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THE WORK OF DEATH.

A TIMELY SERMON BY THE REV. FATHER PAQUIN
IN ST. JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL—LIFE BUT A MARCH TO THE GRAVE—THE SPIRITUAL LIFE, AND NECESSITY FOR RIGHT LIVING DWELT UPON.

The Rev. Fr. Paquin, of Elm Grove and Triadelphia parish, delivered the following sermon, on Ash Wednesday, in the Cathedral at Wheeling. Father Paquin was once a leading professor at Ottawa University, and is widely known throughout Canada.

The Rev. Father said: "You hear the toll of the bell in the church tower and you say: who is dead? You open your door and ask of a passer-by: who is going to be buried? You are given the name of the departed one, you attend to the funeral ceremony, cast a last glance on the cold features of the dead man, of the dead woman, of the dead child; you whisper with a sigh: poor man! poor woman! poor child! And you turn from the mournful sight and go on your way, never thinking that you are yourself, at the very same moment, in the grasp of the power of death. Many and many a time you have heard the church bell tolling its mournful song, tolling the death of your father, tolling the death of your mother, tolling the death of your husband or wife, tolling the death of your brother or sister, tolling the death of your child, tolling the death of your friend. Yet you never stopped to think that this same bell will toll your own death-to-morrow; and with haste you hurried back into the buzz of your busy life, being as heedless as before of the high speed at which you are carried down to the abyss that ends the whirling of this life. So it has been with you; so it has been with me; so it has been with all. Every mortal man holds fast before his eyes the glass of illusion that to him shows death, although striking all around him, young, old, friends, relatives and strangers, as if it were bound to make an exception of him, and to keep far, far away, at an indefinite distance from him.

Today is Ash Wednesday, the voice of God sounds a general alarm and calls out every one from the illusive and dangerous slumber. Wake up, my friend, and face the reality that confronts you. Did you hear this morning, when the ashes were placed on your head, a gentle whisper ringing into your ears: Remember, man, thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return? That was the bell of God tolling, this time not for your neighbor, but for yourself. And what did the solemn toll tell you? That you are soon to die? More than that, my friend! It gently but firmly whispered to you that you are actually dying, that you are already within the cold embrace of the messenger of death, already struggling in the grasp of the ghastly hand that is only waiting for the signal to give you the last stroke. Ay, you have only to open your eyes and see, and judge for yourself. The child is no sooner born than he begins to die. Its first call for food is a first acknowledgment of the hold of death. Its first whining is a first surrender to the power of death. And the whole human life is but a continual struggle with the ever-conquering power of death, a struggle that may be prolonged for a more or less short time, but must always and irrevocably result in a final crash.

You are strong, your cheeks exhibit the glow of youth, you pride in your good health. Ah! my friend, do not be blind, and do not fall asleep in a false and delusive security. Are you not aware of the gradual disintegration that is constantly at work in your body? Every day, every hour, every minute, every instant of your existence, there is a continual and steady waste going on in every department of your frame: waste of your muscle, waste of your bones, waste of your blood, waste of your veins and arteries, waste of your heart, waste of your lungs! Every movement of your body, every motion of your hands, of your feet, of your mouth, tongue and eyes, every beat of your heart, every breathing of your lungs, every display of activity and energy, all are done at the expense of the material of which your frame is built up. Even the oxygen of the air that you are forced to breathe sixteen times or more every minute, is itself coming to your rescue at your own expense. It acts as a destructive agent, oxidizing or burning your lungs, your blood and every part with which it comes in contact. It generates for you the heat that keeps you alive, but your own body has to supply the fuel, and is thereby gradually turned to ashes. Hence the necessity for you to hunt all the time for a supply of new material, in order to make up for your daily loss, and repair your daily waste.

Did you ever stop to think, when taking your meals, that you labor under the obligation to beg, three times a day, of the cattle and other animals, of the birds and the fishes, of the grains of the field and the fruit of the trees, their substance, which you need to make it your own, that you may check your decay and continue in a moving or running order? Walk into one of our Wheeling mills. You see a piece of machinery, it keeps turning every day, sometimes every night, for weeks, for months, for years, and still works the same material, because it is continually receiving new material. But you are not continually receiving new material, and your material is made of animal

organic substance that is very instable, highly decomposable and prone to complete disorganization. Stop for a few days only to store new material in your stomach and your whole mechanism will fall into pieces, and its debris consigned to a box and buried underneath the ground.

