

FIVE-MINUTE'S SERMON.

Sixth Sunday After Epiphany.

HOW TO USE GRACE.

In the Gospel of to-day the kingdom of heaven is likened to a mustard seed. The mustard seed is compared with the size of the tree which springs from it, the least of seeds. Our Lord does not mean to say, of course, that there are no larger trees even in those places where it attains its greatest size. Neither does He say that the mustard seed is the very smallest of all seeds. What He does say is that between the seed and the tree which springs from it there is the greatest of differences; that the effect is very great and very startling when compared with its cause. This is the point of the parable, and a little reflection will make it clear how true it is, whether our Lord is speaking of the kingdom of God without us—that is, the Church; or of the kingdom of God within us—that is, the life of grace in our own souls.

In our times we see the Church of God spread throughout the whole world numbering her children by hundreds of millions. History tells us of the hundreds of years she has lived, of the nations she has converted, of the men and women who have been her nursing fathers and her nursing mothers. Nations have come and gone, but the Church remains. They have grown and become great and mighty, but she has outgrown and outstripped them all, and the mightiest of them have formed but a part of her kingdom. And from what did she spring? Whence did she take her origin? From the eyes of men, the smallest and most insignificant of causes. Go to the manger at Bethlehem, to the holy house at Nazareth, to the cross and Calvary, to the upper room in which twelve poor men were gathered together. Here we shall see the source and spring; here the seed from which the mighty tree has grown.

In this way our Lord's words of the Church have been verified. But what shall we say of the power of grace within us? In Holy Baptism the grace of God was planted in our soul as a seed to grow and fructify. The habits of faith, hope, and charity were then given to us. But as time went on, and as we grew up the power of the passions increased, the assaults of our enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, grew fiercer. Has the good seed planted in our soul survived the storms and held its own in the conflict and strife? The answer to this question depends upon our own selves, upon our own conduct. God, who began the good work in us, will most certainly carry it to perfection, if we are willing to do the part which He has given us to do. He has planted the seed. He is ready to water it with His grace, to foster it with the fire of His love. But we must co-operate.

And first we must pray. It is not enough to say a few prayers in a cold, mechanical way; we must in times of need, in times of temptation, lift up our hearts to God and send forth earnest petitions for strength and help. And next we must make use of the means which He Himself has instituted—His holy Sacraments; especially must we receive the most precious Body and Blood of our Lord, for there we shall always find grace and help more than sufficient. And lastly, we must not tempt God by rashly running into danger; but knowing our own weakness, we must avoid with the greatest care the occasions of sin.

If we are in this way faithful to work with God, the seed planted by His grace will live and grow into a mighty tree, and the kingdom of God within us will in its degree be like the kingdom of God without us, the reign of grace in our own souls will be like God's kingdom in the world—the Church.

A New Congregation at Rome.

The important announcement is made that the Holy Father has established a new Congregation in Rome, whose duty it shall be to treat all questions having reference to the reunion of Christendom. The Congregation is a permanent one, its membership including Cardinals and Patriarchs of both the Eastern and Western Churches. This announcement will be of the greatest interest not only to Catholics, but to multitudes outside the Church. It is the culmination of the Papal policy reiterated in the encyclicals to the Orient and to England; and it establishes a strong probability that the course, at once aggressive and conciliating, of the Holy Father will be continued by his successors. The vigorous "Motu Proprio," in which the new Congregation is proclaimed, hints that it will have abundant work to do. Most accessories to the administration of Leo XIII. have—Ave Maria.

Your Present Need

is pure, rich blood, and a strong and healthy body, because with the approach of spring and the beginning of warmer weather your physical system will undergo radical changes. All the impurities which have accumulated during colder weather must now be expelled, or serious consequences will result. The one true blood purifier prominently in the public eye to-day is Hood's Sarsaparilla. Its record of cures is unequalled. Its sales are the largest in the world. A few bottles of Hood's Sarsaparilla will prepare you for spring by purifying and enriching your blood and toning and invigorating your whole system.

The Coughing and wheezing of persons troubled with bronchitis or asthma is extremely harassing to themselves and annoying to others. Dr. THOMAS' ELECTRIC OIL obviates all this entirely, safely and speedily, and is a benign remedy for laryngitis, sore, injuries, piles, kidney and spinal troubles.

Rheumatism is caused by lactic acid in the blood. Hood's Sarsaparilla neutralizes the acid and cures rheumatism.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

Don't let Mother do it.

Daughter, don't let mother do it! Do not let her slave and toil, While you sit a useless idler, Fearing your soft hand to soil, Don't you see the heavy burdens, Daily she is wont to bear, Bring the lines upon her forehead, Sprinkle silver in her hair?

