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THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING IN THE WORLD IS THE BABY, ALL DIMPLES AND JOY. THE MOST PITIFUL THING IS THAT SAME BABY, THIN AND IN PAIN. AND THE MOTHER DOES NOT KNOW THAT A LITTLE FAT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

Dimples and joy have gone, and left hollows and fear; the fat, that was comfort and color and curve—all but pity and love—is gone.

The little one gets no fat from her food. There is something wrong; it is either her food or food-mill. She has had no fat for weeks; is living on what she had stored in that plump little body of hers; and that is gone. She is starving for fat; it is death, be quick!

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THE ROYAL BABE.

O blue black sky alive with stars! O patient expectation past! O earth, forget thy battle scars,— Thy King is come at last.

A thy hand, a rose leaf touch, A Babe, whose silence is Divine; Thy hand that signed and suffered much, That hand is laid on thine.

It crowns, it pardons. Grieve no more! It lies divinely on thy heart! Arise and shine! His grace adores, Whose heritage thou art!

He comes in love. His infant smile His primal blessing reveals; His Blessed Mother kneels, the while His sweetness o'er her steals.

O Bad of Heaven, unfold Thy rare, Ensanquined petals to the light! Bright Babe of Bethlehem, how fair Thou dawdest on our sight!

The world is in Thy little grasp, Still lingering with delicious thrill; Oh, keep it in Thy tender clasp, And mould it to Thy will!

—Caroline D. Swan in Catholic World Magazine.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Fourth Sunday of Advent.

FREQUENT COMMUNION.

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord." (Luke 3, 4.)

A few more days, and the four weeks of reparation and of earnest desire for the coming of the Redeemer, will have passed. Even now we are in spirit going towards Bethlehem. The holy place looms up in the distance where the Word was made flesh, and soon we will enter with the pious shepherd, to adore the Divine Infant lying in a manger, but remember, it is the Infinite Sanctity whom we approach, whom the sinner has no part, hence, on this last Sunday of Advent, the Church solemnly calls us in the way of the Lord: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

Yes, prepare the way for the Lord of hearts, that He may enter into your hearts with His graces; prepare it by returning from your evil ways and, by making a good confession which will reconcile you with God. Such an admonition is unnecessary for a pious Christian who truly loves God; he will fulfil this obligation without previous counsel, but unfortunately, there are many lukewarm Christians who for months, and even years, have neglected the duty of cleansing their souls in the tribunal of penance. To these, I shall particularly address myself to-day, and beg them not to let the voice of the Church calling them to Penance, pass unheeded; I beseech them to receive their Lord and Master in holy Communion on the approaching feast of the Nativity.

With loving kindness, Jesus invites you to the heavenly banquet: "With desire I have desired to eat this pascha with you," and, again, He willingly calls you saying: "Come to Me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matt. 11, 28). "For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him." (John, 6, 56) Do you seek this loving Jesus and bring grateful hearts to Him, when you refuse His loving petitions and neglect to accept a cordial invitation? Suppose a child living in the same town with its parents would, appear only once a year at their table; would not such conduct sicken the parents, and could others justly accuse such a child of ingratitude? Now judge for yourselves, how our divine Saviour must feel when many consider so lightly this banquet of love which He has prepared for them and appear but once a year. This solicitude, however, is greater when they approach not from love, but from compulsion, to escape the penalty of the Church and disgrace before their fellowmen.

If we truly love ourselves and desire to save our souls, this self love, with out any other motive, should induce us to receive holy Communion frequently. We receive not only our food and drink, but we receive the life of God Himself, when you refuse His loving petitions and neglect to accept a cordial invitation? Suppose a child living in the same town with its parents would, appear only once a year at their table; would not such conduct sicken the parents, and could others justly accuse such a child of ingratitude? Now judge for yourselves, how our divine Saviour must feel when many consider so lightly this banquet of love which He has prepared for them and appear but once a year. This solicitude, however, is greater when they approach not from love, but from compulsion, to escape the penalty of the Church and disgrace before their fellowmen.

THE PASSION PLAY MADE HIM WEEP.

