

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON. Tenth Sunday after Pentecost.

INGRATITUDE. Ingratitude is a very mean vice, no matter against whom it is committed. There may be some fathers and mothers listening to me who have felt how cruel a sin it is, for there are children, not a few nowadays, who have treated their parents, good parents too, with shocking ingratitude; have cursed them and reviled them; have struck them; have allowed them to live on the charity of strangers; have forced them to play the part of drudges during those sad years of old age when leisure and comfort would be so welcome; have tried to force the little remnant of means from them by the basest threats and extortion, and perhaps even violence; there are parents whose hearts have ached to see their children ashamed of their old-country accent and their simple manners. Is not this very abominable? Then, too, all through life we meet with cases where men have lent others money out of personal friendship, only to be repaid by lying, dishonest ingratitude. Indeed, there is scarcely one of us who has not been badly treated by persons whom we have in one way or other befriended.

Perhaps you have heard of the poor man who was walking along the docks one evening, and hearing the cries of a drowning man he threw off his coat, jumped into the water, and, almost drowning himself in the effort, finally brought the poor fellow safe on shore. Grateful, as you may suppose, for his life, he turned to his rescuer, he drew from his pocket a handful of silver, and what do you think he did? He asked him if he had change for half-a-dollar!

Indeed there are many who towards the end of their lives suffer sharp remorse for the ingratitude of their earlier days. How many who never pray for their benefactors; who are so proud and selfish that they do not want to have any benefactors; who are just as careless of benefactors' names in their backbiting as of any others; who think that a little money can pay a debt of affection; who often receive and never give, nor so much as ever thank!

Well, my brethren, if we treat each other so, we treat God no better, not even so well. Now where did I get my good home, and my dear friends, and my plentiful means, and my good bed? From God, who certainly does require at least thanks in return. Did I ever give them? Did I ever so much as acknowledge that God had given me these gifts? Where did I get my good health, my clear head, my strong arm, my light step, my happy heart? Brethren, we get such things only from the most loving kindness of our Creator. And every day we receive them, we enjoy them—alas! sometimes in a sinful manner—and we go on our way almost as if there was no God at all.

The truth is that the commonest sin of our lives is ingratitude to God. It is like the very germ-sin, or the poison in the air, or the venom in the blood of fallen man. It is a sin which is rooted in pride, feeds upon selfishness, and brings forth the fruit of spiritual indifference. In truth, it is as much a state of soul as a sin or a series of sins. Hence it is heartily detested by all good Christians. They endeavor to practise the virtue of thankfulness at every turn. They are careful to give at least a quarter of an hour thanksgiving after Communion; they not only make novenas for favors, but novenas in thanks for them; when at table they say at least one mouthful of prayers, in gratitude for the many mouthfuls of each of their meals; they thank God for the afflictions He sends as well as for His favors, for He is the same God to their loving hearts in storm or sunshine; in a word, one of the channels of the love of God in their lives is a deep sentiment of gratitude for His favors. I am inclined to believe that this virtue is a mark of predestination to eternal life.

MODERNISM AND SECTS.

The Presbyterian Church in this country is entering upon a struggle which promises to be fraught with momentous consequences to American Presbyterianism. The leaven of the so-called higher criticism, which has been at work for years in all the Protestant sects, is producing results which are beginning to alarm sincere Presbyterians who see beliefs they hold sacred treated in the most contemptuous manner by Presbyterian ministers. The recent ordination in New York of three candidates for the Presbyterian ministry, who openly expressed disbelief in our Lord's resurrection, in His virgin birth and in biblical miracles generally, has brought home to many Presbyterians a realization of the nature and of the extent of the serious danger menacing the Church to which they owe spiritual allegiance.

Thus the Rev. Dr. Daniel Seeley, a prominent member of the New York Presbytery, referring to the ordination of ministers who reject what were once considered essential doctrines of Presbyterianism, said that the ordination "would prove the entering wedge in the disintegration of the Presbyterian Church." In defining the nature of the issue involved he declared: "The three men under discussion denied the doctrines of confession and faith and it came to a final issue whether it was the Bible or the men who should be thrown out. The Presbytery throw out the Bible in endorsing the denials of the men." Strong language this, but not a whit stronger than the circumstances justify. Every thoughtful and sincere Presbyterian must see that the rejection of the fundamentals of Christianity will lead inevitably to the dissolution of Presbyterianism. The Rev. Dr. Seeley is not the only Presbyterian who recognizes this fact. In the latest issue of the Bible Student and Teacher, the official organ of the Presbyterian Church, this note of warning is sounded: "The Christian Church is in the midst of one of the most appalling crises in the history of Christendom. The false teachings of radical criticism, introduced from Germany in the name of 'scholarship,' and appealing to the



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"natural man," have swept over the Church like a devastating flood, destroying faith in the foundation of Christianity, the Bible as God's authoritative revelation of salvation."

