

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON. Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

SERVING TWO MASTERS. "You cannot serve God and Mammon." (St. Matt. vi. 24.)

Notwithstanding these clear words of today's gospel there are many who wish to be the friends of Mammon without becoming enemies of God. They dally with the world, they try to serve it and God, if not at one and the same time, at least alternately. They do not appreciate the enormity of sin: in fact, they begin to doubt if God will, after all, condemn a soul to eternal pains for one mortal sin. Their confessions are mechanical affairs, without any serious conversion from their life of sin. There are souls to whom the Holy Ghost addresses those awful words: "I would thou wert cold or hot; but because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit thee out of my mouth."

How foolish to suppose that we can save our souls by a divided love! "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." And if for the sake of the world we forsake Christ in anything, we show where our treasure is and in what service we are.

If our easy-going Christian were to appreciate the enormity of the least sin, he would but admire God's justice in condemning a soul for a single mortal sin. It is not so much the single act which we call a mortal sin for which the soul is condemned, as for the moral leprosy which made the sinner capable of so monstrous a crime. No words can adequately describe the awful leprosy which covers that soul which is in a state of mortal sin. When it becomes conscious of its state, after death it would be a greater hell for it to stand in presence of its outraged Creator than to suffer the miseries of that darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. When it will be brought before the judgment seat of God, before Whose majesty the angels veil their faces with their wings, it will cry out to the mountains to cover it and the hills to hide it from the sight of God.

Let not our easy-going friends think, therefore, that sin is a matter of small consequence. They are mistaken if they think that the sacrament of penance will do their work for them. If any man goes to confession without doing his share, by honestly repenting of the past, and sincerely purposing to walk in the way of the commandments for the future, the last state of that man is worse than the first. By no trickery can we get into heaven; God requires an honest service and a whole-souled fidelity.

But he caps the climax of folly who thinks to put off his conversion until his old age. To-day's gospel asks: "What man, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?" Who can count upon a day, much less a year? But even if we could count upon an old age, who tells us that we shall become truly converted, when it is apparent that the only reason for our conversion is the impossibility of sinning any more? Confession is not the magical charm our easy-going friends would have it to be; it cannot make a foul sinner into a saint by slight of hand. God might save the worst sinner in a moment, as he did the penitent thief. But who is certain that He has done so in a single other case? Let us not try to cheat God. He cannot be mocked. He has told us clearly that we must serve him with all our hearts, or we are none of His. We must choose between Him and Mammon. It is not impossible to choose. What shall it be—God or Mammon?

NOTABLE CONVERTS.

WHAT THE PURITANS FAILED TO FORESEE.—AN EXTRAORDINARY CONVERSION.

The great intellectual struggle of sincere and honest souls in search of the true faith is sometimes marvelous in its results. When Cardinal Newman led the Oxford movement his sole object and aim in life were to restore order in the chaotic state of the Anglican church. Honest, sincere and powerful in intellect, he traveled to Rome to learn and convince himself thoroughly of the errors of the Catholic Church so that he might bring out in bold contrast the beauties and grandeur of the Anglican Church and the necessity of the schism of Henry VIII. During his stay in Rome he studied Christian principles to their foundation. Doubts began to arise in his mind as to his heretian undertaking, viz., to connect the Anglican Church by some invisible chain with primitive Christianity. The more and the deeper he studied the graver and more serious were the doubts which arose in his honest, sincere and His. We must choose between Him and Mammon. It is not impossible to choose. What shall it be—God or Mammon?

After reaching England the darkness grew denser and through the mist he could see no light which would enable his powerful intellect to trace the invisible chain from the foundation of the Anglican Church of Henry VIII. back to primitive Christianity. The missing links were visible in the Church of Rome. He told his brother Francis his mental struggles, his doubts, etc. His brother honestly and candidly told him that in his state of mind nothing remained for him to do but "to go back to Rome." He took the step which shook the faith of thousands of Anglicans.

