

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

TRUSTING IN GOD.

"Be not anxious, therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things the heathen seek. For your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things." (St. Matt. vi. 31.)

We are the children of God, dear brethren. From the day we first saw the sun until this God's hand has held us up and His strength has been with us. We are His heirs. By our baptism we have become His sons and the brothers of Jesus Christ. We have been called to a supernatural life and have been offered an imperishable reward—nothing less than God Himself. God has dealt tenderly with us; His mercies have never been wanting; He has shown indeed that "God is love."

Have we not every reason to have confidence in Him and to put ourselves in His hands with childlike trustfulness? When has He been untrue? When has He deserted us? Many times—too many times, alas!—we have been unfaithful to God, but "God is faithful" always. He leads us to those safe places wherein our souls may rest in peace, and He bestows upon us all things needful for our souls and bodies. Yet we are not always disposed to see the evidence of His providence.

Look out into the world: are men content with God's providence? Are they not asking each other: "What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? Are they not consumed with desires of getting? Do they live for aught else? Does God and eternal life concern them?"

It is, unhappily, but too true that the lives of most men are made of self-seeking. Each one is trying to do the best for himself. Each one wants to be happy and is running after happiness every hour of the day, and yet few know in what true happiness consists. They attain the wish of their hearts; they become rich; they have pleasures, and "they have their reward." For them the earth with its fulness is enough. Beyond is the unknown country for which they care nothing. Life with its joys engrosses them; still they are not happy.

How can they be? "God alone is good," and they have not God. They do not love Him; they do not serve Him; they hardly know Him. Yet He is the beginning and the end.

Oh, busy toilers! working so hard for so little, so anxious to provide for the passing hour, so full of human prudence, so rich in your own conceit, so poor in reality; would that you might know a little of that peace which God gives to those who put their trust in Him and not in riches! Work, indeed, you must, and provide; but why make the having of money and land and name your end? Why spend your strength, your lives, in getting, only to feel the greater bitterness in parting with your goods? It is God Who gives; it is God Who takes away; and He gives and takes away for your soul's sake. Close your eyes and rest your minds; let God speak to your hearts; let His holy Spirit show you something of His treasures—something of the sweetness, the unutterable sweetness, of the Son of God. "I have been young," sings David, "and now am old, and have not seen the just forsaken nor his seed seeking bread."

This, indeed, is happy living—to be God's child, dependent upon Him for all things necessary for salvation, and to be content with these. This is misery—to live for the sake of earthly goods and happiness, forgetful of God, forgetful of our own highest and truest interests—the good of the soul. "Be not solicitous, therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathen seek. For your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things."

THE IMPRACTICALITY OF SOCIALISM.

There is everything in Socialism that is inviting to the dreamer of utopian dreams, says W. H. Mallock, in the Dublin Review, with the important exception that the really practical is missing.

Socialists are prepared to do everything except show that they are practical men by putting their theories into practice. Nothing of a genuinely practical nature can be said to have been attempted even by the most ardent of the advanced school of Socialism, in order to demonstrate its own sociological value, as against the conditions that have hitherto prevailed.

England once produced an ardent Socialist in the person of William Morris. Morris went into business on his own account, and confessedly with a view to carrying on his trade on "ideal" socialist lines.

He was an artistic printer; but his books always contained the legend "printed by me, William Morris," with no mention whatever of his associates.

In the end, William Morris proved himself to be a "capitalist" of the very first and very self-seeking order. After his experience in business, he had no further respect for theoretical Socialism. Attempts made to carry out a truly Socialistic propaganda have, says Mr. Mallock, in no case been successful in point of Socialist doctrine, no matter how much they may have otherwise thriven in point of financial profit.

The strongly economic or materialist basis upon which they were conceived, however, soon destroyed any notion of philanthropy arising out of feelings which religion does not fail to engender.

For all their denunciations of "private property" and irrational religion, as the real promoters of discord in human society, the would-be reformers proved eventually that it was religion that really held together the real reins of the social fabric, that with it, constructive sociology was impossible and impermanent.

Socialistic schemes which won a last, long success, says Mr. Mallock, particularly in America closely resembled the monastic orders of Catholicism; and when it is remembered that not one of the many great American Socialistic schemes was Catholic, it is hard to imagine a fact more curious and more interesting.

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In the first place, like the Catholic Orders, these communities appealed to the select few only—to those who had a special vocation; and their invitation to produce, to possess and yet to share, was really an invitation to renounce.

The conclusion to be derived from a study of all forms of Socialism which are not strictly industrial, is that however much Socialism, in practice, may aim at abolishing the category of employer and employee, it has only prospered in proportion as it maintained and accentuated the category of the directors and the directed, and utterly eradicated the principles of self-employment, in the sense of leaving the laborer to work in accordance with his own discretion.

Another conclusion is that, in proportion as the individualistic motive is abolished and exceptional talents are deprived of any corresponding rewards which shall raise their possessors above the common lot, nothing will induce such exceptional talents to exert themselves, unless it is that religious or ascetic enthusiasm which only religion can generate.

