

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Sextagesima Sunday.

THE CHOSEN FEW.

"To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand." (St. Luke vii. 9.)

These are very important words which we should lay deeply to heart. Their meaning opens out the more we study them, and we would do well to spend a little time in finding out whether we come under the condemnation or not. Let me try to assist you in your examination.

Our Lord was a personage that was constantly surrounded by crowds of men and women who were impelled towards Him by many and various motives. His fame had spread through out the country, and He was regarded by all as a great man; but all were not equally impressed as to the kind and extent of His greatness. Hence it was that some came out of pure curiosity, some to receive a favor, while a few may believe were led to Him by a desire to learn from His lips a higher doctrine than any they had hitherto been taught.

Now, with such a motley gathering always around Him, our Lord could not but speak cautiously on subjects so new and difficult to be understood by His hearers. He was only carrying out His own command, "Give not that which is holy to dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine." Our Lord in thus acting only did what was reasonable as well as merciful. He acted reasonably in that it would have been the height of folly for Him to use words above the native understanding of the majority, who would estimate His teaching as the babbling of one not wholly in his mind. He acted mercifully because he thereby freed them from the penalty attached to the non-fulfilment of their duty learned in these discourses; for not plainly being told the will of God, they could not be brought to account for any neglect in its carrying out. Our Lord says, "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables." Here we have the antithesis "you" and "rest." The "you" refers directly to the apostles, and indirectly to all who are in the same condition of mind and heart as theirs. By the "rest" are to be understood those who are either antagonistic to the divine word, or who are too steeped in sin and ignorance of anything nobler than pandering to the wants of the body and the demands of the passions, to be prepared to receive the revelation that God makes of Himself and of our obligations to Him. Yes, brethren, the heart and the intellect must be in a suitable condition before we may expect to benefit from anything that God makes known regarding Himself or ourselves.

Man of his own natural powers cannot effect anything. In order for us to rise to the supernatural, we need the assistance of the Holy Spirit, whose work it is to fill our minds with supernatural thought and desires, and with our individual co-operation to accomplish in us whatever God has designed from all eternity. The apostle St. James tells us that "every best gift and every perfect gift is from above," and surely there can be no more best and perfect gift than the divine whisperings of the Spirit of God. This is the reason why the vast mass of mankind in general, and Christians in particular, seem to have so little concern with the things pertaining to the soul. They seldom or never hear the voice of God or conscience, intruding themselves into the means of salvation, or illuminating their minds for a clearer and larger grasp of the truths of our holy faith. They always appear to be stupid and indifferent on any subject not having a direct reference to the things of this life. This, brethren, betrays a sickly state of our spiritual nature. We who are born again by the waters of regeneration and nourished by the other sacraments of the Catholic Church, and possessing so many helps for attaining to a high degree of sanctity, should, if we use them rightly and persistently, rise day by day to a clearer and fuller perception of the divine mysteries, till we come after death to the perfect and complete vision of God in paradise. There is no excuse for us. If we do not co-operate with the grace of God, then we shall share the lot of those of whom it is said, "But he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath."

PIOUS BELIEFS.

NON CATHOLICS OFTEN MISLED BY IGNORANT OVERZEAL OF CATHOLICS.

In an interesting and timely article on "What Must be Believed, What May be Believed," contributed to the Catholic Transcript by Rev. T. M. Crowley, we find a useful word as to "pious beliefs."

For convenience sake the writer divides the various topics that came up for consideration into three classes—what is of divine faith and ecclesiastical faith, the opinion of theologians and pious practices, in which last class he includes modern miracles and sacred shrines.

