

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

Catholic Columbian.

Here is a lay-sermon for young men by a young man who is a reader of these columns—a lesson on the value of time and opportunity that should be taken to hear, since the hour and the man combined are destiny. Sometimes the golden moment slips away because we are unheeding. Be vigilant, and grasp yours while you may.

A Young Man to Young Men.
 "What are you doing?" is a question as often asked, perhaps, as the friendly one, "How are you?" or "How do you do?" The reply is frequently, "Nothing," or "Killing time," and while it is a sad reflection and commentary upon one's self and country to have nothing to do, it is ten thousand times sadder to be "killing time," to be throwing away one's life in chasing phantoms and delusions, or realizing, when too late—

How pleasure, like the passing wind,
 Blows by, and leaves us naught behind
 But grief at last:
 How still our present happiness
 Seems, to the wayward fancy, less
 Than what is past.

It is a misapprehension, however, for any one to think that he is "killing time" by doing nothing or wasting it in idleness. Nothing but bitterness and regret follows wasted hours and lost opportunities; and, therefore—

O! let the soul's slumber break,
 Arouse its senses and awake,
 To see how soon
 Life, with its glories, glides away,
 And the stern footstep of decay
 Comes stealing on.

No, no, young man, it is time that is killing you, everything, everybody—whitening heads, dimming eyes, enfeebling minds and bodies, and bearing all rapidly, remorselessly, toward the grave and decay.

Decide at once to fight the battle of life earnestly, to capture the forts and outposts, to fortify its weak places, to garrison and protect its borders. Do not wait for sight to teach you caution, nor for hearing to teach you apprehension, but be up and doing, struggling to accomplish something for yourself and posterity, and to leave, as Longfellow says—

Foot prints that, perhaps, another,
 Following or like a solemn march,
 A form and shape, a shadow,
 Seem, shall take heart again.

Whatever your vocation, do your duty: be it in the field or factory, at the altar or the bar, in the pursuit of wealth or knowledge, do your duty, first, last, always; for in its faithful performance lies your greatest reward and satisfaction, since, in the final judgment, "Every man's good deeds will be declared, and his most secret sins disclosed; and as no elevation of rank will then give a title to respect, no obscurity of condition shall exclude the guilty from public shame; and before Jehovah 'Opulence will find itself no longer powerful; poverty no longer weak; birth no longer distinguished, and manners no longer pass unnoticed."

Do not procrastinate: the present is the time for action. "To-morrow may never come." "To-morrow," as saith the immortal bard of Avon, "is a period nowhere to be found in all the hoary registers of time, unless perchance in the fool's calendar." The past lies fathoms down and is cherished only for its memories; the future is uncertain. Therefore "act in the living present." For, in the language of the Christian poet, Reginald Heber, "Life bears us on like a mighty river and our joys and our griefs are alike left behind us. We may be shipwrecked, but we can not anchor; our voyage may be hastened, but it can not be delayed; whether rough or smooth, the river hastens toward its home, till the roaring of the ocean is in our ears and the tossing of the waves is beneath our keel and the land lessens from our eyes, and we take our last leave of the earth and its inhabitants, and of our further voyage there is no witness but the Infinite and Eternal."

Aim high, and be not satisfied with the low and medium; aspire to great things and worthily accomplish them. Be like Alexander, who, being asked in his youth to contend for a prize in the Olympic game, answered: "Yes, if I have kings to contend with." Enter the arena of life determined to succeed, fully equipped for the fierceness of its battles and the bitterness of its struggles. Achieve honorable success at all hazard and at any cost, but be victorious. Be assured in the words of Stobaeus, that "No slumber seals the eye of Providence," and that in due time the reward of diligence and application will crown the efforts of the day's toil and the burning of the midnight lamp.

