

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

CORRECTION FOR FAULTS.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in any fault, you who are spiritual instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." (Gal. vi. 1.)

Perhaps there is no duty so hard to perform well as that of correction; and of course I refer chiefly to parental correction. Some parents are too lenient. They sin by petting their children. They over-praise them to their faces. They give them to understand that they are not loved, but worshipped. They believe them against school-teacher, neighbor or relative. They are the slaves of the child's slightest whim. And long before old age comes such parents are apt to suffer from that very miserable affliction, a spoiled child. Children are said to be the crown of their parents; the spoiled child is a crown of thorns.

Others, on the contrary, are too severe. If they really love their little ones they have discovered how to discipline them. They are too exacting. They scold, and they scold often, and long and loud. They bring up past offences, long since atoned for. They dwell much on their own merits as good parents. They correct in anger. Impulse guides them, or rather drives them, in place of affection and a spirit of justice. The sudden slap and the rude shove for the smaller ones; the blow of the fist, the kick for the larger ones. And oh! the deadly curse, the evil wish connected with Satan's name, the wish for eternal loss for one's own child, the harsh name, the face flaming with rage, the shouting voice; brethren, all this drives the boys to the saloon, and the girls to the dangerous companionship.

Is it not, then, a difficult thing to avoid both extremes, to be neither too lenient nor too severe? Does it not show us how high a place in Paradise a faithful parent shall enjoy? Does it not—this matter of parental correction—show us why our Blessed Lord raised the parental office to a sacramental state?

St. Paul in the text—although speaking of correction in general—lays down two rules which good parents know by experience to be the two wings of their flight to heaven: first, parents should be spiritual, and second, they should be meek. Spiritual, because to be a good parent "is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God who showeth mercy." Brethren, lay this to heart: the married state is indeed happy, but only by the grace of God. Natural dispositions go before all supernatural life. But the natural man is clay which the potter moulds into a vessel of election. And how often do we see easy-going, kindly-natured young people become crabbed enough after marriage. They lack the grace of God; that is the reason of their difficulties in governing their children. They do not pray enough. They do not come often enough to the sacraments. They are unwilling to inconvenience themselves by joining the rosary society or the temperance society. The necessary spirit of sacrifice is absent from the family; and that spirit is born of the practices of religion.

Furthermore, the spirit of meekness is necessary. The true spirit of correction is not the spirit of authority, but the spirit of meekness. If one's mind is all puffed up with the importance of one's dignity and the greatness of one's merit; if one is always itching to have his authority respected by his children, instead of seeking to be loved by them on account of his devoted affection; if by his harsh voice, his exacting spirit, his cold and distant manner, his stinging rebukes, he means he wishes to keep "his children in their place," they will be neither virtuous nor happy. And least of all will he be happy himself.

After all, dear brethren, there is but one object in bringing up a family: to train souls how to be good children of God. How, if human beings can be kept out of sin in any other way but by much loving kindness, can the Christian religion be a reality? Once St. Philip Neri was surrounded by a troop of noisy boys. Some of his friends, who were annoyed by their shouts and laughter and boish clatter, complained of them to him. "Why, Father Philip," they said, "how can you stand such a noise about you?" The saint smiled and answered, "They might chop wood on my back if it would only keep them out of sin." Let it therefore be the chief object of parents to so correct their children as to gradually remove the defects of character and nature which may cause them to sin. It may sometimes be good to punish with a certain severity, but always without passion; after a little time, at least, of deliberation, and especially in such a way that the child may know that the chastisement is inflicted by one who loves God and his child's soul too much to neglect proper correction.

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CARDINAL NEWMAN ON LOCAL CATHOLIC OPINION.

The attitude which Catholics should assume in the presence of hostile criticism is one of considerable importance. The question we wish to discuss is, what line of conduct we should adopt when Catholicism in general, or Catholic priests and practices in particular, suffer in the eyes of public opinion. In this, as in many other difficult problems, Cardinal Newman's common sense and practical insight will be of great assistance to us. He discusses the question in his ninth lecture on the "Present Position of Catholics in England." At the outset he distinguishes two forms of public opinion: there is, on the one hand, the public opinion which is a matter of mere ideas. It was to do with something abstract; it does not touch real life; it is not based on facts; the judgment formed in connection with it is little more than other abstract ideas associated with it; it is all a matter of stock phrases and parrot cries.

