

SERMON ON SIN

The following sermon on Sin, by Rev. Father Sullivan of Thorold, and which we copy from the Thorold Post, was given to that paper from short-hand notes by one of the congregation. We preface the sermon by a short introduction to the festivities of St. Patrick's Day as published in the Star-Journal of Thorold. This introductory note gives some idea of the work of Thorold's energetic and much loved Pastor. The "Star" says:

The annual St. Patrick's Day concert in Thorold was held last evening in the Grenville Hall, under the auspices of the Catholic Young Men's Club, the flourishing organization instituted by Rev. Father Sullivan, the energetic and popular pastor of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in that town. It is nearly four decades since Rev. Father Sullivan first came to Thorold as parish priest. He found the little flock to whom he was appointed pastor without a suitable place of worship, and without a school or a convent, all of which he considered necessary to an enterprising and successful mission. These have all been supplied during his pastorate, and the buildings, including one of the finest church edifices in this country, stand as a monument to Father Sullivan's energy, foresight and devotion to the cause so dear to his heart and the interests of his people. The Club came later, and it now stands as a perpetual testimony to the interest Father Sullivan has always taken in the young men of Thorold, irrespective of class or creed or other lines of demarcation which usually in the public mind are permitted to divide a community into sections.

The sermon preached from the Gospel of the day is as follows:

Gospel, Matt. iv., 1-11.—"At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was hungry. And the tempter coming, said to Him: 'If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' He answered, and said: 'It is written: Not by bread alone doth man live, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.' Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, and set Him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him: 'If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down; for it is written: He hath given His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands shall they bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.' Jesus said to Him: 'It is written again: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' Again the devil took Him up into a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and said: 'All these will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me.' Then Jesus saith to Him: 'Begone, Satan, for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto Him.'"

The story related in to-day's gospel may appear strange to many of us. It tells us how our Lord, before He began His public ministry, was led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil. This incident in the life of our blessed Lord took place just after His baptism by St. John in the river Jordan. St. Luke says: "And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the spirit into the desert." Hence, it must be distinctly understood that our Lord was led by the Holy Spirit—not by the devil.

Though Jesus Christ possessed, as man, the fulness of wisdom and grace and was perfectly secure against all error, surprise, or confusion. He would not act except according to the leading of the Holy Ghost, to which He submitted with the utmost docility, as is clear from the sacred text.

WHY DID JESUS FAST?

1. In order to atone for the sin of our first parents. They had gratified their desire of eating in a most sinful manner by eating of the forbidden fruit. By this sin they lost for themselves and their posterity the love of God and His grace, and plunged themselves into the greatest misery. Jesus repaired this sad condition by His fasting. St. Augustine says: "As the first Adam had forfeited the prerogative of immortality by the interperence of the palate, so the second Adam, Jesus Christ, should recover immortality by abstinence."

2. To teach us that we should make use of fasting as a means of penance. Fasting is a means of penance in a double way. First, it obtains grace from God. He withholds his punishments, and it inclines Him to pardon us. Example, the Ninevites, Jonas. 3: 5. Secondly, it redeems us from the temporal punishment of our sins, for which we would be obliged to suffer in the next world. Like all other good works, fasting with prayer and alms has this effect.

3. To show us by His example that fasting is a principal means of guarding against sin. Fasting is an assistant of the soul; it helps to tame the flesh. As the rider guides his steed by means of a bridle, so the Christian guides his sensuality by fasting, and subjects it to the law of God. Hence, St. Cyprian says: "Fasting tames all the tyranny of the palate, and adorns man."

Let me state here that, in imitation of the forty days' fast of Jesus, the apostles instituted the forty days' fast of Lent, and the Church imposes it on us as a duty, to imitate, at least somewhat, the example of Jesus and to deprive ourselves during this holy time of some meat and drink. St. John Chrysostom says: "Before our divine Saviour went into the combat and temptation which the devil prepared for Him. He fasted forty days and forty nights, giving us all an example that by fasting and an austere life we must arm ourselves against the assaults of the devil. Jesus having, for love of us, fasted so long, will we refuse to accept in our persons the little difficulties of fasting? Will we find it too arduous, during the holy season of Lent, to deprive ourselves of some meat and drink? Would we be worthy of the name Christians if we would not willingly undergo so little a mortification?"