Such cases are not rare. They speak volumes. A short time ago in Bridgewater, Mass., a notable convert, the son of Harriet Beecher Stowe, and a nephew of Henry Ward Beecher, one of America's greatest preachers, created a similar sensation. Rev. Charles E. Stowe, a minister of high standing in

the Congregational Church, whilst preaching to his congregation, quietly slipped off his gloves, and as reported said:

"Our Puritan Fathers never would have made the break they did with Catholic Christianity could they have foreseen as a result thereof the Christless, moribund, frigid, fruitless Protestantism that can contribute neither warmth, life, inspiration nor power to lift us above the weariness of sin. Alas! it is only too true that the heavenly city, which our Puritan Fathers yearned for and sought, with prayers and tears, has become, to many of our Christless descendants, a frigid city of ice palaces, built of pale negations, cold, cheerless, shining in a pale winter sun with an evanescent glitter of a doubtful and insubstantial intellectual worth."

As the icebergs from the frozen north floated with the ocean currents, and only to be melted and disappear in the warm waters of the equator, so shall these transcendental ice mountains melt in the warmer currents that the Holy Spirit will bring to human hearts from our crucified but now risen and glorified Lord.

The full, rich, glorious Christ of Catholic Christianity has been dragged from His throne by these advanced thinkers (God save the mark!) and reduced to beggary. A pale, bloodless emaciated Syrian ghost, He still dimly haunts the icy corridors of this twentieth century Protestantism, from which the doom of His final exclusion has been already spoken.

"Then in their boundless arrogance and self-assertion they turn upon those of us who still cry with Thomas before the Risen One, 'My Lord and my God,' and tell us that there is no middle ground between their own vague and sterile rationalism and the Roman Catholic Church. If this be so, then for me, most gratefully and lovingly I turn to the Church of Rome as a homeless, houseless wanderer to a home in a continuing city."

We are hungry for God, yearning for the living God, and hence so restless and dissatisfied. The husk of life's fruit is growing thicker and its meat thinner and drier every day for the vast majority of our people. In many and important respects life is brighter in the so-called "Dark Ages" than it is today. The seamless robe of Christ is rent into hideous fragments and trampled in dirt."

A little over ten years ago, John A. Kensitt, the ultra-Protestant who besides manifesting a bitter antagonism to the Catholic Church itself, specialized, so to speak, on trying to destroy the "Catholic party" in the Church of England. He was then attracting great attention on both sides of the Atlantic with his personal interference with services in advanced Anglican churches in London. The writer has seen the modest little church of St. Ethelburga in a crowded district of London where Kensitt began his campaign. The veneration of the cross on Good Friday, and the Asperges following the Catholic custom of sprinkling the congregation with holy water, were naturally very distasteful to the self-constituted champion of Protestantism. He got a few drops of the water one day, and went to the nearest police court to register a charge of "assault and battery." Freedom of worship, however, prevails in London, and the police was singularly unassertive. So when Mr. Kensitt tried to break up a ritualistic service in that city, and made off with the Crucifix, which he had snatched from the hands of the officiating clergyman, his proclaimed zeal for Protestantism did not avail to mitigate his offense in disturbing public worship, and he got the ordinary penalty. All these things are naturally recalled by the announcement that one of his late prominent supporters, the Rev. A. C. White, has been received lately into the Catholic Church. Like Kensitt, Mr. White spent years in denouncing Catholicism up and down the land. He was called upon to counteract the literary activity of the Catholic Truth Society of Great Britain, and his pen was long employed in exposing "the errors and superstitions of Rome." He must, however, have been an honest man, for as he studied the alleged "errors and superstitions," he gradually became conscious of his own error, and manfully followed the light. While his defection is a hard blow to the followers of Kensitt, it rejoices Catholics that another sincere soul has initiated the Scriptural example of St. Paul.—Intermountain Catholic.

TWO PRINCES; A BITTER CONTRAST. ONE AT THE DOOR OF A MONASTERY, THE OTHER AT THE GATE OF A PENITENTIARY.