In a letter to a friend Father Birkhauser, of Rochette Wis., who has been sojourning in Europe since the middle of August, describing his impressions of the Passion Play, he says: "Since my last letter, I have visited the world renowned Oberammergau, and witnessed the Passion Play on the 23rd of September. The performance was in every respect grand, very impressive and touching, at the same time very instructive. The play made a deep impression on the vast audience of four thousand and two hundred persons, more than half of whom were Americans, Great, stalwart men, apparently as hard as adamant, used their handkerchiefs to wipe away the tears they could not control. Very few, if any, refrained from weeping. This says a great deal when we consider that one-half, if not more, of the audience, were non-Catholics. Even your humble servant must admit that he yielded to this same weakness.

"The most touching scenes were, perhaps, those in which Mary, the Mother of Christ, took part. The scene representing Christ taking leave of His Mother was exceedingly beautiful and touching; but the meeting of Christ and His Mother, on the way to Calvary, was far more impressive and pathetic. It was simply overpowering.

"The persons representing Christ and His Mother are two noble-looking personages, with beautiful classic features. Mary's voice was rather weak, but could be improved by further training. We need not, however, wonder at this, as the young lady taking the role of the Blessed Virgin is only nineteen years of age. Talking it all in all, she acted her part, which is undoubtedly a very difficult one, exceedingly well. Judas, the traitor, was, without doubt, the best. The choruses between the acts were finely rendered and very effective. The tableaux representing the prophetic scenes in the Old Testament, prefigured the various scenes in the Passion Play; they were instructive, marvellously beautiful and sublime.

"I must forbear depicting scene for scene. The Passion Play must be seen to form an idea of its grandeur and pathos. The play began at 8 a. m., lasting until 11:45, when an intermission was taken. The scenes were so instructive, marvellously beautiful and sublime.

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PROTESTANT CONTROVERSY.

Doctor Hodges remarks that for centuries before the Reformation the Papacy had interfered with European politics, and often for the better. This is all he would be obliged to say if he were a Roman Catholic. It is no part of Catholic doctrine that the political action of a Pope is necessarily wise. The recent declaration of the Spectator, that no Roman Catholic is allowed to appear before the Reformation in politics, is one of those singular affirmations of the Spectator concerning the Roman See which now and then make me stare and gasp. An adherent of Rome may not allow that the Church has ever erred in doctrinal definition, but there his obligation to maintain her infallibility stops. Bishop Fessler, secretary of the Vatican Council in a work approved, I understand, by a Papal brief, calls in question whether it is of faith to maintain that even the enactments of the Church, in discipline, are infallible, while nobody pretends that the application of them has been infallible.

We know how thoroughly sound and, as we Protestants are accustomed to say, ultramontane in their orthodoxy, Wetzer and Welte are, in their famous encyclopedia. Yet I own I have been surprised, almost astonished, to note the freedom of their criticism of the Papal action against the Hohenstaufen emperors. I have been the more surprised in that my own view, and as I judge, that of a much greater man John Ruskin, is that, however mingled with human passion—and Gregory IX was an old man—and Gregory IX was a passionate man—the overthrow of the Hohenstaufen by the Papacy, a splendid deed, but ruthless even in Barbarossa and plainly impious in his grandson, that this overthrow was a distinct benefit to the world. Yet Wetzer and Welte, in their German feeling, treat the whole contest, and the previous calamitous, without thereby forgetting their high consideration at Rome, although they are far from putting all the blame upon the emperors. Indeed, as Dr. L. W. Bacon has signified, if the Catholic clergy and laity throughout the world would be as broad and courageous as the professors at Rome they would fend off a good many of the accusations of timidity and servility now brought against them. As the present Pope says, frankness and courage are among the best weapons of the Church. Yet when I try to imitate this good example for my side

"Straightway a barbarous noise environs me, Of wiles and asses, cuckoos, apes and dogs."

Contrast Dr. Hodges' cordial reference to the medieval Papacy, confirmed by the great authority of Bishop Stubbs, and, as concerns Hilbrand, of John Fiske, with that of Charles Oman in his new condensed History of England. In every other aspect this little book shows very sound and temperate judgment, but all his references to the Papacy, and usually to vulgar English Protestant contemptuousness. Dr. Hodges appear to gain advantage by the side of him. Oman cannot even mention the noble refusal of the young James III, to purchase the crown of England by apostasy, or even the appearance of ultramontane bigotry. Perhaps he thinks with Henri Quatre

"Paris vaut une messe."

