

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE PUBLICAN AND ON PENANCE.

"I say to you this man went down into his house justified rather than the other." (Luke 18, 14.)

"O God, be merciful to me a sinner." Thus, in deep contrition the poor publican sighed. It is true, he was a great sinner; he had often grievously offended God, but he did not like the proud Pharisee, that is, close his eyes to his own fault, but acknowledged with the royal psalmist: "I know my iniquity (O God) and my sin is always before me." (Ps. 50, 4) But what did our Lord say of him? "I say to you, this man went down to his house justified." So precious in the sight of God was the affliction of his spirit that his contrite and humbled heart was not despised, but merited for him the remission of his sins, and the grace of justification.

We also shall merit this same blessing when we leave the path of sin, return to God and with the humility and contrition of the publican seek God's mercy and forgiveness in the sacrament of penance. For this purpose our kind and merciful Lord instituted this salutary sacrament, that our soul, stained with the filth of sin, may again be washed in His Precious Blood, clothed with the wedding garment of innocence, adorned with sanctifying grace, and made beloved children of God and heirs of Heaven. Oh, let us thank God for this inestimable token of His goodness and mercy towards us, and let us never forget what God has done for us, and is still willing to do. The angels fell; they sinned but once, and immediately they were cast into hell by the thunderbolt of divine wrath. We, human creatures, sin not once, but alas! innumerable times, and through the merits of the Precious Blood of His Divine Son, the heavenly Father is merciful and not only heals the wounds of our souls in the sacrament of penance, but also gives us a home in Heaven. Let us, therefore, with grateful hearts, often have recourse to this heavenly means of purification especially when we are so unfortunate as to fall into mortal sin.

How would you act, my Christian friend, if a poisonous thorn entered your hand? Would you wait until the following day before extracting it? By no means, you would, if possible, remove it immediately, lest the poison might penetrate. How do you act if you are severely injured? Do you wait for days before binding the wound? No, for you might bleed to death. But, my dear Christians, if grievous sin has not merely wounded your soul, but has in reality inflicted death, produced separation from God and placed you in the greatest danger of eternal punishment, what is your manner of acting? You continue to live in your dangerous state, careless and indifferent; you allow weeks and months, yes, sometimes even years to pass before presenting yourself to the spiritual physician to have your soul cleansed from all sin and once more restored to the friendship of God.

St. Thomas Aquinas often said that it was beyond his comprehension how any Christian in the state of mortal sin could, for a moment, be cheerful and happy. The saint was right, because a Christian who lives happily and contented whilst in enmity with God, must have little reason and less faith. For who can protect himself even for a moment against sudden death? Does not our Lord frequently warn us in the gospel that death will come, like a thief in the night, at an hour when we least expect him? Is it not a matter of daily experience that many die suddenly, the one struck by apoplexy, the other by a bullet, again others meet with their death by explosions and accidents too numerous to mention. And you, O sinner, are well aware that the same can happen to you at any moment, and yet you are so indifferent and ease your mind with the frail hope that such will not likely happen to you! You know that hell burns beneath your feet and that the angel of death can, at any moment, cast you into its eternal flames, and yet you are contented to live unreconciled to God in the greatest danger of being eternally damned? Unhappy mortal, whom do you expect to compassionate you, if through a sudden death the waves of eternal perdition close above your head? Oh, take warning in time, God's grace calls you to repentance. Reconcile yourself to God at this moment by an act of perfect contrition combined with the firm resolution of having recourse to the sacrament of penance at the first opportunity, when, like the publican in the gospel of today, you can leave the temple in the peace of God. The sacrament of penance, however, is not only instituted for the sinner who is in the state of mortal sin, but also for the just, that he may not fall. Every venial sin you commit weakens your soul and inclines it more and more to mortal sin, hence go to confession frequently, in order to regain your spiritual strength, that you may not in your weakness fall mortally. The dust of habitual imperfections falls daily on your soul, marring the brightness of grace, and yet you know that every stain must be removed by the painful fire of purgatory before the soul can in spotless purity, enter Heaven. Frequently cleanse your soul from every spot and blemish in the sacrament of penance, and it may always be bright and untroubled and beautified more and more by each confession, so that if our Lord should call you suddenly you will be ready and adorned with the wedding garment of satisfying grace which entitles you to a heirship in Heaven. Amen.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

Cultivate a Soft Voice.