The ambitious young man desiring to succeed worthily, is engaged every moment in a fresh pursuit. He allows unprofitable moments to register their own decay or to pass unobserved or unimproved, but grasps life's instant business with avidity, knowing "What is becoming is honorable and what is honorable is becoming." Neither does he forget the utterance of a celebrated Roman:—"Justice consists in doing no injury to men; decency in giving them no offence," and he knows that to transgress this precept brings punishment and grief. Impurity and false promises may tempt him to falter for an instant, but only for an instant; for true courage, true manhood, will bring him to recollection and make him redouble his efforts in his resolve to achieve success.

Keep out of Government Service.
 In a recent interview Secretary Morton, referring to the matter of the civil service, said:

"Most undoubtedly the greatest harm that could be done to a young

man or woman would be to place either of them in the service of Uncle Sam. Any ambition they may have fostered will simply die of inanition and they will become mere automatons like many other persons in the departments here."

This is strictly true, and should be kept in mind by the young men or women who hunger for government positions. Just what is the cause of it no one can say, but a few years of employment in the government service seem to unfit the employee for any active work in other pursuits. Washington is full of examples of lost ambition, sapped vitality and incapacity to work hard in private institutions. Possibly the ease of Government labor and the short hours have something to do with it. But even this will not account for the peculiar deterioration of the government office holder. The first taste of civil service employment seem to affect him as the first use of a "deadhead" ticket affects some railway passengers. They are forever afterward reluctant to pay the schedule rate of fare.

The best advice to be given to any young man who is asking for government employment is an admonition to let it alone. Work in the national civil service is one of the peculiar mental and moral maladies of the century—unclassified by the physicians, perhaps, but nevertheless a real and distinctive disease.

A Correspondent Answered.

A Toledo reader of *The Columbian* inquires whether a Catholic young man can join the Young Men's Christian Association without placing his faith in peril, and also asks what and why secret societies are opposed by the Catholic Church.

The latter part of the last inquiry was adequately answered in our issue of April 4. In general, membership is forbidden to Catholics in those societies which have chaplains, rituals and religious ceremonies, and in all other associations which require from members an oath that they will not disclose, even to their ecclesiastical superiors and spiritual guides, the nature of the organizations; or which bind those who join them, even by promise, without an oath, to blind obedience, no matter what orders are given. In matter of doubt, whether this or that society comes under the ban of the Church, a Catholic who contemplates joining such associations should consult his confessor or pastor on the subject.

The answer to our correspondent's first question depends on circumstances. Given a branch of the Y. M. C. A., all of whose members are morally upright, free from anti-Catholic prejudices and devoid of proselytizing tendencies, a Catholic young man of staunch faith would, perhaps, expose his religion to little risk in joining that particular branch. The difficulty would be to find such an association; and, generally speaking, the atmosphere of non-Catholic organizations is anything but salutary to Catholic faith.

With the existence of a flourishing Catholic Club at Toledo, what reason, though, has any socially-inclined Catholic young man for affiliating with a non-Catholic society?

Stray Chips of Thought.

Good luck is often bad luck in disguise.

There are some men in the world who don't work their brains hard enough to convince people that they have any.

Nothing flatters a man more than to read in some authority something that he thinks he has thought.

Kind little acts are of the same blood as great and holy deeds.

To speak the truth and perform good offices are two things that resemble God. * * * Every man ought to speak and act with such perfect integrity that no one could have reason to doubt his simple affirmation.

Action and self-renunciation lead alike to happiness; for he who either acts or denies himself reaps the harvest of both virtues. Right action, undertaken heedless of consequences, is indeed renunciation.

The effect of a man's actions must be known; he can not hide them, and they will be felt for good or evil. He may bury the causes of his acts so deep in his bosom that they may never be known; but their effects cannot be confined to such narrow limits. They must be felt and seen; and therefore he "should be as careful of his words as his actions and be as far from speaking as from doing ill."

