

# FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

## Sixth Sunday After Epiphany.

HOW TO USE GRACE.

In the Gospel just read the kingdom of heaven is likened to a mustard seed. The mustard seed is compared with the size of the tree which springs from it. The least of seeds. Our Lord does not mean to say, of course, that there are not larger trees even in those places where it attains its greatest size. Neither does He say that the mustard seed is the very smallest of all seeds. What He does say is that between the seed and the tree which springs from it there is the greatest difference; that the effect is very great and very startling when compared with its cause. This is the point of the parable, and a little reflection will make it clear how true it is, whether our Lord is speaking of the kingdom of God without us—that is, the Church; or of the kingdom of God within us—that is the life of grace in our own souls.

In our times we see the Church of God spread throughout the whole world numbering her children by hundreds of millions. History tells us of the hundreds of years she has lived, of the nations she has converted, of the men and women who have been her nursing fathers and her nursing mothers. Nations have come and gone, but the Church remains. They have grown and become great and mighty, but she has outgrown and outstripped them all, and the mightiest of them have been forced by a part of her kingdom. And from what did she spring? Whence did she take her origin? From the eyes of men, the smallest and most insignificant of causes. Go to the manger at Bethlehem, to the holy house at Nazareth, to the cross and Calvary, to the upper room in which twelve poor men are gathered together. Here we shall see the source and spring; here the seed from which the mighty tree has grown.

In this way our Lord's words of the Church have been verified. But what shall we say of the power of grace within us? In His Baptism the grace of God was planted in our soul as a seed to grow and fructify. The habits of faith, hope, and charity were then given to us. But as time went on and as we grew up the power of the passions increased, the assaults of our enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil, grew fiercer. Has the good seed planted in our soul survived the storms and held its own in the conflict and strife? The answer to this question depends upon our own selves, upon our own conduct. God who began the good work in us, will most certainly carry it to perfection, if we are willing to do the part which He has given us to do. He has planted the seed. He is ready to water it with His grace; to foster it with the fire of His love. But we must co-operate.

And first we must pray. It is not enough to say a few prayers in a cold, mechanical way; we must in times of need, in times of temptation, lift up our hearts to God and send forth earnest petitions for strength and help. And next we must make use of the means which He Himself has instituted—His holy Sacraments; especially must we receive the most precious Body and Blood of our Lord, for there we shall always find grace and help more than sufficient. And lastly we must not tempt God by rashly running into danger; but knowing our own weakness, we must avoid with the greatest care the occasions of sin.

If we are in this way enabled to work with God, the seed planted by His grace will live and grow into a mighty tree, and the kingdom of God within us will in its degree be like the kingdom of God without us, the reign of grace in our own souls will be like God's kingdom in the world—the Church.

# CATHOLICS IN ENGLAND AND TRADES UNIONS.

By a recent decision of the Court of Appeal in England the Trades Unions of Great Britain are forbidden to impose compulsory levies on their members for paying the election expenses or salaries of labor representatives in Parliament. This, as Rev. L. Pausant, a Scotch priest, points out in an article in the Catholic Times, will have an important effect in reference to the Socialist and secular education policy and procedure of some of the controlling elements in the Labor Party. Nine-tenths of the laboring classes of Great Britain, says Father Pausant, still hold fast to the Christian religion and wish their material interests to be represented by Christian labor men, and not by anti-Christian Socialists. At all events, if we may expect genuine Trade Unionists, Christian and Catholic, to stick to their interest and object, we will see labor representation in the future, and not socialist representation. What, then, says Father Pausant, have Catholic Trade Unionists to do? To abide by the law and also to use it. The Catholics have entered trade unionism as trade unionists and not as socialists. But by unjust subsequent laws they have been made to pay for the propagation of socialism and secularism. They now may reclaim their compulsory contributions. The genuine Catholics will certainly not contribute another farthing towards political funds unless and until they are certain that their trade unions will be represented in Parliament by labor men and not by Socialists.

Moreover, Father Pausant recommends the Catholics to form a trade organization of their own. Catholic trade unionists, he says, should unite not only in separate towns, as in Manchester and Leeds, but all over England and Scotland. Such a national union should have a central and representative board to watch over Catholic interests, to consider general and individual grievances of Catholics, and above all to see that trade union money be not spent for socialist propaganda, and that no Catholic be implicated in any way on account of his refusal to contribute to any fund for political purposes of which he disapproves and which are illegal.