Daughter, don't let mother do it! Do not let her bake and broil Through the long, dull winter hours, Share with her the heavy toil, See her eyes has lost its brightness, Faded from her cheek the glow, And the step that once was buoyant Now is feeble, tired and slow.

Daughter, don't let mother do it, She has cared for you so long; Is it right the weak and feeble? Should be toiling for the strong? Waking from your listless languor, Seek her side to cheer and bless, And your grief will be less bitter When the soles above her press.

Daughter, don't let mother do it; You will never, never know What were home without a mother 'Till that mother lieth low— Low beneath the burdened daisies, Free from care and earthly pain; To the home so sad without her, Never to return again.

Acting From Inclination.

With many persons inclination is stronger than duty, says a writer in the *Catholic Columbian*. If they are tired, they insist on resting their body before going on with the work that occupies them, no matter how urgent it may be. If they are drowsy, they shorten their night prayers. If they do not like their pastor generally, they will not assist at the parochial Mass, so that they may escape his sermons. To the other members of their family whom they love they are good-natured, but to those relatives for whom they have no natural affection, they are rude.

Speaking of her own girlhood, Mother Francis Raphael, O. S. D., says that her worst defect of character was her habitual disposition to follow inclination. "I studied what I liked," so she told an intimate friend in confidence, "and the lesson I disliked was always neglected. No one ever had a fault to find with me when geography, history or poetry made up the day's lessons; but black Wednesday came with English grammar and arithmetic, and then I was invariably in disgrace. It was the same with everything—I habitually followed inclination and could not resist, and this begot a fatal weakness of will."

She is not alone in that weakness, for hundreds of thousands of other women, and myriads of men, cannot conquer themselves. Their appetites rule their intellect. Their body is more powerful than their mind, and the lower part of their soul dominates over the nobler element. They cannot bear pain. They shrink to capitulate to any temptation that brings with it gratification.

A Little Hero.

I want to tell you about my little hero.

His name is Jo. He is only ten years old. You wonder, perhaps, how one so young can lay any claim to the title I have given him. Have you not thought that the world has many heroes it knows nothing of—unknown heroes who fight silent battles and win unheralded victories?

I am Jo's father. To me he is one of the best and dearest lads in all the world. One reason why I love him so well is because he is so brave. By that I do not mean that he is brave in the face of physical danger, but that he is not afraid to face a temptation or a trial. Boys have temptations and trials the same as men have, and a boy has often as hard a battle to fight as his father does. If he conquers I call him a hero.

Well, yesterday, I heard some of the boys planning mischief. They were anticipating what boys call a "good time." "We must have Jo along," they said. "Jo is such a jolly fellow that we can't get along without him." Then, they talked the matter over. "Then, they talked the matter over, and I wondered, as I listened, if my boy would be willing to join them in wrong-doing. I hoped not."

Pretty soon he came. "Oh here's Jo," the boys cried. "Hello, Jo! You're the very fellow we've been waiting to see. We've got the jolliest thing all planned out. You'll go in for fun, won't you?"

"I'm ready for fun," Jo answered, "if it's the right kind of fun. Tell me what you're going to do?"

They told him. I saw that he looked grave as he listened. I could read his face like a book. "I could see that he was fighting a battle," he wanted to go with the boys, but he felt that what they proposed to do was wrong.

"Well, you'll go with us, won't you?" they asked, when they had explained what they were going to do. "No," answered Jo, suddenly, as if he had made up his mind all at once. "No, I can't go with you."

"Why not?" they asked. "There isn't anything to be afraid of." "Yes, there is," said Jo. "I won't do what you want me to, because it wouldn't be right. I'm afraid to do anything that I know to be wrong."

Can you think how glad I was to hear my boy say that? I thanked God that he was brave enough to stand up for the right, and coward enough to keep away from wrong. I wish we had more boys as cowardly as my Jo is.

Home Manners.

If people would only realize how very easy it is to teach children good manners when they are little, it seems to me they never would neglect to attend to it. The youngster is allowed to go his own way, to violate every rule of courtesy, sometimes of decency,

until his habits are to an extent formed. Then there is a great breaking up of established notions, and the child is punished and nagged and worried for doing that which it has hitherto been permitted to do without criticism.

It becomes angered, sullen, unsettled, and irritable, and if it has a strong sense of justice—which, by the way, is more common in children than people, as a rule, give them credit for—it feels outraged and abused, and becomes unmanageable and rebellious. The best school of manners for a child is the parent's example and home training.

Company manners are, by all odds, the worst element that ever entered into a family. Just why people should indulge themselves in all sorts of carelessness, indifference, and ill-bred habits when they are alone at home, and put on a veneer of courtesy, amiability, and polish when somebody comes, is one of the many mysteries of this very mysterious thing that we call life. How much easier it would be to maintain the steady, uniform deportment, to follow out the same theories and hold to the same principles Sundays and week-days, storm and sunshine, alone or in society. Veneers are a makeshift. They may have their uses, but are not less desirable than the solid material all through. One lasts for a little while, the other weathers the storms of time, hard usage, and the wear and tear of every day life. One is temporary and wears out with a little contact with the world, the other grows better with every passing year.

