

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON. Seragissima Sunday.

PLACING SCANDALS. *And other some fell among thorns, and the thorn growing up with it choked it. (St. Luke viii. 7.) We, my dear brethren, have received the seed of the Divine word, and we have kept it: we have never fallen away from the true faith as it is in Christ and His Church, and with God's help we never shall. Our steadfastness in the faith is our greatest glory in the sight of heaven and of earth, and whatever our shortcomings may be, we are at least free from the awful crime of apostasy, and this worst of all reproaches can never be laid to our charge. The good soil that produces a hundred fold is ours; but alas! the thorny soil is ours also, and our faith though firmly rooted is often choked by the pernicious jungle growing up around us, in which we suffer ourselves to become entangled.

How many a glorious promise of supernatural faith and virtue in those around us, becomes utterly blighted by the thorns of the world's ways and temptations, because no proper care is taken to resist them and stamp them out! The thorny growths that stifle our faith and render it worthless in the sight of God are many indeed, but there is one in particular that is more destructive than all the rest beside. I need hardly name it to you, for you know it but too well—the deadly weed of intemperance—that casts its withering shade over our hearts and homes and altars! Is there a single person here this morning that does not know of more than one generous soul in whom every fruitful germ of faith and hope and charity, and every sentiment of true Christian manhood and womanhood, have not been blighted by this prevalent passion? Call the roll of your nearest friends and acquaintances, and how many will you not find absent from the ranks of Christian life, duty, and fidelity through this one vice? There is a skeleton in every closet, and the saloon-keepers have taken the flesh of its bones. This more than anything else chokes the divine seed of the word amongst us; this nullifies the power of our faith; this neutralizes the effects of the Sacraments; this scandalizes our holy religion, and makes our consecrated ministry vain; for this is the evil root from whence springs the foul crop of lusts and blasphemies, and crimes and contentions, that stifle every virtue of the Christian life and weigh down the Church of the Living God.

Could we but cast out this baneful blight of intemperance from amongst us, our glorious faith would appear in all its strength and beauty, and yield its hundred fold. If it were not for this gross and scandalous vice that so many so-called Catholics lead, nothing could stop the onward march of our faith. This is the one objection raised against us that we cannot satisfactorily meet.

We know very well that ours is the only true religion, and that it supplies every help that we need to enable us to overcome our passions and to lead upright lives. But the world at large knows little or nothing of our faith; it only looks at the dark side of our every day conduct, and scornfully asks, where is the influence of the Catholic religion on the venal politician, the low liquor-seller, the drunken reveller, the mercenary street-walker, the abominable fathers and mothers who make their homes a hell upon earth, and drive their unfortunate children to destruction? And what reply can we make? We cannot deny that many who claim to profess our faith are in utter disgrace to the world. They, of course, have shaken off all sense of obligation to their religion and its teachings, and have no more conception of religious duty than the cow or the horse. There is a purely animal existence, they live only for the gratification of their lower nature, and we disclaim all responsibility for them. What responsibility has the Catholic Church for those who seldom or ever darken its doors, who never approach its Sacraments, who spend their Saturday nights in the saloons, and their Sunday mornings in drunken slumber? What responsibility has the Church for the roccant rowdies who hang around the corner grog-shops, and the fallen flirts who frequent the sidewalk? They may have Catholic names, but that is the only evidence of their Catholicity. The thorns of dissipation and sensuality and sin of every kind have choked the seed of truth in their hearts, and they are outside the soul of the Church, though they may still claim to belong to its visible pale. But take our consistent Catholics, men and women who are in touch with the spirit of their faith and honestly endeavor to live up to its teachings. Are they not in very truth the salt of the earth? and does not the divine seed planted in their souls produce a hundred fold?

A BISHOP EXPLAINS.

