

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

FEAST OF ALL SAINTS.

All saints, my dear brethren, and all sinners who attain to eternal life, are closely joined together in the solemnities of these first two days of November. The morrow of All Saints' day is All Souls' day. The joy of paradise and the weariness of the vestibule are both offered to our thoughts and almost at the same time. We quickly leave praying to the saints in glory to begin praying for the sinners in purgatory. And this is a beautiful way of meditating on the future life, for love is too unselfish to tarry long with a happy friend while there is another friend outside the door in a state of great unhappiness.

Holy Church would have us measure our charity for the souls in purgatory by our value of the joys of heaven. And experience tells how very great an effect this has on us, for we see everywhere among Catholics an intense affection for the poor souls waiting at heaven's gate, much intensified by the sights and sounds from within that gate which have been granted us beforehand on the feast celebrated to-day.

Now, there is a strict duty of friendship to be fulfilled in praying for the departed. They are our relatives, our former companions in the journey of life, our former associates in business and in pleasure. Can there be any doubt of this? Do you suppose that the suffering souls were any worse Christians than you are yourselves at this moment? In some cases, yes; but these were exceptions. Nearly all who have gone before us are about the same as those whom they have left after them—poor, weak, sinful mortals, sinning and repenting, stumbling and falling and rising again, and finally disappearing in the grave.

We have every hope that they were forgiven their sins, but what about their punishment? They have paid the great debt, but what about the last farthing—the affections still clinging to passionate indulgence, the lowliness of motives, the gross inclinations chained, indeed, but not tamed? What about the venial sins committed by them, as by ourselves in tens and hundreds every day—the nasty little lies, the mean selfishness, the slothful habits, the greediness at table, the worship of men's opinions, the vanity, the self-conceit, the snappish temper, the silliness and giddiness, the harbored aversion even for relatives, the petty dishonesty—what about all this which we know must be atoned for by them, because like ourselves they were commonplace Christians? Ah! brethren, we ought to have a fellow-feeling for them; we ought to thank God that we can interpose in their behalf. Blessed be the prayers we say for them, true pledges of friendship; blessed the Masses offered for them in this their day of gloom and desolation! How well they realize the truth of the Scripture saying, "Blessed is the man who hath found a true friend."

But there is a yet closer bond between us and the souls in purgatory than that of friendship, however strong that may be. I mean the bond of common guilt. I mean the dreadful fact that we are participators in that guilt of theirs for the imperfect repentance of which they now suffer even after forgiveness. They committed venial sins, but who made them? Who but you, my brethren, their former relations and friends? You provoked them to the anger they suffer for, you poisoned their minds with envy, you failed to teach them rightly if they were your children, you embittered their hearts if they were your parents.

Come forward, then, all of you, and bear your own share of the burden. If not from friendship's love, at least from the urgent call of justice, take a share of the sufferings of the poor souls in purgatory, for you had a share in their guilt. By so doing you will hasten the happy hour of their deliverance, and earn a share in their heavenly joy.

MR. STARBUCK CORRECTS THE BLUNDERS OF A PROTESTANT HISTORIAN.

Professor Figgis, after having, for seven years, in his lectures, accused the Jesuits of authorizing their superiors, at their discretion, to command their subordinates to commit sin, mortal or venial, as the superiors may please, has at last come to acknowledge that he has all this while been propagating, or certainly entertaining, an infamous slander against the Society.

He now acknowledges himself to have discovered that the formula *obligare ad peccatum*, or *obligationem ad peccatum inducere*, "to bind up into sin," has alike, in theological treatises and in monastic rules, one uniform sense, namely, to bind any one to something under such a stress of obligation that neglect of the injunction reaches the point of sin, involves a man in sin, leaves him *obstrictus ad peccatum*, "bound up into sin." He has doubtless also discovered that the formula *obligare ad peccatum* has precisely the same meaning with the formula *obligare sub peccato*, "to bind to anything under pain of sin."

although he had for seven years been laboring under this monstrous misconception of the formula *obligare ad peccatum*, he had not expressed it in his lectures, so that his colleagues had not had the opportunity to set him right. Yet when he at last published his error, in a letter to the Tablet, I do not learn that any Episcopalian sprang to correct him. It is by Catholics that he has finally been convinced of his odious misapprehension.

