## CONFESS YOUR SINS.

### A Powerful Sermon Translated from the Irish of Bishop Gallagher.

"In these lay a great multitude of sick, of lame, of withered, waiting for the moving of the water." (St. John c. 5, v. 3.)

This was a miraculous pool near the city of Jerusalem. What virtue and effect were in the waters thereof?

An angel from heaven came on a certain time of the day to trouble the water, and whosoever first stepped in after the motion of the water, was cured of whatsoever disease or infirmity afflicted him. (John v. 4.)

This pool is not unlike the divine sacrament of confession; because, as the water of the pool had no virtue unless an angel came to trouble it, so, in like manner, confession hath no effect unless an angel from God, that is, divine grace, doth come to disturb and excite the conscience of the sinner. And as the water of the pool would cure all the ailments of the body, so the miraculous fountain of confession heals the soul from whatever leprosy, malady or deadly disease it is subject to. "Confess, therefore, your sins one to another." (James v. 6.)

Among the number present at the pool at Jerusalem, we find that Jesus healed only one, who had been afflicted with a deadly infirmity for thirty-eight years; not that He was either unable or unwilling to heal all other sufferers who attended, but because they did not come determined to confess and forsake their sins. Do not similar circumstances frequently happen at the divine fountain of confession? We see thousands approaching daily the Sacrament, expecting to be healed of the infirmity of their souls; but they return with their ailments more dangerous than at first; and therefore our Lord saith, "the last state of that man is worse than the first." (Matt. xii, 45.) What is the reason of this, my brethren? Can it be that confession has not the same effect now, as in the primitive time of the Church? or that it has lost power when it is most necessary? Could it be possible that confession or penance was ever more necessary than at present? or that leprosy or sin was ever more prevalent? Was there ever a time when lies were more general, swearing more frequent, lust and debauchery more abominable, gluttony and drunkenness more fashionable, theft, fraud, and oppression of our poor neighbors more common among all classes of people than at present?

Ah, no, my brethren. But among the aged and infirm who were at the pool of Jerusalem, we see some lame, some blind, and others whose members were withered with disease; methinks they are an emblem or representation of the people who approach frequently to confession. Like the blind, because they do not behold their sins, because they do not search or examine their conscience. Like the lame, because they make a crooked confession; by hiding and concealing the diseases of their souls, and we see them coming without sorrow or remorse, and with hearts dry and withered, like the infirm people in the gospel. This, my brethren, is what leaves confession without fruit or benefit to so many—this is what causes the miraculous fountain of penance not to heal the wounds of our souls; and this is the matter of which I shall make my subject this day; I shall divide it into three parts.

1. Confession is rendered invalid when done without examination of the conscience.
2. It is rendered invalid when all mortal sins are not confessed.
3. It is rendered invalid when not made with sorrow and contrition of the heart.

First—As the body is subject to a thousand diseases that draw it to the grave, so the soul is subject to a thousand diseases that draw it to hell.—(Psalm xv.) There is a difference between the diseases of the body and those of the soul: each particular disease of the body has its particular cure; but for every ailment and infirmity of the soul, Jesus Christ has appointed the sacrament of confession alone as an antidote and remedy. This is a cure, I say, for the most dangerous infection, or the greatest crimes you can commit. Go to confession with a hearty sorrow for your sins, and with a determination to avoid them, and with the other dispositions, and you will obtain pardon and remission from God. You need not take my words for this, Christians, but believe in the words of Christ, in St. John, 20th chapter, where he promises the Church, by the Apostles, that "whatever sins they should remit on earth, he would remit them in heaven." (John, xx, 23.)

