

The One Thing You
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FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

THE POWER OF GRACE.

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh."—Gal. v. 17.

The two-fold principle in man, of which the Apostle here speaks, is a matter of our common experience. We are all conscious of two tendencies within us, one which tries to drag us down to what is material, sensual and evil, and another which seeks to raise us to what is noble, elevating, and spiritual. The former comes from our physical being, from the nature which we have in common with the brute creation; the other is our moral sense, our reason, our conscience.

It is the power of distinguishing between right and wrong which makes the great difference between us and the lower animals. You may teach a dog not to steal, but it will only be through fear of punishment. But we have a sense of responsibility to a power higher than ourselves. This is the voice of conscience within us, guiding, checking, upbraiding us if we have done what is wrong, or, on the other hand, approving us if we have done a good action.

The history of the human race is that of a constant struggle between two principles. They are the two masters of which our Lord speaks in the Gospel of today, and each is striving for the ascendancy over us. Which are you serving; the flesh or the spirit, God or the devil? This is the practical question for each one of us. For there is no half way. We cannot serve both of these masters. You cannot be half the friend of God and half the slave of the devil. Either you are now in the state of grace, the child of God, an heir of heaven, or you are held captive by the devil, and should you die at this moment he would claim you as his own.

But, perhaps, you doubt whether you are in the battle-field for the conflict of which the Apostle speaks—the lust of the flesh against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, so that you do not the things that you would. That is, though in your heart you would rather listen to the promptings of your better and nobler nature, you sometimes it seems as if the flesh had the upper hand, and you are tempted to think there is no use in trying any longer.

Take courage and be consoled by the experience of St. Paul. Thrice he was caught the Lord that a grievous temptation might depart from him, and he received the answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity." No one has described more vividly than St. Paul this conflict within us. "The good which I will," he says, "I do not, but the evil which I will not that I do. For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man, but I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin. Unhappy man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And he answers: "The grace of God by Jesus Christ our Lord." If, then, you are tempted—if even you have fallen, be not discouraged. God's grace can save you, God's grace can enable you to triumph over your lower nature, if you have done those things that you would not. Despair not, then, but, trusting in God's mercy and in the power of His grace, arise and renew the struggle. Victory will crown your efforts in the end, if only you persevere in the fight, for "he that persevereth unto the end shall be saved."

A MONSTROUS CALUMNY.

A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN ON THE CHARGE THAT PAPAL INFALLIBILITY INVOLVES PAPAL DEIFICATION.

During the Vatican Council a series of letters appeared signed "Pomponio Leto," arguing very strongly against the definition of Papal infallibility, and against the truth of the doctrine itself. Professor Nielsen, of Copenhagen, says that it is now understood that the author was a Bishop, who, after the Council having accepted the definition, and having skillfully concealed his authorship of the letters, was made a Cardinal.

However this may be, "Pomponio Leto" takes one position, adopted also by Professor Nielsen, which seems to me strangely extravagant.

Referring to a projected petition of the minority of the Bishops to the Pope, that His Holiness would desist from defining his own ex-cathedra infallibility, Pomponio Leto remarks that it would seem strange that the Holy Father should have shared together his sons of the episcopate into his own house in order to declare his Apotheosis, and that he should then be entreated by those very Bishops to give over the purpose for which he had assembled them.

Apotheosis means deification. Therefore, according to Pomponio Leto, the Pope had assembled the Bishops in order to deify him, or in order to ratify his deification of himself.

Now does Pius, in the Vatican Council, define himself as God? We know that he does not, and that the charge is a monstrous calumny.

God is infinite. Has the Pope defined himself as infinite? Such a question requires no answer. We know that the Pope is limited, alike in knowledge and in power, and that after death he has no authority whatever over the Church Militant.

God is sinless. Is there the faintest intimation in the Pastor aeternus that the Pope is sinless? We know that there is not. We know that inexorable usage requires the Pope to make confession to a priest at least once a week, so that if he has fallen into mortal sin he may be absolved, and if he has not, this conscience may be the better assured by the help of an adequate guide.