What should we suppose that an ecclesiastical scholar of this gentleman's presumable rank would do, in examining the Jesuit Constitutions? He finds the superiors authorized on occasion, *obligare fratres ad peccatum*. Being, we may assume, as ignorant of Catholic terminology as Protestant scholars almost invariably are, very nearly as ignorant as they are of Buddhist technicalities, he would naturally at first recoil in great astonishment.

Yet, if he was really a scholar, really a thinker, really an honest man, and really indispensed, as a Christian, to impute to a Christian brotherhood the inconceivable shamelessness of claiming before all the world the right of commanding their members to sin, and that expressly in the name of Christ, the Fountain of Holiness, he would reflect in some such way as this:

"Whatever this unaccustomed formula may mean (unaccustomed to me but doubtless familiar to Catholics) it is plain that it can not be a permission to command sin, since no one who is not of a disordered mind can possibly link together the two absolutely antagonistic ideas of Christ and sin, and command a subordinate in the name of God's Son to do that which he himself recognizes that God and His Son detest.

Are there any Protestant parallels to such an interpretation? "Luther, it is true, declares that neither murder nor adultery, even though both are habitual, interferes with a man's justification, provided that it does not overstep his confidence. Yet Luther does not represent murder and adultery as pleasing to God, or as something to be commanded. On the contrary, he exhorts his followers to lead a blameless life, not as required for their salvation, with which he declares that it has nothing particularly to do, but because it is, so to speak, no more than a handsome compliment to God for His indulgent courtesy to them in justifying them with no peremptory reference to their manner of life.

So also he exhorts his countrymen to go to Rome and cut the throats of the Pope and Cardinals. Yet he does not enjoin this as a desirable sin, but as a holy service, which it will dispense God if they omit, not if they perform.

So also he owns that it was his plan, in conjunction with his syphilitic comrade, Urie von Hutten, to seize on the Papal ambassadors, and thereby scandalously violate the laws of nations. Yet he does not represent this as an expedient sin, which he was to hide, but as a noble service to religion, in which he was to glory. "Everything that we can accomplish against Popedom," says he, "we account lawful for us. This is really more scandalous than if he had said: 'We can not do our holy work of extermination without committing many sins, but after we have rooted out the Papists we can then repent at our leisure.' But although his exhortation is more scandalous even than this, it is not the same.

"So also when Melancthon hopes for the murder of Henry VIII, it is not as a useful sin, but as an acceptable sacrifice to God.

"So also when John Knox glories in the death of Rizzio and of Cardinal Beaton he does not extenuate them as necessary sins, but glories in them as 'just and necessary and godly deeds.' "Likewise when the Protestants throughout France gave solemn thanks in their temples for the assassination of the great Duke of Guise, they did not rejoice as over an advantageous sin, but as over a glorious deed accomplished by divine inspiration. Calvin, it is true, and the noble-minded Duplessis-Mornay, reprobate it, but their ex-communication, headed by Beza exult in it, and declare themselves moved to a holy envy of the perpetrator.

"It is true that Cranmer once gives it as a mark of a good subject that he loves the king no less than he loves God. However, this monstrousness of the obsequious Primate stands out in its own uniqueness of infamy. It can not be correlated with any form or any deformation of Christianity.

"I see then, that the wildest aberrations of Protestantism (and some of its forms have been abominable and loathsome) have never professed to authorize a command to commit sin. What then am I to think of the central and settled authority of the Catholic Church?"

This is worthy of separate consideration.

CHARLES C. STARBUCK, Andover, Mass. SAVING A MASTERPIECE.

What is the most popular picture in the world? Possibly if a referendum were taken on the subject it would be found that a majority would declare in favor of Leonardo da Vinci's sublime masterpiece, "The Last Supper," in the ex-convent of Santa Maria della Grazie at Milan. Yet a year ago it seemed certain that the days of this masterpiece were numbered. For years past the paint had been sealing away from the walls, and some of the figures had become almost unrecognizable. A great art critic wrote a most touching description of this fatal decay under the heading, "The Agony of a Masterpiece," and nobody thought that it would be possible to arrest the work of destruction. But it was decided to make a trial, and this week the artist chosen for the delicate task, Luigi Cavenaghi, has been able to announce that he has succeeded. By a special process invented by himself he has been able to attach the scaling fragments to their original position in the paintings, and little by little he has seen the faces come again out of the void and the dead wall breathe once more with the life and movement infused into it by Leonardo. It is now proposed to save the priceless work of art from the danger of further injury by protecting it with glass.