On August 10, the Cathedral of Cologne was the scene of a unique and impressive ceremony. The aged Prince Karl zu Loewenstein, in religion Frater Raymundus, who made his profession in the Dominican Order on August 1, received subdiaconship at the hands of Cardinal Fisher. His ordination to the priesthood is set for the Advent Ember Days. This the last stage in an eventful career stretching over more than half a century.

Born in 1834, the prince's whole life has been devoted to the service of his church and his country. In 1868 he became the leading spirit in the German Catholic conventions, organizing and managing them every year until his retirement in 1898. In 1869 he was unanimously chosen to preside over the first Dusseldorf convention. Under his able management and with the aid of his liberal donations these conventions, which have meant and still mean so much for German Catholicity, weathered many a storm and gave the lie to many a pessimistic prediction. His popularity was perhaps second only to that of the great Windthorst. In 1902 he founded the Anti-Duelling League, over which he presided until 1907.

A STARTLING CONTRAST. While this man, full of years and merits, is standing on the threshold of the priesthood, another scion of a princely house, more ancient still than that of Loewenstein, is vainly attempting to clear himself of the degrading

charge of perjury. Philip von Eulenburg-Karl zu Loewenstein—what a contrast! Both are men of the highest rank, standing almost on the topmost rung of the social ladder. Both had great wealth at their command, and both wielded great influence over their fellow-men. And yet how different are their dispositions, their conceptions of life and their destinies!

The one, in spite of his brilliant talents, his high culture, his artistic tastes, his social gifts and his diplomatic adroitness, a man whose darker side can be viewed more clearly only with complete exclusion of the public, the other a true nobleman, a knight, "sans peur et sans reproche," whose escutcheon bears untarnished the proud device: "Fuer Wahrheit, Freiheit und Recht;" a man of noble mind, of pure morals, of unflinching courage of conviction, who, after a long life spent in the most unselfish service of his country and of his Church, voluntarily steps off the stage of public life to live henceforth, forgotten of the world, for God alone.

The one, although he exercised for decades of years an uncanny influence on domestic and foreign politics, could control himself so little that he finds himself face to face with the criminal judge; the other exchanges the prince's ermine, which he had worn in all honor before the world, for the humble habit and cowl of the friar. The one boasts of having been the champion of "Protestant empire idea" at the courts of Catholic sovereigns, and of having earned for his pains the hatred of clericalism and ultramontanism; the other has always and everywhere "given unto God that which is God's," and unto Caesar that which is Caesar's. Wherefore he is honored by all men of noble mind, Protestants as well as Catholics, and their admiration follows him into the solitude of the cloister.

The one, in his frantic efforts to save his honor as a "man of the world," and to keep the calumnies of his opponents and lay his misfortunes at their doors; the other, who has left the world to become in a stricter sense "a man of God," can look up to heaven and pray, "Forgive us our trespasses," because he can also in very truth, "as we forgive those who trespass against us."

A conclusion presses itself upon us; if culture is the ennobling of man, then we have in the prince in the quiet Dominican cell its true image and likeness; in the prisoner prince of the Charite in Berlin its caricature.

How explain this contrast? We have no right to judge any man; God alone searcheth the heart. One thing is certain; whoever takes his religion seriously and practices it manfully may perhaps find himself in his old age at the door of a monastery, but hardly at the gate of a penitentiary.

THE DUSSELDORF CONGRESS. Speaking of Prince Loewenstein naturally reminds us of the fifty-fifth Catholic convention, which meets at Dusseldorf, the Munich of the Rhine-land, from August 16 to 20. It promises to be a most interesting one. The convention hall, superbly situated on the right bank of the Rhine, is the largest ever constructed by the Catholics of Germany. It measures nearly 300 feet in length and 140 feet in width, and has a seating capacity of over twelve thousand. It is built in the later Byzantine style, and the grand central tower and the eight flanking minarets, when illuminated as proposed, will present a fairly fine aspect. The workmen's parade will equal, if not exceed, the monster demonstration at Essen in 1906. Over fifty thousand men are already scheduled to take part.

