

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Palm Sunday. SERVING GOD FROM THE HEART.

"Hosanna to the Son of David." (St. Matt. 21:9)

Today, my dear brethren, we are reminded of that hour in the life of our Lord on earth in which He was receiving from the people of His own nation all the honor they could render Him.

He then entered the chosen city of God in triumph over all who had opposed Him. Thousands surrounded Him, went before Him and followed after Him.

They paved the road before Him with their own clothing and with the branches of trees, that they might thus make His entry into Jerusalem as glorious as possible.

In a few days, when He had been arrested by His enemies, where was this great crowd? Where were those who had cried out so fervently, "Hosanna to the Son of David"?

They were all gone. The rest had either deserted Him or joined in with the crowd that mocked Him even while He was dying on the Cross.

Nearly all had abandoned Him in the day of His adversity. The first test of their faith in Him, the first trial that proved the strength of their love for Him, found them entirely wanting in that characteristic of true love, fidelity to the end.

Is it impossible for us to do as they did? No; it is not impossible, for many of us are Catholics born and bred to do the same thing now.

But who are these? They are those who fail to keep the Ten Commandments of God and the precepts and laws of the Church. Every Catholic who breaks the Commandments of God and refuses to obey the laws of the Church does worse than those who deserted our Lord when He was condemned and crucified.

Why are these men worse than the others? Simply because they reject the graces of Christ in their baptism, in their confirmation, and in their first Communion, as well as in their many Communion thereafter.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS. THE SPRINGTIME.

EUGENE FIELD.

A child once said to his grandfathers: "Grandpa, what do the flowers mean when they talk to the oak tree about death? I hear them talking every day, but I cannot understand; it is all very strange."

The grandfathers bade the child think no more of these things; the flowers were foolish prattlers, what right had they to put such notions into a child's head? But the child did not do his grandfathers' bidding; he loved the flowers and the trees, and he went each day to hear them talk.

It seems that the little vine down by the stone wall had overheard the south wind say to the rosebush: "You are a proud, imperious beauty now, and will not listen to my suit; but wait till my boisterous brother comes from the North, then you will drop and wither and die, all because you would not listen to me and fly with me to my home by the Southern sea."

These words set the little vine to thinking; and when she had thought for a long time she spoke to the daisy about it, and the daisy called in the violet, and the three little ones had a very serious conference; but, having talked it all over, they came to the conclusion that it was as much of a mystery as ever. The old oak tree saw them.

"You little folks seem very much puzzled about something," said the old oak tree. "I heard the south wind tell the rosebush that she would die," exclaimed the vine, "and we do not understand what it is. Can you tell us what it is to die?"

The old oak tree smiled sadly. "I do not call it death," said the old oak tree; "I call it sleep—a long, restful, refreshing sleep."

"How does it feel?" inquired the daisy, looking very full of astonishment and anxiety. "You must know," said the old oak tree, "that after many, many days we all have had such merry times and have bloomed so long and drunk so heartily of the dew and sunshine and eaten so much of the goodness of the earth that we feel very weary and we long for repose. Then a great wind comes out of the north, and we shiver in its icy blast. The sunshine goes away, and there is no dew for us nor any nourishment in the earth, and we are glad to go to sleep."

"Mercy on me!" cried the vine, "I shall not like that at all! What, leave this smiling meadow and all the pleasant grass and singing bees and frolicsome butterflies? No, old oak tree, I would never go to sleep; I much prefer sporting with the winds and playing with my little friends, the daisy and the violet."

"And I," said the violet, "I think it would be dreadful to go to sleep. What if we never should wake up again!" The suggestion struck the others dumb with terror—all but the oak tree. "Have no fear of that," said the old oak tree, "for you are sure to awaken again, and when you have awakened the new life will be sweeter and happier than the old."

"What nonsense!" cried the thistle. "You children shouldn't believe a word of it. When you go to sleep you die, and when you die there's the last of you!" The old oak tree reproved the thistle; but the thistle maintained his abominable heresy so stoutly that the little blue and the daisy and the violet were quite at a loss to know which of the two to believe—the old oak tree or the thistle.

little vine was the last of all to ink to her slumbers; she nodded in the wind and tried to keep awake till she saw the old oak-tree close his eyes, but her efforts were vain; she nodded and nodded, and bowed her slender form against the old stone wall, till finally she, too, had sunk into repose. And then the old oak tree stretched his weary limbs and gave a last look at the sullen sky and at the slumbering little ones at his feet; and with that, the old oak tree fell asleep too.

The child saw all these things, and he wanted to ask his grandfathers about them, but his grandfathers would not tell him of them; perhaps his grandfathers did not know.

