

AN EASTER SERMON.

Timely Words From His Excellency Mgr. Satolli.

THE SAVIOUR'S MESSAGE.

This Easter week, after nineteen centuries, humanity is moved once more and feels the profound impression of the death of the man-God expiring in sorrow and pity. Our affections are once more stirred up, and perhaps all men in their inner consciousness hear the voice of Christ suffering for all and saying to all: "Come unto Me and I will refresh you."

All conditions of human life are reduced to these heads—crime and punishment, impiety and expiation, vice and virtue. And these conditions are found represented in their full evidence in the course of the passion and death of Christ.

The most solemn moment of life is that nearest death. The last desire expressed by the dying has often decided the fate not only of a family, but of great nations. The Jews recalled always the last wishes of their patriarchs, and were guided by the last will of David regarding the succession to the throne. The Greeks were directed by the last instructions of Alexander, which decided the future of all Greece and Asia. With the Romans the authority was supreme of the last will of Augustus and of Constantine. It was fitting that Christ also on the cross should express His dying wish, and he did so in the compendium of seven words, which comprise His whole mission, His teaching, His lofty plan for the betterment, not of one nation, but of all humanity.

CHRIST TO THE PEOPLE.

First—Christ saw from the cross the human race in a state of profound corruption and declared that He intended to lift it out of its misery by means of repentance and pardon. He recognized the inextinguishable thirst for happiness vainly sought up to that time in a precarious materialism, and promised to humanity its true kingdom with the everlasting fullness of every joy.

Second—He viewed the urgent necessity of nature by which man needs social life, both to defend himself from evil and to make more easy the acquirement of good. He called to Himself from the tree of the cross not only individuals, but families, races and nations, each and every one; and, moreover, He intended to constitute above all nations and of all nations one society, not indeed political, but religious. And this He declared when He gave His own Mother to be the Mother of all men.

Third—Without doubt human perfection is the outcome of two activities, which are free will and grace; that is, an activity proper to man's nature and the co-operating activity of God. Christ in His fourth and fifth words indicated the natural activity of man to be thirst of justice, and promised the co-operation of God, which should never abandon to his own helplessness the man of good will.

Fourth—Certainly the most important thing in man's life is to find the right road, to fulfil his vocation to his true destiny assigned him by Providence. Happy those who can justly claim to have accomplished their task and can say with St. Paul, "I have run the race." The immortality of glory shall be the abundant reward given them by God. Christ in the last of his dying words with stronger voice signified that through Him and in Him only should humanity find the attainment of its true destiny, and He strengthened our faith and reposed it in the bosom of God, there to expect its never-ending reward.

HOUSKAW AND CHRIST.

The expression of the unbeliever Rousseau has become celebrated, in which, comparing the death of Socrates with that of Christ, he said: "The death of Socrates was that of a philosopher; the death of Christ that of a God." Indeed, there have not been lacking wise and profound thinkers who, studying the circumstances of the passion and death of Christ, have succeeded in demonstrating His divinity from them; and it would appear that He Himself intended to show Himself both man and God by His death on the Cross, for He had predicted that when He should be crucified He would draw all humanity to Himself: "And I, when I shall be lifted up, will draw all things to Myself."

The historical stages of humanity, from its beginning to its end, are three. Its history begins with its fall, has its middle point in the commencement of its restoration and will find its completion in the entire and perfect fulfilling of the providential designs of God concerning humanity and the whole universe. Christ in His suffering humanity united the beginning and the continuation of all the miseries and wretchedness of mankind. By the personal union of the human with divine nature He constituted in Himself the inexhaustible source of reparation, and in those wonderful endowments of infinite wisdom and love which the Divinity transfused into the humanity of Christ He prefigured in Himself the final destiny of the human race—the destiny marked out for it in the hidden design of God which unfolds itself in the progress of history, and which, in compendium, is explained in those sublime words: "For so God hath loved the world that He hath given His only begotten Son, that every one who believeth in Him shall not perish, but shall have life everlasting."

THE NEED OF WORSHIP.

Humanity has need of worship and of laws. Worship is needed in its relations with the Divinity and with the supreme principles of its being; laws are indispensable for its social existence. Christ on the cross has established worship "in spirit and in truth," has completed and set the seal upon His legislation of justice and charity.

What there was of the true and the good before Christ was only a preparation and a figurative symbol of Him and of His mission in the world fulfilled on the cross. Indeed, His own life, with its miracles and teaching, was the continuous development of a plan, beginning at Bethlehem and ending on Calvary, where He fixed His throne, His cathedral and His altar. From the moment of Christ's death nothing was left for humanity but the evolution and the application of the work accomplished by Him on the cross.

Religion and politics, philosophy and theology, science and art, faith and reason may justly be considered as concentric circles with respect to Christ, who was the mystic stone fallen from heaven into the ocean of the natural and moral universe, to agitate its waters around Himself, to set them in regular motion animated by His Spirit. Therefore St. Paul said that of all knowledge, human and divine, it was sufficient for him "to know Christ and Christ crucified," since in Him he found all the treasures of science and wisdom.

Rev. J. M. Cruise has been appointed pastor of St. Helen's, Brockton, and Rev. W. Bergin, pastor of Weston and Toronto Junction.

The Archbishop of Kingston and the Bishops within the Archdioceses of Toronto and Kingston were the guests of His Grace Archbishop Walsh for a few days recently, engaged in conference respecting educational and religious matters of their Province.

A JAPAN HORROR.

Kumamoto Leper Mission.

THE SICK AND DYING.

