

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.
LIVING FROM DAY TO DAY.

If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for our peace, (St. Luke xix, 42.)

The fault of the Jews, my brethren, was twofold—boasting of the past and waiting for the future. It is especially on account of the latter fault that our Lord in this day's Gospel lays such stress on the words "and that in this thy day." It is a warning against trying to live in the future.

We all know, to be sure, that one may go to the other extreme, and by a form of sloth be too careless of the future. Some things there are which are certain to come upon us, and their coming must be provided for. There is a judgment to come, and every minute of to-day is like a ball of fire gathering evidence for that Divine Court. Temptation is sure to come, and its strain upon our virtue must be foreseen in every prayer of every day. The common wants of life for one's self and family are inevitable, and must be provided against. In all such things we know that the future is an actual fact, and is just as present to God as this very instant is to us.

What our Lord would rebuke is not a prudent foresight, but that weak and idle state of mind which postpones to the future what should be done at once. This is the common point of view of the condemned by the saying, "Procrastination is the thief of time," and it might be added of many other valuable commodities. In a spiritual point of view the dreadful result of delaying till tomorrow what should be done today is expressed by the saying, "hell is paved with good intentions. Wise men resolve to do in the future only what they cannot do now. Many and many a poor soul has lost the kingdom of heaven for that one reason—resolving instead of doing.

Brethren, a practically-minded Christian lives his spiritual life from day to day. He knows that the future is something entirely in God's hands. As for himself, his actual ability to do good begins and ends with each passing hour. If he provides well for it as it comes and goes he has done his part; God will not fail to take care of the future. One's peace of mind is never secure till one has learned to be content with present duty well done. Oh! what a happiness when one's soul is unburdened of care for the future. Do you covet that happiness? It is yours if you leave nothing undone for the present. If you can honestly say, "that is all I can do for the present," you may add "and the future also."

But, you say, what about a purpose of amendment? Does not that dwell especially on the future? Yes, it does; but it springs from a present sorrow. And if the sorrow be as heartfelt as it should be the purpose of amendment will take care of itself. A deep hatred of sin is the only true sorrow, and such a hatred must be enduring. The test of a contrite man is not what he promises but what he does. His sorrow unites the past and future in the present. Warned by his past weakness, he begins right here and just now by prayer and work to guard against a future relapse.

Learn a lesson, brethren, from our Lord's warning and from the fate of the Jews. It is better to say one's morning prayers to-day than to resolve to become a saint next week. To-day is here, and next week is nowhere. This day is mine; I know not if I shall have so much as one other. God has the past and the future. I will thank Him for the past, I will beg Him for the future. As to the present, with God's help, I will set to work to do my utmost.

TALKS ON RELIGION.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

In the Apostles' Creed there is expressed the article of faith: "I believe in the communion of saints." This expresses the belief and the teaching that all the members of the Church on earth, in purgatory and in heaven are in communion with each other because they constitute one body in Jesus Christ. In other words, communion means mutual participation in benefits.

"Saints," in the usual significance of the term, refers to those blessed souls who have victoriously fought "the good fight" and who are reigning with Christ in heaven. In a more general sense the term includes all those who by baptism are called to be saints. Hence the name is applied to all the members of the Church whether they are among the militant on earth, among the suffering in purgatory or among the triumphant in heaven.

The members of the primitive Church in Jerusalem had communion with one another in worldly goods; they so participated in each other's possessions that what belonged to one belonged to another. The spiritual goods of the Church include the merits of Christ, of Our Blessed Lady, of the saints, the Sacraments, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the prayers and good works of the faithful. These spiritual goods are in a sense the common property of all the members of the Church. By the communion of saints the members of the Church on earth are united to the members in purgatory and to the members in heaven, so that they assist each other by prayer. We can pray for us, and we can ask and receive the assistance of the blessed in heaven. We may glean from this the nature and meaning of "the communion of saints." All are the subjects of the children of one King and they unite to fight a common foe.