As to the contention that Catholic trade unionists are in such a minority that they may be ignored or despised Father Pausant asserts on the contrary

that there are more Catholic trade unionists in Great Britain than there are socialists, but regrets that, so far, there is little evidence of national or even local organization among them seeming to have no definite programme, and he exhorts Catholics and Christians to unite to promote the interests of labor and justice and social peace and Christian social reform. Christian Democracy, he urges, is the cure for modern social avoidable evils—socialism is a spoke in the wheel of progress, a revolutionary system which spells nothing but economic failure, social slavery, and spiritual ruin in this life and eternal damnation in the next.

To most readers of this interesting article of Father Pausant's it must occur that if, as he states, "nine-tenths of the laboring classes of Great Britain still hold fast to the Christian religion," it ought to be easy for them to check and defeat the schemes of the Socialists and Secularists.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

# FINAL PENITENCE AND GOD'S MERCY.

Because no question, perhaps, is more frequently asked than that of final penitence and God's mercy, the following from the Bombay Examiner, of which the Rev. Father Hall, S. J., is editor, will be of general interest:

Question: Take two cases—one of a man who lives well all his life, but on one isolated occasion falls into mortal sin and then dies suddenly and goes to hell; the other of a man who lives wickedly all his life, and a hasty repentance at the last moment manages to get to heaven. Where is the justice of God—or even His mercy? Ought not His mercy to take into account so many years of virtuous life and forgive the one isolated sin.

Answer: Two such cases are theoretically possible; for, according to theology, it is not directly the state of the soul in life, but the state of the soul in the moment of death, which determines each one's eternal fate. Thus a repentant death can follow a wicked life, and an unrepentant death can follow a good life. However, looking at the matter practically, things may work out quite differently. Experience shows us many cases of sinners repenting at the last moment, and thus presumably being saved. But I doubt whether experience shows us a single case of man of good life dying unrepentant after an isolated sin in the way supposed. Even if the good man did this suddenly fall and meet with his death immediately after, we believe that there is no death so sudden as to allow of the very short time required for repentance. If in the case of wicked men God is supposed to make special efforts at death to win them to repentance, it is likely that He will make still greater efforts to win back a good man who happens to have committed one single mortal sin. Besides, a good man by the habits of his life would be all the more likely to repent of such an isolated sin when convicted, and would certainly co-operate with God's final graces.

Although our theological theory about a sinner's repentance seems on the surface to suggest the idea that it does not much matter whether one leads a good or a bad life, this is in practice certainly not the meaning of it. Although there is always room for sincere conversion so long as a man is alive, the general probabilities are that men who are systematically and deliberately wicked in their life will remain wicked in their death. The chance of repentance is offered, but such men have so ignored their conscience and hardened their hearts against good that it is unlikely that they will respond to the offer. On the other hand, those who have cultivated a love of goodness, and who have regularly turned to God after each fall, will have acquired a certain habit of repentance. Hence at the approach of death they will be alive to the situation, and will accept the graces offered with earnestness and alacrity. Though one single mortal sin is sufficient to deserve hell, we feel pretty sure that hell is not peopled by such casual sinners, but by those who have really made wickedness a serious part of their lives.

# GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

The American Catholic Press Association was organized a few months ago in Cincinnati. Its membership consists of nearly all the Catholic papers published in America. The last meeting was held at the office of the Catholic Union and Times in Buffalo on Sept. 12, and the following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved, That the Catholic Press Association invite all Catholic societies to pass a resolution pledging the patronage of their members to business men who advertise in Catholic papers.

Resolved, That it is the right of the Catholic press to be the first to get strictly Catholic news, and this particularly from the hierarchy and clergy.

Resolved, That we express our conviction that the Catholic press is the very best kind of an advertising medium. We also protest against the discrimination practiced by many lines of business against the Catholic press, and hereby declare our determination to resist in every legitimate way a continuance of such discrimination.

Resolved, That we remind the Catholic people that the Holy Father and fathers of the Council of Baltimore,

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and the clergy in general, have spoken of the necessity of the Catholic newspaper in the church, family, and as a continuous mission in the parish. In harmony with these declarations, the clergy to take steps to make these sentiments practically effective.

Resolved, That the American Catholic Press Association encourage Catholic writers and foster Catholic literature.

The adoption and carrying into effect of the first resolution by 50 per cent. of our Catholic societies would soon place the Catholic press on a par with the German Catholic press where five hundred and twenty Catholic dailies and weeklies flourish with a circulation of eight millions. All honor to the sturdy German Catholics for the magnificent record.

The other resolutions speak for themselves. The Catholic press of this country of ours is doing a noble work and a little stouter, or going on the part of every and every Catholic would make it a tremendous force for the spread of Catholicity and happiness of humanity.