Then, as confession is so effectual an antidote against the poison of sin, it is an antidote so necessary to the soul, in a manner, that if a sinner would distribute his whole substance to the poor—if he would shed penitential tears of blood—if he would fast during his whole life—if he were praying until he would wear his tongue—this, and a thousand times as much as he could do, would be of no effect or benefit without confession, if it be in his power to make it. If you do not credit me in this, believe the holy doctrine of St. Augustine, who asserts that the sorrow of the heart is of no avail, unless accompanied by the acknowledgement of the mouth. If we were free from sin, the sacrament of penance would not be necessary, but as sins are as numerous as there are inhabitants on the earth, no one can say he is free from the obligations and duty of penance. It is true that many go to confession, but alas! few there are who profit by it. They are like the blind mentioned in the gospel, tarrying by the water in expectation of being healed, but cannot behold the well; they go on the pretence of confessing, but they do it only after a barren manner; they have but the appearance or shadow of confession. Oh, do not be deceived, sinners; confession of this kind doth not abolish sin, but increaseth it; it draweth not down God's love upon us, but His hatred; it maketh not our peace with Him; but increaseth His wrath; for as our creditors will not accept counterfeit money from us for payment, so God will not accept a tepid, counterfeit, false confession from us as an atonement for our sins. (Ter. 48.)

Why, then, is it not a lying confession he maketh who is addicted to drunkenness and intoxication, to lying and swearing, who giveth way to a thousand libidinous, obscene thoughts, and stops not to follow them in his actions; who keeps not his hand from immodest touches, nor his mouth from unchaste kisses; that a thought entereth not his heart, but concerning the world; who is inveterate, passionate and vindictive; who after a dissolute life of this kind, has been twelve months or more without going to confession? Is it possible for this man, in a momentary examination of conscience, to bring these enormous sins to his mind, or set them in order before his father confessor? Ah, no, no; if he takes no more time than this to search his conscience, he makes no other confession than a guilty confession; a confession without vigor, fruit or benefit.

He who goes to confession often, who sets a guard upon all his members, who strictly examines his heart each night, in order that he may repent of the sins he has committed that day, let him, after all this, set about the work of his conscience with caution, lest he should not cleanse it in a proper manner. Then what shall become of them that give liberty to their iniquities, who stop at no evil, or who never think of their sins until the moment they go to confession? Why, they often set down what they have not committed, and do not recollect half of what they have committed. They do not behold the huge mountains that lie on their consciences; they are like the blind mentioned in the gospel, seeking relief by the troubling of the water, and they often get at the fountain of grace, eternal damnation. Set a guard upon thy conscience, saith the holy St. Augustine. Do not leave a recess or corner without examination, not with tepidity or sloth, not with indolence or reluctance; look to every thought that has entered thy heart; to every evil word thy tongue has spoken; to every evil action thou has committed against God and thy neighbor. After discussing and settling them in order, shed them forth at the tribunal of confession; do not conceal any one sin through shame or confusion, for if you do your confession will be of no effect, but you will augment your sins, as I shall prove in the second part.

Second—Christian confession is a self-accusation the sinner makes to God, before a priest who has the power to give him absolution, or pardon of his guilt, and who has been authorized to hear confession. If your body were afflicted with a deadly wound or sickness, it is not the worst physician you would choose for healing thee; and surely you would not choose the most lukewarm physician for healing wounds of the soul, or one who has, perhaps, no authority or power from the Church to give you absolution; by this you would show that you love your body more than that noble pearl, your soul, or that you would be quite indifferent to your salvation.

If confession be an accusation we make of ourselves, why do we, instead of accusing, try to excuse ourselves? Why do we throw a veil of different color over the sin? Why do we not expose the wounds of our hearts to the physician of our souls, as we expect to be healed by him? We see a great many who are dissolute and wicked, when they approach the confessional have nothing to tell but slight or frivolous matters, and if you were to take their own word for it, it is not themselves who are culpable in the evil done, as they commonly lay their burden on some other persons. If they happen to swear it is but the provocation to anger, and their children or neighbors provoked them to do it; if they happened to stop long in the tavern, it was not for the sake of the drink, but for the sake of the company; if they injured their neighbors in reputation or property it was but slight. The same fate that happened the lame, who sat in expectation of their cure, and obtained it not, will happen to those people who come with lame confessions to the sacred tribunal. If they can by these apologies, blindfold the priest, they cannot blindfold the Sovereign Judge, who seeth not only the bad deed, but even the imost thoughts of their hearts.