But there is another form of public opinion which he calls real public opinion, and which is based on the knowledge of persons and facts. To this he gives the name of "local opinion," because it has its origin in the opinions formed by persons living in daily contact with one another and because, on that account, it is more likely to be limited to the locality in which we dwell. To the former comparatively little attention need be paid; but the latter is important. To bring out his meaning more clearly he takes a not familiar example. He supposes that one of the metropolitan newspapers contains a leading article against Catholicism and Catholic priests. Up to a certain point Catholicism is nothing but an abstract idea. Catholic priests are nothing more than names. The whole article is nothing more than words, and is therefore harmless.

"Words hurt no one; words cannot hurt us till they are taken up, and believed in the very place where we individually dwell. Ah! this is a very different kind of public opinion! It is local opinion and it concerns us very nearly."

The importance of local opinion for us Catholics in action can scarcely be exaggerated. Listen to Newman's words: "This I would say, Brothers of the Oratory, not only to you, but if I had a right to do so, to the Catholics of England generally. Let each stand on his own ground; let each approve himself his own neighbourhood; if each portion is defended the whole is secured. Take care of the peace and the pounds will take care of themselves. Let the London press alone; do not appeal to it; do not expostulate with it; do not flatter it; care not for public opinion; cultivate local."

The way in which Newman shows how the thing works out in practice is quite humorous and at the same time quite true to life. He takes as examples some of our leading cities like Birmingham, Manchester, Preston, and Liverpool, and with the masterly hand genius outlines the rival workings of public and local opinion in these cities.

"The Birmingham people will say, Catholics are doubtless an infamous set, and not to be trusted, for the Times says so, and Exeter Hall and the Prime Minister, and the Bishops of the Establishment, and such good authorities cannot be wrong; but somehow an exception must be made for the Catholics of Birmingham."

"They are indeed a shocking set at Manchester, Preston, Blackburn, and Liverpool; but however you can account for it, they are respectable men here. . . . In like manner the Manchester people will say, 'Oh, certainly, Popery is horrible, and must be kept down. Still let me give the devil his due, they are a remarkably excellent body of men here, and we will take care no one does them any harm. It is a very different thing at Birmingham; there they have a Bishop, and that makes all the difference; he is a Wolsley all over; and the priests too, in Birmingham are at least one in twelve infidels. We do not recollect who ascertains this, but it was some most respectable man who was far too conscientious and too charitable to slander anyone.'"

Thus as Newman concludes, the charges against Catholics will become a sort of hunt-the-slipper, everywhere and nowhere, and end in sound and fury, signifying nothing.

CHEAP SALVATION. The very latest explanation of non-church attendance is made known to the world via the brainery of Leslie's Weekly. A writer in that interesting sheet gives it as his opinion that "regular church going is virtually out of the question because of its expense-ness" a rare conclusion born of a brilliant mind.

We hear a good deal of the costliness of salvation. Even among Catholics there are those who are everlastingly knocking the grasping priests; we find many people who growl continually about this, that and the other expense. These people never own pews, they never contribute to the monthly collection, if there happens to be one; so far as they are concerned, the church may remain cold and cheerless during the long winter months; the orphan may freeze and starve. Their religion is about as hot as an iceberg and their faith as deep seated as is the patriotism of an army mule.

There is absolutely nothing in all the world so valuable to the soul as the gift of faith. It is worth every dollar contributed to the Church, and the wonder is that the struggle is made such a strenuous one for the men and women who have foregone all the pleasures of the world that the great work may be carried on successfully. Thousands of people go to church Sunday after Sunday, evidently thinking they have done their full duty from a financial viewpoint when they have dropped their little copper penny into

the contribution box. Hundreds there are who cannot afford to rent a seat, though, goodness knows, there are no exorbitant rates; but they have dollars for base amusements and never teny themselves what they consider pleasure no matter what the cost. In order to get money to carry on the work of the Church and charity every conceivable legitimate measure has to be worked, people in this way bringing upon themselves worry and annoyance altogether uncalculated for.