And behind these two conclusions is this one, namely, that the individualism of the ordinary world—the desire of each to possess in accordance with his own power of production, and to retain for himself such advantages as his own efforts have gained, has its deepest roots in marriage and the individual family, and that, therefore, in order to make theoretical Socialism possible, marriage and the individual family are the ultimate factors which must be safeguarded and these are exactly those which Socialism seeks to eradicate or eliminate.

Of all non-religious experiments, the history is virtually the same. Where religion was excluded, the social fabric possessed no permanency.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

GREAT ST. BERNARD PASS.

Come with me in the alpine diligence for a drive up the queer zigzag road that goes twisting and climbing until it pierces the wet and misty clouds and reaches a region of eternal ice and snow. Here, writes W. G. Fitzgerald, in St. Nicholas, in a climate almost as cold as Greenland, we shall find a band of men who do a great and good work, assisted by dogs, as Bernard de Menthon did long years ago.

We start from the lovely village of Chamonix at the very foot of mighty Mont Blanc and drive to Martigny. This "diligence" is the road-coach of the Alps, drawn by five big horses all decked with bells and fly-dickers. The air is like wine for its bracing sweetness, and all around us are roaring cataracts, glistening glaciers, or moving ice-seas; gloomy ravines and towering peaks, below whose topmost crags thin wisps of cloud float like wreaths of gauze.

Round and round, up and up. It grows colder as we ascend and the smiling landscape fades away. The pretty flowers disappear too—the anemone and gentian; dark-leaved satyrs and sweet alpenroses. We shiver, even in August, and put on our wraps and furs. We have passed from summer to winter in a few hours. Now we enter the Valley of Death, so called from its many fatal memories. Here at the most dangerous part of the St. Bernard Pass a little shelter-house has been built; and parties climbing still higher to the famous hospice or monastery can now telephone their coming. This has saved hundreds of lives. For nowadays after such a message, the good monks at the top look out for the travelers, and if they fail to appear after a certain time search parties of dogs are sent out to look for them. Here is deep snow even in August. It is so bitterly cold that we get off and walk to warm our numb limbs; and soon the bare bleak walls of the world's loftiest house of charity loom through the damp mist. Winter lingers here for ten long months; and the few weeks of summer do not suffice to melt the wilderness of ice and snow. We are here nearly nine thousand feet above the sea, and the slightest exertion distresses our breathing apparatus, so rarefied is the air. No sooner are we at the door than a dozen monstrous dogs come baying forth to greet us. No questions are asked. It is understood we require dinner, a warm and comfortable bed, breakfast next morning, and full directions and protection for our onward journey.

In the recreation room is a big piano which King Edward, then Prince of Wales, gave the monastery nearly fifty years ago. The Emperor Frederick of Germany and his consort also passed the night there, as also have a host of world-famous celebrities. For nearly ten centuries, from generation to generation, some fourteen monks and eight or nine attendants have occupied the monastery and helped travellers crossing over the summit of the Great St. Bernard.

It is sad to think that even these helpers have to descend periodically in search of health, so terribly trying is the climate. The dogs themselves even suffer severely from rheumatism.

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At present the monastery costs about \$9,000 a year to keep up, and this money is partly collected in Switzerland and partly derived from the revenue of the monastic order. But in the middle ages the monastery was stripped of all its wealth, though it still continued and continues to this day to carry out the work of St. Bernard. Over thirty thousand travellers pass this way every year, and hundreds of these, at least, would lose their lives were it not for the guardians of the mountain.

The poor immigrant laborers from Switzerland are often found by these faithful dogs in the snow, utterly exhausted from hunger and fatigue, and often with badly frozen limbs. These are tenderly nursed in the spotlessly clean infirmary of the hospice. I visited the lofty house of charity in the clouds. Of course the great attraction is the kennel of the famous St. Bernard dogs. One is grieved to learn that even these, hardy and intelligent, as they are, often perish in terrible storms. They are big powerful, short-haired animals, most of them—white, with but a few brown patches. During winter five magnificent creatures were lost in a furious blizzard. I saw one or two aged veterans over twenty years old; these are now privileged to lie before the kitchen fire, and each of them has saved over twenty lives in the snow wastes. The monks are not now so dependent on the dogs for news of travellers in distress, because of the telephone I have already mentioned. The scent of these dogs is so wonderfully keen they can track a man's footsteps in the snow two or three days after he has passed. It is a grand sight to see the monks and their attendants go forth in their big fur coats, high rubber boots and helmets and swansdown gloves. Behind them come assistants with long ash-poles, ice-axes, alpen-stocks, spades, wine and provisions.

