

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

HORROR OF MORTAL SIN.

"As He entered into a certain town, there met Him ten lepers, who stood afar off and lifted up their voices, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." (St. Luke xvii, 16.)

One of the comparisons we most frequently meet in Holy Scripture is to call sin—mortal sin—the leprosy of the soul, because sin, in its effect on the soul, very much resembles the devastating and blighting effects of leprosy on the body.

Leprosy in olden times, and to-day where it exists, is one of the most loathsome of all diseases. It is contracted by contact with persons infected by it, and once one is infected by it it gradually poisons the whole system. The various members of the body, as the touch of poison comes to them, slowly fester, rot, and then shrink away. There is no power in medicine to cure or even to alleviate this terrible disease. Once the disease attacks its victim he is beyond the skill of man. To prevent the infection spreading to healthful persons, the lepers were cast out from human society. They were relegated to a spot by themselves, and by law were not allowed to come near to any one.

So the lepers in the Gospel "stood afar off and cried out." They did not dare to come in contact with any one, and did others approach them unaware they were infected. So that they were exiled from society, home and all joys of life to exist in a living death. What a horrible sight it must have been to see with our Lord and see these ten lepers—living sepulchres that they were—afar off raising their handless arms in attitude of supplication and crying out with tongues that were nearly devoured and lips that were polluted with the terrible disease, "Jesus, have mercy on us!"

What leprosy is to the body that sin is to the soul. Like the leprosy, sin is contracted by contact with sinners or by going into temptation. It is by touching the pitch the sinner becomes defiled. Once the poison of sin enters into the soul it steals away all its beauty and innocence.

The innocent soul in health is mistress of her own energies. She calms the risings of rebellious nature. She keeps in check the inclinations to evil. The tranquillity and peace of conscience that one enjoys are but the vigor and strength that comes in the possession of health. But the contamination of leprosy enters in, and she who was mistress of the fairest kingdom on earth becomes a slave to the passions, degraded, destitute, and powerless in the midst of a thousand foes. She loses the peace that comes from union with God. She is deprived of her relish for prayer. There is taken from her that sense of the awful judgments of God. This is but the beginning of the terrible havoc sin makes on the soul.

There are secondary stages in the disease, when the sinner becomes so possessed with his defilements he no longer finds pleasure among the innocent. He has made himself an outcast from God, he now shuns all that is good. The corruption seizes on all his faculties and powers. His mind can think of naught but sin, his desires are for lower and still lower sensual gratifications, his imagination becomes filled with all foulness, and one by one the heaven-born gifts that were his in the health of innocence, fester and rot away, so that he takes on corruption and it enters like water into his flesh and oil into his bones.

Externally he goes about his daily routine of duty, but his external show covers but a mass of rottenness.

Oh, dear brethren! has this awful leprosy been yours—have you gone into the dark and slippery path and thus contracted this terrible disease? If so there is for you only one remedy. No human power can stay the progress of the evil. It is the divine touch alone that can heal you. It is the divine lips only that can say to you, "Be thou clean." Like the lepers in the Gospel, as you come into the presence of our Lord in the Church cry out to Him from afar, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" He will listen to your cry and going, showing yourselves to the priests in the tribunal of penance, the leprosy will be healed, its foulness washed away, and you will be restored to spiritual health.

THE MASS.

The Lamp, the organ of the High Church party in the Anglican church, commenting on the late Pan-Anglican congress, whilst commending the liberality and widespread interest of the assembly dignitaries, complains of a noted want of devotion to divine worship especially that of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Here is how the writer vividly draws the contrast:

"The crowning feature of the service was the presentation on the high altar of the Anglican faithful, which amounted to £335,000 sterling. But where was the devotion of this vast assemblage to the Real Presence of Jesus Christ, Body, Soul and Divinity, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? Where did they give public expression to his desire before the eyes of the world in unmistakable fashion? There were indeed numerous celebrations of the Holy Eucharist in London churches during the session of the congress, but with the exception of certain high Masses in a few well known ritualistic churches on Sunday they were confined to low celebrations and were attended by scant congregations. The reporter of the English Church Times attended the 8 o'clock Mass at Westminster Abbey on the morning when the congress opened and he found no more than a hundred persons present.