"You are always reading things about the beauty of a soft voice," says the girl who is blessed with one that is low, ladylike, and musical, "and I have never given it any thought until recently, and now I begin to believe there is something in it. I think one instinctively lowers the voice in asking a favor, and I am sure that I have done so without thinking of it. I don't know that I ever should have noticed it if my attention had not been called to one of the girls, who speaks rather loudly, and I noticed that though she is a pretty and attractive girl, she does not—well, get her own way as often as she likes. I came to the conclusion, then, that it was her voice. Now I take pains, whenever I want anything to ask in my very softest voice, and even if it is my own brother I am asking I usually get it. Selfish? Why, of course not. I always want what other people will like."

A Sly Old Cat.

A lady who has a small menagerie of pets remarked the other day: "I have come to the conclusion that the cleverest and slyest animal in the world is the cat. They are cautious and suspicious, and, while a dog can be taught implicit obedience, you can never get more than eye service from a cat. I own a very intelligent specimen. Though he is old enough to be more dignified, he has a mania for playing with and pulling at anything that flutters in the wind, whether it be curtain or plant or ribbon, and his sharp claws do destructive work. When I am present I have only to say 'Roger' in a quietly reproving tone, and he stops his mischief at once; but I see daily many proofs that he takes advantage of the turning of my back. He is forbidden to go into the parlor, and never enters it while I am in the house, and were it not for the presence of black cat's hairs on my soft cushions I might fancy Roger a model of obedience. One day as I approached my house I saw Roger on the parlor window sill, viewing the passerby with much interest. He did not see me until I tapped on the window pane with my umbrella, and then he disappeared like a flash. He was up stairs before I opened the front door, and when I went to my room there he was stretched upon the hearth rug, apparently in the deep slumber of innocence. I gave him a slap as a slight punishment and he opened his eyes and gazed at me in mild surprise, as if to say, 'What's the matter with you?' He evidently wanted to persuade me that I had been the victim of an optical illusion. No human being could have done a clever piece of acting."—The Animal World.

A Wonderful Professor.

Our young readers remember the story of the Irish giant, who pretended to be merely a giant baby in order to impress the visiting Scotch giant with the idea that a grown up Irish giant must be a terrible fellow, indeed. A similar story is told of Johann Sebastian Bach, the great German musical composer. Bach's life was nearing its end, and although it had been a good and useful life, he felt that, as he had so few years remaining, he must make the most of every day and hour. So he studied and wrote as industriously as when a young man. Now, there was among the swarm of people who daily thronged to see him a certain Frenchman, whom we shall call Monsieur X—. He fancied himself a great performer upon the harpsichord, and he used to enter Bach's drawing-room as regularly as the sunshine and seat himself at the instrument, which he would play for hours, stopping occasionally to boast of the musicians in his country, so superior, he declared, to any Germans. This was all very perplexing to the good host, who thus found his precious hours of leisure going by unimproved, and he cudgeled his brain trying to devise some plan whereby he might get rid of his visitor without rudeness; at last a thought struck him. He wrote a letter to his favorite pupil, Ludwig Krebs, bidding him come to Leipzig at once. Krebs soon appeared, and a conference was held between him and his master. The next morning, as soon as the Frenchman was well established in Bach's parlor, there was a knock at the door. When it was opened a sturdy man presented himself, indicating by his coarse blue blouse and hobbled shoes that he was a laborer. In his hand he held a wagoner's whip. "Ah, my good friend," said Bach, "I rejoice to see you! Come in: I will introduce you to this gentleman. This"—indicating the Frenchman who was vexed at having his music interrupted by so coarse a creature—"is the great composer and player upon the harpsichord, Monsieur X—. You have doubtless heard of him?" Monsieur X—bowed (for the French are always polite, however annoyed they may be). "And this, Monsieur X—, is my friend Cancrius, a worthy man, although as you see a wagoner. He can play with the whip to perfection, and even venture a little jingle now and then upon a worthier instrument. Sit down at the harpsichord, friend Cancrius, and try your hand." The wagoner hesitated, but upon being more strongly urged, did as he was bidden, first playing a simple air; then he played it again with wonderful variations, and then a third time, weaving into it the harmonies of which he, as Bach's most studious pupil, was master. The Frenchman stood transfixed and could not speak. "What do you think?" asked Bach, quietly, "of the musicians of our

country, when our wagoners play like that?"