Recently Right Rev. James J. Keane, D. D., Bishop of Cheyenne, Wyo., spoke on "Why I am a Christian" at a lecture course arranged for non-Catholics by the Knights of Columbus of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. As a preliminary he answered the question, "Why do Catholics give lectures to non-Catholics?" saying in part: "The real motive is this: To give helpful information on a question of supreme import and practical concern to every one. I once, years ago, when a young man, filled with enthusiasm was persuaded to campaign for the Prohibition party in Minnesota. One evening my companion and myself entered a little village in Southern Minnesota, and went to the best hotel we could find which happened to be one managed by an elderly lady. I asked her if there were any Catholics in that town. She said: 'No sir; why do you ask?' I said: 'Just to satisfy idle curiosity.' Then I said to her: 'Now that you have been able to tell me that there are no Catholics here, maybe you can give me some idea of the Catholic Church.' She said: 'I know all about it.' 'Oh, you have been educated with Catholics, I take it, or perhaps, have attended a convent school?' 'Oh, no; never put foot inside

of one.' 'Perhaps you are well acquainted with some priest?' 'Oh, no never saw one before I saw you if you are one.' 'Well then, where did you get your information?' 'I got it from a book written about Catholics which I read.' 'Will you kindly show me the author of that book?' 'Father Chiniquy.' 'Now this poor fellow had been unfortunate in his life; he loved wine and women too well to remain in the ranks of Catholic priests, and was excommunicated from the Church, and after a while he turned against the Church which had been his mother, and said some of the nastiest things that ever escaped the lips of man. This poor lady got her impression of the Catholic faith from this book. 'Am I not stating the matter correctly when I say that the multitude who detest the Catholic Church have their information from just such sources as this? Now, is it not indeed unfortunate that any one should be wrongly informed on a matter of great importance? And is not the Catholic Church a matter of great importance; does she not mean this term? Is she not wonderful in her own right, and in her influence, and is she not venerable in her age? Should she not merit careful investigation and consideration, rather than the ready acceptance of the calumny of lies that have been told about her? 'Therefore, the object of these meetings is to correct these impressions. There are too many men living to-day who would have accepted these untruthful stories about her, and they are being urged upon these wrong impressions, and perhaps have even hated the Church. I deem it a great misfortune that any one should hate the Catholic Church, when if they were rightly informed they might have loved her. 'Then there is another reason. Christianity and religion generally is at considerable disadvantage in this day of ours, when a fakir with no fear of results may stand up in New York, Chicago or Baltimore on Sunday and deliver a sermon of the old calumnies against revealed religion, denying the virgin birth of Christ, or His divinity, or anything that is sensational, and every newspaper in the country on Monday will publish it in glaring headlines before the multitudes, who are perhaps disturbed, or at any rate interested enough to want to know if these charges are true. But if one of the defenders of our faith should go to the same newspaper and say to them: 'I have here a refutation of the calumny uttered by Mr. Jones in New York last Sunday. Will you kindly publish it?' 'Oh, no,' no doubt would be the reply of the editors. The world knows this, there is nothing new about it; everybody knows that the charges he made were false, and people do not care for things of that kind.' So that month after month, week after week our newspapers contain sensational attacks upon our faith, and it is only seldom that they contain an answer to these charges or give the other's less sensational side of the case."

OUR MENTAL LIFE.