The earliest training of a child should be in strict conformation with the most approved society into which it is born. That which is known as Sunday manners or behavior should be the inflexible rule of the household.

One of the prettiest sights in the world was witnessed in a public hall the other day, when a boy of nine years stepped out in advance of his mother and older sister, opened the door, held it with one hand, and waited for them to pass through.

It put the blush on more than one mature cheek, and caused many a mother with growing children to wonder why it was that her boys never did anything of the sort. The simple reason was that in that household courtesy was enforced from the cradle. The boy never had been permitted to suppose that he could pass through a door and allow it to swing back into the face of his seniors.

At the age of nine years he could offer his mother his arm, escort her to the table, place her chair for her, pick up her fan, handkerchief, or gloves, and perform all the little polite acts of everyday existence with the dignity and grace of a courtier. To say that he was admired by every one would not be in the least exaggeration. In striking contrast was his conduct with the indifference, lounging, carelessness of most of the boys with whom he associated. But to attain this degree of ease and polish it is scarcely necessary to say that the strictest rules of good breeding were constantly observed in that family.

It may be said that such things take too much time and trouble, and that one's home is a place of relaxation and indulgence in one's personal peculiarities. While this may be so, the question would immediately arise just what habits and practices should be allowed, and whether under any circumstances, bad manners, loafing, and extreme carelessness, are to be tolerated. When once one is trained to good form, some of the most objectionable features of everyday indulgence become as distasteful as they were aforetime thought comfortable and most necessary. All of which goes to prove the truth of the old quotation: "How use doth work a habit in man."

The Degree on Anglican Orders.

Father Luke Rivington, speaking on the state of religious mind consequent on the Papal condemnation of Anglican orders, said that the Anglicans were passing through a very critical stage. "He felt that when all the bluster had blown over, when many persons had had their say, and when all this talk of indifference to the Pope's pronouncement had passed by, a great many people who spoke in this way would find they could not sleep, that they were still haunted by their difficulty; that when they heard their clergymen say, 'We are priests just as much as Roman Catholic priests are,' there would be felt a tickling of conscience, and that it was, after all, a serious matter when Rome had spoken so decisively. At this moment there was in the Church of England a great anxiety upon this question."

Moreover, the answers given to the letter were so absolutely irrelevant and unimportant, that if the laity could only be posted up a little better on this matter they would be able to remove doubts in the minds of many people who were wavering in their opinions. He therefore asked Catholic laymen to study it a little and to be ready to reply to Anglicans in their difficulties. "To meet this emergency the Catholic Truth Society of England is preparing and disseminating special literature dealing with the questions in the controversy. The Society will also devote its endeavors towards the big Non-conformist body of England. Thus the work goes along in every land. We need only an explanation of Catholic doctrines and numerous conversions will follow.—The Missionary.

Pale sickly children should use Mother Graves' Worm Expeller. Worms are one of the principal causes of suffering in children and should be expelled from the system.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

God keeps a school for His children here on earth; and one of His best teachers is named Disappointment. He is a rough teacher; severe in tone and harsh in His handling sometimes, but His tuition is worth all it costs. Many of our best lessons through life have been taught us by that stern old schoolmaster, Disappointment. In the things of the world choose the least; in the things of God choose the best.

Home Influence.

Our home influence is not a passing, but an abiding one; and all powerful for good or evil, for peace or strife, for happiness or misery. Each separate Christian home has been likened to a central sun, around which revolves a happy and united band of warm, loving hearts, acting, thinking, rejoicing, and sorrowing together. Which member of the family group can say, "I have no influence?" What sorrow, or what happiness, lies in the power of each?

Our Brother's Keeper.

We need not draw on the distant centuries to find examples of our responsibility for other's sins in our failing to interfere to prevent sin. To-day wickedness riots in consequence of our silence or our inaction. To-day lives are sad, because we fail to speak. To-day wrong and evil are powerful, because we fold our hands and close our lips. The tempted are yielding, because we stand by the tempter. The pure are tried, because we offer no sympathy. Lives are broken, because we slay not the destroyer. Lives are lonely, because we show no friendship. "It's none of my business," we say; "he is his own man!" It is your business to do all the good you can to everybody, for, indeed, you are your brother's keeper.

First and Last.