God is ignorant of nothing, great or small. The Pope, like other men, is ignorant of most things going on in the invisible world. As Gorres remarks, the Church cannot certainly

know the truth of any post apostolic miracle or revelation.

When she authenticates one, this only signifies that she judges the evidence for it such as to make it unwarrantable to oppose it precipitately or boisterously. The faithful are not thereby restrained from prosecuting farther inquiry and examining fresh evidence affirmatively or negatively. Of this abundant evidence is given by the eminent Bollandist Congregation of the Jesuits in their great work of the "Acta Sanctorum."

Nor does the Pope know more than another man of what is going on in other visible worlds. He can pronounce no sentence concerning the inhabitants of Venus or Mars, and if there are such, he has no authority over them. If we suppose that there has been a Fall and a Redemption in either planet, or both, it has been under wholly different conditions from those of earth, conditions over which the Pope has no control.

Nor, on earth, does the Pope pretend to authority except over the baptized. That is, about two thirds of mankind are as yet confessedly beyond his jurisdiction, which is why the Inquisition condemned those who said that he could give away heathen crowns.

Nor, within Christendom, does he claim infallibility of policy or administration. Pius IX., speaking through the Swiss Bishops, has expressly disavowed both.

Nor is even doctrinal infallibility an inherent attribute of his being. When an absurd theological professor, in France lately declared that the Pope is infallible in everything that he says, at least on religion, the Bishop promptly and rightly removed him.

Nor, says that most learned of the Popes, at least of all later Popes, Benedict XIV., is the Pope, writing simply as a doctor of theology, entitled to any other acceptance of his propositions than results from their intrinsic force.

Nor even, says Pope Benedict, does he blind faith speaking as Bishop of Rome, or as Archbishop of the Roman province, or as Primate of Italy, or even as Patriarch of the West, although this includes nine-tenths of the Church. He binds faith only when, speaking as Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, he defines a doctrine of faith or morals. He may not, says the decree, propound any new doctrine. He may only define more precisely a doctrine already included in the revelation given to the Apostles.

Protestants, it is true, maintain that Catholics have received various doctrines unknown to the primitive Church, even embryonically. This is a controversy of fact. Certain it is that the Pastor aeternus emphatically denies the validity of any attempt to set up a doctrine not already received in the Church, substantially, although it may need more explicit development. As the Chief Pontiff and the Council clearly know what they mean to define, Henry C. Lea's ludicrous suppositions to the contrary, only prove that whatever merits this gentleman may have, knowledge of fundamental Roman Catholic apprehensions is not one of them. Infinite knowledge of detail and utter blankness as to principles are perfectly compatible things.

Now, in view of the fact that the Pope owns himself a limited, sinful, transitory son of earth, liable to error in his policy and administration, not having even doctrinal infallibility except in the rare act of a dogmatic definition—which only an occasional Pope exercises—how monstrous it is to call this carefully, indeed anxiously, guarded and restricted definition an act of self-deification!

Most Protestants hold that every Apostle is doctrinally infallible in everything that he says. Do they thereby defy the Apostles? Yet this is unambiguously more than Catholics claim for the Pope. Moreover, they commonly hold that every command of every Apostle concerning the Church is of perpetual binding force, which Catholics deny, holding that the Power of the Keys, though not the right of declaring new doctrine, has descended to the episcopate. Yet assuredly Protestants would not allow that they defy the apostles. How much less, then, Catholics the Pope!

Justin McCarthy unduly explains Papal infallibility as involving divine inspiration. Now the eminent Jesuit Perrone expressly says: "Never has it been taught that infallibility is given by way of inspiration."

No wonder then that Arthur Hutton, although having abandoned the Catholic Church, thinks Protestants rather extravagant over so subordinate a question as the precise organ of Church infallibility. This extravagance, we see, seems in some to amount to blasphemous slanderousness.—Rev. Charles C. Starbuck in the Sacred Heart Review.

RELIGION AND AFFECTION.