You may ask why was it that the devil tempted our Lord. He did so to make him fall, if possible, into sin, and to make void the work of our redemption. Because if our Lord had been overcome by the devil He would have at once placed himself under the power of the devil, and therefore could not have redeemed the world,

and would have shown that He was not God. The devil's motive was to frustrate the redemption of mankind. He had an idea that Christ was the redeemer of the world. In fact He knew, from the baptism of our Lord by St. John in the Jordan, that Jesus was the redeemer. You will notice that Satan tempts Jesus soon after His heavenly Father has declared His divinity from on high saying: "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He also thought man was to replace him, the devil, and his fallen angels in heaven. They had forfeited their right to heaven, they had lost their seats there, and man was created to fill these seats, to occupy the places made vacant; therefore he wished to go to the very fountain-head; he wished to seduce, to lead astray, that Saviour who had promised to redeem mankind; and if he had succeeded, mankind would be lost and would go to hell, and there would be no salvation for us. Our Lord permitted himself to be tempted in three ways—to sensuality, pride, and covetousness. Each time he overcame the devil. Now, why did our Lord permit the devil to tempt Him? Why did Jesus suffer this terrible and humiliating trial? For our instruction and encouragement; to give us an example; to teach that His grace would be sufficient for us to overcome us that temptations are not sins, but that on the contrary, they serve to keep us humble, watchful, fervent, and thereby more pleasing to God; that they are independent of our will; that neither holiness nor solicitude exempt us from them; and that therefore they ought never to trouble or discourage us, because "God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." 2nd motive—Our Lord allowed Satan to propose three particular temptations because they include all the temptations to which we are exposed. He was a great High Priest who could have compassion on our infirmities because He was tempted in all things, like as we are, "but" without sin. Tempted means simply tried, tested, the sin is in yielding, consenting. The good St. Peter compares the devil to a roaring lion, who goes about seeking whom he may devour. This has been the occupation of the devil from the moment that man was created, and it will be his occupation until the end of time. Our Lord, who is God, permitted Himself to be tempted, but He overcame Satan by His Own power, and so also can we all overcome Satan by the power of God. Our Lord said that His grace is sufficient for us, and that He will not permit us to be tempted above that which we are able. We find in the history of the Church, and even in profane history, that the devil attacks us in various ways. We find when He wishes to destroy people that he very often afflicts them with sickness. Take, for instance, the case of Job. Job was a man after God's own heart; he was a good, pious, just man; and we find that there was no one in the world more afflicted. Who afflicted him?—the devil, by the permission of God. We find first of all that he killed his children, destroyed all his flocks, and left him a pauper with absolutely nothing, and after robbing him of everything he possessed, struck him with a terrible disease, which caused him intolerable pains. God permitted all this. Did Job murmur? No. "God has given and God has taken away, and he has given us what we have answered to the name of God." "The name of God" was his answer to his friends when they taunted him with his terrible affliction. Yes, God has given, God has taken away, yet Job was to be remunerated, and we are assured that he was made richer than before, and God blest him with a large family, simply because he bore these afflictions in resignation to God's will. We find that many have been afflicted. In the gospel of St. Luke we read of a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and Jesus healed her. Again we read that the devil made a man deaf and dumb, and that the evil spirits, whom Jesus cast out of two possessed, went into a herd of swine and the whole herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea and perished in the waters. We find people afflicted in their bodies, and they do very strange things. This was quite common among the Gentiles. The Gospel frequently speaks of Jesus as having cast out devils. We find the same thing in our own days, but not so frequent as in former times, for the devil as power is now as then? No, our Lord Jesus Christ broke the power of the devil, so that he has not the same power since the coming of our blessed Lord as he had before. Who led our first parents into sin? The devil; he firstly suggested or put an idea before them, and they acted upon it, and see the result. Who tempted Judas to betray his Master? The devil. Judas was a man who was chosen to act as a representative of Christ on earth, to be a Christian and pillar of the Church, and to perform miracles. He was selected by Jesus Christ to do most violent temptations day after day; but he earnestly resisted—prayed, fasted, and invoked Jesus; prayed for protection and help; signed himself with the sign of the cross, and behold, the temptation ceased. The devil told the sorcerer that Justina was a Christian, and that he had no power against Christians who courageously fight and confide in the Lord. The sorcerer, Cyprian, became a Christian, and obtained with Justina the crown of martyrdom. Thus we see the wonderful effects of prayer. Another means is we must do all in our power to resist temptations, because we know the Holy Ghost says: "He who loves the danger will perish in it." Therefore, we should resist them, and call upon the name of Jesus.