What of those members unfortunate enough to be in mortal sin? Can they have any share or participation in the communion of saints? Yes, provided they are separated from the infected sheep from the flock, or as human society deprives a dangerous criminal of his social or civic rights, so the Church sometimes cuts off or excommunicates evil members. While the sinner is in mortal guilt he may profit by the

merit of others. He may be quickened or roused to repentance by the inspiration obtained for him by the intercession of the saints; he may be assisted back to spiritual life by the efficacy of the Mass. The faith which is not extinguished in him keeps him in a sense attached to the golden chain of the communion of saints.

"As in one body we have many members," so we being many, are one body in Christ," says St. Paul in the twelfth chapter and fourth verse of the epistle to the Romans. As the members of the natural human body have actually no separate existence, except as united with the rest, so all the members of the Church work together for the good of all. "I am the vine, you are the branches."

It is evident from the scriptural teaching that there was inter-communion of God's servants. It is related in the Old Testament that Abraham, Job, Moses, Aaron, Samuel, Tobias, Judith and Esther prayed for their friends or nation and that God accepted their prayers. So in the New Testament our Lord says that where two or three are gathered together in His Name, He will be in the midst of them.

There is a good deal of mystery concerning the disembodied state. Though the soul leaves the body and changes its state it does not change its nature. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus shows us that the departed soul is mindful of conditions on earth. Dives wished that Lazarus would be sent to his father's house, where the rich man had five brothers, and bear such testimony that they might not go to that place of terrible torments. Since such knowledge appears to be possessed by souls in hell, would it not, for greater reasons be granted to souls pleasing to God? If Dives was solicitous would not the Holy Souls be more solicitous to help those battling on earth? They must rejoice in those that fight the good fight while they cannot but grieve over those their friends who have fallen and who continue to live in mortal sin.

St. Paul tells us in 1 Cor. iv. and ix., that we are "made a spectacle not only to the world, but to angels and to men." The blessed in purgatory and the saints in heaven are deeply interested in our spiritual combats. Loving God intensely and loving us now even more than formerly, they ardently pray for our victory. We should reciprocate by praying for the "poor souls."

Our real life, our long life, begins after death. Here "all the world's a stage." We are the actors. According to their parts some appear in royal robes and others in humble attire. Some represent the kings and queens of the play, and others the laborers, the valets and the grave-diggers. It matters not what part they had provided they filled their parts well. When the play is over and the curtain falls, they are all "themselves" again. The kings and queens take off their crowns and the clowns divest them of their attire and the only question then is, "Who played best?"

We should be satisfied with our lot, with our part. Imagine actors quarreling on the stage and seeking to take parts for which they are not fitted, neglecting their own and struggling to usurp the place and attire of others. Yet the angels and saints and the blessed in purgatory see much of his conduct in our play.

Intercession is the constant office of the saints, as it is the constant occupation of our mediator, Jesus Christ. Prayer and praise will merge into praise alone when all below is finished. God's will is their will, and His will is our sanctification." 1. Thes. iv, 3. Therefore for that they pray.

The doctrine of the "communion of saints" should encourage us in our spiritual combats. The King of Syria was anxious to apprehend the prophet Elias, and despatched chariots and horsemen for that purpose. When the servant of the prophet arose in the morning and saw this mighty host he was terrified and cried out: "Alas! alas! my lord, what shall we do?" And the prophet showed him the mountain around about "full of horses and chariots of fire," and he said to him: "Fear not for there are more with us than with them." (1 Kings vi, 15, 16, 17.) So in the battle for heaven we need not be discouraged by powers of darkness for "there are more with us than with them."—The Catholic Universe.

FATHER CHIDWICK ON MANLINESS IN RELIGION.

The service at St. Patrick's Cathedral on last Sunday evening for the members of the New York Police Department was a most inspiring and edifying one, says the Catholic News of New York. More than one thousand policemen, the majority of them in uniform, were present. They occupied the entire center aisle, which was reserved especially for them. Many of the men brought their wives or other relatives with them, and it is estimated that the entire attendance was about 2,500.

