

# FIVE-MINUTE SERMON

## EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SPRIT AND FLESH

For if you live according to the flesh you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live. (Rom. vii. 5, 6.)

What does the Apostle mean by this? This only, that the flesh with its concupiscence and lusts must never get such power over our will that it will carry us along with it and make us obey its longings and desires when we know these are forbidden by Almighty God. I say "this only" because to have the flesh is no sin; neither is it a sin to feel the disorderly movements of the flesh that lead to sin; but it is a sin to consent to these and to follow them. For this reason we are told that, if we mortify the deeds of the flesh, we shall live. But what does the word "mortify" mean? It means to destroy, that which makes the life of a thing. Notice here the Apostle does not tell us to mortify the flesh itself but the deeds of the flesh. To do this we need not then destroy all that gives life to its deeds.

What are the deeds of the flesh? They are the seven capital sins—pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth. Can we kill them? In the most important sense we can. We can get them so under our control that, after awhile, they will move us but slightly and cannot influence us to any great degree. We shall feel from time to time that they are still present in us, but that cannot disturb us much. We shall have taken their strength away. We shall have made them so weak that we can check them easily.

Ought not each one of us to strive to get ourselves into that blessed state? But how can we do it? Make up your mind to do it. Form a good resolution, one that will not change but that will be firm for life. Then live according to that resolution. When first you are aroused, refuse to follow its promptings; when covetousness moves the heart, stop the eager desire for gain; when lust would lead you away, content against the thought until it is driven out; when anger disturbs, seal the lips with the sign of the holy cross; when gluttony makes you long for feasting and drinking, refuse to go where these things are going on; when envy racks the soul, pray for the one who is the object of envy; when sloth tempts you to self-indulgence and inactivity, stir up the fear of God and holy shame within the soul, for sloth is a destroyer indeed of all that is truly manly and heroic in us.

But all this is about as hard to do as anything a man can do, but the success is sure. Shall a man do less for God than for himself? See the time and labor spent to secure that which is necessary for the body and holy shame within the soul, do not have it this way, for life. Those who keep up the struggle get stronger day by day. In them the flesh and the movements of sin grow less day by day. The devil, however, wishes us to believe the lie he tells, to make us give up the struggle. Do not listen to the lie, and it cannot hurt you. Remember always, it is a lie, and the mind will not take hold of it.

We can make it all the easier by trusting God, who will always help us in the struggle. Pray more. Go to confession often. The confessor will then help us and remove much of the burden by good advice. Go to Communion often, and God himself will make it easier for us than we imagine by giving his own strength to the soul at that time. Only begin earnestly to control the flesh, continue perseveringly to use confession and Communion. This, with daily morning and evening prayer, will take away very many difficulties. Soon we shall find we have truly mortified the deeds of the flesh, and then indeed we shall live; for the flesh will then be dead or dying fast and too weak to hurt the soul. Keep, then, in the mind the text from the Epistle of to-day: "For if you live according to the flesh you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live."

## CHAT ABOUT LIVING CONVERTS

By Scannell O'Neill

Miss Ida Ashworth Taylor has just published a new book, a study of the life of Queen Christina of Sweden, daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, who gave up her throne to become a Catholic. Christina is one of the unsolved problems of history, and opinions regarding her character and life are much in an interesting volume.

Miss Taylor is a daughter of the late Sir Henry Taylor, author of Philip Van Artevelde, and first cousin of Aubrey de Vere. Her mother was a daughter of the first Lord Montagu. She is a convert, and besides her purely secular works, is the author of a perfectly fascinating volume of "The Silver Legend, a Study of St. Robert Southwell, poet and saint," and another she edited the "Sayings of Madame Swetchine."

Miss Susan L. Emery, associate editor of the Sacred Heart Review, Boston, whose "Inner Life of the Soul," when first published was supposed by many to have been the work of a priest, is a type of cultured convert the Church is ever receiving from the ranks of the American secularist bodies. Week by week, for many years now, her writings have cheered and edified countless souls so fortunate as to take the Review, while

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her translation of the verses of that dear little saintly nun, Sister Therese, has shown her intimate knowledge of the French language, and introduced the work of a rare character to American Catholics. Miss Emery entered the Church so long ago as 1875.

The late King Edward was a convert to the faith in the Hon. Albert Edward Bingham, son of the present Earl of Lucan.

Mr. Seymour Fay, B.A., late "William Adams," Professor of Moral and Dogmatic Theology at Neshota Episcopal Seminary, Wisconsin, and Archbishop of the diocese of Fond du Lac, who became a Catholic some two years ago, is pursuing his studies at the Catholic University.

On May 21st the Archbishop of New York conferred the diaconate on Father Paul, superior of the Society of the Atonement, and editor of the widely read monthly magazine The Lamp. We venture to advance the hope that after Father Paul shall have been ordained priest, his superiors will send him on a round of missions.