It is true there are not so many possessed of the devil in the new law as in the old, because of the above reason, but there always have been possessed persons, and since the devil will lose all his power only at the end of the world. The devil has only as much power over man as God allows him. Without the permission of God, he cannot hurt a hair of our heads. But God sometimes gives him power over men, either to punish them for their sins, as was the case with the seven husbands of Sarah (Tobias), or to try them, and to give them an opportunity of practising patience and other virtues (example, Job).

The whole motive of the devil in tempting us is to induce us to lose our souls. He therefore tempts us, and uses all exertions to lead us astray, to keep us in sin, and to ruin us. We cannot doubt this truth for a moment, since we find numberless proofs of it in Scripture and tradition.

We have therefore an easy means to render the temptations and assaults of the devil ineffectual, namely, always to have recourse to prayer. St. John Chrysostom says: "The roaring of the lion does not drive away the evil spirits, as much as prayer does."

We should also mortify ourselves, mortify our bodies, because we know, my good friends, when the body is mortified, when we are weak from hunger, we are not inclined to do things. No, when the body is mortified we are not inclined to commit sin. But when we pamper our body with eating and drinking, then we are prepared, like the animals, to do abominable things. Another way is to call upon the name of Jesus in the time of temptation. The devil is the name of temptation, and we should call upon the name of Jesus Christ they could drive out evil spirits! "In My name they shall cast out devils." Numberless Christians have been freed by the invocation of the holy name Jesus, not only from temporal evils caused by the devil, but also from his temptations. St. Athanasius says: "The power of Christ is so great that the evil spirits shrink back into nothingness before it, and cannot even stand before the invocation of the name of Jesus." Christ that curbed and overcame the power of the devil, and that name is just as powerful now as in the early days of Christianity. Yes, in times of temptation let us call upon the names of Jesus and Mary. The sign of the cross is very effectual against attacks of the devil. St. John Chrysostom says: "The devil is terrified when he beholds that weapon which struck him a mortal blow. The hellish powers cannot believe a glimpse of this sign when full of fear and trembling, they take to flight."

Another means of driving the devil away is the use of holy water. There must be great virtue in holy water. St. Teresa tells us the use of holy water will drive away the evil spirits. She says in her experience it was one of the most effectual means: "It is no empty imagination; I have often experienced it." This may be looked upon by some as visionary, but the Church advises the uses of holy water; it should be used frequently, and particularly at night by blessing oneself. The invocation of the name of the Holy Ghost, and of the calling upon the Blessed Trinity for protection.

There is a great difference between the attacks of the devil and those of man. If a man who is our superior in strategy and strength attack us, our resistance is useless, and we will be overcome; but if the devil assaults us, it is in our power to overcome him. Resist earnestly. It is related of a young woman named Justina, who became a Christian in the Church, A.D. 501, and vowed her virginity to Jesus Christ. We are told that she was most beautiful in person, and of a lovely character. Aglades, a young pagan, wished to espouse her, but she rejected the offer. The young man used promises and flatteries, but all in vain. Finding himself baffled, he had recourse to a sorcerer, in order to conquer Justina with the help of the evil one. The sorcerer called up the powers of darkness to his aid, and Justina was obliged to endure the most violent temptations day after day; but she earnestly resisted—prayed, fasted, and invoked Jesus; prayed for protection and help; signed herself with the sign of the cross, and behold, the temptation ceased. The devil told the sorcerer that Justina was a Christian, and that he had no power against Christians who courageously fight and confide in the Lord. The sorcerer, Cyprian, became a Christian, and obtained with Justina the crown of martyrdom. Thus we see the wonderful effects of prayer. Another means is we must do all in our power to resist temptations, because we know the Holy Ghost says: "He who loves the danger will perish in it." Therefore, we should resist them, and call upon the name of Jesus.

All men, and especially pious Christians, are subject to the temptations of St. Paul, who was wrapt into the third heaven, and who says of himself that an angel of Satan tempted him, for which thing he thrice besought the Lord that it might depart from him. Our Lord answered: "My grace is sufficient for you." In the "Lives of the Saints" we read that the devil in many ways tempted them, and employed every possible artifice and stratagem to make them fall. The devil is a subtle enemy; he does not trouble himself much with sinners who are already caught in his snares, but he employs all his weapons against the good and fervent servants of God, and does all he can to bring them under his dominion. St. Francis of Sales beautifully says: "The dogs do not attack those of the house-