In a timely sermon delivered in St. Rose of Lima's Church, Parkville, the Rev. James S. Reilly, said: "Religion is greatly a matter of mind. Man is a being who is moved to activity by the prompting of thought. The human will is a blind faculty, and so the mind must guide the will if it is to act at all, and this is the reason why instruction must precede decision, because the mind must be supplied with a motive which will move the will in a certain direction. This is also the reason why converts to Catholicity must have their thoughts re-arranged for them before they can consistently accept the faith. Even God in His dealings with the human soul must first convince, before he can convert, for 'I will illumine the intellect before it moves the will.' And reason, what is it but a foundation for faith? Only an intelligent being can make an act of faith. The insane man is incapable of such an act. All sermons ever preached, what were they but appeals addressed to the reason in behalf of faith and good conduct. Take mind from man and he becomes an irresponsible being, incapable of merit or chastisement. Mind then plays an important part in the religious life of man, and his moral life is but the expression of his mental life. As man thinks so he acts; and as he speaks so he thinks. This is a self-evidence of truth; but a truth that is most important because to a man's thoughts may be traced his earthly misery and his eternal misery; and to his thoughts may be traced his earthly happiness and his eternal happiness. Never was there a religion in society that had not its origin in some man's brain. Never was there a soul lost that could not describe its damnation to some habit of mind. Never was there an amelioration in the condition of men that had not been planned by some kind mind. Never arrived a soul in heaven that could not find the remote cause of its salvation in some habit of pious thought. And since our words and deeds are but children of our thoughts; since our external life is the photograph of our internal life, since virtue is the result of habits of mind, is it not of deepest concern to us that we look to mental make-ups and see what originates our thoughts? Looking over the many sources from which our thoughts may come, I think, all will admit that reading is the chief; that reading is to the mind what food is to the body. As a man reads so he thinks. Consequently, the quality of our reading is of importance. It has been said, and truly so, that a very good opinion may be found of a man's character by the choice he makes of books, and to the choice of reading may be traced the damnation or salvation of many a soul. St. Augustine was converted by the reading of a certain passage of Scripture, and in our own lives have there

not been books from whose reading we were better or worse men? How many a child has learned the evil that wrecked his life in the pages of the daily paper, and how many a man has changed his way of life because of some good book. Thousands are in heaven this morning who might never have been there were it not for the reading of a certain book.

Certainly if reading fashions our mental life, what we read is a matter of life and death. Now what do we read? Is it good or bad? Does it strengthen our faith, does it inculcate virtue? Does it make God known, or does it deny His existence? Does it make us proud of our Church or does it reveal her history to us as something needing an apology? Let each one answer for himself. For most of us reading may be classified under three heads: the newspaper, the periodical and the novel. The influence of the newspaper upon our mental and consequently upon our moral life cannot be over-estimated. From this source of knowledge we get information of the most varied nature. There is no topic about which the editor will not presume to write. Matters theological are not foreign to him, even though he never studied a single page of theology. In the newspaper every species of religion finds space, and crack-brained sophists are given the opportunity to manifest their ignorance about God and the things of God. In the pages of the great dailies the very foundations of our faith are attacked, the Church's institutions adversely criticized, her doctrines falsely represented, and the most sacred things treated with irreverence. Now, is it possible that they who constantly read the newspaper escape the baneful influence of the same? I think not; for it stands to reason that objections against the faith must harm our spiritual life. Take another class of reading—the periodical. In it theories of formation of the faith are advanced as facts, and self-constituted Moralists and Theologians decide questions of the highest moment, and what is the result? The faith of many individuals is weakened. God and the theories of God become lost influences in their lives. How many an individual may trace his loss of faith or virtue to some article contained in a newspaper or magazine. Take the third and last class—novel reading. In itself I for one agree with the writer who said that a good novel is a gift of God; but every novel is not good, nor should the novel be our only kind of literature. There are readers who might be called "Novel Drunkards," because, like drink to the drunkard the novel has become a necessity in their lives. To read all novels that are written is to read some which we should not read. Because an author finds a publisher and escapes arrest is no warrant for the lawlessness of his book, for the censorship of the press in this country is most indulgent. There are authors whose books should never enter a Catholic home, and there are novels which should never be found in the hands of a Catholic man or woman. The least that can be said against constant novel reading is that it makes us forgetful of the religious and social claims, and indifferent to the interests of our intellectual and spiritual life. So much for reading that is useless or worse than useless.