Not a person who is earning a salary in these prosperous times but can afford to give say a dollar a month toward the support of the Church. Were all those who attend Mass every Sunday, thereby making a mild bluff at being Catholics, to do this, we would hear no more concerning the costliness of church going, and there would be no reason over to mention finances from the pulpit.

Try casting your bread upon the waters. It will pay you in time and in eternity.—Catholic Union and Times.

FALSE IDEAS OF HAPPINESS.

"The pursuit of happiness"—what is happiness? Here, again, all depends upon how men accept the term. Is it feasting and rioting? Is it the lust of the eye and the pride of life? If so, what is to become of civilization? Who will deny again that, at least by their actions, some of the population of this great country have accepted this conception of happiness? The shameful records of the divorce courts prove it. The degeneracy, the moral pollution of our great cities give evidence of it. The diminished birth rates, the crowded insane asylums, and hospitals, and poor-houses are all witnesses of it. And it is growing and growing with each succeeding year. Who can deny that paganism is showing its frightful head in a thousand forms all over the land? Who can deny that from the households thousands of voices are calling to the worship of base pleasures with the same formula which destroyed Egypt and Persia, and Greece, and Rome; eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die?

When fashionable preachers have made of God a myth, a blind force; when by their preaching they only succeed in obscuring the certainty of a future life, who is to blame for the logical sequence in infidelity and belief only in the pleasures of the passing hour?

Clear living, honest dealing, voting without bribery and docile observance of law, in that alone is happiness the happiness which conscience alone can bring. This is the watchword, and, please God, we shall shout it one day so loud as to drown forever the shrill cry which to-day leading millions to destruction.—Archbishop O'Connell.

FREQUENT CONFESSION.

As God's grace is the means of our happiness, inasmuch as no one can be truly happy unless united with God, it follows that frequent confession is one of the chief means of becoming and remaining happy, as, together with Holy Communion, it more than anything else leads us and binds us to God. Although frequent confession is so useful and so necessary to our happiness and advancement, it is strangely enough neglected by a great many, and even the fairly good are ignorant with regard to it. This can be best accounted for by the fact that Satan, knowing its very usefulness and necessity to us, does everything in his power to keep us from practising frequent confession. Thus we are led to defer our confession, to put it off for little or no reason, and instead of seeing in it a comfort and consolation we are led to view it as something to be feared and abhorred.

To the good and holy, frequent confession is one of the joys of the soul; for it permits the soul to humble itself, to relieve it of its fears, to purify itself and unite it more closely to God. The habit of mortal sin and frequent confession, we are told by spiritual writers, can not exist in the soul at one and the same time; and as mortal sin is the greatest of evils, separating us as it does from God and maybe forever should we not gladly take this easy means of keeping us united with God here on earth that we may insure ourself union with Him in heaven?

We find time for so many things which do us no special good, and too often in many cases for things that are simply harmful to us. Yet we can find no time to go to confession. It is a happiness, and happiness for time and eternity, and yet there are comparatively few men who go to confession frequently. Now what should we understand by frequent confession? Is it going to confession several times a year? Surely not, when obligation, binding under sin, commands us that we confess at least once a year. Nothing short of going every month, or at the farthest, every second month, should be called frequent confession. It is easy to do this; little time is required; the priests are ever at the call of the people for this important work. As confessors they are the physicians of the soul. As judges of those accusing themselves they are the most merciful and indulgent, and as fathers of those they forgive the kindest and most benign. If anyone will acquire the habit of frequent confession he will find it so comforting he will never give it up. "Taste and see how sweet the Lord is."—Seedlings.

I, your sufferings, cry out to Jesus: "O Divine Crucified One! when my strength leaves me, when Thy cross weighs heavily on me, if I fall, do Thou raise me up."—Abbe Perreyre.