Close by Kumamoto, there is a hamlet called Honmioji, from the name of a pagoda, much frequented by pious Buddhists. This pagoda is also the rendezvous of all kinds of sick, especially of lepers and the syphilitic, who gather hither from all parts of the Empire. The greater part of those wretched creatures are outcasts forever from their families, to whom they have caused dishonor and ruin. As the people of Kumamoto are very tolerant in their regard, many end by establishing themselves for good in the hamlet, where they form one of the most pitiable collections of beings to be seen in the whole world.

The state of these wretches is really terrible. They are piled one on top of the other in miserable hovels belonging to other poor people, to whom they pay about a fifth or two-fifths of a cent each, daily, for their lodging. In general, they have only one garment, but what a garment! I have seen in one of these wretched holes a poor mother who had no feet, scarcely any hands, and no other clothing than an old piece of rag which scarcely covered half of her shoulders. With her little naked baby she strove to cover the rest of her person.

Those who can still walk, go about the city and the country begging. The more skilful succeed on good days in getting as much as three or four cents. If they have not gone too far, they return in the evening to Honmioji and sleep in the hovels just described. Some go a great distance and do not return for days or weeks. The villagers treat them with considerable humanity, but they cannot get a lodging anywhere; they have to sleep in the vestibule of a temple, in a corner of a field, or in the forest on the naked earth, or on a plank of wood.

To cook the few handfuls of rice which they have begged, they carry a little saucepan, worth about four or five cents, and prepare their poor meal far away from dwelling houses, wherever they can find a bit of dry wood to make a fire. Those who cannot walk, get themselves carried or drag themselves to the wide avenue or the steps leading to the pagoda, where, from morning to night they implore the charity of pilgrims and passers by. The maximum of their daily receipts is said to be from two to three cents. But often enough, through fewness of visitors or other causes, they get only a few centimes, while others get nothing, and many of these remain two or three days without eating.

As said above, they sleep in huts or common sheds. But when their disease reaches a certain stage, they exhale such an odor that they become insupportable to their neighbors, and then they are expelled. From this moment they no longer appear with the rest, they sleep outside abandoned by all, without mat or cover, exposed to wind and rain, weeping, groaning, sighing for death, which generally is not slow in coming. Then nothing is left but to bury them. Four or five of their companions dig a pit. An old barrel is bought, the corpse is thrown into it, and the whole deposited in the ground, without priest or ceremonies. A burial costs eighteen or twenty cents. But where is the money to come from? As I have said, some of them have a little saucepan; this is sold. Each has also a rag of clothing; of course this cannot be left in the bier, so it is sold too, and may fetch eight or ten cents. Then, there are, beside the hovels, dung heaps, which are regularly sold to poor farmers of the neighborhood as manure,

and the produce serves to complete the cost of the funeral.

Some time ago I was desirous to ascertain the history of a certain number of these wretched inhabitants of Honmioji. Here are some of the details I obtained:

1. Furuya Ukichi, of the province of Nagato, aged 28; a leper. Has three brothers, all very wretched, who are unable to keep him. Has been at Honmioji for two years. Came from home penniless, begging on the way. If he gets better, says he will return home. Adds that he has never seen anybody cured since he came. Says that he suffers very much in body and that "his soul is very sad." Whilst speaking big tears roll down his cheeks, which were all eaten away with leprosy.

2. Uyeda Masuzo, province of Iyo, aged 84. Has had leprosy since he was 21, and has been three years blind. Efforts were made to cure him at home, and his parents have spent upon him about \$200, constituting their all.

3. Ayuwara Otohe, of the same province, 18 years old; of poor family, who are quite unable to attend to him. Has had leprosy only two years, but is already frightfully disfigured.

4. Fukuzawa Kanekichi, of Sagami province, 28. Eldest of a poor family, whose support he has been. Has been a leper three years. Thinks only of his parents and wonders what they now do to live. Sleeps in the woods, on the bare earth, or on a stone.

5. Chikuba Teru, town of Shimabara, a girl of 23, has had leprosy three years. Says her people were comfortably off, but have spent all on trying to get her cured.

6. Kato Matazo, province of Tajima, 30. Has only his mother, who brought him herself to Honmioji. As he can't walk, she goes about begging for him.

7. Nakamura Nami, of district of Akita, in Higo, girl of 29. Has had leprosy since she was 15; has no relations.

8. Tanaka Rihe, province of Sanuki, 33. Has had leprosy for six years. Nobody can remain near him on account of offensive odor, so he sleeps in the open air. Cannot walk; often has nothing to eat. Appears to long to die.

9. Mikoda Ukichi, of Chikugo province, 25. Has had leprosy since age of 22. Can walk a little, but cannot go beyond precincts of pagoda, begs alms from pilgrims, eats when he can, and sleeps outside.

In conclusion. We must try to save at least the souls of these unfortunate pagans, who have our own nature, the nature which belongs also to Christ and his Mother, who are blessed in all ages! But to save their souls, we must begin with their bodies. An hospital is necessary. To found it will require from \$7,000 to \$8,000; and to keep it up, abundant resources yearly. Catechist nurses are also needed to go into hospitals and private houses so as to visit and nurse the sick, instruct and baptize them. Each one will cost some \$60 a year, besides alms to distribute to the most necessitous.

Reader, I recommend to your charity our poor pagans, sick and dying. He Who has promised to reward a cup of cold water, will repay whatever you do for them. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Agonizing Heart of Jesus, have pity on the dying! Mary, health of the sick and comfort of the afflicted, pray for us, pray for the sick and dying pagans! Amen.

Letters reach me direct at the address:—Rev. J. M. Corre, Missionary Apostolic, Kumamoto, Japan, and Money-Orders may be sent by post, or to Father Hignard, Director of the Foreign Missions, 128 Rue du Bac, Paris; or to the Father Treasurer, St. John's Seminary, Brighton, Boston, Mass., U.S.A.