

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.

OCCASIONS OF SIN.

Who is my neighbor?—From the gospel of the Sunday.

This is a very important question, my brethren. We depend much for our happiness on the kind of persons who live around us and on how they feel towards us. Our Lord answers the question by the famous and touching parable of the Good Samaritan. By that parable He teaches us kindness of heart; He makes that the mark of true neighborly conduct. The good neighbor is the friendly and benevolent one. But may we not turn the question around and learn another good lesson from it? I think we can. The Gospel is like a piece of good cloth. You know when a wise mother buys some cloth to make the children's clothes she will get a piece that, as they say, will do to turn—that is, when one side is worn out you can rip up the garment and make it over again with the inside turned outside, and so it will last quite a while longer. So we may learn, perhaps, another lesson from the question in the Gospel by reversing it and asking, "Who is not my neighbor?"

The saloon-keeper is not your neighbor. Geographically speaking, no doubt he is your neighbor. He takes care to be handy to you. He is on the ground floor of the big tenement house you live in, so that you must pass his door to get to your own. Or he is on the corner you must turn twice in a day. If nearness were the only mark of a neighbor, the saloon-keeper is not your neighbor. But, morally speaking, and in the meaning of our Lord's parable, he is perhaps the last man who can claim to be your neighbor. Yet many honest fellows treat the saloon-keeper not only as their neighbor, but as a partner in their business. They do the hard work; the workingman's share in the partnership is to bend under the heavy load in the hot sun, or to strike with the heavy sledge on the rocks, or to be half-stuffed the livelong day in the hot factory; the other partner has for his share of the work only to smile and pass the bottle. You know which one gets the bulk of the profits; or if you do not, the workingman's wife and many foolish men are there who have taken this bad neighbor into partnership the most confidential, and not only give him most of their money in return for worse than nothing, but have made him, besides, the managing partner of their leisure, their friendships, and their politics! As to the saloon-keeper's traffic, he manages to escape them for a time; and may God give him the grace to repent of his sins and fly from their occasion—that is, change his business—that he may escape the divine wrath in the future.

Another very bad neighbor, and one very unworthy of that name, is a certain class of newspaper dealers. I say a certain class, for I hope that not all newspaper dealers are alike. But there are very many of them who are guilty of the loss of human souls by selling periodicals and books which can only corrupt the mind and heart of the reader. I ask you, Christian parents, what do you think of those who dress out their windows with bad pictures to lure passionate youth to the early wreath of Catholicism? What do you think of persons who actually make a living in selling journals which are but the pictured proceedings of the police courts? O my brethren! how often is the grace of a good confession and Communion destroyed by a few minutes bad reading! How many there are whose first mortal sin has been some act of youthful depravity suggested by what was bought at a news-dealer's! Such newspaper holders Satan's certificate to teach the science of perdition. What need has the Evil Spirit to fear the Catholic Church and Catholic school as long as he is not hindered from laying his snares for youthful virtue in every direction, as long as the laws against obscene literature are a dead letter? Therefore, let Catholic parents furnish their families with good reading, both secular and religious; let them take the least Catholic paper, and let them patronize and direct their children to patronize newspaper dealers who do not sell dangerous matter.

Of course there are other bad neighbors, such as those who invite you to a public dance, or a moonlight excursion, or a Sunday picnic, or a low theatre. But I think that you will agree with me that the commonest vices are intemperance and impurity, and that our worst enemies are those two bad neighbors, the saloon-keeper and the vendor of impure literature.

TALKS ON RELIGION.

DIVINE GRACE—SANTIFYING GRACE.

The last talk on religion was on actual grace. There is another kind of grace, habitual or sanctifying grace, to which actual grace leads when we correspond with it. Sanctifying grace is "the charity of God poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us."—Romans v. 5. The Catechism teaches that "sanctifying grace makes the soul holy and pleasing to God." It brings with it the favor and the friendship of God. Those who possess it are the loved and the true children of God. Those who do not possess this grace are the enemies of God. This doctrine is clearly shown by the "beloved disciple," St. John, in the fourteenth and twenty-third chapters of his gospel. "If any man love Me, he will keep My word, and My father will love him and we will come to him and will make Our abode with him." The abiding is not to be for a few minutes or a few hours, but permanently, or until we expel the Holy Ghost by mortal sin.