The golden jubilee of the Holy Father, according to a published resolution of the central committee, will be the keynote of the whole celebration. Of course, ample provision has been made, just as in former years, for the adequate discussion of the burning social and religious questions of the day. The Catholic inhabitants of the Dusseldorf (two-thirds of the population) hope to realize a long-cherished project of erecting a new cathedral, the majority from the City Council, by means of the wholesale shaking up of convention will give to the indifferent or free and easy-going Catholics.

Speaking of the good results effected by these monster manifestations of Catholic life and faith, a well-known writer of Cologne recently said to the attendees at the Katholikentag does me more good than a week's retreat.—Catholic Standard and Times.

BULL AGAINST THE COMET.

OBJECTS TO PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN'S CRITICISM.

Writing in the Sacred Heart Review the Rev. Dr. Starbuck says: Of all singular remarks concerning the Church of Rome made by President A. D. White, and which I learn principally from Father Campbell, S. J., and Dr. Walsh, through the Messenger, and also from the Ambassador himself, through the Atlantic Monthly, it seems to me that there is nothing quite so surprising as his contemptuous rejection of Dr. Pastor's testimony that there is no record of any Papal edict which can be interpreted as even distantly resembling a "bull" against a comet.

Dr. White's mere contradiction of Pastor signifies little since the latter has found a document which Pastor had failed to notice, the Papal archives being exceedingly voluminous, and having probably, in the course of ages, fallen more or less out of chronological order.

The extraordinary point in White's rejection as quoted in the Messenger is the assumption that a Roman Catholic

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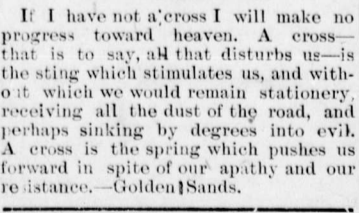
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historical scholar, no matter how high a standing and character—and we know that there is none now living, who stands above Pastor—would not dare to state the truth about an external, contingent fact, a public and official declaration of the Church, verifiable from diplomatic archives, if he thought the statement might be disagreeable to the Holy See, lest a work of his should be suppressed by the Index; nay, that he would feel himself bound to make a positive affirmation contrary to the truth, for fear of such a condemnation. When Leo XIII. announced his intention to throw open the Vatican archives, with few reservations, to all the world, Dr. Leroy M. Vernon, predecessor of Chancellor Day at Syracuse, N. Y., and previously head of Methodist operations in Italy, signified with abject success that he did not believe that the Pope had any such intention, and that a too credulous Protestantism would find itself mortifyingly taken in by this hypocritical pretense.

Dr. Vernon did not live, I understand, to see the Pope honestly fulfill his frank declaration. Had he seen it carried out, we have little reason to suppose that it would have made much difference to him. He had higher titles and higher positions than the Lansings and the Christians, but in his preface to Lansing's book, whereby he voluntarily brings himself down to the level of this unhappy demagogue, he shows beyond question that he is completely possessed by Luther's avowed principle: Do not ever shrink from setting forth a good plump lie if it will advantage the Protestant cause. Never retract a calumny against an active Papist, for the very fact that he is such a Papist turns a calumny into a truth. Being ipso facto a child of the devil, he has always done the thing you allege, or something else exactly equivalent. What difference does it make if I say a man has stolen two double eagles and it turns out that he has stolen four single eagles? Does this unessential difference of fact make me a slanderer against him? The law takes no account of trifles.

If I have not across I will make no progress toward heaven. A cross—that is to say, all that disturbs us—is the sting which stimulates us, and without it which we would remain stationary, receiving all the dust of the road, and perhaps sinking by degrees into evil. A cross is the spring which pushes us forward in spite of our apathy and our resistance.—GoldenSands.



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