What society or auxiliary will be the first in the C'd to adopt and carry into effect the first resolution.—The Spectator.

# CAUSES OF DISBELIEVING.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ATHEISTS—PROTESTS AGAINST AUTHORITY—THE UNRECORDED LOGIC—THE OBLIGATION OF CONSCIENCE—THE OBLIGATION OF THE SKELETON OF UNBELIEF—THE NEARER THE FOUNTAIN THE PURER THE STREAM—VERIFIED IN THE OLD AND NEW DISPENSATION.

All articles of the Apostles' Creed from "I believe in God" to "Life everlasting" have been denied. The denial of God includes a denial of all religious creeds. Those who do not deny positively the existence of a Supreme Being do so negatively when they assert they do not know that there is a God, and become indifferent to the obligation of serving Him. Before the reformation an atheist was looked upon with horror. To deny God, future retribution and the immortality of the soul meant isolation and abandonment for the unbeliever or skeptic. We have stated that the broad principles upon which the Reformation was started, namely, a protest against all spiritual authority, and the unrestricted right of private judgment in interpreting the Bible, were the basis of the new religion. In our enlightened and progressive age only a small percentage ever think of their obligations to serve God. Whom they consign to the unknowable. When persons adopt certain principles they are bound logically to follow these principles in all their consequences. But the principle of unrestricted right of private judgment is atheistical in its last analysis, its final wind-up. It means a denial of all authority, and an acknowledgment of man's moral independence. But man cannot be independent of God, because as Creator He is Supreme and Sovereign Lord upon Whom man depends physically as well as morally. Hence man is bound to obey in whatever He commands. This Protestantism will naturally concede and adduce their Bible, everyday practice in proof of their faith in God and their obedience to His commands. But it is their principle and not practice that is under consideration. They are Protestants only because they protested against the Catholic Church, yet take from them what they borrowed from her, and their Protestantism will soon find an easy road into the domain of infidelity. The three and a half centuries that have marked the career of Protestantism at home and in Europe give unmistakable evidence to-day that the principle of unrestricted right of private judgment leads and has led to the unbelief now so prevalent; for whether we consider the rigid doctrines of Calvin or Knox, or the free-love doctrine of Fanny Woodhull, each has in its way, in proportion as they have receded from the teaching of the true church, been progressive of incredulity. In the history of religion this is simply a repetition of what took place in the Old Law. Before the advent of Christ, that the synagogue and Patriarchal religion, which takes us back to Paradise, represented the true worshippers and adherents of God, there is no doubt. It is equally evident that the Gentiles, who apostatized, had fallen prey to the grade of polytheism down to the lowest of African idolatry. So, too, the Catholicism of the Middle Ages, which has been with those who protested against the Church of Christ. First, it is historically evident that the early reformers protested less than the various sects who afterwards sprung up in their ranks. The nearer the fountain the purer the spring, and the nearer the source of truth the less the error. So it was in the Patriarchal religion, and this has been in the development of Protestantism, as is evident from the chaotic mass of their religious beliefs to-day. With Luther it was only a protest against the spiritual authority of the Pope and a few other minor points. Since his time and by his followers every article of the Creed, from "I believe in God" to the last has been denied by would-be reformers. The denial of God makes up the total denial of everything about places, things, and the right of private judgment to its logical consequences, in the ranks of atheists.

That unbelief is the sin of the age there can be but little doubt. People boast of the fact that whilst their parents believed in the doctrines of

those fakes from Rome. Once in every little while the secular dailies contain absurd bits of news about the Holy Father or some of his entourage. It was the same in the days of Leo XIII. Then Catholics were daily amused by fake reports of that pontiff's struggles against Cardinal Rampolla. Besides, he seemed to have a chronic antipathy to the medicine prescribed by his physicians, and every now and then he was represented in the act of making a score or so of American Cardinals.

Pius X. receives different treatment. It is true he also has the habit of meditating American Cardinals, but so far he has not had more than three quarrels in a month with his Secretary of State. Still, he has symptoms that are rather alarming. According to the cable he is really quite well, and he has a habit of seeing visions that he never beholds. If we ask how all this can come about, we find answer in the English Catholic weekly, Rome, published in the Eternal City. Says the current issue of that journal:

"It is very odd, but not so odd as it looks, that the anti-clerical papers of France and Italy, should be the only ones to discover the visions of the Holy Father. Last year they announced that he had a vision of the Blessed Virgin as he prayed before the replica of the Grotto of Lourdes in the Vatican Gardens; this week he is stated to have seen the Venerable Joan of Arc, whom he will canonize next April in St. Peter's, and who is supposed to have given him consoling assurances about the religious future of France. The fact is, however, that the Pope has never in his life had a vision, and that, therefore, there is not the slightest foothold for a description of him as a 'visionary' Pope, which would doubtless be the next evolution in the inventions of the enemy. If there is one thing more than another which the anti-clericals do not like in the character of Pius X. it is his direct matter-of-fact way of looking at and judging things."