When the first snow comes in September the paths are marked with posts twenty feet high. But those who disappear and other posts are fixed on top of them, and so on. Soon the winter paths lead indifferently over enormous rocks and buried alpine huts. The greatest danger comes from the furious gales shifting the snow and making return impossible. The rescue parties are always led by dogs, whose intelligence is never questioned. Sometimes the dogs go prospecting on their own account, and each carries a supply of good red wine in a flask about his neck. Should he track and find some wayfarer in the snow, or fallen down a precipice, he gallops back to the hospice with a message that is unmistakable. Then the rescue party goes out, rubs the frozen limbs of the unfortunate with handfuls of snow and encourages him to rise and walk a little. If this be impossible, or the victim is dead, he is borne off on the stout shoulders of the monks' attendants.

I was most interested to learn that the pure race of St. Bernard dogs cannot live away from the mountain they have associated with for so many centuries. In the plains they degenerate in size and strength, and their wonderful sagacity grows duller. Under no circumstances will the hospice sell or part with their dogs, although they have had many tempting offers from foreign travellers, who will pay a high price.

Most notable among those four-legged saviors is Oliver, with a record of fifty-six rescues. He is to be sent to Martigny, where the monastery has a kind of a sanatorium in which the dogs try to regain the health and strength they have lost in the service of strangers.

THE POPE'S RETURN TICKET.

The story of the Pope and his return ticket on the occasion of his traveling from Venice to Rome to attend the Conclave at which he was elected Supreme Pontiff, though contradicted at the time on what seemed to be high authority is confirmed and interestingly noted in an article in the Fortnightly Review, London:

Summoned to the Conclave at Rome, when he left Venice, one blazing morning in July, greeted by the prophetic cry of "Long live the Pope!" he not for a moment doubted that he should return.

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"So little did I think that I should never see Venice again," he says, with a smile, "that I took a biglietto d'andata te ritorno" (return ticket.)

He long kept this return ticket. Wealthy collectors strove by every means in their power to become its purchaser, but he invariably refused. Last year the King of Greece, in the course of a visit which he paid to the Pope, expressed a keen desire to possess this little piece of cardboard which has become for all time historical—and the Pope gave it him.

But there is one possession so prized by the Holy Father that not even a King may hope to persuade him to part with it, as the Review writer (M. Rene Lara) thus tells:

On the other hand, there is one humble relic with which nothing will ever induce him to part. This relic is his watch, a little cheap nickel watch. "It marked the minutes of my mother's death-struggles," he says, "and the hour of my definite separation from the outer world, from space and liberty. It has marked all the sad, all the joyous, all the solemn moments of my life. What jewel could be more precious to me?"

He carries it fastened to a white silk cord in the broad sash which he wears round his waist; and he did not hesitate to offend against the etiquette which hitherto had obliged the Pope, when he wished to know the time, to apply to one of his prelates in waiting.

Doubtless that watch may mark the minutes of the Holy Father's own death, an event we hope and pray may be far distant. Ad multos annos.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

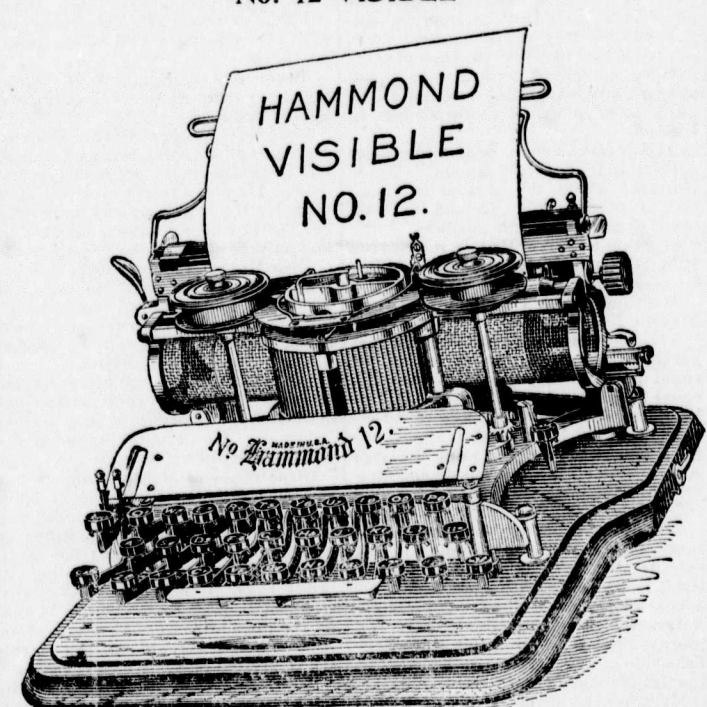
Are Your Hands Empty?

That was a beautiful thought which sprang from the heart to the lips of a lovely hospital nun. She was attending a young woman a trifle worldly in her ways, whom the doctors had given over and who ceased not weeping day and night.

"Why are you weeping, my child?" said the nun.
"Because I have to die," the other answered, "and die with empty hands."
The nun at once undid the crucifix from around her own neck and placing it between the clasped hands of the dying woman, said sweetly:

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