

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON. Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost. BAD COMPANY.

"I am the Angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord."

The history of Tobias, one of the most beautiful narratives of the Old Testament, teaches us many lessons. There we find a charming picture of home-life. The father of the family is at once the example and teacher of virtue to his young son; the son, a model of filial devotion to his aged parents, succoring them in their need, submissive to their will, delighted to give them pleasure.

The life of the family is full of peace. Even in affliction they recognize the finger of God, and His blessing rests upon them. He is the sunshine of their home. To serve Him—to keep themselves free from sin—is their chief care. When, therefore, it became necessary that the younger Tobias should make a long journey, the first thought of his father was to find him a suitable companion. He would not trust his child to the guardianship of every man. He felt the necessity of great care in the choice he made. Such a choice is indeed not a trifling matter, not so unimportant an affair as some seem to think it; the happiness of a whole lifetime, perhaps even eternal salvation itself, may be at stake. Young people especially are very susceptible to the influence of those who are about them. They are open-hearted, unsuspecting, too ready often to give their confidence and friendship to those unworthy of either. They are slow to abandon those upon whom they have bestowed their regard, unwilling to believe evil of them because of their affection for them. And so the danger to their virtue is very great when they fall into bad company, their ignorance of the world and their guilelessness leaving them open to many temptations.

The bad companion is he who is trying to rob us of our virtue—the rob us of the best we possess. Virtue is a precious thing. It is a treasure beyond price. To have virtue is to possess nobility of soul, elevation of mind, a close likeness to God. To have habits of virtue marks us out as true men, men who have made their animal nature subject to reason through God's grace. Virtue is not acquired in a day. The getting of it means work, constant work for a time, perhaps a long time; but it is worth all it costs. When we have virtue, we have something of a great value; and because it is so valuable it must be carefully guarded lest we lose it, for we may be robbed of our virtue as well as of our money.

The bad companion wants to destroy our innocence, he wants to disturb our peace of soul; he wants to unman us, to make beasts of us. Where are these bad companions? How shall we know them? "By their works you shall know them." You shall know them when you hear their filthy speech, when they make their dirty jokes and tell their smutty stories. You shall know them when they invite you to low drinking saloons, to places where purity is lost; when they tell you how to make money at the expense of honesty; when, in a word, they suggest evil to you. Flee from them; they are robbers; they are worse; they are murderers; they seek to take the life of your soul.

The Angel Raphael on the other hand, teaches us the offices of a good companion. We find him guiding his young charge, warning him of dangers, instructing him how to overcome difficulties. He is by his side in the hour of need; his counsel is always at his service; his advice is good; his example is good. He is constantly striving to advance the best interests of Tobias and to further the object of his journey. This is true friendship; this is right companionship. It is unselfish, conscientious endeavor to promote the friend's welfare. Young people, find yourselves a Raphael, but trust not every man.

A GOOD PLAIN ROAD TO CATHOLICITY. The following is a clipping from our valued contemporary, Father Price's Truth. It is part of a story of a conversion.

"But was not prejudiced to any great extent, and at last, all my little ones and went to the services that were held every Sunday at St. Mary's Catholic Church. It was all so new and mysterious, but for some reason or another it attracted me, and I kept on going constantly. At last I took instructions in the catechism. Now here is another point that I wish to draw attention to. I was not in the least interested in dogmas, doctrines and catechisms. I could hardly endure to read them, and must have been considered rather a strange subject for conversion. But there were two other studies that did awaken me. One was the 'Life of Father Hecker,' the other the Sacred Heart. The former has been a guiding light for many long years, though at first I did not comprehend all that Father Hecker wrote; but his mental suffering, his earnest quest for truth appealed to me. Afterwards his references to the guidance of the Holy Spirit were a source of much consolation.