His guest did not reply, but bowed himself out and did not call again; while Ludwig Krebs took off his blue blouse and went back to his studies, glad to have been of some service to his beloved friend and teacher.

Teddy's Threads.

"I'd like to know what has become of my cap," said Teddy Brown, giving the closet door an impatient slam, as though it were in some way responsible. "I've looked everywhere for it and it isn't there."

"I think," said Teddy's mother, speaking with calm assurance, in spite of Teddy's statement, "that you will find it just where you left it. You know, Teddy, I put up a special hook for your cap, but it doesn't seem to do any good, does it? You'll just have to hunt it up, that's all. I can't stop to look for it."

Just then the door opened, and Alice, Fred and little Hal, accompanied by two of the neighbor's children, came into the room, their eyes glistening and cheeks aglow as the result of a frolic they had been having on the lawn.

"Why don't you come out and play, Teddy?" asked Alice. "We've been having such fun. Haven't we, Fred?"

"I can't find my cap," said Teddy, looking vexed and disconsolate. "You haven't seen it anywhere, have you?"

"No," Alice replied. "I haven't seen it either," volunteered Fred. Little Hal felt that the blame had, therefore, been shifted upon him.

"I don't know where it is," he stoutly protested. "What is it that's lost?" asked Aunt Carrie, who had just come into the room, and had overheard the latter part of the conversation.

"Teddy's cap," said Alice. "What, again?" asked Aunt Carrie in astonishment. "This makes the fifth time this week, doesn't it? Now, let me see, I believe, I did see your cap somewhere a very short time ago, Teddy. I think, yes, that's where it was, behind the sofa in the sitting-room. I found it there, when I moved the things to clear up the room. I think you'll find it on the table now."

"Oh, yes," said Teddy, with a surprising return of memory. "That's just where I put it. Laid it on the sofa. I suppose it fell down."

"Before you go out to play," said Aunt Carrie, when Teddy had brought his cap, "I would like to ask you to do something for me if you will."

"What is it?" asked Teddy, curious to know what she wanted. Aunt Carrie told Teddy she would like to have him hold the palms of his hands together and his arms out straight. Taking a spool of basting thread from the pocket of her sewing apron, she wound the thread about Teddy's wrists, drawing it tight y.

"See if you can break it," she said. Teddy made a tremendous effort and when he found that he was able to break the thread a smile of satisfaction and triumph lighted up his face.

Then Aunt Carrie wound the thread around his wrists again, twice this time instead of once; but Teddy succeeded in freeing his hands again.

"Well done," said Aunt Carrie, winding the thread around Teddy's wrists a great many times and fastening it, after which she told him he might break the threads again.

"I can't," said Teddy, looking very sheepish when he took in the situation sufficiently to realize that his hands were tied fast and that it was not in his power to loosen them. Indeed, Teddy looked so very helpless and woe-begone that Aunt Carrie and the children could not help laughing at him just a little.

"Now, let me tell you," said Aunt Carrie, "what it is that I would like to impress upon you all. It is this: Habits are very hard to break, for they are made up of separate acts, just as Teddy's hands are held together by means of separate threads. The only way to keep one's self from becoming a slave to habit is to take care that the little acts of carelessness or wrong-doing do not accumulate."—The Picayune.

It is always a pleasant thing to have been at Mass; it sweetens and savors the whole day. It is indeed a wonderful thing, as we walk about, to think that "we have seen the Lord,"—seen Him with our eyes, have actually been in His company, have stood within a few feet of Him! What a privilege to enjoy over ordinary men and women whom we pass by in the streets! No one, therefore, who can do it, should miss this seeing of Our Lord every day. Continued day after day during life, it forms a strong habit of piety and a sure protection. It brings confidence and protection, and may be a stepping-stone to better things. We think of accidents and of sudden death with less apprehension; for we know that we are the humble friends of Almighty God,— "we have seen the Lord."—The Layman's Day.