REFORMING A PARISH.

HOW FATHER WALSH TOOK UP PRACTICAL TEMPERANCE WORK, ANTI-TREATING PLEDGE A SUCCESS.

Rev. R. F. Walsh, rector of the Immaculate Conception Church, Easthampton, Mass., says a writer in the Union and Times, is going after the drink habit in a way which presages its very great diminution if not extinction among the men of his parish. Early in March Father Walsh preached a very strong temperance sermon one Sunday morning, greatly deploring the amount of drunkenness in Easthampton and calling on the men of the parish to join hands to stop it. He called special attention to the modern custom whereby a series of alternating "treats" must occur every time two acquaintances meet in a saloon or anywhere near one. He declared that he believed a large portion of present-day drunkenness would be eliminated could this system be abolished. Father Walsh is a plain-spoken preacher and his words that Sunday morning were easily understood and straight to the point. The congregation was large, especially of the men, and their attention was of the closest. But the climax of that sermon was like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky and was a practical application of the truth much less convenient to indorse than the truth itself. As he brought his sermon to a close, Father Walsh announced that he had drawn up an anti-treating pledge which every man of the parish would be both asked and expected to sign—and keep. He then read the following pledge to the men of that somewhat astounded congregation:

"For the honor of God and our holy faith and for the sake of preventing drunkenness, I promise neither to give nor to accept a treat of intoxicating liquor in a place where drink is sold in Easthampton; and with the grace of God, to be always strictly temperate myself."

PARISH CANVASSER.

Immediately a canvasser of the parish began and during the next two or three weeks the names of more than sixty per cent of the men had been secured to this novel pledge and the movement against liquor treating in Easthampton was given a rising start. For about five months every man of the parish made to get more signers, as Father Walsh was anxious to see how the plan would work out before making another canvass of his people. This trial now having been made, the results have been so satisfactory that during the past two weeks another canvass has been made with the result that there are probably not over 5 per cent of the men in the parish of the Immaculate Conception who are not now enrolled under the provisions of this extraordinary pledge. The results have been so marked that this undertaking by Father Walsh is certain to have a widespread influence for good throughout many avenues of life in Easthampton.

This pledge is printed on a convenient-sized sheet for filing and is not designated as a pledge at all, but as an "anti-treating promise." Below the pledge on the sheet is the blank for the name and for the date of taking, and then follows the "obligations of this pledge," which are thus set forth:

1. "Not to take a treat from another nor to give one myself in any place where intoxicating drink is sold, whether saloon, bar, hotel, drug store, etc."

2. "Not to be guilty of the sin of drunkenness, but to observe the law of God faithfully on all occasions in this matter."

As the canvass of the parish was made it was surprising how readily signatures were secured. A few demurred but in most cases it took little urging to secure the names, even though it meant in many cases casting to the winds a long-established practice.

THE RESULT.

Some people in Easthampton laughed at the idea when Father Walsh first announced his plan, but the results have been surprisingly good. That the signers to the pledge have kept their word remarkably well is certainly true and in consequence liquor drinking in Easthampton has fallen off greatly. Father Walsh declares that case after case is to be cited of men who have not been intoxicated since they took the pledge, who were frequently so before.

Many are the men who now stop for a glass of beer on the way home, get it and go their way still sober, who formerly hung around the bar for an hour or two with their companions and then staggered home in a more or less pickled condition. So well pleased is

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he with the results, that Father Walsh is constantly laying much emphasis upon the keeping of this pledge and believes it is doing more to preserve the sobriety and good morals of his people than any previous undertaking in this direction. Corroboration of this fact is found throughout the town in general and those who laughed at Father Walsh's "freak scheme" are forced to admit that great benefit has been accomplished.

THE DIVINE HARVESTING.