The child saw the storm king come down from the hills and ride furiously over the meadows and over the forest and over the town. The snow fell everywhere, and the north wind played solemn music in the chimneys. The storm king put the brook to bed, and it rowed a great mantle of snow over him; and the brook that had romped and prattled all the summer and told pretty tales to the grass and flowers—the brook went to sleep too. With all his fierceness and bluster, the storm king was very kind; he did not awaken the old oak tree and the slumbering flowers. The little vine lay under the fleecy snow against the old stone wall and slept peacefully, and so did the violet and the daisy. Only the wicked old thistle thrashed about in his sleep as if he dreamt bad dreams, which, all will allow, was no more than he deserved.

All through that winter—and it seemed very long—the child thought of the flowers and the vine and the old oak tree, and wondered whether in the springtime they would awaken from their sleep; and he wished for the springtime to come. And at last the springtime came. One day the sunbeams fluted down from the sky and danced all over the meadow.

"Wake up, little friends!" cried the sunbeams—"wake up, for it is springtime!" The brook was the first to respond. So eager, so fresh, so exuberant was he after his long winter sleep, that he leaped from his bed and frolicked all over the meadow and played all sorts of curious antics. Then a little blue bird was seen in the hedge one morning. He was calling to the violet:

"Wake up, little v'one!" called the bluebird. "Have I come all this distance to find you sleeping? Wake up; it is the springtime!" That pretty little voice awakened the violet, of course.

"Oh, how sweetly I have slept!" cried the violet; "how happy this new life is! Welcome, dear friends!" And presently the daisy awakened, fresh and beautiful, and then the little blue and last of all, the old oak tree. The meadow was green, and all around there were the music, the fragrance, the new, sweet life of the springtime.

"I slept horribly," growled the thistle. "I had bad dreams. It was sleep, after all, but it ought to have been death." The thistle never complained again; for just then a four-footed monster stalked through the meadow and plucked and ate the thistle and then stalked gloomily away; which was the last of the sceptical thistle—truly a most miserable end!

"You said the truth, dear old oak tree!" cried the little vine. "It was not death—it was only a sleep, a sweet, refreshing sleep, and this awakening is very beautiful!" They all said so—the daisy, the violet, the oak tree, the crickets, the bees and all the things and creatures of the field and forest that had awakened from their long sleep to swell the beauty and the glory of the springtime. And they talked with the child, and the child heard them. And although the grandfathers never spoke to the child about these things, the child learned from the flowers and trees a lesson of the springtime which perhaps the grandfathers never knew.

So the little ones went to sleep. The

born babe asked as to whether she could hope to see it in heaven. She was told that a writer in the current number of the American Ecclesiastical Review quotes St. Bonaventura, Cajetan and other theologians as holding that the desire or prayer of a parent for the salvation of a child who, without its own or its parents' fault, dies deprived of the sacrament of baptism may effect the baptismal grace which removes original sin and procures for the child entrance into heaven. The prophet Jeremiah and St. John Baptist were sanctified in the womb. It is always consonant with Scripture and reason to have unbounded confidence in the mercy of God, whose very essence according to St. John, is love—"God is charity."

"An Afflicted Mother," a Protestant Christian, asked Father O'Connor to request the prayers of the congregation (with whose piety she had been struck) in a great affliction. The congregation was asked by the lecturer to pray for her.

"E. J." inquired if a Catholic could marry a Jew and be married by a Catholic priest. The answer was yes, if a dispensation could be procured, which is very difficult in such a case, as one of faith to the Catholic party and to the children is even more likely than in a marriage to a Protestant.

"M." asked: "If a person be baptized on her death bed, is the temporal as well as the eternal punishment remitted?" The answer was yes. "J. E. M." was concerned to know why no Irishman ever became Pope. Many other Catholic nations have never had a representative on the Papal throne. There is no national impediment in the choice. The Cardinals are under the most solemn obligations to choose a Pope according to the dictates of conscience, and nationality is not considered, hence it is that even with an overwhelming number of Italians in the college, those of other nations have been chosen.

"C. L. B."s important queries were referred to an imaginary committee of young ladies. She wanted to know whether a very trifling circumstance could be construed into a proposal of marriage, asked about fortune-tellers, black cats and bad luck, and finally as to whether a "splendid Catholic, not a bit pious, who drinks beer, takes girls to the theatres, dances," etc., would make a good husband.

This young man will probably be accepted before he knows he has proposed, and the outcome, unless both parties reform, will be a very much "mixed" marriage in more senses than one. "Bella" wished to know whether a widow might become a nun.