"Here," he says, "the non-Catholic falls into error, and many times because of the ignorant overzeal of his Catholic friend. There are many deviations in the Catholic Church, none of which, apart from the Mass on Sundays and holy days and the reception of the Eucharist at Easter, are of obligation. They are useful if properly understood and followed with an enlightened mind, but if they are followed wrong and very detrimental to impress non-Catholics with the belief that these are a part of the faith. Many of them have the approbation of the Church, and if understood and practiced as the Church wishes them to be understood and practiced, they are a source of grace and blessing. The devotion of the secular is an example. Worn in the spirit of the Church it is the source of good in many ways; but to hold that the more wearing of it,

without anything else on man's part, can be a pledge of salvation, is nothing short of blasphemy, for God, after all, cannot abdicate his own sovereignty.

"Pious beliefs are very useful and even if sometimes misinterpreted by Catholics, their main object is subverted, which in the last analysis is the honor and glory of God. And I may also apply this to relics and to sacred shrines, the object of which is to honor God in His saints or some mystery of religion, as the Incarnation inseparably connected with the House of Loreto. But it must be always borne in mind that these are vastly different than the doctrines that are called 'of faith.'

"In regard to modern miracles and revelations but little need be said. They may be believed or not, according as the testimony in favor of them furnishes a motive of credibility. God's power is not shortened, nor God's knowledge decreased; and, if it so please Him, there is nothing either on the part of God or of man that makes a miracle or revelation intrinsically impossible. But whilst we Catholics may believe them, it is well to be on our guard against elevating them beyond their own sphere. To put them in the realm of revealed doctrine is to be more Catholic than the Church and to work serious harm both within and outside the Church.

"These few reflections show substantially what Catholics must believe and in what they are free. If the distinction were always kept in view, there would be less misunderstanding and less tendency on the part of papers, secular and religious, to make mistakes that to the enlightened Catholic are supremely ridiculous."

AUTHORITY.

Authority has the right of rule and sway inherent in itself, for the author of a thing, whence the word arises, must have all that pertains to carrying out the reasons for its existence. Authority stands to maintain law and order, our earthly rights and well-being, and so it is to be respected and obeyed, just as God is to be honored and obeyed as the first great author, Creator and Lord of all things.

The authority of the earthly ruler is but a shadow of the divine and has its root in God and its power from Him. Thus the apostle says, "All power, all authority is from God."

"Through Me kings reign and rulers rule," says God in holy writ, and bids us obey them. We are to give to Caesar, that is, give to authority our submission, our respect and our obedience. We must be submissive to rule, though we know how strong is the feeling of rebellion in us, incited as it always is by the enemy of our souls who said, "Non serviam." "I will not serve."

Law, order is heaven's first law, and it must be the same everywhere. Nature obeys fixed laws, and man for his part must follow rule and obey a ruler; the planets revolve around the sun as well as turn on their own axis, whilst the sun draws its power, its light, its heat from God the Creator of all. In the same way man, whilst having great power and independence in himself, still depends on God through the channels which He has appointed. Man in his wisdom must see the necessity of this. The law, for example, in the family, the workshop, or what you will, in any place where there are a number, some one must rule and all others obey; there may be minor differences, but in no way there must be a working as one great common core of law, harmony and order; there must be unity and co-operation on both sides; unity as to some one who governs and unity as to all the rest obeying that one.

We are to be docile and submissive to those placed over us; not more we are to respect and obey them. It must not be a sullen aspect or an unwilling subjection, but one cheerfully given because right and necessary, seeing in those who rule the representatives of God Himself, who will hold them even to a stricter accountability than those over whom they rule.

How great is the responsibility of those who govern! They must answer not only for themselves but in large part for their subjects. The latter may have many griefs through their misrule, just as the children of a bad and indifferent father have their sorrows, or the workmen of a cruel and heartless employer know injustice and hardship, and all this must be accounted for before God, who bids the afflicted hear-up through their trials and sorrows, abiding the day of His justice soon to come.

We must beg God to give us strength to bear with imprudent rulers and help us to obey them, for authority is to be obeyed for itself. Injustice at times will be attempted by rulers following their own whims rather than the principles of justice, and who become tyrants rather than good and wise rulers; but if they persist their way will soon be brought to an end by the just uprising of the people at large.