A man may find as much pure delight among his books as elsewhere. There he may become acquainted with the past and present, ancient and modern, philosopher and statesman; there he may find, as was said by the mightiest mind of modern times, Lord Bacon's, whose writings are said to contain all the wisdom of the ancients—that "studies nourish youth, delight old age, are the ornament of posterity, the solacement and refuge of adversity." He will find that industry effects everything; that eminence is not the result of accident, but of hard, untiring labor; that everything depends upon industry and application. "Success in every art, no matter what may be the natural talent, is always the reward of industry and pains." Had Cicero and Demosthenes been content to remain as they were, had they not persevered to improve, to go forward, to achieve something, Rome and Athens would have benefited little by their genius and "the world would never have known their fame." They would have been lost in the undistinguished crowd that sank to oblivion around them.

No young man should remain idle when there is so much to be accomplished. Every hour should be spent profitably and advantageously, for to waste an hour, or even a minute, means perhaps the loss of the single golden opportunity of life, to grasp which would be of greater moment than to conquer kingdoms and live in luxury upon their spoils. Let him be imbued with the principles of good faith and moral obligations, carrying in his heart a touch of humanity; and when old age arrives it will be grateful and resplendent, full of joy and satisfaction.

J. P. B.

AN HOUR WITH A SINCERE PROTESTANT.By Rev. J. P. M. S.
XXXII.

TEMPTATIONS OF CONVERTS.
 After having become convinced of your duty to submit to the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, still more after having done so with the help of God's special grace, you must not wonder if you are at once assailed with all kinds of temptations unknown to you before. The arch-enemy of God and man hates nothing so much as the Church of Jesus Christ. Hence he most willingly grants everything, and is, as it were, willing to make great sacrifices, if by doing so he can keep persons out of the true Church. In the Roman Catholic Church he recognizes the mystical body of Jesus Christ, and that infallible and all powerful means instituted by Him, to lead men into the possession of heaven, from which he and all the fallen angels are forever excluded. These temptations and annoyances, therefore, must be for you one more convincing proof that the Roman Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ. Don't be disturbed by them nor dispute with them. As Pilate said: "What I have written, I have written"; so also say you to the tempter: "What I have resolved to do, and to do, I have resolved." Be faithful in your prayers, and in due time God will command the storm of temptations to abate. The clouds of doubts and perplexities will disperse and a great calm will ensue. Whilst the enemy intends to harm and ruin you, God wishes you to have a chance to prove your fidelity and generosity, and thus to take firmer and deeper root in the fertile soil of holy Church. To confirm and encourage you the more against possible temptations and annoyances call to mind and convince yourself of the following truths.

XXXIII.

TO TRULY PLEASE GOD.

In order to truly please God we must not only abstain from evil, but also do the positive will of God; but to do the will of God we must learn it; to learn it we must make use of that means which He Himself has instituted to acquaint men with His holy will. This means is the Church founded by Jesus Christ, which you have become convinced is the Roman Catholic Church. Consequently, every one who in all earnestness wishes to do God's holy will, and thus become pleasing in His sight, must listen to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

XXXIV.

The question is not, whether we have all the same God, whom we all intend to serve; but whether we serve Him in the manner He Himself requires; for only when a servant does what his master demands of him can he expect to please him and to be rewarded by him.

XXXV.

DECEIVING ONE'S SELF.

Whatever endearing expressions a child may make use of, and however generously and sincerely it may try to please its parents and make them loved and honored by others, it can never truly please them as long as it neglects or refuses to do that one thing which they, above all others, require of it. So neither can any one truly please God, however great and generous his endeavors may be, if he neglects or refuses to submit to the authority of holy Church, or neglects to clear up his doubts as to whether the Church he belongs to, is or is not, the Church founded by Jesus Christ. Such a one only deceives himself and allows himself to be deceived by others, and all the good works he may imagine he is performing are scarcely more than mere rubbish in the sight of God.

XXXVI.