The wolf, when he rushes upon the flock, commonly seizes a sheep by the throat, and cuts the tongue out of her immediately, lest she should make any bleating or noise that would alarm the shepherd, who would relieve her. In like manner does the merciless wolf, the devil, with many, especially young people, who go to confession, lest they should alarm Jesus Christ, the shepherd of their souls, with their tears and sighs. He seizes them by the throat,—he looks up their tongues in a manner, that they expose not their hearts; they conceal the faults of their souls; they lie to God, and not to man; and as God makes not a sudden example of them on the spot with sudden death, like Ananias and Saphira, for concealing part of the property they bestowed upon the Apostles, they shall get a death, a thousand times worse, which is eternal damnation. It is not one advantage alone this cursed wolf takes of man, but many. The shame that ought to attend him at committing so heinous a deed as sin, he steals from him; but as soon as he commits the sin, and is disposed to confess it to the priest, he doubly returns to him the shame; so that this sinner, who committed the bad deed without shame or confusion, when he would confess the same, he is ashamed to tell it to his physician; and unless he does, there is no possibility of his being healed.

O thou miserable sinner, open now thine eyes and behold the snares of this evil spirit; expel the poison with speed out of thine heart, or it will be the death of thy soul. Lay open, without omission, without excuse, the wounds of thy soul, but lay them open with contrition and sorrow, or they will be without remedy, as I shall endeavor to prove in the third place.

Third—Those who would offer a sacrifice to the Lord in the Old Law, as we read in the book of Leviticus, would slay a cow or an ox; they would clean the flesh in water, and after cutting it up in small pieces, would place it on the altar; the priest would put his hand over it, fix fire under it, and consume it. A sacrifice of this kind would make the people's peace with God, it would assuage His wrath, and withdraw His scourges from them. (Levi. i. 4.)

In like manner, let each sinner who is resolved to make his peace with God, make a sacrifice of his soul upon the altar of confession; let him first extirpate from it the filthy scum, and the old withered skin of sin; let him wash it clean with heavy tears of penance; let him cut it into small pieces with contrition and heart-rending sorrow for having offended God; and as the priest raises his hand over him at saying these words, *Ego te absolve* (I absolve thee thee) the eternal Father will make his peace with him. Thus confession will free him from the heavy vengeance that hung over his head—it will quench the burning flames of hell that were prepared for him—it will kindle the fire of grace in his heart—it will cleanse his soul, that was so black and odious, and make it pure and bright. A person may have this hearty sorrow that is necessary in two ways: the first when he shows his remorse and sorrow externally by tears and sighs. The second when it grieves him to the heart to have committed sin, though he shows it not externally. The first sorrow is to be highly commended, and is not meritorious, but it is not necessary because it is not every man who can shed tears when he would; but the second, which is a hearty sorrow is so necessary in the sacrament of confession, that unless it be accompanied by a hearty sorrow and remorse, it would be no other than a vain confession, a confession that would prove without fruit or benefit.

Ah, my brethren, how few of you come now to confession with a sincere sorrow! How many of you imitate the infirm at the pool, who come to render your account with a heart dry and withered. How many of you go to confession without solicitude or anxiety, as if you were going to your temporary business, You imagine, if you have told your sins, all is well, as for contrition, or a hearty sorrow, there is no such thing, which is easily known by the non-amendment of your lives after confession, and your sudden relapses into the sins of which you were before guilty.

Do we not see the swearer as addicted to this sin after confession as before? Do we not see the lascivious as inclined to this vice after confession as before? Do we not see the defrauders and thieves as bent upon depriving their neighbors of their property after confession as before? What must be the reason of this, my brethren? Oh, it is the want of real sorrow in their heart. If they had a real abhorrence of the sin, there would be no dread of their immediate relapses.