Hence this grace is called habitual, because it is looked upon as a permanent quality of the soul. It is the wedding garment with which all the children of God are expected to be clothed. Our Lord is the King who has invited the multitude to His banquet, "the poor and feeble, the blind

and the lame." No matter how poor or how feeble, blind or lame, and no matter how wealthy or how strong, or physically sound the guests might be, the absolute condition to sit at His table is that each one must have on the "wedding garment" of habitual grace.

The garment of Divine Grace makes the poor, miserable and sinful children of men fit members for the royal banquet and fit members for the kingdom where God reigns with His saints for ever. Wonderful, indeed, and most precious is the raiment which does not merely cover the wickedness and filth of sin, but which by its touch brings a complete and perfect soundness. It does not merely apply the name of just to sinners, but it actually makes them "holy and unspotted in His sight in charity."—Eph. i. 4. Habitual grace may be compared to a light. When we go forth to meet the bridegroom we must carry with us the divine light with which the Lord has enlightened our souls, and present it to Him, the true Light which enlighteneth every man who cometh into the world."—(St. John i. 9)

While actual grace is a passing grace, habitual grace is a permanent and lasting gift. This "wedding garment" remains until willfully removed. We never could deserve it by our own personal merits, but yet it is freely given by our Lord and no one can take it from us. It encompasses us at all times until by our own deliberate act we cast it off. Even then our Lord is willing to restore it to us if we return like the prodigal to our Father's house. This grace is called sanctifying grace because it makes all those who possess it "holy and pleasing to God." When this grace enters the soul of even the greatest sinner it transforms him, for: "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be made white as wool." (Isaiah i. 18.) As light and darkness are incompatible, so are mortal sin and sanctifying grace.

Sanctifying grace makes us and marks us as heirs of heaven. Though this grace is God's free gift, He bestows with it a right to an eternal reward. If we preserve it and "keep our baptism," so as to be without blame," and retain it when gained through any other sacrament, we have a claim on the eternal inheritance of the saints. "And if sons, heirs also; heirs, indeed, of God, and joint heirs with Christ." (Romans viii. 17.) For this reason and on this ground St. Paul said: "There is laid up for me a crown, which the Lord, the Just Judge, will render to me on that day." (2 Tim. iv. 8.)

He claims the "crown of justice" as a right, because the grace of God he has not received in vain. "By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace in me hath not been void."

Since "all our sufficiency" is from God we can do all things in Him who strengthens us. Therefore we cannot value God's grace too highly, nor can we value it as we ought. Sanctifying grace is, indeed, the greatest of all treasures. It is the pearl of great price for the gaining of which we should be willing to sacrifice all our possessions and all earthly prospects. "For all gold, in comparison of her, is as a little sand and silver, in respect of her, shall be counted as brass; and loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light, for her light cannot be put out. Now, all good things come to me together with her, and innumerable riches through her hands."—Wisdom, vii. 8.

Even these inspired words fall short of the true estimate of the value of sanctifying grace. The treasures and privileges included in it surpass all understanding, as the vision of heaven surpasses the ability of St. Paul to describe. This treasure should not only be preserved, but like the talents should be increased and multiplied. "Forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth ourselves to those that are before." (Phil. iii, 13.) Grace is given to us that we may get a greater increase of this divine gift. "Every branch that beareth fruit, He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (St. John xv. 2.)

Since the Sacraments were especially instituted to convey grace to our souls, we may realize something of the great value we should place on their proper and frequent reception.—Cleveland Universe.