"In reading the life of blessed Margaret Mary the life of Christ began to dawn upon me; His simple kindness, His poverty and humility were like beacon lights that have always under the greatest difficulties, kept me from forsaking the Church; for I was not easily converted, though always attracted, and the greatest stumbling block was that Christ positively asked His Apostles to follow in His steps in regard to poverty. No doubt He knew that all the evils in the Church, past, present and future, have been caused by laying up treasures on earth, though of course, I understand that there must be substantial churches and schools, and that we should do all in our power to assist the priests in bringing this about. Another great perplexity was that Christ went out in the highways to teach, even in the byways and mountains and at the river side. In all places He ministered to the poor and desolate; and as I looked about me in after years and saw misery on every hand in the darkened slums, the busy factories, the

wretched poor, the dusty highways, I felt that I must give vent to what was oppressing me and call upon the Catholic Church to take the place of the Salvation Army, which they could do so effectively, and teach mankind the way of truth.

"I do not wish to be critical, but feel that I can speak from experience; for in joining the Catholic Church, which I finally did, I lost all that the world holds dear—home, husband, the friendship of all relations, and a comfortable living—my life was from henceforth one of great difficulties, and I often wonder how I kept the faith at all. Yet I see the reason as I look back. It was the love of the Sacred Heart which followed me about in my wanderings. I could not escape it if I would. Often I felt inclined to turn aside and follow a more desirable, broader path, but always before me stood our Lord, telling me to persevere, to take up my cross and follow Him, and follow I certainly tried to do, though often a most unwilling victim."—The Missionary.

ENGLISH CATHOLICS VOICE THEIR INDIGNATION. INTERFERENCE WITH EUCHARISTIC PROCESSION WILL HAVE FAR-REACHING RESULTS. The temper of the Catholics of England in the humiliating position in which they were placed by the government's eleventh hour interference with the Eucharistic procession may be judged by the following editorial comment by one of their leading organs, the London Catholic Times.

"What blindness and folly have seized the rulers of this country, that they should be ready at the beck and call of an insignificant knot of noisy, cackling lot of bigots to drag England's reputation through the mire? With shame every Englishman must open the pages and read the comments of the foreign journals. Not in the backward lands of the West, not in the most civilized island of the Pacific could there be a more contemptible exhibition of intolerance than there has been in London, the British metropolis, London which boasts of its love of fair play, London which sees and permits all sorts of non-Catholic demonstrations, Christian and pagan? What shall we say now to the Americans who cry 'shame'? What to the British colonists, who have always looked to the centre of the empire for an example of broad-mindedness and for light and leading? What to the German Emperor, who took care that every facility was given at Metz last year for the procession of the Blessed Sacrament? England has deliberately placed herself on a lower level, has earned their contempt. How can the British people talk of enlightenment and freedom and progress when by an act which has aroused the attention of the whole world the national policy has been proved to be bigoted and narrow and reactionary?"

"The prohibition of the Eucharistic procession has wounded Catholic feeling to an extent unprecedented in this generation, it may be confidently affirmed that it will have beneficial results. In every quarter Catholics are demanding that an agitation should be forthwith be commenced for the removal of the grievances under which they at present labor. The king's offensive declaration and the penal clauses of the Emancipation Act must alike go by the board. We must win for ourselves that equality with non-Catholic citizens before the law, which prevails in the United States and in other free countries. Every vestige and remnant of the old disabilities must be swept away. Measures must be taken at once to give practical expression to sentiments that all Catholics share. 'The Prime Minister's action,' says the Bishop of Salford, 'has strengthened our determination to work for the abolition of penal enactments which are objectionable to us, including the Royal Declaration.' Upon questions of this kind there will be no divisions or differences in the Catholic ranks. All will join hand in hand, whatever be their nationality or politics. It is not improbable that out of the new movement will arise a powerful Catholic organization, which will be an unwelcome surprise to the fanatics and will establish fair play for adherents of all creeds upon a firm and enduring basis."

ARGUMENT FOR MIRACLES. It is interesting to find a writer in a Protestant paper quoting approvingly a Catholic priest's argument for miracles. Says G. H. Wetherbe in the Baptist Standard:

"Skeptical people have always contended against miracles, one reason being that a miracle would be a direct violation of a law of nature, and perhaps more than one law. They argue that miracles and the laws of nature are not consistent with each other, and that they never can be. Rev. L. A. Lambert, in his book on 'The Theories of Infidels,' and in replying to an infidel, says: 'But you will ask, does not this higher power, in producing a miracle, abrogate or interfere with or change the forces of nature? Here we have in a nutshell the objection of infidels to miracles. I reply that God in working miracles does not change, abrogate or interfere with the forces of nature. He simply intervenes by His power between the action of those forces and their results or does directly what those forces could not, of themselves do. He intervenes between the forces and their result.' 'This is a sound argument. It ought to be convincing to any reasonable person. Mr. Lambert, in order to make his argument still clearer, uses this illustration: 'I hold in my hand a pound weight. By thus holding it I do not interfere with the force of gravitation, for the force still acts and presses on my hand to the extent of a pound. I do, however, interfere between that force and its result, for I prevent the weight from falling, which would be the result if I did not interfere. Do I abrogate or change the law of gravity? Certainly not, for whether I hold or let fall the weight, the law continually and uniformly asserts it-

self. Do I vary the result? Yes, for I prevent it from falling. Now, whether I lift the pound weight or the Almighty lifts the Rocky Mountains from their bases, and holds them suspended in space, the law of gravitation is not varied or abrogated; but the still more general law of forces is affirmed, namely, the law that force yields to superior force. The first would not be a miracle, because the force I wield is in nature. The second would be a miracle, because the force manifested is evidently above nature."

"I have presented his argument at length, for I regard it as being unanswerable. Perhaps some readers can use it as a reply to skeptics."

MASS AT 6 O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING.

DESCRIPTION BY AN EYE-WITNESS OF THE UNPRECEDENTED CELEBRATION AT CLOSE OF LOURDES' JUBILEE.

Rev. A. M. Barbier, rector of St. Vincent de Paul's Church, New Orleans, who has been spending the summer in his native France, writes for the New Orleans Morning Star an interesting account of the magnificent celebration held at Lourdes this year in honor of the golden jubilee of the miraculous apparitions to Bernadette Soubirous. A feature of the celebration, as has already been briefly noted in The Catholic Standard and Times, was the unique and unprecedented celebration of Mass at 6 o'clock in the evening.

Father Barbier says that seventy thousand pilgrims from all portions of France thronged the city of Lourdes during the festival. Every night they would gather before the grotto, pilgrimage by pilgrimage, and over the hills and vales, far beyond the lofty rocks of Massabielle, could be heard their voices united in the singing of the "Credo," "I Believe in God." It was the answer of France, true, traditional Catholic France, to the hideous mockery of a once noble nation which the present infamous Government is holding up to the world.

A PROOF OF FRANCE'S FAITH. "No," says Father Barbier, "France, Catholic France, is not dead! A nation is not even on the verge of death when she can show to the world such vitality, such energy, such powerful and indomitable zeal and apostleship and such devotion to the faith as was evidenced during the great celebration which has just passed into history."

At 10 o'clock each morning there was a Solemn Pontifical Mass in the magnificent church which crowns the cave, and which was far too small to accommodate the multitude.

The people knelt on the green sward, on the river banks and on the mountain sides. As far as the eye could reach there was one dense mass of humanity, all kneeling with faces upturned towards the wonderful grotto where fifty years ago the great Queen of Heaven and earth showed such favor to a pure and innocent child.

Every day at 3 o'clock during the solemn Triduum the Vespers were chanted in the open air, a sermon was delivered by one of the duly appointed Bishops and the great procession of the Blessed Sacrament took place. Every day the sick were brought to the grotto and bathed in the miraculous waters, and each day recorded some wondrous miracle wrought through the intercession of Mary Immaculate.

WITNESSED A MIRACLE. Father Barbier was the eye-witness to the great miracle when a woman blind from birth had her sight restored by bathing her eyes with the wonderful water of Lourdes. "What a glorious vision," says he, "was that which greeted her eyes as she opened them for the first time upon the world. There was the magnificent church, the hundreds of lights, the kneeling multitude, God's beautiful heavens above, and His lovely world around, and every heart paying homage to Him who had so blessed mankind in His precious gift of Mary Immaculate."