hold, but only strangers; thus the devil does not assault those who are already his. If, therefore, he seeks one, it is a sign that he does not belong to him yet, and the greater the virtue of the person is the more vehement assaults he may expect from the devil. The devil tries various ways in his temptations. He endeavors to spread false rumors and errors in the world, wherefore Jesus calls him an enemy who, while men were asleep, oversows cockle among the wheat. He tries to take the good resolutions we make out of our hearts, that we may not execute them, as Jesus assures us (Luke 8th.). Moreover, he operates on our external senses, producing in us various images, notions and inclinations, which often become the cause of violent temptations; he uses the particular circumstances and inclinations of men to tempt them and entice them to evil. He flatters the young, and paints the joys and pleasures of the world in the most beautiful colors; he makes old people believe that they will live a long time yet, and therefore have plenty of time to work out their salvation; he entices the vain to pride, the avaricious to covetousness, the unchaste to voluptuousness, the irascible to revenge; in a word, he assaults everyone in his most vulnerable spot, and where he can overcome him with the least difficulty.

I must, however, remark here that not all temptations come from the devil. There are other sources of temptation, namely, our own concupiscence to evil, as St. James says: "Every man is tempted, being drawn away by his own concupiscence, and allured." Then the world with its illusions, scandals and bad examples, as St. John says: "All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eye, and the pride of life."

If you had not listened to the devil he would not have allured you to sin. "The devil is like a chained dog," says St. Augustine, "he can bite no one unless he imprudently goes near him. He may growl, show his teeth, and snarl, but he cannot bite us, for he can go only the length of his chain. Show the cross and he will fly back into his fiery kennel of hell." "As the old enemy is strong with those who assent to him, so he is weak against those who resist him." If you consent to his suggestions, you can no more tame him than you can a lion, but if you resist him, you can trample upon him as an ant, notwithstanding his power and subtlety; for it is not we alone who fight, but the Almighty God who fights in us, and with us, and helps us in to victory. In view of this Divine aid the apostle says: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me," even to the overcoming of our great enemy the devil.

Therefore, my dear friends, we must struggle and strive to overcome temptations. Our Lord has set us an example in order that we may escape them, and if any person says he is not tempted I cannot believe him. Temptations are the tests of those who are worthy to be soldiers of Christ. While we should fight, yet we should not go into danger lest we may fall. Now do not put all the blame on the poor devil; it strikes me that we do put too much on his shoulders. Young people, and some old people, too, find it very easy to say: "I was tempted." But do you try to resist? While you may say you do, yet you do not, because you don't avoid the occasion of sin.

Our own weakness, and the power and persistence of our three spiritual enemies, namely, the devil, the world, and the flesh, combine together in dictating that prudent avoidance of occasions of sin which is certainly the best evidence of Christian valor.

Every one knows it is wrong to carry a burning torch into a place where hay, straw and other inflammable materials are stored. To delight in occasions of evil and to fall into sin, St. Augustine declares to be one and the same thing. St. Peter sought the company of the enemies of Christ in the high priest's palace, and he fell, for God withdrew His grace. "He that loveth danger shall perish in it," Eccl. iii., 27. "He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled with it," Eccl. x., 1. On the other hand—God will watch the issue, but He will not be wanting with His help, and you will find the truth what the apostle says: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue that you may be able to bear."

The sacred Scriptures are full of warnings, in word and in example, against exposing oneself to the danger of sin. "My son," says the wise man, "if sinners shall entice thee, consent not to them. If they shall say, Come with us, cast in thy lot with us, walk not thou with them, restrain thy foot from their paths." (Prov. x., 15). And elsewhere he gives that well-known maxim: "He that loveth the danger shall perish in it." (Eccl. iii., 27.)

St. Paul reminds us of our duty in this regard when he says: "Let him that thinketh himself to stand take heed lest he fall." I Cor., iv., 12.

Look at the instance of King David, one so favored and loved by God, how in a moment of anger he cast not off the suggestion of evil, but took delight, gave consent; and oh! so miserably degraded himself! Well might he say, when in the days of his penitence he was crying out for pardon: "I am become miserable, and am bowed down even to the end. I walked sorrowful all the day long." (Ps. 27).

Look at Solomon, so wise and so good a teacher, who, through inspiration of the Holy Ghost, spoke those words of caution which I have just cited. Would that he had practiced himself what he had taught to others! and his end would not have been buried in the gloom in which it was now shrouded. God had cautioned the Israelites against associating with the Gentiles. "For they will most certainly," he said, "turn away your heart to follow these gods." And to these Solomon was joined by a most ardent love. And when he was now old his heart was turned away by women to follow strange gods.