The ceremonies were very simple. They were conducted by the Rev. John P. Chidwick, the Catholic chaplain of the Police Department, who also delivered an eloquent sermon on "Manliness in Religion," refuting the charges so often heard that religion is fit only for the weak. The men were welcomed to the Cathedral by the rector, the Right Rev. Mgr. M. J. Lavelle, V. G.

In opening his sermon Father Chidwick said that the three prominent characteristics of manliness are strength of character, liberality and love of liberty. After expressing his gratification at the large number of men present, he pointed out the place of man's work in the Church. He said that Almighty God has endowed women with such a spirit of religion that it is almost a contradiction to find an irreligious woman, owing to the important part she is to play in the great plan of creation.

CROWNING MANHOOD'S STRENGTH. "God has made men strong," Father Chidwick said. "They are the pro-

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viders, the bread-winners—they are independent, practical. And while He has given them all the graces necessary for the salvation of their souls, these particular characteristics often lead them away from their religious sentiments. Hence the joy it is to a priest to greet such a large number of men who bow their head and bend their knee to the Great Creator, crowning manhood's strength and independence with the just loyalty which they owe to God and giving evidence that religion can sacrifice the workshop as well as the home, the street as well as the church, men as well as women, and has power to lift up and sanctify every condition of life and every soul, however and wherever it may be situated.

"This testimony is very necessary in our day, as we hear on all sides the charge against religion that it has ceased to have a place over the strong, and that it has become a mere force or ceremony wherewith to please the sensational and to quiet the emotions."

"We know from experience that religion is not weakness. It is not weakness that makes a man clean, decent and sober. It requires all the force and energy that are in human nature to conquer passion and to overcome temptation. It is not weakness for a man to keep his body free from defilement, be faithful to his marriage vows and jealously guard the honor of his children. It is not weakness for a man to thrust aside a bribe which might assure him a life of ease, but at the sacrifice of conscience. Not the drunkard, nor the liar, nor the thief, nor the adulterer is the type of a strong man, but the clean, sober, pure and honest; by these virtues he derives his strength and derives their power from religion. Religion is the inspirer of virtue and the giver of energy and life: it clears man's vision to truths high and noble, which by himself he would never perceive, and it calls upon him to reach up to these high ideals. It fortifies his conscience and gives him an unconquered purpose for duty, and thus the whole man is developed to his fullest and strongest stature, to stand forth as God made him—a child of the Most High."

"The preacher then spoke of strength—strength for truth and for duty."

STRENGTH FOR DUTY. "This strength," he said, "comes from conscience, and conscience derives her authority and power from God and religion. It is not true that conscience by itself is sufficient: it can become a slave instead of a master, a subject instead of a monarch. Temptation can sap its life, self-interest can choke it into silence, passion can storm about it until its voice becomes inaudible. At times it is betrayed to set the seal of virtue upon what is vicious. Conscience needs quickening, strengthening, directing. No individual action, beyond itself will suffice when passion rages and self-interest urges. Conscience, ringing with the voice of God, backed by His punishments or made attractive by His love, alone can, under all circumstances, be the power which impels man to do his duty."

"Men who charge religion with weakness do it because they themselves are weak. They reject religion not because she asks too little, but too much. If they are honest, they will confess that religion seems to be beyond their strength; that they cannot exercise an ever-watchful discipline over their thoughts and desires; that they cannot prefer love of God and man to the love of self; that they cannot sacrifice the fleshly and material interests to spiritual and heavenly things."

Here Father Chidwick showed that the sacrament of penance, which is often charged to be an institution of weakness, calls for the greatest strength that there is in human nature. Only strong men face their accusers, and only the strongest kind of men, desiring a better life, have the courage to lay their sins before another for direction and forgiveness.

MAKES MEN FREE. Speaking of another characteristic of manliness—its love of liberty—Father Chidwick said:

"Men love to be free, and religion is the only power that can make men free. Of what use is civil liberty if man be a slave to passion? If a man be a liar, a thief, a drunkard or an adulterer, his crime may not be known, but he feels he is not free."