And to what systematic strategy are you not forced to resort in order to keep on your feet in the war you have daily to wage with the power of death. You must warm your body near the fire and wrap it up in heavy clothes during the cold season; you must cool it down by an icy beverage in the hot weather; you must give it a rest after each exertion; you must make for its sleep an allowance of eight hours out of every twenty-four; you must expose its clashing to the skill of a physician; you must rub it with liniments; you must lose it with medicines, and what else! But, my friend, be as cautious as you will, and fight your battle as bravely as you can, you are soon confronted by the bare fact of your failure: to keep the repair even to the waste, soon forced to realize that the deadly power in whose clutch you are struggling is gaining, gaining, gaining, over you every day, and that every minute of your existence takes you nearer and nearer to your final wreck. Ah! let me see how you presently stand on the battlefield. I notice an unusual pallor around your eyes. Beware! This is the shade of death creeping towards your most vital parts. I see wrinkles on your cheeks. Beware! These are death chambers hollowed in by the digging hand of death. I see your back rounding its curvature, and your grey head sinking down. Beware! Death weighs more heavily upon you, and hurries you down to the grave. What! Who is there in that small, white, flower-covered coffin that is carried ahead of that old man? Ah! it is a child who could not stand the race, fell down before its time, and now takes the lead in the lugubrious procession of all human beings moving towards their last home. Oh! my God, how sad it is! That poor girl was so happy during the last entertainment, with her rosy cheeks and her smiling lips, and her bright, sparkling eyes, her beautiful dress, and the flowers that were showered upon her during the whole evening. It was a cold night when she returned home. A cough! Then pneumonia! And * * * how quiet and beautiful she looks through the glass of her coffin. Wipe your tears, mother! Very soon you will follow her.

My friends, these are not cheerful thoughts, I know. If they were only thoughts, the creation of my mind! But they are more than mere thoughts, they are facts that confront you every day. Why then not yourselves confront them to-day, the last Ash Wednesday perhaps that you have received the ashes on your head! Do not be downhearted. Brace up and listen a few minutes more. The toll of the bell of God has something else to say. It has to tell you that while you slowly but surely move forward to your grave, your sombre cortege is composed of the ghastly representatives of death, and that you are surrounded from all directions by the spoils of death. What stuff do you take for your blood? The flesh of dead animals. Of what material are made your hat, your clothes and dresses and your shoes? Of the skin, the hair, the wool and the feathers of dead animals. Under what sort of matter are you sheltered in your dwelling? Under the dead trees of the forest, cut off from their sap-giving roots, and dried up into decaying lumber. Ah! my dear Christian friends, can you not take the warning? Why do you eat every day the spoils of death, you are wrapped every day in the spoils of death from head to foot. You live and sleep under a roof made up of the spoils of death, and in addition to this, the hand of death is making new spoils in your own body every minute of the day, and you forget that you are dying! And the voice of God summing up these warnings of nature tells you plainly that "thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return," and you forget you are dying! And you have a manner of living and a behavior as if you were to live in this world forever!

Ah! then, you may say, if such is life, if it is only a downward race to the grave, with a baggage of sufferings and trials, sorrows and tears, contradictions and miseries, is it really worth living? This is the very point where I am in wait for you, and I say: If our existence were limited only to the few years we have to live in this world, this life would not be worth living. But when we open the eyes of our faith, and know that this body of ours, which is the battlefield of our earthly struggles, is but the exterior and perishable envelope that conceals an unperishable substance which is our real self; and when we know that our immortal soul will forever stand triumphant above the reach of the giant of death, and enjoy an endless and glorious life in the happy land of heaven; and when we know that our immortal soul is attached to this our corporal structure only for a short time in order to ripen for a life everlasting, as the juice of a fruit has to remain in its envelope until its maturity, when it casts off its peel to become incorporated into our living blood; and when we know that our immortal soul has to stay down here for a few years, only to be tested in the crucible of God and be made worthy of admission into His eternal glory and be happy for ever in His glorious society; then we rush to the conclusion that this our life is indeed worth living. But it is worth living only if we do live in the right way. And the right way to spend our transient years on earth is to provide first for the welfare of our immortal

soul in the endless hereafter, and then only, to see to the welfare of our perishable body. Seek first of all the kingdom of heaven, said the great guide who came down from heaven to point out to men on earth the right road they have to follow. If we reach the harbor of eternal salvation, our life will be a success, no matter how many hardships we have to encounter in this vale of tears; whilst, if we miss the salvation of our soul, or life, although very successful otherwise, successful in piling money by the millions, successful in acquiring properties by the hundreds, successful in the enjoyment of earthly pleasures, successful in gaining a reputation as wide as the world, will be at the end a failure, a complete failure, an irremediable failure.