It is strange that the French and Italian anti-clericals do not abandon such tactics, English and American Catholics do not credit their lies. When they see them in print they merely wonder at the credulity of those newspapers that believe them good Catholic reading. Another anti-clerical fake is the one which, from month to month,

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some certain church, they believe in no church, no God and no future life beyond the grave. How unnatural and unreasonable is not this incredulous age! Deny God and what is there in this world worthy of man's aspirations? Nothing but the gratification of his selfishness, and for women, nothing but the realization of her vanity! Yet with neither, no matter how fully realized, are the cravings and desires of the soul ever satisfied. The soul naturally craves for the infinite, which means the plenitude of happiness.

When those years that constitute the ordinary span of life have well-nigh passed away, when the strength and buoyancy of youth sink beneath the weight of years and the bloom of manhood and womanhood are changed into the wrinkles of old age, ambition in most people ceases, and vanity is no more puffed up by the datterer's tongue, then where are those to anchor their future hopes? Not in heaven in the presence of God, where all is love and happiness, and which they deny. With no aspirations beyond the grave their remaining years are a blank. To all men in all ages the thought that God is men will reveal the great with infinite happiness, has been the great source of consolation. All not deprived of their mental faculties should know that He is, and that He is the Creator of the universe. This intellectual light should demonstrate that all beings inferior to Him are equally depending for their existence, and that, in fact, every creature necessarily supposes a Creator. As a splendid edifice supposes a skilled architect and builder, so the Universe supposes an omnipotent Maker; or as St. Paul expresses it, "Every house is built by some man; but He that created all things is God." (Heb. iii. 4.) To this may be added the famous motto of the intellectual giant St. Augustine. "I asked the Earth, he said, 'whether it was my God, and it told me no; and all things that are in it confessed the same thing. I asked the sea, and the sky, and the replies that are in them, and they answered: 'We are not thy God; seek Him above us.' I questioned the air, and the whole atmosphere with all its inhabitants said: 'Anaximenes is deceived; I am not thy God.' I asked heaven, the sun, the moon and the stars, 'Neither we are thy God,' was the reply. Then I asked the mass of the world, 'Tell me whether Thou art my God, or not?' and with a strong voice it answered: 'I am not; but I am by Him Whom you seek in me. He made me; seek above me Him Who rules me and made me.'"

—F. D., Intermountain Catholic.

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announces that somebody has given the Pope a gift of thousands of millions, that he keeps it all, and is so phenomenally wealthy that he does not need Peter's Pence. These lying Rome fakers must make even the Spirit of Evil weary because of their bungling. —New World.

# False witness.


In the Bible, the book wherein non-Catholics find authority for almost everything concerning the religion that is in them, there is a commandment which says: "Thou shalt not bear false witness." Lies against character especially told publicly, slander, baseless accusations, are looked upon by all fair-minded people as sins of the worst kind. He who steals a man's good name is shunned by all. We are not informed as to the Baptist rule of faith. Perhaps there is no such thing. So much the worse, for it certainly is needed. But a few days ago representatives of this so-called religious body met and resolved that they regard "the attitude of the high officials of the Roman Catholic Church toward both our school system and the separation of Church and State as unwise for the best interests of their own membership and hostile and disloyal to the country."

Are we so densely dull that the disloyalty of our leaders is not observed by us? Are our Baptist brethren so blessed with brain brilliance that they can judge a man better than can we? No! To speak in plain terms, these Baptist preachers are slanderers who accuse members of the American hierarchy of disloyalty; they are bearing false witness; they are engaged in an effort to rob these men of their character.—Catholic Union and Times.

# The Best Thing for the Catholic Press.

"The best congratulatory thing for the Catholic press," says the Pittsburgh Catholic, "is a subscription. It grows tiresome to read all the neat things said of the Catholic press in many and diverse quarters, the resolutions of support of Catholic societies, the 'perpetual mission in the parish,' the terrible things that have happened to French Catholics who neglected their Catholic press, the wonderful achievements of German Catholics since they supported and spread their Catholic press. All this is good, splendid, reads well, and uplifts the Catholic thought in the heart. The subscription is the thing, the only thing, that will make the Catholic press pulsate with life, vigor and vim. Words beat the empty air. Words are always thick as leaves in fall, the subscription is rather rare."

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