The great festival closed on July 16, the anniversary of the last apparition day. Not a cloud overshadowed the sky, not a single accident in that immense gathering of people marred the beautiful fête. Every house in Lourdes was decorated with the colors of the Blessed Virgin, except the Government offices. Every window and portal was garlanded with flowers, and the road which led to the grotto was a veritable pathway of flowers, waving banners and arches from which the colors of Mary Immaculate floated. Lourdes was indeed the "city of Mary," so beautiful and fair that even the infidel officers of the French Government felt their hearts touched by the zeal and devotion of the populace. All night the mountain sides were thronged with people, all night the praises of God resounded in the churches. With the first rays of the rising sun the city of Lourdes turned toward the grotto. The pilgrim throng was augmented by the arrival of over six thousand from Italy, under the guidance of Mgr. Mander, and presided over by His Excellency, Mgr. Grasselli, Archbishop of Viterbo, who was delegated by our Holy Father, Pope Pius X. to celebrate the Mass of 6 o'clock in the evening which had been especially authorized by the Pope to commemorate the day and the hour of the eighteenth or last apparition of the Blessed Virgin to Bernadette.

With Mgr. Grasselli came a great number of Bishops and priests. They proceeded at once to the grotto, around which it was almost impossible to pass, so great was the throng. At 10 o'clock Mass was celebrated by His Eminence Cardinal Andrieu, who was especially delegated to represent Pope Pius X.

THE EVENING MASS.

At 5:30 o'clock all the Bishops and clergy repaired to the grotto for the Mass at 6 o'clock. It was a privilege without precedent. Mgr. Grasselli, Archbishop of Viterbo, of the order of Friars Minor, representing our Holy Father the Pope, officiated. The sermon was delivered by Mgr. Schoepfer, Bishop of Tarbes, in whose diocese is located the city of Lourdes.

The scene in and around the grotto surpasses any attempt at description. As far as the eye could reach stretched the great sea of human faces. The fields and gardens and hillsides, the banks of the Gave, the road to Pau, the heights on which stands the Church of Carmel seemed to have been turned into one vast amphitheatre, and yet there was not a sound, not a whisper as the great sacrifice of the Mass proceeded. All were wrapped in the great thought of the mystery that was being celebrated. At the close of the Mass the "Magnificat" and the "Te Deum" were sung. Mgr. Schoepfer then mounted the pulpit and in a few brief words told of the eighteenth apparition of the Blessed Virgin to Bernadette at that very hour. His Eminence Cardinal Andrieu then gave the Papal Benediction.

At 8 o'clock in the evening the City of Lourdes seemed to be aflame. There was not a house, not a place of business, not a hamlet that was not illuminated. The scene was one of surpassing splendor. The entire city, as if by concerted action, offered this magnificent demonstration of faith and honor to our Lady of Lourdes. The Cardinal, the Archbishops and Bishops made the tour of the city in carriages and admired the illuminations. Everywhere they passed they were greeted with cheers by the crowds. At 9 o'clock every one repaired again to the grotto. It was a final demonstration of faith and love towards Mary Immaculate and her Divine Son.

"CREDO!" "I Believe in One God," chanted Cardinal Andrieu. Seventy thousand voices took up the cry. "Credo! Credo!" resounded from the grotto, from the Gave, from the hillsides and the mountain peaks in the distance. "Credo! Credo!" It was again the heart of Catholic France challenging the infidel hosts that would

stamp out the thought of God from the people.

As the great echo died away a salute of one hundred guns pealed forth over the hills of Lourdes; the illuminations seemed to redouble their brilliancy and every street seemed an avenue of light; bonfires were lit on the mountain sides, and once again that mighty throng spontaneously burst into the magnificent Credo, as though it wished the very heavens to register the cry of the believing heart. "Oh," says Father Barbier, "it was a sight that I can never forget. May we all be worthy children of God and our Blessed Mother Mary."

In Pre-Reformation Days.

London Catholic Times.

Then, as Richard Davey tells us in The Pageant of London, Christ was recognized in the streets as the great King. In the fifteenth century every house on Corpus Christi day was hung with wreaths of flowers and verdant garlands, whilst showers of fresh rose leaves and golden genestra or Plantagenet blooms fell thick as snow before the Host, carried, lost in a mist of incense, under a glorious canopy of white and gold, by the Bishop of London in full pontificals. The eight golden poles of this splendid screen were upheld by as many noblemen, their armor elaborately damascened in gold and silver. On either side of the Metropolitan walked their Graces of Canterbury and York, and in advance of them, two by two, all the Bishops that chanced to be in London, their mitres glistening and their pastoral staffs flashing in their gloved, gem-sparkling hands.

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