Therefore, my friends, go ahead along the road of heaven. Your body is carried down to the grave by its own weight, independently of your will, being hurled by an irresistible current; but your soul

with twelve companions for Caldonia's shores, and landed on the Isle of Iona, three miles long and one mile broad, rocky, dreary, rainy, foggy, unlike the smiling green fields of green Erin. They set to work at once to put up a few huts made out of tree-branches, and replaced them afterwards by a monastery. Columba occupied, on the top flat of the building, a plank cell, with the floor for his bed and a stone for his pillow. The lion was changed into a lamb and an apostle, too. At that remote period of Scottish History, the whole country was inhabited either by the Scots, who occupied the Western Coast and the Islands, or the Picts, that dwelt everywhere else. Doubtless, long before his arrival, the influence of Christianity was being slightly felt in the West, owing to Irish Catholic emigration there, and in the Southern Districts, too, by reason of their close proximity to Gaul and their commercial relations with it.

Greater religious refinement was, how

self must, naturally, have grave obligations to the Sacrament and the minister to whom he has come for absolution. The penitent, without doubt, is obliged to keep only what is termed the "natural secret" about anything that would have a tendency to bring disrespect upon the Sacrament, or to the sacred ministry to which the priest is invested by Divine grace, or to the person of the confessor.

"This 'natural secret,' though some what less strict than the confessor's, is nevertheless, the object of a very grave obligation of religion, charity and justice, as may be seen by article 285 of the Code of Civil Procedure, which protects the confessor just as well as the lawyer, the notary, the physician, or any other person to whom is confided a secret of office. The law does not permit any one to interrogate him on the subject; for the cause of public order demands that these confidential communications of a citizen with one from whom he expects advice and comfort, must be free of any fear or misplaced confidence. Even in case where the divulgence of a secret would produce considerable benefit, the law forbids it, because it is believed that this temporary benefit would have been bought too dearly at the price of the mutual confidence and perfect liberty which must govern all such matters and communications."

FATHER O'CONNELL'S ANNIVERSARY.

SIXTY YEARS A PRIEST: HIS SINGS HIGH MASS ON THE CANALS: A MOST IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY.

St. Patrick's Church was the scene of an exceedingly interesting ceremony last Sunday morning, the occasion being the diamond anniversary of the Rev. Peter O'Connell, who has been a Roman Catholic priest for sixty years, has reached his 50th year, and is still hale and hearty. Rev. Father O'Connell was born in the North of Ireland, in the year 1801, and when thirty years of age, came to Canada, where he has lived ever since. Father O'Connell has labored among the Irish Catholics of Montreal for 25 years, Rev. Fathers Richard and Phelan the latter, afterwards Bishop of Kingston bring his co-workers in this city. It then went to Ottawa, and for many years was located in the diocese of Ottawa and Kingston.

For some time past, Father O'Connell has been living quietly at the Grey Nuns, on Guy street, and although a good many years have elapsed since the zealous priest was engaged in active work his memory is still revered among the faithful, whom he served so long and so well. It is not surprising, therefore, that the congregation would be a very large one when it was known that Father O'Connell was to be the celebrant at High Mass, with Rev. Fathers Gaudin of the Seminary, and Martin Callaghan, deacon and sub-deacon, respectively. While the aged priest was singing, it was remarked that, although slightly faltering, his voice was sweet and of notes quite correct.

The sermon was preached by the Rev. Father Fahicy, and the subject was "Heaven." There was, likewise, an interesting ceremony in the afternoon and again Rev. Father O'Connell was the central figure. He blessed 700 children attached to the Parochial Catechism, and presented the retiring Priest with a rose, as an example of his great love for little children.

During the day the venerable priest received congratulatory letters, besides being made the recipient of several valuable presents, including a splendid bronze statue of St. Peter.