Let us now turn our attention to that kind of reading which may be called good. How many of us ever read a book which treats of God or the things of God? How few of us have ever read even a portion of the history of the Church. How many of us ever read one of the four gospels from beginning to end? And yet we all admit that our mental life is greatly influenced by what we read; now, if we have a care for our salvation we will devote some time to good reading. In the past it was the complaint of Catholics that they had no readable writers. Such a complaint cannot be maintained to-day; for there are thousands of good Catholic books that have the commendation of even the secular press. Authors who rank with the best of the world's novelists. But none will ask what may we read? Anything that will bring us nearer to God or make religion a greater influence in our lives. For those of a serious turn of mind the studies of the tenets of the faith will prove most interesting. Such people will find books which answer all the sophisms of all centuries. Books which expose the errors of the self-appointed teachers of mankind. Books which prove almost to a demonstration the truth of Catholic Christianity. For those of an historical taste the history of the Church will be most fascinating and for those for whom the novel is the highest literature the Catholic novel will paint a moral while it delights the mind. Lastly, there is a kind of reading called "spiritual." The goodly influence of this kind cannot be over-estimated. The masters of the

MADE IN CANADA ROYAL YEAST CAKES



Best Yeast in the World Sold and Used Everywhere E. W. Gillett Co., Ltd Toronto, Ont. spiritual life place it among the great means of perfection. To it we owe many of the saints of our calendar. The founder of the Jesuit Order, St. Ignatius, found God's grace in the pages of a pious book. St. Augustine, the Apostle of Christianity, was converted by a single passage of Scripture, and converts whose number is legion had the light of faith reflected to them from the pages of some holy book. One caution and only one need be given in this matter of spiritual reading. The caution is this: Read no particular spiritual book without the advice of a confessor, because of all kinds of books there is none for whose selection expert knowledge is so much required. Two books which may be recommended for general use are the "Imitation of Christ," and the "Devout Life of St. Francis De Sales." In conclusion, I would say that a good book is a good companion. One who will not hesitate to reprimand us when he finds it his duty, nor withhold a word of praise when we have done well. In good reading we will find the gateway to the world unsearchable in the eyes of God, and more adventurous more useful to our fellowmen. Discontent and misery will be less, home life more happy, sin less frequent, religion a daily influence, salvation more secure and death less terrible.—The Tablet.

CATHOLIC LAYMEN.

FORGOTTEN SOCIAL DUTIES WHICH SHOULD HAVE ATTENTION. Indifferentism, writes Dr. Barry, in a Catholic Truth paper, entitled "The Layman in the Church," is the religious disease of our age. Other men have invented other names for it, such as Positivism, Agnosticism, Secularism. In the recent encyclical, Pope Pius pointed out that many dangers accrued to the Church from the attitude of the average Catholic layman towards the faith and its teaching, whether he was professor, literary man, or simply private individual.

When the layman has done with school, says Dr. Barry, he too frequently has done with religion. Even if he still pursue the duties of religion, he is satisfied to think he has done all that is required of him, when he has received the sacraments and made certain contributions to the pastor. As for an active Catholic life, in which he should endeavor to make his Catholicity a living force in the social world and propagate its truths, this conception of his religious duties never enters into his mind. Yet by our baptism, we are soldiers of the Catholic Church, apostles of the gospel kingdom. We have all rights within the Church; but we have all obligations, as much to others as to the Church and ourselves. It is undeniable says Dr. Barry, that our average Catholic abstains from active social Catholicity. Our young Catholics have not that sense ingrained and insisted, of duties to be undertaken during their spare hours, which has created in England and America the immense set-work of non-Catholic voluntary associations, so distinguished for their encouragement of the higher life and their attempt towards social amelioration. Most of our associations, if not all, are lamentably undermined. Considering the large percentage of young lay Catholics engaged in active social Catholicity is far from satisfactory. The question is, however, how can we increase their numbers? One must begin at the beginning and the beginning is to recognize frankly that the lay Apostolate is lamentably wanting in our midst. It is not enough to hear Mass and receive the sacraments. Men must be taught—and the lesson cannot be begun too soon in life—that there is a Catholic social creed. The difficulty lies mainly in retaining, after their school-days, youths of both sexes who have already learned the lesson, more difficult now than ever, since the whole machinery of public Christian life which might avail has long since been swept away in modern countries. Nothing is left but voluntary effort. The great hindrance to the fulfillment of one's duties, says the doctor, in effect, is drink, the continual indulgence in unthrift, selfishness and the disorder which this habit carries with it. Every association, therefore, which promotes sobriety, is a branch of the Lay Apostolate. Temperance is, in fact, a penitential name for the blameless Christian life, as it bears on our combat against the social evil in all its forms. In this it is the layman who can strike the boldest stroke. He can take over the boy as he leaves school, and induce him to enter a social brotherhood. In gaining a youth to the cause of temperance, he is practically assuring him his spiritual and material welfare in the world. The Catholic boy should be taught to consider his duties as a citizen;