Little do we know what peculiar circumstances may surround us in life. There are times when the last shall be first, and the first last, as witness the following:

"At a recent sale of the Lincoln relics in Philadelphia, one of the most interesting 'relics' was the autograph copy of Lincoln's bill for legal services for the Illinois Central Railroad Company. The bill was for \$5,000, and six members of the Illinois bar certified that the amount was not unreasonable. Another relic was a check for \$250, given to Lincoln at another time by the same company as a retainer. If successful, he would receive a \$1,000 fee. Mr. Lincoln would not sue the Supreme Court, and presented his bill for the balance. The president of the company was absent when Lincoln called, so the latter was referred to the superintendent, who refused to pay the account, remarking, 'This is as much as a first class lawyer would charge.' The superintendent was General George B. McClellan."

Hope on, Hope Ever.

The great orator, the great painter, the great poet, the great statesman—all are children of Hope. It was Hope that hung the lantern upon the ship of Columbus; it was Hope that brought Milton tidings of Paradise; it was Hope that waved the torch before Bacon as he descended into the dark laboratory of Nature; it was Hope that supported the steps of Newton when he wandered into the dim solitude of unknown worlds; it was Hope that scattered the Persian chivalry before the eloquence of Demosthenes; it was Hope that sprinkled the purple hues of summer over the canvas of Titian, and breathed the solemn repose of heaven over the divine heads of Raphael. But Hope has a yet holier signification. One who is happy in the home of the good man, indeed, that angel is never absent; in the darkness of winter and in the bloom of spring it is alike present to cheer, to comfort and to exhort.—Bentley.

Make a Library.

Do not wait a minute. Pick out what books are yours and call them a library. Fix a place for them, a bookcase, a few shelves, a what-not—anything you can get. Place the books upon it in a way to make them look as well as possible. Number them; have your name, printed or pen-written, in the upper left-hand corner of the inside cover; this latter precaution has brought into port a great many books that otherwise would still be adrift on borrowing seas. Don't lose your pamphlets and paper-covered books; if you dislike to incur the expense just now of regular binding, put them up neatly yourself in paste-board lids, cover with leatherette, print title on the back with pen or type-writer and enjoy them permanently as a part of your library.

The Three Ways of Living.

Every boy born into the world should be put in the way of independence. There are but three ways of

living . . . by working, by begging, or by stealing. Every productive occupation which adds anything to the capital of mankind, if followed assiduously with a desire to understand everything connected with it, is an ascending stair, whose summit is nowhere, and from the ascending steps of which the horizon of knowledge perpetually enlarges.

Friendship.

Too late we learn—a man must hold his friend unjudged, accepted, trusted to the end.—John Boyle O'Reilly.

Carelessness is Kin to Shiftlessness.

Shiftlessness is as smoke to the nostrils of New Englanders of the old stock, and few words express such a down at the heel condition of good-for-nothing existence as that. It is the don't-work-before-breakfast kind, the go-to-the-ant-then-singard species. We saw its embodiment the other day slouching along the street—hands in pockets, too stupid to whistle—shoulders rounded, and not simply forward, but of the squashy kind of selfish rotundity of back, without stiffening (such men ought to wear corsets). His whiskers were uncombed and without form. He toed in—his boots, of course, were the pull-on kind and were unblackened. His hat was on crooked and unshaped. His vest had buttons off. One leg of his pants had caught on to the top of his boot, the other reached the ankle. The coat-collar was turned up at the back and the man wore no suspenders or necktie. How such drones get along is beyond our ken. They are too lazy to get mad and too stupid to think that a round berating is anything more than flattering attention. They lack all self respect. There is no holding together, no crispness, no well-knit frame, no muscle and sinew and nerve control. The gymnasium will do a great deal for a young man inclined this way, provided he can be made to work. A well-kept condition—trim, neat, firm and strong from shoes to hat—should be the care of every young man. Carelessness breeds shiftlessness, sloth, debts, vermin and moral decay.

Manners for Young Men.

"What is to be a gentleman? Is it to be honest, brave, gentle, generous, and wise, and possessing all these qualities to exercise them in the most graceful manner? Ought a gentleman to be a loyal son, a true husband and an honest father? Ought his life to be decent, his bills to be paid, his tastes to be high and elegant? Yes, a thousand times yes."

A young man should lose no opportunity, no matter how busy he is, to improve himself. There is a fine education in pictures and works of art. He should read and study in his leisure hours, and frequent the museum and picture galleries. He will thus have pleasant topics of conversation for his evening call, or at the dinner table. Every one needs all his social skill and agreeableness in society. It is the place where we exchange our mental gifts. A young man helping to do the work of the world can become one of the most agreeable of companions even without the accepted polish of society, if he brings a keen intelligence, refined taste, and a desire to be agreeable into the conventional world where etiquette reigns.

A young man's manners may be elegant and his accomplishments numerous without injuring his usefulness. To study manner, to make that enamel on solid gold which has made such Americans as Everett, Motley, Livingston, Bayard, McClellan, and Story cannot be a poor study. The men who have influenced their race have had fine manners.—Catholic Citizen.

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