THE SECRETS OF THE CONFESSORIAL.

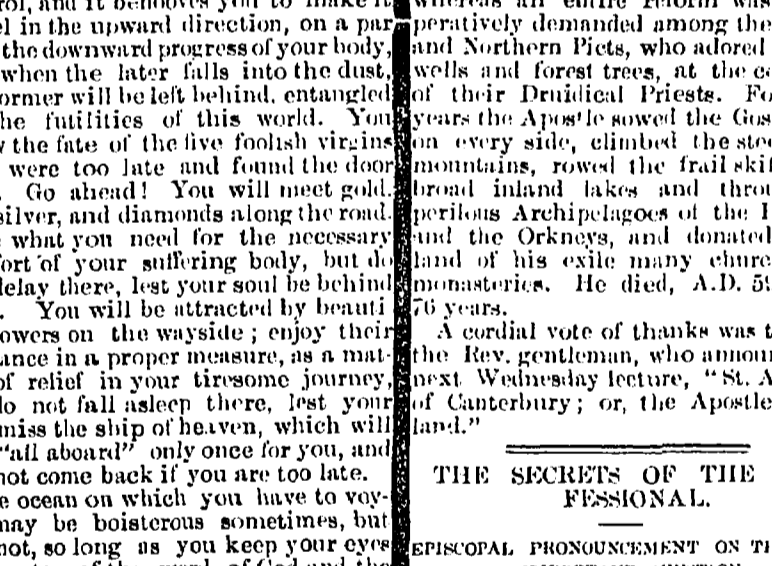
EPISCOPAL PRONOUNCEMENT ON THIS MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION.

During the present Lenten season the mandament, which was issued by the bishops of the Province in 1881, regarding the Sacrament of Penance, has been re-quoted in La Semaine Religieuse, under the authority of His Grace Archbishop Fabre, on the occasion of the condemnation of Rev. Mr. Gill.

The document deals principally with the secrecy of the confessional and the benefits derived therefrom. It begins: "God, who in His infinite wisdom directs everything according to His will, with all the conditions and consequences that may appertain to the purpose intended, has so willed (and the Church teaches) that the administrator of the Sacrament of Penance shall keep the most absolute silence on all that comes under his cogitation or judgment, in the name of God, in the remittance or the retaining sin."

"Who would submit to such a tribunal, were there the slightest fear of treason? Not even when the death of an innocent person is threatened, not even the necessity to prevent a public calamity, not even a dispensation from the highest authority of the Church; none of these may force the priest to reveal any secret he may have heard in the confessional, even after the death of the penitent. The confessor must suffer death before divulging, directly or indirectly, what he has learned by confession. This secret is so absolute that the confessor must not say anything of, or even allude to, by a sign or otherwise, to any knowledge so obtained, or to anything that might render the Sacrament odious. He may not speak even to the penitent, notwithstanding that it might be for his greatest spiritual good, unless with the penitent's free and express permission. Any danger there may be to the respect and confidence due to the sacrament, for the confessor may not use his knowledge, and thus the penitent is not the only interested one. Things being thus regulated by Divine right, as to the secret which the confessor is obliged to keep in his relation to the sacrament, it is necessary that the penitent should

THE LATE REV. FATHER JAMES HOGAN, FORMERLY PASTOR OF ST. ANN'S CHURCH.



SCOTLAND'S APOSTLE.

Rev. James Callaghan Delivers an Interesting Lecture on St. Columba.

The Catholic Young Men's Society of Classic Literature held their regular once-a-week meeting last Wednesday evening, in their hall, 92 St. Alexander street. Mr. John J. Patterson, B.L., presided, and opened the proceedings with a few laudatory remarks on the flourishing condition of the Association. His mastery effort was deserving of the young gentleman's title of Bachelor of Letters of Laval University, and was greatly appreciated by his large audience. Select violin and piano cantatas, with vocal solos, varied the programme. Rev. James Callaghan, S.S., Director, delivered a lecture on "St. Columba, or Scotland's Apostle." St. Columba, born A.D. 521, was the great-grandson of Tara's King, who ruled all Ireland when Patrick was carried a slave into the "Emerald Isle." Educated by the Monks of Clonart, near Dublin, he was ordained deacon, and upon his retirement from that renowned sanctuary of faith and science, had when only twenty-five years old, completed the erection of thirty-seven monasteries. Warlike and bloodthirsty, he incurred King Diarmid's displeasure and the censures of the Church. Repentant, he sought a holy monk's advice. "Go away from Ireland," was the reply, "and convert to Jesus Christ a number of pagans corresponding to the victims slain in your sanguinary revolt." "I shall do as you bid me," answered Columba. He sailed

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

Rev. Father Stevin Shows How Education Without Religion is a Delusion.