Dr. William McGarvey, late rector of the Episcopal Church of St. Elizabeth, Philadelphia, and Superior of the Companions of the Holy Saviour, was on May 20th raised to the diaconate by the Archbishop of Philadelphia. Dr. McGarvey is the most important convert we have received from Anglicanism

in this country since the conversion of Father Martin some years ago. He is bound to reach a high place in the ruling body of the Church, for he is a man of extraordinary ability.

## POLITICS IN THE PULPIT

His Excellency Governor Draper sounded a true note the other day when addressing the Unitarian May meeting. He said: "I go to church hoping to be a better man when I come out of church than when I enter, to get some good there and to hear something that I believe will be for my benefit."

"But I do not go to study political economy, or to be instructed in political principles. I go there to have my best feelings stirred, to have my religious knowledge improved and to come away with all that is best in me quickened, so that I may be a better citizen in every respect. I therefore recommend to the Unitarian churches that when they preach to their people they remember that the people want religion and lots of it, and not political economy."

The utterance is timely in view of the curious discourses which are delivered in so many so-called Christian pulpits. One wonders that the thoughts of the Gospel seem so alien to some preachers. Is it possible that they have taken to the office of preaching without having previously acquainted themselves—according to their lights—upon the things that make for Christian life? One has only to take up the advertisements of the "Sunday services" in the papers of Saturday and Sunday to note how far off the track such self-constituted preachers can go. Here is a "sermon" on "The best way to keep the streets clean." Another discusses "Reforms in caucus work." Still another is concerned with the "Civil Service Commission." A preacher recently took for his text, "Who owns Massachusetts, or the New Call for Patriotism," while in the same church on the same day, the sermon had for its subject, "New Problems Facing New England." The question naturally arises: what has this to do with religion? When men wish to

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listen to stump oratory, they go to a public hall, not to a church.

One Sunday twenty-two preachers took their text, "The Care of Infants in Summer," and we are informed that as many more spoke on the same subject the next Sunday.

A Protestant minister said recently: "The pulpit is equally in danger of succumbing to the prevailing search for thrills. A yellow pulpit is a little worse than a yellow press. For some ministers nothing is too extravagant, nor too absurd, nor too bitter to be uttered from what used to be called the sacred desk, so long as the expectant congregation is kept guessing as to what will come next."

At the same time it is not significant that the Catholic pulpit is silent upon questions of politics, and that it leaves the matters of trade and labor to their proper guardians? It is only when moral questions are involved, or matters touching closely upon the integrity of the faith that the Church utters any public word. For politics in themselves she has no special word, from the pulpit and in the Church. She knows that her

mission lies in other fields, except when morality and Christian truth are involved.

We have often wondered what would be said by the self-same Protestant political preachers if the Catholic priest were to launch out into the discussion of political problems in the pulpit. What a howl it would excite from one end of the land to the other! What cries of "religious prejudice!" And yet what better right has the Protestant minister to preach politics than the Catholic priest? Is the priest less a citizen because he is a priest? The fact is that in many cases the former is compelled from lack of Christian knowledge to take refuge in the "questions of the day," while the priest finds that the store-house of truth, the truths of the Gospel, is so vast and inexhaustible that he has no need to leave them for less sacred subjects. The words of Christ remain: "Going teach all nations—teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." Therein lies the secret, and the difference. They that follow Christ need not talk politics from the pulpit.—Pilot.

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## CRAWFORD'S FAITH

Marion Crawford's sister published a sketch of him in Collier's recently, in which she paid this beautiful tribute to his faith:

"His religion was too much a part of himself to invite analysis when once he had satisfied himself of its supreme truth and irrefutable logic. Yet, to assist others, he was planning to write a pamphlet entitled: 'Why I am a Catholic.' Rocky in faith, yet simple as a child in practice, he was one of the few latter-day Catholics who take their creed as the Crusaders took it, whole, unquestioningly and joyfully.

"Everything," she goes on, "was Marion's—success, honor, the affectionate companionship of a devoted wife who read every line he wrote with the keenest interest and true literary acumen; brave sons and beautiful daughters who worshipped their father but nothing in this world had any real hold upon him. He was quite detached; he worked to the very end, knowing that the end might come at any moment in order that his dear ones might not miss any of the comforts and luxuries with which he had always surrounded them. He was precisely in his dealings with others, the helper of the poor, the defender of the oppressed, a tower of strength to all in trouble. But for himself he asked nothing, desired nothing that the world can give. He aspired to only one thing, immortality. And when the call came, on Good Friday in the glory of the sunset by the sea, he answered with a smile and shed his fetters without a sigh. The only

wonder was that they had held him here so long."

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