THE RESULT OF THE BREACH WITH ROME. The first notable act of her reformers after the Church of England ceased to be a Catholic was to de-throne the Mass from its position as the supreme Sacrifice of the Christian altar, the all-prevailing Act of Divine Worship; and

Cranmer's substitute for it was principally an expurgated Litany, the psalmody of David and the Te Deum. Never perhaps since the Reformation were these sung more charmingly and "tear compellingly" than at the opening and close of the Pan-Anglican congress, but a Miserere, however wretchedly sung, or St. Ambrose's great hymn, or the grandest alleluia chorus ever composed, is but a mess of pottage when offered in exchange for our Catholic Eucharist, the Eucharistic Sacrifice. It was no doubt a majestic sight to see two hundred Anglican prelates, preceded by mace bearers, bringing their gold like the Magi from afar and solemnly depositing it upon the high altar of St. Paul's until the accumulating flood swelled into a grand total of nearly \$17,000,000 but the truth remains that one consecrated host unified in the hands of the poorest and humblest priest in the Catholic Church is in God's sight an infinitely more sublime spectacle.

"We feel constrained thus to put on record our disappointment that as far as the members of the congress addressed themselves to the all important matter of Divine Worship they should have chosen to approach the throne of the Most High after the manner of Protestant Episcopalians rather than as inheritors of the ancient Catholic traditions of the Church of England.

"The Catholic remnant in the Anglican Church for seventy-five years has battled hard for the restoration of the Mass to its rightful place in public worship, and withal wonderful has been our success, but can we reasonably entertain the hope that with one voice the Anglican Episcopate will again proclaim the true doctrine of the Mass, or with unity of faith celebrate the Eucharistic mysteries in a truly Catholic manner until we recover that union with Rome, the loss of which was the initial step to the throwing down of our altars and the casting us into a corner of the Sacrifice of the Mass?"

THE PRIEST.

He stands at the foot of the altar in his snowy vestments, his altar boys around him; he ascends the altar steps—alone.

Without him there would be no Mass, no confessions, no communions.

Of all that great churchful of people at last Mass he is probably the only one fasting. The rest had their fragrant coffee, their Sunday morning's breakfast hours ago. That is a long fast. Try it some Sunday. It will give you a headache, make you feel half sick—but try it, anyway.

He stands at the altar alone. Other men have come from homes where wives and children await them; he put that possibility away from him years ago.

Other men meet on the streets, stand and chat, argue politics and so on by the hour. Other men go to theatres, clubs, amusements; his calling shuts him off from all that.

Other men choose their place of residence, their associates; he goes where he is sent.

How different from the rest of the world he is in the confessional. When we are sick or worried or annoyed we speak sharply even to our dear ones and find ready excuse for ourselves for so doing. Suppose he allowed such things to make him short and irritable with us when we go to confession?

We get out of patience, disgusted with people when they will not do as we think they should. What if he became disgusted with us when we go to him week after week, or month after month, with almost the same story of weakness, unfaithfulness and sin?

When people will not do as we want them to we leave them alone after a while to go their way. What would become of us, if he let us go our way?

We fly to others with our troubles. He has the sorrows of hundreds brought to him. Think you that his heart is not touched, that he does not feel for his people and suffer with them in their afflictions?

And when we do feel grateful to him, how seldom we let him know.

We are not bound, of course, to thank the priest for what it is his duty to do, but his heart is human, after all, and gratitude and appreciation are, without doubt, as becoming to him as to us.

In that most beautiful and most holy relation which exists between the priest and his people all are equally bound before God; he "so to watch as to give an account of our souls;" we to profit with the greatest care and faithfulness by what God sends to us through him. St. Francis de Sales says that we should regard our priests "with a reverence that does not diminish our affection and an affection that does not diminish our reverence."

A priest once promised a certain woman that a favor from God should be granted her. He promised it "in the name of God." It was granted. A dear Protestant relative to whom that woman told the circumstances said: "As God's minister and representative, he stands in the place of God to you. When he promises you a thing 'in the name of God' it has to come true." Wonderful answer from a Protestant! Wonderful consolation to us, when "in the name of God" the priest pronounces the words of absolution over us and bids us "go in peace."

In his care and watchfulness over us we have a type of the loving care of the Father who gave him to us. In the sacrifices he makes for us there is a symbol of the infinite sacrifice of One whose humble follower he is, and from Whom he receives whatever beauty of character he possesses, as the tiny pool reflects the glorious sun. In his wisdom and knowledge for us there are shown the workings of that spirit of truth and holiness whom the Father promised to send in His Son's name unto His Church.

Never in this world shall we realize what we owe to the priest. We are too full of our own wants and needs and we take our blessings too much for granted to think a great deal about it.

But if ever we save our souls it will be, under God, through his help. Then, having more knowledge and seeing more clearly than we do here, we shall comprehend what our priests have

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done for us. We shall regret, if regret can enter that happy place, that we did not more often cheer his heart by gratitude and obedience.