Again, those who rule may be inferior in many ways to those ruled. They may not have the same amount of intelligence, or worse still, may be lacking in virtue and morality; but all this is to make no difference as long as the law is carried out according to the principles of justice; they are only figures and instruments, unworthy, indeed, yet still holding a power not their own but God's, which He has entrusted to them. The sceptre is greater than the hand that wields it, the crown is of more consequence than the one who wears it, yes, the mace is greater than the six hundred who guard it, for all these stand for authority. Let us see, therefore, our duty to the State, to the Government under which we live and perform it fully and religiously as good citizens, lovers of law and order, in a secondary degree only to that higher rule of loving and serving God as His children and the future citizens of heaven.

Rendering to God the things that are God's includes rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. The good devout Christian is always a good and

faithful citizen; but this cannot be said vice versa. Many a man keeps the laws of the State and breaks the law of God. He is to all appearances a good man and is so regarded in the eyes of the law; he is just to his fellow-men, peaceable and law-abiding and is considered a good and valuable member of society. But he is wanting in his duty to God in one way or another. It is his family, perhaps, that is suffering from his neglect of them, or there are in his home some hidden wrongs and crimes of which the law knows nothing or takes no notice, and so he may be just before the world and condemned before God. In this way we may say, "Men's ways are not God's ways." This world is, indeed, a more plaything and less a thing of this world are vain and fleeting in comparison with the things of the life to come. Earth's laws are but for the day, but the laws of God are for an eternity. The law and order which we admire and gladly sustain are only so many smokestacks across the dial of time which has its beginning and end in eternity. So external service will count for nothing unless accompanied with internal and everlasting principles.—Bishop Colton in Catholic Union and Times.

PIANO SERVES AS ALTAR.

EXPERIENCES OF A MISSIONARY IN A TOWN NEAR CLEVELAND WHERE CATHOLIC CHURCH WAS UNKNOWN.

One would hardly expect to find today, in the great State of Ohio, a few miles from Cleveland, a thriving community, many of whose inhabitants had never seen a Catholic church. Such a condition was found to exist in Rittman, O., by Rev. Thomas J. O'Hern, of the Apostolate, when he went there recently to give a series of lectures to the Catholics. The territory was within the jurisdiction of Father Hermann, pastor of Dylestown, who arranged for the lectures. They were held in the Opera House and the people of both town and surrounding country manifested the keenest interest in the topics discussed. The speaker was greeted every evening by a crowd which entirely filled the building, some of them having driven a distance of seven or eight miles. The questions showed that their knowledge of the Church was very meagre. They were all eager to learn the truths of the Catholic religion, and the Catholic doctrine which was distributed among them gratefully.

While the lectures were intended primarily for non-Catholics, they proved to be of the greatest value to the Catholics of the vicinity. A square piano on the stage served as an altar, and Mass was celebrated every day. Many of the non-Catholics, who had never been in a Catholic Church, came to see what Mass was like. Every day several Catholics would make themselves known and express a desire to return to the Church and receive the sacraments. Up to that time no one in Rittman knew that they were Catholics. The faith was just flickering and about the only reason they could give for being Catholics was that they had been born such, as some of them stated. The Catholics are now very enthusiastic and desire to build a church. One of the men has headed the list by subscribing \$400. The future of Rittman looks bright. Extensive additions are being made to the large salt works and box board factory in the town.

Father Hermann has the honor of the lectures repeated at Dylestown, so Father O'Hern lectured there from Jan. 12th to 18th. Dylestown is situated upon a hill and is a quaint old town about one hundred years old. In approaching from any direction the spire of the Catholic Church can be seen long before you arrive. The church is spacious and beautiful and Father Hermann has just completed a magnificent school building.

A course of lectures was given in Dylestown about thirteen years ago by Father Hermann and Wendel. These lectures were attended somewhat better than the recent course, but this was due to the fact that the weather was very inclement in the early part of the week. Then, too, interest in religion is not so keen among people generally today as it was fifteen years ago, because Protestantism is losing its hold upon them, and they are drifting into indifference. Hence, if the Catholic Church does not reach them before that condition arrives, they will be beyond the reach of religious appeal.