FIDELITY TO MASS UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

In the "God's Acre," a small town in the Midlands, England, are the graves side by side of a brother and sister. Owing to circumstances that they could not change they lived seven miles from a church and yet never had they been absent from Sunday Mass. From childhood to old age, summer and winter alike, had they gladly tramped every Sunday morning their fourteen miles, seven in and seven out, to hear Holy Mass. Moreover, every first Sunday of the month they walked in fasting, so as to go to Holy Communion; nor did they break their fast till half way back on the road home, when sitting down beside a spring they would eat the bread they had brought with them from home and drink from the bubbling spring. A few hundred yards from their halting place was a Protestant nobleman's house, and they always prayed as they passed it by for the conversion of the family to the Catholic faith. The years came and went and the answer to the prayers came, as come it always will, to prayer. The aged couple, brother and sister, have gone to their reward. The once Protestant nobleman's family is now Catholic, and a beautiful Catholic church has been built within a stone's throw of the spot where the good Catholic old man and woman were wont to break the fast after Holy Communion.

Time is given to man that he may win the priceless heritage of eternal happiness. Therefore, they who spend it with no effort to attain this end, die for but little from the rest of the animal kingdom, which have no souls to save.

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A JESUIT ON SOCIALISM.

VERY REV. JOHN RYAN, S. J., PROVINCIAL OF AUSTRALIA, SPEAKS ON THE EVIL AND ITS REMEDY—ONLY CHRISTIANITY CAN CHECK THE CAPITALIST.

Speaking at the Communion Breakfast of the Catholic Societies of Newwood (S. A.) recently, the Very Rev. John Ryan, S. J., Provincial of the Jesuits in Australia, said: "Socialism was at present the question of questions in the political world, and a great number of people took a large interest in it. The chief question for them was—Can a Catholic support Socialism? There were some various kinds of socialism, and some of them were not opposed to Catholicism. With regard to anarchists and dynamiters, anyone could see that no Christian, much less a Catholic, could support them. There was another kind of Socialism, known as Communism, the radical principle of which seemed—for it was very difficult to get at the real meaning—to be summed up by its author, Proudhon, in the maxim: 'Property is robbery; everything should be in common.' Well, no Christian, much less a Catholic, could support that, for it would upset the foundations of society. (Hear, hear.) Then there was scientific Socialism, which sought reform, not by anarchy or communism, but through the ballot box. Its object was to nationalise all sources of industry. All kinds of production were to come under the regime of the State. There were to be no capitalists or companies controlling the labor market.

SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM.

They would abolish these, and equalise all men—put them all on scratch, as it were. There was to be equal justice all round, and State wages. All were to work, and none to be gentlemen. That was a rough view of scientific Socialism. It was not very accurate, perhaps, as the leaders could not define it, and were quarreling among themselves, like the Protestant sects. (Laughter.) This third form of Socialism a man could conscientiously support so long as it did not go too far, and exceed the bounds of Christian liberty. Then there was Christian Socialism, which embraced all that was best in scientific Socialism, and every man could belong to that. (Hear, hear.) Father Ryan then indicated the lines on which Christian Socialism should run. First came

THE PROTECTION OF LABOR.

Every right-minded member of society must see the need of protecting labor from the wolfish monopolist, who would grind the sweat out of a man, and not leave him necessities for his wife and family. The late Pope Leo XIII. was the first to emphasize the right of the working man to a wage that would keep himself and family in frugal comfort. (Cheers.) The voters should see at the ballot-box to this protection. In reality it was the only thing that satisfied Catholic Guilds. Trades unionism, properly managed, was perfectly right and proper. (Hear, hear.) Next came

THE PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUALS

by legislation, so arranged as to protect the helpless, especially youths, girls and women. An atmosphere of respect, ability and virtue should surround women workers, and there should be female inspectors. (Hear, hear.) In the third place the worker—and he included in that term the clerical worker—should have

A CO-OPERATIVE SHARE

in the products of his industry. A man should get a fair wage, and do justice to his employers, but if the employer was making 50 or 60 per cent. on his outlay, why should not the employees have a share? (Cheers.) These three things ought to satisfy every reasonable man, without going to extremes. (Hear, hear.) It was contrary to the teachings of the Church to do away with property, and anarchy was wrong. There must be government and a head. The man who tried to do without government and advocated anarchy or communism was mad. He put himself beyond the pale of all reasonable men. Father Ryan then dealt with the question of the practical working of scientific Socialism. The doctrine of equality which came from the French Revolution was impracticable. In a certain sense, it was true, all men were equal. Every man was a child of God, a member of society, and had a right to be protected in his life and property. But in regard to wealth and other external things, the idea was a chimera. If all men were given an equal start now there would be a difference in twenty-four hours. All men were not equal, and it was not in the nature of things. (Hear, hear.)

