in a form so attractive for the English-speaking world where there are still so many non-Catholics, the magnificent and immortal achievements of the Catholic Church and her children in the domains of science, literature, and art, cannot but be an enterprise eminently helpful and beneficial. Moreover, as the preface of the first volume explicitly states, the purpose of the work is to set forth the immense benefits conferred through the Catholic Church on mankind, not only by furthering moral and social development, but also by promoting civil, scientific, and artistic growth and progress. In conclusion, the Holy Father heartily congratulates the efficient editors and their collaborators on the first happy fruit of their labours; he encourages them to continue with zeal the great task to which they have set their hands, and as an earnest of his special good will he bestows on each of them his Apostolic benediction.

I avail myself of this welcome occasion to assure your Grace of my very profound esteem, etc., etc.

(Signed) Pius X. Rome, 1 Dec., 1907.

Note: The official letter of Cardinal Merry del Val is written in Italian and on the large white letter paper made specially for the Papal household. It is interesting to note, in the center of the sheet, the water mark here reproduced, which displays the tiara, and the keys, above the letters S. P. A. The initials stand for Sacrum Palatium Apostolicum ("Sacred Apostolic Palace"—see The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume I, page 95).

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