What will become of those who thus dishonor confession, who go on the pretense of performing it, without the proper disposition, true sorrow; or what will become of those who often promise God in their confessions to abandon sin, and to amend their lives? Oh, how this sacrament, which Jesus Christ instituted to be the life of their souls, is changed to a deadly poison! God holds out His patience with them for a time, as the royal prophet says, but He brings them to account at last. (Psalm lxxxviii, 16.) As if He would say, Those who lie now to Me, and promise to amend their lives and do not do it, I shall suffer with them for a time; I will let them proceed in their iniquities; but the time cometh when I shall cast them into a dark, dismal prison, where they shall have no other company than devils—where their ears will hear nothing but blasphemies—where their food shall be no other than fire, sulpher and serpent—where their drink will be none other than gall, wormwood, and everything most bitter, where fire will be consuming them, racks tearing them, devils tormenting them, serpents gnawing them; and all that without intermission or relief, whilst God is in His glory. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." (Matt. v. 41.)

Oh, Christians, who have had the misfortune to fall into the infection of sin, do not slumber any longer over the wounds of your souls; repair with speed to the fountain of grace—confession—where you shall find health against every contagion and infirmity. Do not say, like the poor mentioned in the gospel, that you have no one to put you into the well. (John v. 7.) Here is Jesus Christ on the cross, His arms extended to receive you as soon as you will return to Him. Here is the angel of God, the Church, ready to move the water for you. Come then with hope and confidence; but come with a hearty sorrow and contrition—confess your sins without excuse or omission, and you will obtain from God a store of healing grace in this life, and eternal glory in the next. Amen.

## KING ROBERT BRUCE.

By Very Rev. Æneas McDonald Dawson, V. G., LL D., etc.

THE ARGUMENT.

*Insignem pictate virum tot adire labores.* —VIRGIL.

Bruce arrives in Kintyre—at the cottage of a crofter—repairs to the Castle of the Island Prince—hears of the victories, betrayal and cruel murder of Sir William Wallace; all Scotland roused—Bruce raises an army of thirty thousand men—advances towards Stirling—comes in sight of the English army, one hundred thousand strong—resolves to attack—Bannockburn—Bruce rewards his Barons, the Island Prince, and the crofter of Kintyre.