When appearing before the judgment seat of our Lord, one may enumerate all the good actions he has performed and call upon the whole world as a witness of the irreproachable and edifying life he has led; but all will avail him nothing, if he did not submit to the authority of the true Church, or, by his own fault, did not come to the full knowledge of it. Our Lord will tell him, that for the good works he has performed, and for the morally good and edifying life he has led, he has already received his reward on earth by having been kept free from the attacks of violent temptations, by having had success in his undertakings, by having enjoyed the esteem and love of his fellow-men, by having been praised and extolled by them even after death; but that he cannot expect a reward in heaven, which is reserved only for the obedient children of the true Church.

XXXVII.

DOING WHAT IS RIGHT.

The saying that it does not matter what a man believes provided he does

what is right, involves a contradiction. It implies that a man may believe things to be true and do just what is contrary to what he believes. Besides, "doing what is right" includes also "listening to the Church." Hence, no one, knowing the true Church of Christ, and, after all, not submitting to her, can say that he does "all that is right." He transgresses wilfully and continually a most important commandment of God by not submitting and not listening to the Church, and is, in fact, a very great sinner in the eyes of God, whatever he may be in the eyes of men, should he even rival the Pharisees of old in external righteousness.

XXXVIII.

STIFLING RELIGIOUS DOUBTS.

"Out of the Roman Catholic Church" there is no salvation for those who know her to be the true Church founded by Jesus Christ, and, after all, refuse to submit to her; neither for those who doubt whether the church they belong to is the true Church, but neglect to clear up their doubts, and thus remain by their own fault ignorant of the true Church founded by Jesus Christ, who has solemnly declared: "He who will not listen to the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican" (Matt. xviii. 17), and, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me" (Luke x. 16). Whatever edifying lives such persons may lead, they cannot be saved. They will be lost, not on account of the positive evil they have done, but on account of what they have omitted to do. There is good reason to suspect that a great deal of the zeal at present manifested among non-Catholics and their craze for performing works of charity, and in this, if possible, to outdo Catholics, is reducible to an endeavor to stifle religious doubts. When such doubts assail them they look at themselves; compare their good and moral lives with the bad and immoral lives led by so many Catholics; heap up before the eyes of their soul all the good and charitable works they have performed and are yet performing. Thus, pleasing and admiring themselves, they dismiss all annoying doubts as to whether they are members of the true Church, or not; and, being satisfied with themselves, they conclude that God, too, must be satisfied with them. Besides, the enemy of God and man is only too anxious to confirm such persons in their false peace, security and self-delusion, and to succeed herein still better he is most willing to play the part of an angel of light, filling their hearts with false and counterfeit sentiments of devotion and piety, urging them on to practise those moral virtues towards which they feel naturally inclined. Thus he will succeed in preventing them from inquiring into the doctrines of the Church, and so will keep them out of her pale, and, consequently, out of the way of salvation.

XXXIX.

BAD LIVES OF CATHOLICS.

It is unreasonable and unjust to judge the Roman Catholic Church by the bad lives of many unfaithful members. Catholics are bad only in as far as they do not live as Catholics. The Catholic Church is a good tree, and as such can bring forth only good fruit; but as you can find bad fruit on the best tree, so you will find also bad fruit on the good tree of the Catholic Church. But, as bad fruit on a good and healthy tree does not owe its being bad to the good tree, but to some bad influence from without, so the bad conduct of so many Catholics is due, not to the Church, but to some bad influence outside the spirit of the Church. He who lives up fully to the teaching and direction of the Holy Roman Catholic Church will infallibly become a saint. All saints whose sanctity God has made known by miracles were children of the Holy Roman Catholic Church without a single exception, and saints are nothing else but the fruit of the good tree of the Catholic Church.

XL.

MORAL GOODNESS OF ACTIONS.