To the apostles asking Him our Lord said: "It is that sower of the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world. And the good seed are the children of the kingdom, and the cockle the children of the wicked one, and the enemy that sowed them, the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. Even as cockle, therefore, is gathered up and burnt with fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all scandals and them that work iniquity and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The picture of the world here given us by our divine Lord, composed, as He shows us, of the good and evil, is easily verified by looking into the human heart. Our hearts are God's favorite field and He sows good seed in them: good thoughts, noble aspirations, fervent love of Him, but Satan comes and sows cockle by wicked temptations which corrupt and, unless eradicated, in time destroys the seeds of virtue which God implanted. What was all fair and beautiful becomes now full of sin and imperfection. Our thoughts if not entirely of God, are at least divided; our aspirations become base and lowly, our love of God cold and indifferent.

And the fault is all our own. Satan is the tempter, it is true, but as God cannot fructify the seeds of virtue without our co-operation, neither can Satan produce vice, so we are his ready tools and helpers and assist him to accomplish our destruction. A constant trifling with danger, and exposing ourselves to attack by neglect of prayer and the sacraments, make us an easy prey to our enemy. Self-love, which prompts us to think only of ourselves or of others for love of self, to the exclusion of the love and consideration of God, is the chief cause of our downfall; a momentary gratification of some base passion is for the time preferred to happiness for all eternity; some temporary indulgence of greed for wealth or power, come how they may, is the exchange for the treasures and glory of heaven; a mess of pottage for our birthright, the slavery of sin and the yoke of Satan, in a word, are preferred by the sinner to the freedom and happiness of the children of God and the joys of His heavenly kingdom. We sleep and our enemy comes and sows cockle, sows corruption in our hearts, and we sow the seeds of death as long as we remain in the state of mortal sin. We have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, for every faculty is practically dead when the soul is influenced by sin, for its use is only misuse breeding destruction and death when not accompanied by the grace of God.

These magnificent gifts of God, therefore, the mind and its powers, the soul and its faculties, are the means the sinner gives to Satan to turn him from being the wheat of God's grace into the cockle, the chaff of corruption, that one day must be cast into the fire. Let us not forget, God will say to the wicked, "Depart from Me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire."

Therefore does our Lord bid us cut loose from whatever endangers our souls. "If thy hand scandalizes thee," He says, "cut it off; it is better for thee to enter life maimed than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that cannot be quenched." Nor will it be for a time, but fixed and eternal, as the soul is immortal, nor is there liberation or escape, "for whosoever the tree falls," says Isaiah, "there shall it lie."

The Church, our infallible guide, places the existence of hell among her dogmas and has condemned as many as sixteen centuries ago those denying it. The fathers taught it and the martyrs died for it, preferring, as they said, to suffer transient to escape eternal pain. Nor is it unreasonable to think that since the good must justly be rewarded, the bad as justly must be punished, and that God Who rewards as a God, must punish as a God. Treating of this matter St. Thomas says that man was created by God with an intellect and given free will, so that he could attain his ultimate end either eternal happiness by good works, or eternal misery by bad. But life is a way and must have an end, says the saint, and this end must be contained within the limits of this life; otherwise man would be always on the way and never at his journey's end—never reach his Father's house, never

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receive his life's reward, and man feels he ought receive his rest after the heat of the day has been borne, the soldier his laurel after successfully fighting the battle, and he does so, or why should God have filled us with this desire if we could never attain it? The good, he concludes, must, therefore, be rewarded and the bad punished.

We need not pause here to consider what are the rewards of the just. Suffice it to recall the testimony of St. Paul who declares eye hath not seen nor heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the joys that God hath in store for those who serve Him; nor need we delay on pondering over the pains of the wicked and the miseries of hell, where the worm never dieth. It is for us to reflect and look into our hearts and see whether they are blooming with the wheat of virtue, or are they full of cockle and of sin and of the seeds of death.—Bishop Colton in Catholic Union and Times.

THINK WELL OF YOUR CHURCH.

Be glad you are a member of the Catholic Church. Take pride in its activities, social and religious. If defects are pointed out, look for the goods things that balance against them. You will be in better condition to help in the removal of defects if any really exist. And you will escape the peril and the unpleasantness of seeing only the dark side. Think well of the people with whom you are associated in the Church work. Believe the very best you can of them. Very likely the good is more nearly true of them than the bad. If you hear anything to their discredit, try and remember something you know that shows them in a better light. Do not encourage a repetition of scandalous stories. It is not a suppressing of truth. It is more

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