The Presbyterians in Dylestown are at least making an effort. They held services every evening while the lectures were going on, and rang the bell furiously every time the bell of the Catholic Church began to ring. I think, however, that the action was due to the ringing constituted the major portion of the minister's congregation.

The Lutherans were very much interested and Father Hermann expects to start a class of instruction in the near future. T. J. O'H.

A noble, large-hearted life, fruitful in good works, giving and receiving blessings, and finding, even in this world, a plentiful reward in the greatness of its labors, and the unlooked-for depths of its joys, this is the gift granted, even here, to those who forget self, give up self, and are ready to "lose their life for the Gospel's sake."—Abbe Henri Perreye.

LIQUOR AND TOBACCO HABITS

A. McTAGGART, M. D., C. M. 25 Young Street, Toronto, Canada. References as to Dr. McTaggart's professional standing and personal integrity permitted by Sir W. R. Meredith, Chief Justice. Hon. G. W. Ross, ex-Premier of Ontario. Hon. N. B. Macdonald, D. D., President Victoria College. Rev. Father Teofy, President of St. Michael's College, Toronto. Right Rev. A. Swann, Bishop of Toronto. Rev. W. N. B. Macdonald, D. D., Principal Knox College, Toronto. Hon. Thomas Coffey, Senator, Catholic Bishop, Toronto. Dr. McTaggart's vegetable remedies for the flower and gonorrhea have been tried, safe, inflexible home treatments. No hypodermic injections! No publicity! No loss of time from business! A certainty of cure. Consultation or correspondence invited.

DOLLARS AND CENTS THINKING.

It is positively surprising to consider to what extent this habit of thinking in dollars and cents has assumed control of the men and women of to-day. Even the scholar, the man of letters, falls victim to the ruling passion of the age and refuses to buy the book he wants because he must pay 25 m/re than usual for it, and willingly snags up the book he doesn't want because it happens to be marked down 25c.

The soldier-saint of Loyola, in his famous meditation on "The Two Standards," reminds us that those who follow Satan go their way without a glimmer of reward from the base prince of darkness. In a like predicament are the erring, deluded mortals who think in dollars and cents. Many of them, with all their wearisome howling about saving money and breeding duets, never get enough of those same duets to give themselves a respectably funeral; and those who do succeed in making what they vulgarly call their "pile," can't for the life of them put it to any effective use. Some of them are not men enough to admit it, but the truth is this: Their gold has turned to naphtha. Homely sayings these, and thoughts of thought before? Granted, but sayings with much pith and hidden meaning, and thoughts that the modern world cannot too often entertain. We have had enough thinking in dollars and cents. Let us by way of variety, think in terms men and women. Not "How much is he worth?" but "Who is he?" should be the question of tenets on our lips.

We must have money, to be sure, even as we must have microbes, even as we must have rain. But when we seek it too earnestly and too exclusively we often fail to attain the gilded goal, and infallibly fail to reach any other goal. When the Saviour uttered those momentous words: "A rich man shall hardly enter the Kingdom of Heaven," He meant, not that the rich man is necessarily wicked or sin-grimed, but that he is so absorbed in his riches that he is prone to pass by the blessed kingdom without being aware of its existence. In other words, he becomes indifferent—indifferent, that is, to all but the pursuit of wealth; and in our day and generation indifference is the unpardonable sin. It is one of the gravest, the most deplorable results of the base habit of thinking in dollars and cents.—Monitor.

PAGANISM AMONG THE "SMART-SET."

A staff correspondent in Reynold's Newspaper (London) notes and gives interesting, even if revolting, particulars of the pagan "Smart Set" dog-worship solemnly denounced recently by Father Bernard Vaughan. We have heard, says the correspondent, of thoughtless women clothing their dogs in furs and boots, and hanging their necks around with jewels. But possibly the latest phase of the show exhibits in the tradesmen's section is the most astounding piece of reckless fooling in the way of money wasting we have seen. A feature of the show was the splendid display of Christmas presents for dogs. These took the shape of silver brushes, chains, collars, motor costumes, traveling trunks and boxes, and India rubber balls for the pet whom they want something to play with!