"It may be objected that the dogmas of the Church restrict the freedom of the mind. This is not true. Freedom enjoys her best advantages when limited by Truth. Two and two are four. No man is permitted to be free with this truth so as to make two and two make five, especially if he be dealing with your money and your mind. Freedom is limited by truth, and accordingly the revealed truths of religion, coming from God Almighty, must give man the greatest possible amount of freedom of thought and action. You men know that when you are faithful to the teachings of your Church you are freest, happiest, best."

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In conclusion, Father Chidwick said:

"I selected this topic to right because you men are dealing constantly with temptations which would deceive you into the belief that manliness and religion do not go hand in hand, and that I might give you some strong thought in the midst of the vile temptations which surround you, which will enable you to preserve your manhood in all its integrity by preserving your holy faith. No body of men or of the earth is so strongly and so constantly surrounded by temptation as you are. I have no sympathy with those who slander and calumniate you, who strike you in the dark. I cannot help but believe that your character must be of the strongest calibre when such few scandals of a serious character are recorded of you by our newspapers, and you a force of nine thousand men, more strongly tempted than any other body of men under the sun. May God enable you to preserve your strength of character, preserve you from being deceived by the hypocrisy of weak and cowardly men who excuse their lives by charging weakness against religion, and may the blessing of Almighty God descend upon you and your homes, in our department and on the community of whose peace you are the custodians!"

LAW VS. JUSTICE.

The Catholic Times gives the following case of "Penal Laws still in force" in Ireland against the Catholic Church.

"In the Court of Appeal (Dublin) on Friday (June 29) the Lord Chancellor delivered judgment in the case of Cussen vs. Hynes, in which the validity of two legacies, one to the Superior of the Convent, Co. Cork, and the other to the Superior of the Holy Trinity Convent, Cork, was called in question. In delivering judgment, the Lord Chancellor said that the contentions put forward by both legatees, namely, that the legacies did not come within the penal clauses of the Catholic Emancipation Act, had failed."

They were bound to administer the penal clauses as long as they were on the Statute Book. There was no doubt that the gift to the Superior of the Holy Trinity Convent for the education of members of the community was an illegal gift within the meaning of the Act. As the legacy of £100 to the Superior of the Holy Trinity Church for that community, they could not yield to the contention that it was a gift to the individual members of the community at the date of the deceased's death. Consequently they were bound to hold that the legacy was also invalid, and they allowed the appeal."

That is British law in Ireland, but what a mockery of justice. Nobody denies or doubts that the dead man wished, and expressed the wish in writing, that the money—his money—should go to the Holy Trinity Convent and to Holy Trinity Church, but in steps the law and says, no, this man's doing what he wished with his own money must not be allowed in the case because and only because, it would benefit the Church to which he belonged and which it was his will and desire to benefit. No need to comment on the situation.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

As a regular custom after a fire the volunteer fire companies of Shenandoah are presented with beer by the different breweries, to show their appreciation. The Phoenix Fire Company, one of the best equipped in the State, however, adopted resolutions forbidding beer being accepted or drunk upon the premises, and suggesting to those who feel disposed to send beer to the company would accept the equivalent in cash for the expense fund. This company, composed of Catholics, recently made a donation to the archdiocesan collection for the San Francisco sufferers.

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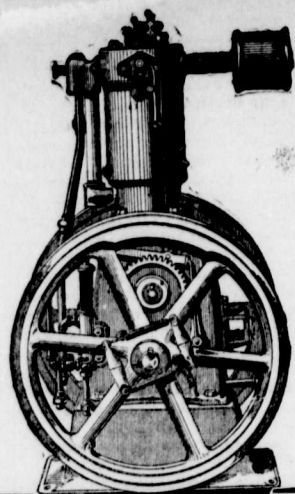
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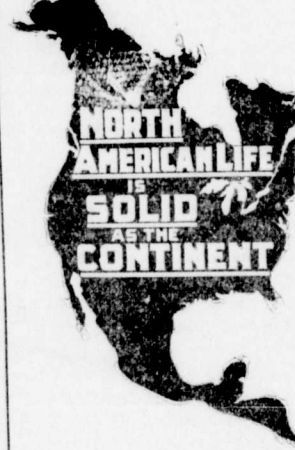
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