Rev. Father Stevin, S. J., of Galveston, the Lenten preacher at the Gesù, last Sunday evening, gave an address on the necessity of religious training forming a part of education. He contended that comparative history showed that education, no matter how bright and high, must, without religion, sooner or later, terminate in decay. Education, without religion, was a delusion. The modern system of education, although there were exceptions to the rule, too often consisted of cramming with tables and mathematical formula, without one word about the soul. Nowadays, the common acceptance of the word "education" meant the ability to answer a certain number of questions, which, it was presumed, a person ought to be able to answer, and, if they were answered, the person was adjudged to have been educated. Education without religion left the masses free-thinkers, and, consequently, self-dealers, for the two always went together. He quoted from Guizot, St. Augustin and others to show that religion and morality could not be dispensed with in education, and went on to say that no nation could get along at the expense of religion and morality. A country that was simply intellectual would never deserve national life; religion was the mainspring and centre of intellectual national life. The schools of the nineteenth century, or any other century, in which religion was banished from education were hotbeds and nursing grounds of the elements of discord in national life. Some few months ago the Archbishop of Montreal and the Fathers of the Catholic Church, sat in council, and they took occasion to warn the faithful against a certain class of literature, which, though not infidel, was still working towards infidelity, was exciting the passions of youth, was teaching licence under the garb of liberty, and was holding up the doctrines of the Catholic Church to ridicule. Look at the rebellions of the last 200 years, he said, and at America and Canada draw a conclusion. To be socially and nationally useful, education must be fundamentally religious. National education must be given and received in the midst of a religious atmosphere, and this was the system upon which the Catholic Church proceeded.

ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH NOTES.

THE COMING RETREAT.

We wish to again remind the young men of St. Patrick's parish, that the retreat for their benefit will commence on the 22nd March, instant, and will be continued throughout the whole of the following week. The Rev. Father Schneider, of the Redemptorist Order, New York, will preach the sermons. It is to be hoped that the attendance will be so such that we will be enabled to report a grand success as that which resulted from the recent retreat for unmarried ladies.

SOCIETY HOURS DEVOTIONS.

On Friday next, at half-past nine in the morning, the exercises of the Forty Hours will commence in St. Patrick's Church, and will terminate on Sunday morning at High Mass. Any parishioners desiring to contribute flowers, candles, oil, or other donations, for the decoration of the altar, are requested to present them at the Sacristy and they will be gratefully received.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

This (Wednesday) evening, at eight o'clock, the delegates from the various societies for the St. Patrick's Day celebration will hold a meeting in the Hall of St. Patrick's Presbytery.

LENTEN DEVOTIONS.

During the whole of Lent special services are held each evening at half-past seven o'clock. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament each evening, except on Fridays, when the Stations of the Cross will take the place of the Benediction.

ST. ANN'S PARISH NOTES.

LENTEN SERMONS.

Rev. Father McPhail, C.S.S.R., will deliver the evening sermons, in St. Ann's church, during the present Lenten season. So far these evening services have been largely attended and it is expected that as Easter approaches the numbers will become greater. Every parishioner, who can possibly do so, should be present to hear these instructive sermons.

A REQUIEM MASS.

Yesterday morning, at seven o'clock, a grand Requiem Mass was chanted in St. Ann's church for the repose of the soul of the late Father Hogan, former pastor of the parish. Rev. Father Scheubel, the parish priest and superior, officiated, assisted by Rev. Fathers Goits and McPhail, as deacon and sub-deacon respectively. The church was filled with a devout and sorrowful congregation, and many a fervent prayer went up for the repose of the departed priest.

REQUIEM MASS.

It was announced in St. Ann's Church, at all the Masses on Sunday, that a Requiem service would be celebrated on Tuesday morning, at seven o'clock, for the repose of the soul of the late Father James Hogan, formerly pastor of St. Ann's Church.