It is also unreasonable and unjust to judge and measure the moral goodness of actions by what they appear to be. The intention of the heart is the only measure for our good, as for our bad deeds. Actions little objectionable in the eyes of men may be highly displeasing in the sight of God, and actions very objectionable in the eyes of men may be little, or not at all, objectionable in the sight of God. Slaves of sensual passions, whose very appearance is highly disgusting, are certainly less hateful in the sight of God, than persons intoxicated with pride, however respectable and even praiseworthy may be their external conduct. Who could doubt that the public sinner in the temple, even before he so humbly asked for God's pardon, was far less displeasing to God than the proud Pharisee, notwithstanding the latter's dazzling exterior righteousness. Hence, those who proudly refuse to become children of the Holy Catholic Church, although they know, or at least suspect, that she is the true Church of Christ, are certainly far greater sinners before God, than Catholics who willingly submit to the Church, but are not free from sins of sensuality. Sensuality has at least the excuse of weakness; not so pride, refusing to submit to the authority of the Church. This explains also why, in many cases, God does not deprive slaves of sensuality of the gift of faith, whilst it is often withdrawn as punishment for intellectual pride.

XLI.

INTELLECTUAL PRIDE.

As it is wrong to judge an individual, so it is also wrong and unjust to judge families, societies, and even whole nations by their mere external conduct, which may be pleasing, polite and engaging, but cannot be called truly good unless its motive be the desire to do the holy will of God as made known by His holy Church. It is also in this intention of conforming our conduct to the will of God, as made known to us by the Church, that true education consists. Hence, a poor servant-girl, knowing well her catechism and anxious to live according to what she has learned from holy Church to be the will of God regarding her, is truly educated, whilst a lady of fashion, although a leader in society, but ignorant or forgetful of what God, by the voice of His Church requires of her, whatever her worldly learning and accomplishments may be, is not educated at all, and possesses no resemblance to the pattern of true perfection, which is God Himself.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE PRIEST'S VOCATION.

The other day a very good and well-intentioned lady informed me that she was educating her son to be a priest. Some years ago she and her husband decided that this boy should be dedicated to the Church, and, consequently, while the lad was yet under ten, they would have him enter upon the religious life, for, she said, "he was so good." The lad is fifteen now, and the mother feels very bad because she fears the boy does not relish the idea of studying for the priesthood. Still the parents hope to be able to dispel his ideas of the present, and to coax him into the pathway that they have marked out for his future, says a writer in the *Catholic Mirror*.

While I am very glad to note the increase in the number of ecclesiastics, I believe that nothing is more unwise than to force a young person into a life that is not evidently his vocation. Parents may have the laudable desire to have a priest in their family, but they must remember that the "calling" or "vocation" must come from God. Numerous are the lives lost, on account of a hurried or careless decision in a matter of such moment. As a rule these persons have entered upon a sacerdotal life without having a certain vocation therefor; only after their irrevocable vows are pronounced do they discover their error; then come regret, uneasiness, wavering, melancholy cravings for the unattainable, and, eventually, acts that lead to correction, and finally to misfortune.

The vocation consists in certain qualities, dispositions, aptitude, tastes and inclinations which render a man fit to follow a certain calling. And if it is so for a lawyer, a physician, a merchant, an engineer, or any other profession or business, much more so it is for a priest. The man who enters upon any worldly career is at liberty to leave it when he finds he was mistaken; not so the priest. In no way is the parent qualified to decide upon a child's vocation.

Again, do I repeat that it is unwise, unjust and extremely dangerous for parents to seek to impose their intentions, in such matters, upon their children. Long after the parents are dead the young person—grown to manhood—may eat the bitter fruit of repentance and suffer a life of untold torture on account of a false filial devotedness that induced him to accept as his vocation the career chosen by those who were incompetent to guide him properly.

Man, an Ungrateful Animal.
 As a race we succeed in showing a good deal of dissatisfaction with the weather, and grumble a great deal about it. In summer we're too hot, in winter, too cold, and during bright spring days we complain that it won't last long. The great secret for doing away with all complaint is to dress appropriately. In summer, don't dress, wear a negligee suit and watch your neighbor work. You'll be cooler than if you worked yourself. But in winter, that's different, indulge in all the active work you can find, but instead of burdening yourself with a number of garments, have your outer coats interlined with Fleece Chambray. It will keep out all wind, rain and frost, and yet is inexpensive, and so light in weight that you must feel its presence.

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