May our Lord Jesus Christ give us more and more of that loving confidence towards St. Joseph that burned so brightly in the hearts of St. Teresa, St. Francis de Sales, and so many glorious or hidden saints! St. Joseph is the patron of hidden lives, obscure virtues, hard work and happy deaths.

MOTHER-LOVE SAVED HIM

Among the cases tried before Judge Wright, in the Criminal Court, Baltimore, recently, was one which was made pathetic by the display of a mother's devotion to her erring son. Charles W. Alls, thirty-eight years old, who looked as if he might have been a tramp, is the son. The love of his mother may rescue him, as it did from the punishment about to be meted out.

When he was taken from the lockup and arraigned before Judge Wright on the charge of disturbing the peace the aged father of Alls was called as a witness against him. Mrs. Alls stood beside her husband while he told the Judge of their son's habits. The old man told him his son, after spending his money for liquor, would return home drunk. Judge Wright could find nothing in the old man's statement to sustain the charge of disturbing the peace. As Mr. Alls declared he was afraid his son would harm him, the Judge said he would require the son to give \$300 bail to keep the peace. "That will keep him in jail and prevent him from annoying you," the Judge said to Mr. Alls, "as he will not be able to furnish the bond."

While her son's fate was thus settled Mrs. Alls had been gazing at him with eyes that showed her pent up love. She tenderly grasped her son's hand as he passed her on his way to the lockup and then she cried pathetically, "That's my boy."

Judge Wright heard the cry and questioned Mrs. Alls about her son. "He's a good boy, Judge," she said, with trembling lips. "He wouldn't harm anyone. He would only stop drinking he would be all right. His father is not in good health and is not patient with him."

When Mrs. Alls asked that her son be given another chance, Judge Wright consented. Then he had Alls brought before him again, and gave him some good advice. Alls told the Judge he would stop drinking. He said that he would swear off, and that if he took an oath he would keep it.

While waiting for the release of the son whose liberty she had obtained Mrs. Alls sat in the court-room weeping.—Sacred Heart Review.

A TEST OF CATHOLIC FAITH AND PIETY.

It may well be questioned whether Catholics in America have had adequate consciousness of the interest they should take in the welfare of the Universal Church—especially in the Sovereign Pontiff, which so vitally sums up in itself the life and the action of the whole organism, and without which the nation, of which the village and the city are mere local manifestations, and without which the village and the city retain neither authority nor life. The life of any part of the Church springs from the life of the whole organism. The glory of any part of the Church is born of the glory of the whole organism, of its wondrous universality over space and time, of its oneness in faith and government, notwithstanding its unity into separate dioceses, every parish, every member of a diocese or a parish is entitled to say—it is mine, the whole Catholic Church, the Catholic Church of all ages and of all people, the Catholic Church whose fount of life is the heart of the Incarnate God, whose record during nineteen centuries is the record of the reign of Christ, whose deeds for truth and justice have ever been so radiant of splendor that naught else is required to testify to the stream of divine life ceaselessly coursing through its human framework.

The Sovereign Pontiff comes most close to every member of the Church. He is the Head of the Church, its prime mover after Christ, its leader and its guide. The interests in which he is concerned are those of the whole Church; the activities which he puts into play have as their object the welfare of the whole Church. To dissociate ourselves from the Sovereign Pontiff is to dissociate ourselves from the Church; it is to cease in our practical life, to be loyal, earnest Catholics. The measure of Catholic faith and piety is, in a meaning most true, the measure of our devotion to the Sovereign Pontiff, the measure of the sympathy and the co-operation we accord him in his labors and trials.—Archbishop Ireland.

Pig or Christian? In his interesting book of confidences ("Between Ourselves") Max O'Rell remarks that even the pigs are happy in France. So far as this world's happiness is concerned, under the Clemencau regime it is vastly more comfortable to be a French pig than a French Christian.—New Zealand Tablet.

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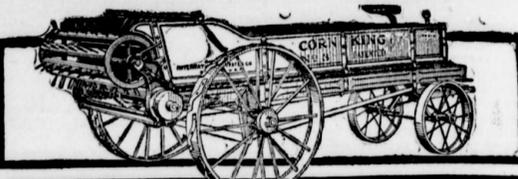
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