"On these wild and rugged shores sorock-bound
Safety with grateful peace at length is found.
But what fortunate chances are there now
To pluck my stolen Royalty from Edward's brow?
Few they are; yet on my own Carrick shore
Are loyal men; in Mona's isle some more
And Arran's mountains; brave men leal and true
O'er Scotland all glad would the fight renew,
Tyrants and hated foreigners drive far
By noble feats of a successful war.
With such bright hopes I chase my cares away
Pleased if in some lone cottage I could stay.
Lo! such at hand! sweet welcome I may find.
I'll enter in. The host is passing kind."
"You're welcome, stranger; and you'll liberal share
In this our home, our hard won scanty fare.
Wasted with care you look; much toil you've borne
As if an Exile from your country torn
All lonely, sadly desolate, forlorn."
"Forlorn, indeed, but what those towers afar?
Some fortress held for fierce King Edward's war?"
"Not so; though it incredible appears,
Our Prince's home for twice five hundred years
Those walls. Still firm holds he independence
A brave and loyal People his defence."
"By your kind care I'm well refreshed, good friend.
To your Chief's mansion now by steps I'll bend.
If ever prosperous days to me return,
And you appear, my thoughts to thee I'll turn,
And joy to see you at my much loved home,
Remembering well whence and to whom you come;
But ere I leave tell me your chief's desire."
"No use to wish. However we aspire
Stern fate appoints with power the only way
Our lot be cast, nor suffer us to stay."
"Speak out your wish, meanwhile. If it bring no gain
No loss it is your will not to obtain."
"Since you insist, and only friendship show,
It's surely meet that such a friend should know;
I fain would own the land I cultivate,
And so the Laird be of a poor Estate."
"Adieu! my friend! I leave you on your land
In care of Him who loveth poor and grand."
Both stronghold and pleasant mansion, far famed,
Was Donald's home. Dunavertie 'twas named.
Therein security with needed rest
King Robert found, so long with toil opprest.
Much converse held they on affairs of State,
Bewailing sore their Scotia's hard fate.
With rare delight of deeds by Wallace done
They often heard, and battles bravely won:
How oft beneath his conquering sword lay low
The best and bravest, noblest of the foe.
But oh! Sad turn of fate! A traitor knave
Betrays our Wallace, long so strong and brave.
No mercy shown; no generous friend to light
His pain; no enemy that knew his might
To pity him when down; but to the knife
He's given of murderous men he quelled in strife.
Still here, at least, loved liberty prevails
'Gainst arms and darkest treason. Nought avails
Proud Edward's hosts o'er this our land to spread.
Most hopeful augury! May yet be free
Fair Scotland all, since here is Liberty
So vast a land throughout, and Islands all
That ne'er will basely own King Edward's thrall,
O'erthrown our Wallace, bravest of the brave,
And doomed to fill a patriot martyr's grave,
Was roused all warlike Scotland's bitter pain.
The watchword "Scotland wronged and Wallace slain,"
Wide o'er the injured lands loud warning gave,
From Solway to the far off Northern wave,
And warriors rose all burning for the fight,—
Brave Barons, Knights and Lords of greatest might.
The Standard Royal floats upon the breeze.
Anxious each man the favoring chance to seize
For Liberty and vengeance on the foe,
Hastening the Regions all their force to show.
Thus Scotia's stalwart sons, in war array,
Come hurrying fast a hopeful war to wage,
And England's powers for Scotland's wrongs engage;—
The men of Lanark, hardy, brave and true,
With those of Teviotdale, so fair to view;
Of Ettrick wild each stern and valiant son.
They of the north were not to be outdone;
And Scotchmen all from Solway's rushing wave
To Northern Isles afar their pledges gave,
The Power usurping fiercely to engage,
And never cease the Patriot war to wage,
Till once more conquering Scotland shall be free,
Her Lion Flag aloft from sea to sea.
England, meanwhile, sends forth her veteran Power
To save from Scotland's siege old Stirling's Towers.
In vain prepare they fiercely to attack;
The warlike Randolph promptly turns them back.
Hopeful the Bruce 'gainst odds to win the day,
Would now the fate of awful war essay.
But first, each warrior kneeling on the sod,
His prayer uplifts to the Patriot's God
"For homes and country, mighty Lord we fight,
For Liberty and our loved nation's right."
"The rebels," Edward cries, "for pardon sue."
"But, your Grace, to another King than you."
The strength of England in her archers lies.
On them relies she and all foes defies.
Scattered these archers—such a feat once done
Sure we may claim the worst of battle won.
Thine ardor, Edward Bruce, timely restrain,
The shock of arrows patiently sustain;
Then ere anew they drew the fatal bow
Rush with thy horsemen headlong to the foe.
Wavers the English hosts—a panic spread,
So great of warlike Scotland's arms the dread.
The valiant Englishmen still show their might,
Their choice to die or conquer in the fight.
Thus Bruce: 'Brave Donald, firm's my trust in thee,
Charge home with all thy well known chivalry."
Succeeds the charge; the crowning work is done,
And Scotland's free, the Patriot battle won.
Meanwhile this glory not for her alone.
Great Liberty and right the world outo'er
Much ground obtained, in after times a Power,
Greater than ever mightiest monarch knew,
This seed of right with growing time e'er grew.
Its march no man could stay or fix its bourne,
Its destiny was read at Bannockburn.
Now to the Sacred Altar hastes with speed,
The victor king, his first and greatest need,
That thanks be given to HIM who oft denies
The battle to the strong. Most earnest rise
Thanksgiving Psalms re echoed o'er the plain
Joining each warrior in the holy strain.
Thanks first; and then that Scotia long may be
A land of Virtue, Truth and Liberty!
With victory and peace came cares of State,
Much joy and feasting crowned the Royal fate;
His Barons to reward the king applies,
Assigns to each a noble victor's prize.
Needs not the Island Prince much landed store;
But highest privileges and honors more,
That on the army's right wing he should fight
Was henceforth ruled to be his honored right.
Nor was the crofter of Kintyre forgot;
A wondrous change came o'er his humble lot.
Our cottager at Bruce's Court scarce knows
His former guest, so greatly changed he shows.
But still his privilege our ploughman claims,
And as of right the Captain Robert names.
De Bruce, well known to be of generous mind,
The needed service, all so good and kind.
The crofter gave, most liberal would repay;
And ere the good man sought to move away,
The wish he once expressed was realized;
And he greatly delighted and surprised.
His croft by deed received, and several more,
A fine estate now added to his store.
The only due as from old deeds appears.
He ever paid in course of coming years;
An apple was that always richly grew,
On land he labored yearly to renew.