But that is not all or nearly all. The cult of the pet dog, continues the correspondent, is becoming so acute that several ladies take nurses in uniform to attend to the "collie" of the animals, and to feed them. It is a matter of no moment that a farm boy's mother has to cut her lad's hair by the simple process of turning a pudding basin upside down on his head and cutting round it. The pet dog's toilet places him far above the plough boy in value. Experts, for costly fees, trim his hair, dress his coat, scent him with delicate perfumes, or give him a bath and shampoo. Thus far above the plough boy in value is the pet dog in twentieth century "So ciety" civilization. To point the moral is needless.—New York Freeman's Journal.

After 1,200 Years.

From the beginning of the new year, writes the Marquis de Fontenay, the Augustinian nuns, who have enjoyed the privilege of tending and nursing the sick at the great hospital known as Hotel Dieu at Paris, since the eighth century, will be excluded from that institution, with which they have been so closely identified for twelve hundred years. The records of the hospital show that every ruler of France, from Charlemagne to Napoleon III., has visited the institution, and has lavished praise upon these Augustinian nuns, and so time honored has been their charitable ministry in connection with the place that even the Government of the great Revolution did not dare to expel them. They were spared during the Reign of Terror, but now must go.

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The North American Life Assurance Company

Held its Annual Meeting at its Home Office, in Toronto, on Thursday, the 30th day of January, 1908. The President, Mr. John L. Blaikie, was appointed Chairman, and the Managing Director, Mr. L. Goldman, Secretary, when the following report of the business of the Company for the year ended December 31st, 1907, was submitted:—

New Business

The policies issued for the year, together with those revived, amounted to the sum of \$1,622,635.00, being greater than the new business transacted for the previous year.

Saving in Expenses

The business has continued to be conducted on a conservative basis, resulting in a further reduction in the ratio of expenses to premium income of over two per cent. This percentage of reduction has resulted in a material saving in expenses of \$26,918.17, as compared with 1906.

Cash Income

The cash income for the year from premiums, interest, etc., was \$1,815,097.09, showing the satisfactory increase for the year of \$68,553.69.

Payments to Policyholders

The amount paid on policy holder's account was \$607,347.44, and of this amount the sum of \$266,825.95 represents payments for dividends, matured endowments and investment policies.

Assets

The assets increased during the year by the sum of \$936,811.63, and now amount to \$8,735,876.08.

Net Surplus Increased

After making ample provision for all liabilities, including the special Contingent Fund of \$155,173.35 to provide for the temporary depreciation in the value of debentures, bonds and stocks, and paying the sum of \$97,304.79 for dividends to policyholders during the year, there was an addition made to the net surplus which now amounts to \$673,556.04, the year's work from every standpoint being highly satisfactory.

Assets Safely Invested

The assets of the Company continue to be, as heretofore, invested in the best class of securities; a detailed list of these will be published with the Annual Report for distribution.

Monthly Audit

A monthly examination of the books of the Company was made by the Auditors, and at the close of the year they made a thorough scrutiny of all the securities held by the Company. In addition to the examination of the securities by the Auditors, a committee of the Board, consisting of two Directors, made an independent audit each quarter.

The Officers, Field Representatives and Office Staff deserve to be commended for their efficiency and diligence.

L. Goldman, Managing Director.

J. L. Blaikie, President.

The Annual Report, showing marked proofs of the solid position of the Company, and containing a list of the securities held, and also those upon which the Company has made collateral loans, will be sent in due course to each policyholder.

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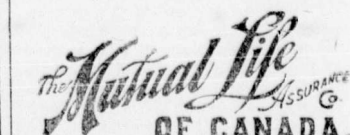
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