The Dean maintains that the Reform was supported, as well as opposed, in France, rather out of political partisanship than from the love of truth. In this I think that he hardly does full justice to the depth of religious conviction in the great body of the Huguenots, those of the middle classes. Even among the nobility, the two great leaders, Coligny and Duplessis Mornay seem to me to have been, like the elder Guise on the Catholic side, moved primarily by religious interests. This was still more deeply true of Queen Jane D'Albret. Like Mary Tudor, she was a hateful persecutor, but like her, she was grimly in earnest, on the opposite side. Coligny's brother, too, Cardinal Chastillon, would hardly have thrown up his bishopric and his seat in the consistory, except from the force of religious conviction. I can hardly say that he threw off the Roman purple, for with a brief intermission he wore this till his death. It must have been, to some amount, toothers scandalizing, to see him, attired as a Prince of the Holy Roman Church, dispossessing the Lord's Supper after the Calvinistic rite. However, as Ballentine says of such cases, his consecration of the elements remained valid, and Catholics will allow that so far as his Huguenot brethren of the second generation were sincere, they received the Eucharistic blessing.

Dr. Hodges, however, has a good right to say that the Protestant nobility was largely moved by mere factiousness, especially the princes of the blood. It is hard to believe that Anthony of Bourbon, or his nephew Condé, had much religion in his any of his sort. William Rufus has had many successors among pretences in saying, at least by actions, that they would have turned Jews if it had been made worth their while.

The Dean, while rightly maintaining that the chief reason for the failure of Protestantism in France was that it did not suit the French character, mentions a secondary reason of considerable force, namely, that the Protestants had no one great leader. Luther was in the midst of the Lutherans, but Calvin was not in France at all, and as the doctor says, no great

campaign has ever been brought to a great issue mainly by correspondence. I don't know exactly why the Dean calls the Protestant side in France "the liberal side." The antithesis to "conservative" would rather be "innovating," or "revolutionary." Certainly the Huguenots had not a thought of tolerating Catholicism, except under compulsion. As the Protestant Guizot tells us, when equally provoked, they were quite as ruthless in massacre as their Catholic countrymen, while they did the Catholic clergy to death with a slow relentlessness of torture quite equal to that of Chinese Boxers, something to which the Catholic massacres in France appear to have afforded no parallel. Surely, some better suting name could have been found for them than "liberal."

And unless they very speedily repel with indignation the proposal now made in various quarters in France to take the religious control of their parents and their pastors away from the Protestant pastors, the French Protestants will show that they are quite as much persecutors in temper as they are used to be. However, I am waiting to see what answer the R. v. Charles Merle d'Aubigné, now in this country, makes to the question I have addressed him through the Independent. His kinswoman Frances d'Aubigné, Queen of France, though by no means such a persecutor as commonly supposed, favored, at least consented to, the tearing away of Protestant children from their parents to make Catholics of them. I am curious to see whether her relative of to-day agrees with her in principle, only reversing the application. I cannot believe it.

The Dean says that the Huguenots were "the best beloved people in France." What does he mean by that? Best beloved by the Huguenots? Naturally. Best beloved by the Catholics? On what ground? On the ground that, being at most one-fourth of the people, they numbered from 5,000 to 8,000 Catholics. St. Bartholomew's included 3,000 monks and priests who maintained 30,000 families? That they murdered sacred images and pillaged sacred shrines innumerable throughout France; that they burnt down monasteries, and violated tombs, and threw the bones of the mighty dead about the churches and the churchyards, and finally that, with their greatest theologian, Theodore Beza, at their head, they destroyed the magnificent cathedral of Orleans? The French Catholics must have been a very extraordinary type of human nature if on such foundations they made the Huguenots their best beloved. I am afraid this phrase of the Dean's is not the only one of that sounds nice and means nothing. A little more strictness of thought and rigor in examining facts would be very accessible to his future reputation.

We see in his account of the Massacre of Vassy. He makes this a set attack by the Duke of Guise on a Huguenot congregation. Now Guizot declares that he does not know whom the massacre was caused by the obstinate discourtesy of the Calvinists, first, in his posing of provocation, built their temple (not a barn) right alongside of the Catholic Church, and second, in their contemptuous refusal to comply with the Duke's courteous request that they would suspend their loud psalmody for a quarter of an hour, until the Mass should be over. This refusal provoked some of the rude men-at-arms, and before the Duke knew what was going on, they had cut down some thirty or forty of the unarmed Protestants. Of the responsibility for this, Froende absolutely acquits Guise himself.