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## A GIRL'S NARROW ESCAPE.

Her Friends Did Not Think She Could Recover.—A Case Where the Expression "Snatched From the Grave" May be Most Appropriately Used—A Story Worthy of a Careful Perusal by Parents.

From Penetanguishene Herald.

A few evenings ago a representative of the *Herald* while in conversation with Mr. James McLean, fireman on the steamer Manitou, which plies between here, Midland and Parry Sound, learned the particulars of a case which adds another to the long list of triumph of a well-known Canadian remedy, and is of sufficient importance to deserve widespread publication for the benefit it may prove to others. The case referred to is the remarkable restoration to health of Mr. McLean's daughter Agnes, thirteen years of age, who had been so low that her recovery was deemed almost impossible. Miss McLean's condition was that of very many other girls throughout the land. Her blood had become impoverished, giving rise to palpitation of the heart, dizziness, severe headache, extremely pale complexion and general debility. At this period Miss McLean was residing in Midland, and her condition because so bad that she was finally compelled to take to her bed. A doctor was called in, but she did not improve under his treatment, and another was then consulted, but without any better results. She had become so weak that her father had no hopes of her recovery and did not think she would live three months. The lady with whom Miss McLean was residing urged the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and finally a supply was secured. Before the first box was all gone an improvement could be noticed in the girl's condition, and by the time another box had been used the color was beginning to come back to her cheeks, and her appetite was returning. The use of Pink Pills was still continued, each day now adding to her health and strength, until finally she was restored to perfect health, and has gained in weight until she now weighs 140 pounds. Mr. McLean says he is convinced that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills saved his daughter's life, and he believes them to be the best remedy in the world, and does not hesitate to advise their use in all similar cases.

The facts above related are important to parents, as there are many young girls just building into womanhood whose condition is, to say the least, more critical than their parents imagine. Their complexion is pale and waxy in appearance, troubled with heart palpitation, headaches, shortness of breath on the slightest exercise, faintness and other distressing symptoms which invariably lead to a premature grave unless prompt steps are taken to bring about a natural condition of health. In this emergency no remedy yet discovered can supply the place of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, which build anew the blood, strengthen the nerves and restore the glow of health to pale and sallow cheeks. They are certain cure for all troubles peculiar to the female system, young or old. Pink Pills also cure such diseases as rheumatism, neuralgia, partial paralysis, locomotor ataxia, St. Vitus dance, nervous headache, nervous prostration, the after effects of la grippe, influenza and severe colds, diseases depending on humors in the blood, such as scrofula, chronic erysipelas, etc. In the case of men they effect a radical cure in all cases arising from mental worry, over-work, or excesses of any nature.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are sold only in boxes bearing the firm's trade mark. They are never sold in bulk, or by the dozen or hundred, and any dealer who offers substitutes in this form is trying to defraud and should be avoided. The public are also cautioned against all other so-called blood builders and nerve tonics, put up in similar form intended to deceive. Ask your dealer for Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for pale People and refuse all imitations and substitutes.

These pills are manufactured by the Dr. Williams' Medicine Company, Brockville, Ontario, and Schenectady, N.Y., and may be had of all druggists or direct by mail from Dr. Williams' Medicine Co. from either address, at 50 cts. a box, or six for $2.50. The price at which these pills are sold makes a course of treatment camparatively inexpensive as compared with other remedies or medical treatment.

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