Let us, then, reverence him, obey him, love him with a holy affection and thank God for him.

Let us pray day and night that our dear Lord will comfort and strengthen him here and reward him for all eternity among His saints in heaven hereafter.—The Monitor, San Francisco.

THE CHURCH OF ROME THE CHURCH OF HISTORY.

An English Protestant, Mr. George Sampson, recently reviewing Rankin's "History of the Popes" in the London Daily Chronicle, wrote as follows on the Catholic Church in European history:

"It is a simple fact that in the history of Europe the Church of Rome is the Church of the centre, the other bodies being merely provincial institutions. The church of England, nor the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion, nor the Society of Friends, nor the Union of Ethical Societies. The church of history is the Church of Rome as Newman asserts in the passage where he sadly admits that the 'unbeliever Gibbon' is our only worthy ecclesiastical historian. But I will go further, and say that the church of English history is the Church of Rome; for it gave us our cathedrals, set the form of our prayers, marked out our parishes, taught us our duty to the poor, nursed on laws and our learning, won us much of our liberty, and laid the foundation of our last four centuries of progress. Without knowing something of this great Church, you can understand very little of English history, and to minimize the historic importance of the Papacy because you happen to be a Protestant is as stupid as to minimize the historic importance of The House of Austria because you happen to be an Englishman."

ANARCHY IN RELIGION.

It is somewhat peculiar that just at a time when there is a general outcry against anarchy in the State, there should be so much of it in religion. The determination to throw off all authority in religion seems to grow with what it feeds upon. Creeds must have no authority, the consensus of opinion formed after a conflict of ages must have no authority; beliefs which made epochs in history and produced generations of heroic men and women must have no authority, the mighty men of the past who changed the face of the world must have no authority, the lawgivers of the apostles must have no authority, the Christ must have no authority, except such as belongs to other sages, and these have no authority, the Bible must have no authority, nothing must have authority except the opinion of the man expressing it, and he must be at liberty to change the opinion before noon. A council may be called to pass upon the fitness of a candidate for ordination, but it must have no authority to consider the beliefs which he holds. * * *

If this is not anarchy in religion, then there never has been anarchy nor ever will be or can be. And if anarchy is to be treated, this is the place to begin. It is useless to denounce the anarchy of the man who is haranguing on the street corner while supporting a more fundamental and destructive form of it in the pulpit.—The Advance (Congregationalist).

A Convert's Opinion.

Here is what Father Robert Hugh Benson, a convert, and the son of the late Dr. Benson, Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, says about the Catholic Church:—

The Church promises a great deal, but my experience is that she gives too times more, and if you put on the balance the most successful life outside the Church, and the most unsuccessful and disastrous life within her fold, a thousand times rather choose the latter. The Catholic Church is supremely what she promises to be. She is the priceless pearl for which the greatest sacrifice is not too great.—Sacred Heart Review.

A Twelfth-of-July Incident.

We have grown so far away in Boston from the old-time anti-Catholic bigotry that it comes to us with a slight shock to know that Orangemen still hold picnics and have an acute distaste for anything green. To show, as Mark Twain puts it, "How slight a cause may lead to crime"—or riot and bloodshed for that matter—on Saturday morning, July 11th, a body of Orangemen on their annual outing were passing through the South Station when one of their number noticed on the news stand a book entitled "Anne of Green Gables." On ascertaining that the publishers, Messrs L. C. Page & Company, had their offices opposite the South Station, they marched in a body across the street, the band in the meanwhile playing the most horrible and heartrending dirges. The demonstration was cut short by the tactful attitude of one of the company's editors, who conferred with the leader of the Orangemen and explained that, although the title might appear offensive, the heroine, "Anne" had hair of a distinct orange hue. On hearing this explanation, "Anne" was adopted as their mascot, and the party proceeded on their outing in high glee.—The Boston Republic.

The Son of a Great Convert.

The sudden death of the Rev. William Burns, chaplain of Nazareth House, London, just after preaching an earnest sermon on the Blessed Eucharist, and while the elevation bell was ringing, recalls the story of a convert family whose devotion to the faith was remarkable. The father, a native of Scotland, was the founder of the well-known publishing house of Burns and Oates. So great was his love of the Church and zeal for its progress that after his conversion he refused to issue any but Catholic books, of which at that time there was crying need. Mr. Burns' five daughters entered religion, and after his death, in 1871, his wife also went into a convent. His son William had already become a priest, and was exercising the ministry in Spanish Place, London, the nearest church, as it happened to the great publishing house founded by the head of the family.—Ave Maria.

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