Do not imagine, as some do, that when the love of God enters into a man, his perfection consists in the hardening of natural affections. Whenever the spirit of devotion or piety narrows or contracts the heart, and makes our homes to be less bright and happy; when it makes parents imperious to children, or children unaffectionate to parents, or lessens the sympathy of brothers and sisters, or chills the warmth of friendship—whenever the piety of religion, or fervor, or of piety has the effect of lessening the natural affections be sure that such piety is either perverted or not true.

The best son will make the best priest, and the best daughter will make the best nun; that is to say, the best training for the most perfect character, as a disciple or a handmaid of Christ, is to be found in the natural affections of home. Love to kindred friends, with all tenderness due to them, and not only friends, but to your enemies, to those who are displeasing to you, to those who offend and treat you spitefully—this is the fruit and proof of true and happy piety.—Cardinal Manning.

For what does my heart beat? What is its main concern in life, its absorbing interest?

HIS WIFE WAS THE CONVERT MAKER.

The force of my wife's good example in attending scrupulously to her church duties was the most important factor in my conversion.

My father died, leaving me to the care of my grandparents, when I was only four years old. My grandfather was a well-meaning Protestant, religiously inclined, but very bigoted toward Catholics. He was what might be termed a lay preacher, often occupying the pulpit of different denominations, being naturally an eloquent talker. He frequently took me along with him to take notes of his sermons. I have many of his writings left, showing the views he held in opposition to the Catholic teachings.

Having been brought up in such an atmosphere I naturally became imbued with his ideas, which made me bitterly antagonistic towards everything Catholic. My grandfather died when I was fifteen years old, and my mother and grandmother were more or less indifferent towards religion, but strictly opposed to Catholicity. Had he lived, my grandfather intended that I should study for the Protestant ministry. While a boy I attended Sunday-school quite regularly, but on growing into manhood I seldom went to church. However, I always had a desire to be a Christian and to belong to the true Church. I did not become a Catholic until one year after I was married. I obtained a dispensation, Dr. Moeller, Archbishop of Cincinnati, (who afterwards received me into the Church), asked me why I would not become a Catholic. I told him that I thought the Catholics were wrong, and hence I could not conscientiously become one. He did not press me farther. The hardes thing for me to do was to sign the application allowing my wife to have the children brought up in the Catholic faith, and afterwards had many arguments over it. My wife attended to her church duties regularly and I did not interfere. I frequently went as far as the cathedral steps with her to confession, but would not enter, as I wished to show my outward disapproval. Heretofore I had never knelt down to say my night prayers, but on seeing my wife kneeling in prayer it naturally caused me to follow her example.

One Sunday I told her that I intended to visit the different churches, to see which I liked best, and to join that one. Finally, after much consideration, I told her I should like to have her go to the Episcopal church with me, it being the closest allied to the Catholic. However, she refused the Catholic. However, she refused the Catholic.

About that time I had charge of an exhibit at the exposition in Cincinnati and was attracted by the religious exhibit, which I think included most of the Protestant denominations. While examining this exhibit I noticed a chart giving statistics showing the numerical strength of the various Protestant denominations and of the Catholic Church. It was very interesting to the strength and universality of the Catholic Church. I desired further information, and asked my wife to get me a history of the Catholic Church from the beginning, as I wanted to read the lives of the different popes. She obtained a Student's History from the late Archbishop Elder, and I read it with interest. Rev. Robert Doyle (now deceased), then pastor of St. Edward's Church, gave my wife a copy of Cardinal Gibbons' "Faith of Our Fathers," with the remark that I would want to become a Catholic before reading the book through. His prediction became true, for before I had read half of it I most earnestly desired to become a Catholic and most impatiently awaited my instruction and reception into the Church. I had seen the light of faith.

The good Father's and my wife's prayers must have helped me. I was received into the Church by Father Moeller, now Archbishop, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and in honor of the same I have placed my family under the protection of the Blessed Virgin.

I have two sons now studying for the priesthood, and my daily prayer is that Almighty God may grant them a true vocation for non-Catholic mission work in this archdiocese.