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CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

The entire grace, happiness and virtue of a young man's life depends on his contentment in doing what he can dutifully, and in staying where he is peaceably.—Ruskin.

Four Good Habits.

There are four good habits—punctuality, accuracy, steadiness and dispatch. Without the first of these, time is wasted; without the second, mistakes the most hurtful to our own credit and interest, and that of others, may be committed; without the third, nothing can be well done; and without the fourth, opportunities of great advantage are lost, which it is impossible to recall.

When Riding Your Bike.

A few things to think about while you are out taking your constitutional: 1. Lean back in your seat when riding moderately slow down hill. 2. Learn to back pedal well. 3. Use your brake as little as possible. 4. Let the other fellow coast. You may not lose your life, but you may mar your good looks or break some of your bones.

Of course one must use his uncommon good sense in this matter of coasting; easy grade roads are not dangerous, but long, steep-grade hills are so, and one should not risk his neck on the strength of a brake.

Learning to Swim.

Just as soon as the warm weather sets in many persons who, at the close of last summer, were able to swim a few strokes will again somewhat timorously enter the water. The majority will find this self-imposed task far more difficult than is anticipated. It is necessary to remind those that indulge in short, hurried strokes that one of the golden rules of swimming is move slowly and deliberately. Those who wish to become good swimmers must cultivate self-reliance, and they should always bear in mind that water itself has a great sustaining power.

The slow stroke is the very essence of good swimming. It enables the bather to inflate the lungs and thus unconsciously turn them temporarily into life-preservers. To move slowly is to get plenty of breathing time, and to get plenty of strength to repeat the movements which propel the body through the water.

The second golden rule which the beginner should school himself to remember is that the living human body is specifically lighter than water, and is specifically lighter than water, and, consequently, it does not necessitate, as is so often thought, the sustaining power of water is the only secret to swimming.

Trusts and Their Enemies.

J. G. Cannon, vice president of the Fourth National bank of New York and head of the Credit Men's association, in a recent address on Trusts, said in part: "We are passing through a great industrial change. The consolidation of interests into so called trusts is destined to modify our system of political economy and turn into new and untried currents the entire business of the country. Years ago young men were educated along lines which would fit them to enter business for themselves, but with the large number of corporations which are springing up and the tendency of all business enterprises to organize as corporations, the situation is decidedly changed, and hereafter we must look forward to educating a class of men who will manage these corporations upon a salary basis. There never was a time when a young man needed a thorough business education so much as he does today."

In the organization of the so called trusts the laboring man is maintaining his position, but a very large number of the machine class is thrown out of employment. There is a great weeding-out process going on. Men of ability are being selected for managerial positions, while mere time-servers and men of poor business education are being dispensed with. It is a 'survival of the fittest.'"

Stray Chips of Thought.

Opportunity includes the ability to see it. The man who is not so bad as he might be, is rarely as good as he could be. The most craven drudge is he who crawls for public opinion. Genius the gift of Nature, who lends possibilities of success to all. Health, like success in life, is to be gained by paying attention to details. It is better to try to keep from catching cold than to be trying to avoid infection. More can be done to check cholera by keeping houses clean than by using tons of disinfectants. Nature gives health. It is a man's perversity in departing from Nature's teachings which leads to disease. Nature intended all to have fresh air, sufficient food, uncontaminated water and exercise. Let us accept Nature's bequest, if we prefer health to disease.

A Great Man's Advice.

A statesman of national reputation said to me: "You ask for a word of wisdom to young men. Well, my one will be two. 1. Make a written pledge not to drink 'fire-water' until you're a grandfather, and 2. Save something regularly every Saturday night, if it's only one cent. Given health and opportunities, the man who is temperate and frugal is bound to be a respectable member of society. Whether or not he will amass riches is a question partly

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BOYS' AND GIRLS' ANNUAL

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