When inspired and highly-privileged gods and prophets have fallen because they exposed themselves to dangerous occasions, what are we to think of ourselves, and how can we expect an exemption which was not granted to them? In the temptations to which our dear Lord was subjected, it was not He who sought the tempter; it

was the tempter who came to seek Him in the solitude and security of the desert. When, in the Lord's prayer, we pray that God would not lead us into temptation, we pray that we be kept from occasions which would draw us into sin; and therefore we would be contradicting the spirit of this prayer, if we would be doing one thing and asking Almighty God to do another in our regard if we deliberately put ourselves in the way of temptation. St. Philip Neri used to say that our duty is not so much to avoid sin as to avoid the occasion of sin. And this, you will observe, is the promise we make to God when, in our act of contrition, we ask for pardon for past sin, and declare, with regard to the future, that we will carefully avoid all the occasions of sin.

See the sad catalogue of evils which are apt to arise when an occasion of sin is voluntarily sought or accepted.

The occasion leads to suggestion, suggestion to delectation, delectation to consent, consent to actual commission. Acts lead to habits, habits to obstinacy, obstinacy issues in a kind of feeling of necessity of sinning and the impossibility of helping it; then comes final impenitence, despair, death in the state of mortal sin, and the eternal loss of the soul. All this, because occasions are not avoided.

What, then, our duty in regard to temptation? We must watch; that is to say, we must be on our guard, and not allow ourselves to be led into any occasion which, in our case, is proximately connected with sin. We must fly from an occasion. We must pray, and thus call God to help His Holy Angels to shield us. We must frequent the sacraments—penance and Holy Communion, for these are channels of divine grace; they diminish the force of concupiscence, increase our union with God, and therefore our separation from sin. The practice of acts of self-denial, especially such as are imposed upon us during the holy time of Lent, is a great help toward conquering in the time of temptation, for such acts prove that we are in earnest. And one most important matter to attend to, is prompt resistance at the beginning of temptation. The moment any suggestion of evil arises, it ought to be at once crushed; there should be no dallying with what we ought to fear and hate. St. Cyprian says: "No one can be safe for any length of time when close to danger. The recollection of the Presence of God, of the great truths of eternity—death, judgment, Heaven and Hell—remember the last end and thou shalt never sin." A careful remembrance on our part of the horrible deformity of sin will always serve as a secure defence. Our life implies a constant succession of temptations. "Man's life upon earth is a warfare"—Job vii., 1. And it is in accordance with God's will and providence that it is so. We are in a state of probation, and temptation is implied in that state. We might wish to be kept forever free from every attack, but this is an idle wish. We are members of a militant Church, and each of us must be ready to take our part in the conflict which is ever going on. Though God loves us, He allows us to be tried in order that we may have occasions for merit, and may deserve the reward of victory. To each of us He says what through His angel He said to the faithful patriarch, Tobias: "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee." Tobias xii., 13. We are not alone in the struggle—God and His angels are standing by, and are on our side. Those faithful spirits who came to minister to our dear Lord after His victory will, after our contest, come and minister to us. And our blessing will be that pronounced upon every true and loyal soldier of Christ by the apostle St. James. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him," James i., 12.

Bishop McCloskey of Louisville, Ky., who just recently attained his eighty-fourth birthday, will on May 24th next also celebrate his fortieth anniversary as Bishop of the diocese of Louisville.

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Since the occasions of sin are so dangerous and so numerous, what is there to be feared from them? We have to fear this one thing; that hundreds, nay, thousands, will be ensnared by sin and become a prey to hell. "He that loveth danger shall perish therein" (Eccl. iii., 27.)

WE MUST AVOID THE OCCASION OF SIN.

One very important and essential matter to attend to on the question of temptation is the necessity of avoiding occasions of sin. What I mean by occasions of sin are such places, persons or things which, as a rule, are the means of leading us into sin if we go in quest of them.

Evil company, for instance, is an occasion of sin, for it is proverbial how much we are likely to be influenced in our character and conduct by those with whom we associate.

Places in which we have reason to believe that danger may arise to our virtue are occasions of sin. Reading of immoral and anti-religious books are occasions of sin to every one. For in all these there is found an allurement to sin. Evil is suggested; the suggestion may be entertained and delighted in; consent may follow; and thus occasions of sin may lead to the completion of the three stages of temptation, and to the commission of deliberate sin. Hence arises the necessity of avoiding the occasion of sin.