The danger here referred to would not be so threatening if it were not that the very persons to whom the defence of Presbyterian doctrine has been entrusted are the ones who are engaged in undermining "faith in the foundations of Christianity and in the Bible as God's revelation of Salvation." In other words, the Presbyterian Church resembles a besieged fortress whose defenders find that they have to protect themselves not only against enemies on the outside of the breastworks, but against foes within them. Herein is the gravest peril. The Presbyterian organ from which we have already quoted in dealing with this internal treachery, thus describes it:

"One peculiar feature of the situation is that in the past the destroyers of the faith have commonly been men of the world, outside of the churches; to-day they are inside the churches—leaders in a great scholastic apostasy, entrenched in the foremost positions of power in its pulpits, its press, its homes, its educational institutions and even in theological seminaries, poisoning all the springs of its life.

"Another dark feature of the situation is that these enemies of the Bible have gained control of the forces that shape the public opinion and conduct of the Church and the world."

We have here a description of a situation which bodes ill for the future of the Presbyterian Church. If the Christian truths, which impart to it all the vitality it possesses, cease to influence the minds and the conduct of its members, its days will be numbered. Clear seeing Presbyterians must recognize this. They cannot fail to perceive that if the propagation of anti-Christian doctrines gain the upper hand, there will be no further need for the existence of the Presbyterian Church which, in that case, will disappear in the limbo that has swallowed up so many sects in the past.

That the forces of unbelief at work within the Presbyterian Church are busily employed in preparing the way for such disastrous results to Presbyterianism is attested by any number of witnesses who are fully competent to bear testimony on this subject. We have already quoted some of these witnesses, and heard what they have to say. President William Phillips of the Bible League, in summarizing the situation says:

"Through this false teaching the faith of the fathers' in the Bible as the inspired, authoritative word of God is being rapidly dethroned in the minds of multitudes of men. Even the ministry of the Word, in many cases, is becoming or has become, ministry of unbelief in all things supernatural and divine. A great apostasy is in active progress. Its leaders, being already entrenched in many of the educational institutions and churches calling themselves Christian."

Another distinguished Presbyterian, Rev. Dr. Daniel S. Gregory, who has held the position of professor of Yale and Princeton, is every bit as emphatic as the president of the Bible League in speaking of the assaults upon what formerly were considered the cardinal doctrines of the Presbyterian Church. We quote his words:

"It would be hard to overstate the gravity of the situation, with all the forces of unbelief organized in the interests of deadly errors, and flooding the world with their books of reference and their literature for Sunday schools, families, and students in educational institutions of all grades."

The testimony we have adduced is that of persons who are thoroughly conversant with the perilous situation, from a doctrinal point of view, the Presbyterian Church is called upon to confront. Presbyterians like Dr. Seeley and Dr. Gregory, should now be in a position to appreciate the service Pius X. rendered to the cause of Christianity when he gave to the world his encyclical condemning Modernism which sought to propagate within the Catholic Church doctrines similar to those which threaten Presbyterianism with annihilation. The Modernists, just like the Presbyterian ministers who are utilizing Presbyterian pulpits to popularize anti-Christian teachings, hoped to carry on their anti-Christian propaganda within the Catholic Church.

But the Catholic Church has in the successor of St. Peter a source of authority capable of dealing with and crushing error, whatever shape it may assume. It is the lack of this species of authority which constitutes the essential weakness of the Protestant sects. Take the case of the Presbyterian Church. The opponents of the ordination of young men who reject the teachings of the Bible threaten to appeal from the New York Presbytery to the General Assembly where the question will be decided by a majority vote. No one claims that a decision so reached is based on a com-

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mission such as was intrusted to St. Peter and his successors.

Speaking with the authority derived from that divine commission, Pius X. has crushed Modernism within the Catholic Church. The Presbyterian Church, devoid of such authority, is struggling with the form of Modernism which has manifested itself within its fold and which seriously threatens the existence of the Presbyterian Church as a Christian Church. As the struggle progresses, it may well happen that sincere and devout Presbyterians, who believe in Christ and His teachings, will ask themselves whether a Church, that has no authority to safeguard these teachings except such as is derived from a majority vote of fallible men, can be of divine origin.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

Holding Civilization Together.

A non-Catholic correspondent of the Emporia (Kansas) Weekly Gazette writing from Rome, has this to say of what the Rev. W. R. Alger, another outsider, calls "the most imposing organic symbol of Christendom":

"The Holy Roman Catholic Church, whether we like it or dislike it, still must be admitted by serious-minded persons of every faith to be the cement that is holding civilization together. For if the influence of the Catholic Church were removed from millions upon millions of our fellow-creatures in Christendom, barbarism and anarchy would be rampant in the world."

Not a particularly novel assertion, even from a Protestant nowadays; but

VACATION TIME. When preparing for the summer vacation it would be well not to lose sight of the fact that sooner or later a permanent vacation is coming for all, and now is the time to make proper preparation for it. You will be able to enjoy the summer holidays all the more if you have the consciousness of having fulfilled your duty to those dependent upon you. North American Life Assurance Company. HOME OFFICE - TORONTO.

such declarations are very gratifying, as proof that traditional antipathy or bigoted repugnance to the Church is on the wane everywhere in the United States.—Ave Maria. The unlettered toiler seldom has any other ambition than to see the close of the day. A minute may suffice to commit a deed whose influence will extend into eternity.

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