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he must learn that his fellows in religion may need his services as a municipal officer, as a magistrate, or in some other public capacities. Let every Catholic ask himself, says Dr. Barry, if he has helped any social Catholic enterprise, and what help has he given in accordance with his power to assist. Individual effort and heroism can be the only solution, in these days of religious anarchy and indifference. The victory over indifferentism, secularism and the worship of money, can be assured not by the clergy, who live out of the world, but by the laymen who live in it.

A CATHOLIC HIGHLANDER. THE LATE DR. WATSON'S CATHOLIC TEN DENCIENS. "It is now known," writes Dr. Robertson Nicoll of MacLaren, in a biography of the deceased novelist, just published, "that during the early years of his ministry he adopted much of the Catholic discipline. He observed the fasts; he wore a hair shirt; he aimed strenuously at self-conquest and self-knowledge as well as knowledge of books and men." Dr. Nicoll, indeed, insists that if we are to understand Dr. Watson's personality aright, the two chief factors that we must bear in mind are that he was a Celt, and that his ancestry on his mother's side was Catholic, his granduncle being a well-known and influential priest in the Highlands. "I am a pure Highlander," said Watson himself on one occasion. "My mother was a MacLaren, and came from Loch Tay, and spoke the Gaelic tongue. My father was born at Braemar, and Gaelic was the language of my paternal grandfather."

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CHATS W... What is a fri... A man is eag... is asked if he is... "I am not an... in the hands of... friend? A man is of... sell a spiritual... says: "I'll s... 'my friends.'" A man meet... named Brown, walk along to... third person, "Let me intr... What is a frie... A man has... to every netic... is able and m... the money, and... getting a dolla... A man is le... os and prodig... is too good fo... money lasts, When the la... alone. What... A man gets... reporting the... Church, and s... friends of the... a friend? A man died... nouncing his... circle of frie... His widow an... vided for. T... to make a liv... any sort—o... suggestion, o... or gift. What... Some time... given to that... "The sunsh... "The esse... "The ripe... "One who... "A friend... "A star o... verity." "A volun... cloth." "A diamo... anee." "A safe in... thing." "Friends... love and hel... "The jewel... the darkness... "One who... my deservin... "The link... bears the gr... "A harb... waves of adv... "The first... the whole w... "One who... and will tel... "One who... griefs, and... "The great... power." "A jewel... acids of po... dim." "The mir... the mirror... tion." "One who... ladder, won... the bottom... "A bank... draw supp... sympathy." "One who... frowns on... our sorrow... and is a... trouble." "One who... toady you... sickness in... marries, y... your child... These ar... ject: Wh... For the... answer rec... What is a... There b... tween the... day—the... to do som... wishes of... in macke... hung abou... old yeste... pleasant... questions... his remain... ceived in... ence was... dow and... he ponder... to keep u... ly and c... seemed... edly he t... pair of e... asked wo... "Georg... grouch b... It was... to be the... that it w... mature... ing a g... pety g... old happ... oning da... the ske... and mai... you real... your irri... sent me... you are... kindling... of the mo... of joy... your fri... All v... best li... mind I... employ... passed... graded... ordinan... than b... I ju... about... Wor... R. E. E... age I... made... Princi...