ANOTHER DIFFICULTY

was how the system of State Socialism was to be worked. Could it be each nation from a central bureau? If so, the system would be too gigantic, and

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could not be got to work. He agreed that certain universal services, such as the post-office, gas, water, railways, and he would add tramways—(cheers)—should be under the control of the State; but they must draw the line somewhere, and not make it communism. (Hear, hear.) Father Ryan then showed the difficulties that would arise from all industries being worked by the State. They could not raise the millions required for compensation. Even if they could, and even if they were dealt with by separate cities or municipalities, there were the objections one city might make to workers being transferred from another city, where a failure, such as that in Melbourne after the land boom, occurred. Instead of men going to the West from Victoria, as they then did, they would have to stay where they were, and starve. The system was impracticable, and no man, however eminent, had been able to lay down a scheme that would give satisfaction. In conclusion, Father Ryan urged that true and real Socialism was

CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM.

Let them protect women and children, but do not handicap the man of industry and ability. Let every man work out his own salvation and bring up his children in the fear of God. That was the only true religion, and the only way it could be carried out was in the Church of God. Other religions were vanishing; there was no substance in them. The fundamental mistake of Socialism was the idea that happiness meant wealth. The most wealthy were often the most miserable. They should be satisfied with what they had, and the Providence of God would equalise all things. Only Christianity could check the capitalist. Christianity would purify the world. It had done it before, and, please God, it would do it again.

THE CARDINAL TALKS ON LOVE.

At the Church of the Sacred Heart, Long Island, a few days ago Cardinal Gibbons preached on the uplifting of St. Mary Magdalen and its cause. Every seat in the church was filled when the aged Prince of the Church began his sermon. In part he said:

"We are celebrating to day the festival of St. Mary Magdalen, and I shall read for you the words from the Gospel appointed for the Mass to day, 'Her sins are forgiven her, because she loved.' This beautiful and touching narrative relates to a certain occasion when our Blessed Redeemer was invited to a banquet by Simon, a distinguished member of the Pharisees. There was in town a certain woman who led a sinful life, a woman of attractive appearance, but, unfortunately, wicked. When she heard of the boundless, forgiving love of the Savior of mankind, so much in contrast with that of the Pharisees, who did not fear to disdain to speak to sinners, she hastened to the house of this Pharisee, and, regardless of the sneers and frowns of the hosts and guests, cast herself at the feet of the Lord.

"She washed His feet with penitent tears, and wiped them with her hair, and poured on them some precious ointment from an alabaster box. And our Lord said: 'Her sins are forgiven her because she loved.' Simon in his heart began to approach his Master, saying: 'This woman should not have touched Christ because she is a sinner.' Our Lord proved that He was a prophet because He interpreted His host's thoughts. He sent the woman away with a light heart and unclouded countenance.

"Were I to be asked the fundamental teaching of Christianity; were I to be asked what is the very basis of the Gospel, the most salient point in its whole teaching, I would answer that it is comprised in that one word—'love.' Were I to analyze the Old Testament teachings of the prophets, of Christ and His apostles, I would find them contained in the short word—'love.' For St. Paul says, 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.' Therefore, to be loving toward God and our neighbors is the fulfilling of the whole law, and the shorter, surer and most sacred path to the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Our Blessed Lord on one occasion asked: 'What is the great commandment of the Lord?' He replied: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.' On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets, I know then for certain that I am fulfilling the whole law of God if I fulfill the whole commandment of divine love."

Have a close watch on the whereabouts, the occupation and the companionship of the children. They are not yet able to watch for themselves.

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