I wish to share with my separate brethren the blessings I have received.—George Ignatius McCullough in The Missionary.

Geneva up Calvin.

The disestablishment of the Church of Geneva, now ratified by popular vote, is an event of historic (not to say antiquarian) interest rather than of political or religious importance. It is significant that out of 25,150 electors inscribed on the rolls, not more than 14,476, or less than three-fifths of the whole, exercised their right of suffrage. Of these 7,653, or less than a third, voted for the suppression of the budget des cultes, but as they exceeded the opponents of change by 834 votes, they are to have their way—a fact which throws some useful light on the value of the referendum as a means of gauging public opinion. At any rate, the Church of Calvin's foundation could not, in its native home, find enough support to retain its position as the Church of the state.—The Guardian.

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THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.

"Whereas, Ignorance of the truth is the chief cause of the religious indifference so frequently met with among Catholics; and
Whereas, Misconception of Catholic doctrine is the source of prejudice against the Church among so many of our fellow-citizens."

This is the preamble of a resolution, made by the Federation of Catholic Societies recently at Indianapolis, inspiring the dissemination of Catholic books and periodicals, so that religious truth may be made diffusive of itself. The resolution is a splendid truism. Truth is essentially so beautiful, so forceful, so valuable, that its possession is the richest treasure for the mind enamored of its tenant, and of the soul lit by its flashing. Ignorance is abhorrent for its ugliness, its wretched infirmity, its nothingness; it is negative in itself and negating in its influence. Truth is the mind's life, the soul's hope; while ignorance is the death of intellectuality and the forbidding parent of despair. Truth is doing the grand work of the world as well as of heaven, and ignorance is every day non-progressive and destructive. Truth, without which education is a curse, life a riddle, and our destiny inexplicable. Truth, so constant in its parts, so majestic in its bearing; so logical in its conclusion, that it is the very name of God Eternal! How abominable, then, is the ignorance of a Catholic of that all powerful truth of which the Church is the font! How terrible is its destructive character in confirming prejudice. Catholic ignorance is the confirmation of Protestant prejudice, and stupidly damnus where truth should easily prevail. In this regard we find prejudice the result of ignorance; ignorance of our doctrine always comes first. Very often he hates what we detest—misconceptions of our teaching, as far from everything we entertain as salutary as are the poles apart. In conversions we find that almost all the work of the teacher consists in undoing the absurdities engendered by mistaken beliefs. For instance, many Protestants believe that we must take the Pope's word for the number of the stars; they draw no distinction between our Holy Father in his capacity as a scholar, in matters outside of faith and morals, and his infallible power expressed in dogma and doctrine. When argument gives the scope of Papal infallibility, and the conquering reason thereby, the teacher receives an "amen" as ready as it is humble. So in many other questions. Ridiculous fancies take the place of solemn facts and bad men of mighty principles, and conclusions are drawn therefrom so murderous of Catholic truth that in their disdain for it, as they conceive it, the devil ingeniously hides the true character of the falsehood of heresy. They regard Catholics as torpid, whereas sound philosophy marks every step of their theological progress.

With blessing feet, the Catholic devotee follows his Saviour to Calvary, often 'mid the taunts and jeers of the mob similar to those which hooded and hounded Him Who is "the Way, the Truth and the Life."

This following of the cross, now as in the olden time, is a reproach.

Now that men have not Christ to crucify, they crucify His truth by misrepresenting its tenets, by mocking the practices of its followers. Good books will do much to set things aright by undoing indifference, for Truth is absolute, and by destroying prejudice in a proper enunciation of our principles. They will tell men who want to know what Catholicity is and what we are; they will prove the fallacy of liberal Christianity, another name for indifference, by showing that it makes a great difference what a man believes for practice is animated by doctrine, and the man who thinks that "whatever is, is right," blasphemes His Maker in believing that the God of Truth can be served with a lie. Good books and papers will bring God's blessings on the house where they enter, for they are in very truth angelic heralds of divine law.—Buffalo Catholic Union and Times.

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