Yes; there are many widows who are canonized saints and even founders of religious orders, as St. Jane de Chantal, the Visitation, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

"Charley" does not like to see Catholic girls on bicycles, and he asked if the Archbishop forbids this. There is no prohibition. A true lady will be as modest on a bicycle as on horseback or in a carriage.

"P. A. M." who says he (or she) reads the question box every week in these columns, acts as corresponding secretary for a number of friends with queries, some of which are obscure and others already answered. The first is apparently about faith curists or spiritualists, though indefinite. The second asks whether Protestants can go to heaven. This has already been answered in the affirmative, with the provision that they be baptized and in good faith. The third requested the lecturer's opinion of "a strict Catholic" who never misses Mass, but has not been to confession or Communion for forty years!

"Grocer" wished the lecturer to get his hands on some of his bad pay customers who are Catholics, as he had heard about the priest compelling them to pay their debts. He finds that Catholics are much like other people, and that religion is more talked about than practised. He also wished to know why some of the "best people" never go to church, and said he would not criticize were it not that Catholics claim so much. Most Catholics are no better than other Christians and some a great deal worse. "Grocer" has come to the conclusion that some men are naturally mean and tricky, and others naturally good and noble. There are people who can't help stealing and getting drunk and they know the Bible by heart. "I don't blame the Church," he says; "she's all right, but I think she claims to do the impossible."

How much worse Catholics without their faith would be, and how much better the naturally good would be with supernatural graces added is something "Grocer" loses sight of. So far as the Church is concerned, it not only teaches that failure to pay your debts is sinful, but to contract a debt which you have no prospect of paying is also sinful.

"Jennie" (1), whose minister is very much pleased with the fair manner in which the lecturer speaks of Anglican orders, says that all "Anglo-Catholics" admit a superior dignity in the Bishop of Rome, but not that he is supreme in jurisdiction over the whole Church.

All Catholics in the true sense admit the primacy of the Pope, which is an essential part of the constitution of the Church, as the head is an essential member of the body. What the superior dignity of the Bishop of Rome consists of according to Anglican ideas would be interesting to know. It is at least a big admission to confess that the head of the Roman Catholic Church is superior in dignity to all other Bishops.

Her minister thinks that the Catholic Church will gradually drop many of her ceremonies and usages, such as strict fasting before Communion. The Church is the sole judge of her ceremonies and discipline. Inability to fast until early morning would indicate serious illness, in which the priest might give Communion as viaticum. Again, a sick Catholic might receive shortly after midnight and thus observe the law.

Rome (says "Jennie's" minister) has alienated nearly every country by insisting upon its peculiar customs. Reserving the sacrament is one of these. The Church which contains by far the largest body of Christians can scarcely be said to have alienated nearly every country. The Blessed Sacrament was reserved in the primitive Church, as we know from the Acts of the Martyrs.

She cannot believe everything in the Bible, and wished to know if she is a hypocrite when she continues to go to church while in this mind. A hypocrite is one who pretends to be what he does not. Perhaps it is your interpretation that you do not believe and which may not be the proper definition.

She has a young Episcopalian gentleman friend who calls to see her, who says if she were to become a Catholic she should never be his wife. As Protestants, and particularly Episcopalians, admit that salvation is to be found in the Catholic Church as well as in their own such manifestation of intolerance must be ascribed to a stubborn disposition. It would be well to settle all religious doubts before marriage, if possible, and thus may much future unhappiness be avoided.

A CRIPPLED SHADOW. The Remarkable Statement of Jas. Davis, of Victoria. STRICKEN WITH RHEUMATISM HE WANTED TO A PAIN STRICKEN SHADOW—DOCTORS AND HOSPITAL TREATMENT FAILED TO HELP HIM—DR. WILLIAMS' PINK PILLS RESTORED HEALTH AND STRENGTH.

Proof upon proof accumulates that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills is the greatest medical discovery of the 19th century, and the following story told in the grateful patient's own words again substantiates the claim that they cure when other medicines fail.

"Knowing that I am a living monument of the wonderful curing power of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, I don't think it my duty as a grateful man to give my testimony for the aid of such as are afflicted as I was. I am a resident of the village of Victoria, Ont., and have lived in the town or neighborhood all my life and am therefore well known, and what I say can be easily proved. Three years ago I was stricken with and partially paralyzed by rheumatism, and after being under the care of two physicians I was given up to die. I wanted to a human skeleton; nothing more than a crippled shadow. I lost the use of my limbs entirely and food was given me by spoon. Life was not worth living, and such an existence was indeed miserable. Thus I awaited the end to come when I was told that I was a living monument of the wonderful curing power of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, I don't think it my duty as a grateful man to give my testimony for the aid of such as are afflicted as I was. 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