Now has Dean Hodges and new facts? If not, he ought to be very much ashamed of his own story.

Charles C. Starbuck.

Andover, Mass.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

Of the Consideration of the Misery of Man.

Thou art miserable wherever thou art and which way soever thou turnest thyself, unless thou turn thyself to God.

Why art thou troubled because things do not succeed with thee according to thy will and desire? Who is there who hath all things according to his will? Neither I, nor thou, nor any man upon earth.

There is no man in the world without some trouble or affliction, though he be a king or the Pope.

Who is it that is most at ease? doubtless he who is willing to suffer something for God's sake.

Many unstable and weak men are apt to say, Behold how well such a one lives, how rich he is, how great, how mighty and powerful!

But attend to heavenly goods, and thou wilt see that all these temporal things are nothing; but are very uncertain, and rather burdensome, because they are never possessed with out care and fear.

The happiness of a man consists not in having temporal things in abundance, but a moderate competency suffices.

It is truly a misery to live upon earth.

The more a man desireth to be spiritless, the more this present life becomes distasteful to him; because he the better understandeth and the more clearly seeth the defects of human corruption.

For the interior man is very much burdened with the necessities of the body in this world.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

A Dying Woman's Prayer

There are many marvelous things to pray, and it is the will of the great Giver that some of us should be called to help in His work. Inestimable favor. Miraculous manifestations of the Divine call are means rare. Every priest can recollect the summons which he has called vocation. People in the world are called, too, and we may be no one ventures to disregard the command of the voice from heaven. It is possible to mistake its tones, though we are so dull-sensed as to claim them for vibrations of the heart-impulse. We are the instruments, but the heavenly music is of our making.

Have you never helped to another's prayer? Is your own even now lying you to do so against your accustomed path? Perhaps in opposition to your very Perchance the voice is coming to you to answer a prayer uttered world away.

Here is a true story. A few ago we—Meadams X. Y. Z. were discussing a subject not than the Mysteries of Memory said a few wise things and many nonsensical things, as a—yea, and all men—are a when they talk of that which understand.

Madam X frankly confessed wilderness. "For example," said she last Sunday, on my way home Mass, I began to think of Mary Allan. I can't tell why. I haven't thought of her these fifteen years ago she and I were some dormitory in a Belgian town. She was not my 'La,' as we called our special chum (La vous concevez), but we liked very much, for we had many tastes. She was a slight, English girl, with silky blue quick bright eyes—quite a beauty.

"Still I had forgotten forgotten her. She had returned to America on Monday. I had thought of the new occasions which I had introduced new friends, girl friendships are proverbial nothing, as you know. I did memory send Marcia Sunday when I was five miles from a thought of the mon?"

"Somebody with 'quick blonde hair?' " "Did you dismiss her with thought?" "It was impossible to She haunched me that day of her all night. I could on Monday. But I think of annoyed: what was Marcia to me or I to her after all that? But it was no use to reason. At last I sat down and wrote letter, using her old name address. When I read it, I was surprised at its effect. really I must have thought Marcia than I thought I had she looked solem. "No letter?" she said.

"I did; it seemed obliged to do so. I wonder it will say about my freedom."

"It is not a matter of dear. There is something Wait until you hear from before you classify your as Something beyond! Proper—even So! Last week Marcia's answer. She penniless and dying in a hospital for consumptives. decade since her father died lost his fortune. M. only child; so far as she not a relative in the world could apply for aid. Her father was a month old when it for the old name and had been lost to postal mail. "I have been in the weeks," she wrote. "My children are in an orphan sent them there two months as soon as the doctors declared bronchitis had developed. I would not enter lives. They are absolutely inherit their father's. He was killed in a rail. Poor Edward! he had in his life; he used to going to be a famous composer. You say that you are yourself because you had impulse to write to me. I think God has prayed. I asked Him holy will, that I might of my children's future make any appeal to you believe now that God was a mother to my babies. Is not so, why did you after fifteen years of silence tell me that you child lover? that you photographs; you will are fine, handsome child. Tayo—let me call you name for the last time—are so gentle and so—you may do with them. You see I am taking granted. It must be for most without hope for—no one! Forgive me think of you; it is so passed out of my life, has chosen that you shall pray, and now I can it has taken me three this; I am very weak