The drinking-saloon is an occasion of sin to the drunkard, and for those who frequent it often and spend much time there. Unfortunately, those who spend much of their time in the saloon are apt to acquire the habit of drinking and gambling, to be involved in quarrels, and to neglect the duties of their calling. The dancing-hall is chiefly a source of danger to those who carry dancing to an excess, or who have already been led into sin by it. Bad theatres are the occasion of sin to many.

The occasion of sin may be compared to a plague-stricken person who gives the contagion to all who approach him; or to a fire, which burns all that it touches, or to a stone in the way, which causes many to stumble.

As the occasion, therefore, thus leads to sin, it must be avoided; and it is in itself sinful to expose oneself willingly to such a danger.

Our own weakness, and the power and persistence of our three spiritual enemies, namely, the devil, the world, and the flesh, combine together in dictating that prudent avoidance of occasions of sin which is certainly the best evidence of Christian valor.

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See the sad catalogue of evils which are apt to arise when an occasion of sin is voluntarily sought or accepted.

The occasion leads to suggestion, suggestion to delectation, delectation to consent, consent to actual commission. Acts lead to habits, habits to obstinacy, obstinacy issues in a kind of feeling of necessity of sinning and the impossibility of helping it; then comes final impenitence, despair, death in the state of mortal sin, and the eternal loss of the soul. All this, because occasions are not avoided.

What, then, our duty in regard to temptation? We must watch; that is to say, we must be on our guard, and not allow ourselves to be led into any occasion which, in our case, is proximately connected with sin. We must fly from an occasion. We must pray, and thus call God to help His Holy Angels to shield us. We must frequent the sacraments—penance and Holy Communion, for these are channels of divine grace; they diminish the force of concupiscence, increase our union with God, and therefore our separation from sin.

The practice of acts of self-denial, especially such as are imposed upon us during the holy time of Lent, is a great help toward conquering in the time of temptation, for such acts prove that we are in earnest. And one most important matter to attend to, is prompt resistance at the beginning of temptation. The moment any suggestion of evil arises, it ought to be at once crushed; there should be no dallying with what we ought to fear and hate. St. Cyprian says: "No one can be safe for any length of time when close to danger. The recollection of the Presence of God, of the great truths of eternity—death, judgment, Heaven and Hell—remember the last end and thou shalt never sin." A careful remembrance on our part of the horrible deformity of sin will always serve as a secure defence. Our life implies a constant succession of temptations. "Man's life upon earth is a warfare"—Job vii., 1. And it is in accordance with God's will and providence that it is so. We are in a state of probation, and temptation is implied in that state. We might wish to be kept forever free from every attack, but this is an idle wish. We are members of a militant Church, and each of us must be ready to take our part in the conflict which is ever going on. Though God loves us, He allows us to be tried in order that we may have occasions for merit, and may deserve the reward of victory. To each of us He says what through His angel He said to the faithful patriarch, Tobias: "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee." Tobias xii., 13. We are not alone in the struggle—God and His angels are standing by, and are on our side. Those faithful spirits who came to minister to our dear Lord after His victory will, after our contest, come and minister to us. And our blessing will be that pronounced upon every true and loyal soldier of Christ by the apostle St. James. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him," James i., 12.

Bishop McCloskey of Louisville, Ky., who just recently attained his eighty-fourth birthday, will on May 24th next also celebrate his fortieth anniversary as Bishop of the diocese of Louisville.

Look at the instance of King David, one so favored and loved by God, how in a moment of anger he cast not off the suggestion of evil, but took delight, gave consent; and oh! so miserably degraded himself! Well might he say, when in the days of his penitence he was crying out for pardon: "I am become miserable, and am bowed down even to the end. I walked sorrowful all the day long." (Ps. 27).

Look at Solomon, so wise and so good a teacher, who, through inspiration of the Holy Ghost, spoke those words of caution which I have just cited. Would that he had practiced himself what he had taught to others! and his end would not have been buried in the gloom in which it was now shrouded. God had cautioned the Israelites against associating with the Gentiles. "For they will most certainly," he said, "turn away your heart to follow these gods." And to these Solomon was joined by a most ardent love. And when he was now old his heart was turned away by women to follow strange gods.

When inspired and highly-privileged gods and prophets have fallen because they exposed themselves to dangerous occasions, what are we to think of ourselves, and how can we expect an exemption which was not granted to them? In the temptations to which our dear Lord was subjected, it was not He who sought the tempter; it



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