

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

TAKING COURAGE.

Sometimes, my brethren, we feel discouraged because we have not kept our good resolutions, and are even ready to say it is better not to make any at all, so often do we break them. I have no doubt there are some listening to me who began the new year courageously and with some sincere promises to God of leading a good life, and have already slipped back into the bad old ways; and now they say, "What was the matter with my good resolutions? I did not mean to be to God, yet I have not kept my word with Him; I have relapsed; I am as bad as I was before, may as I am now. What, then, was the matter with my good resolutions? Now, in considering this question let us not get into a panic. God knows us just as we are, and far better than we know ourselves. Therefore He is not so cruel as to add us strictly to all our promises. "God is true and every man is a liar," says Holy Writ, and every experience of human nature demonstrates that although we are honestly determined to tell the truth, and do sell it when we promise to God to be honest, we may break down, and that is understood when we make our promises. I remember reading of St. Philip Neri that sometimes on waking in the morning he would say, "O Lord, keep Thy hand on Philip to-day or he will betray Thee."

Hence it is a great folly to say, "I do not want to make a promise for fear I could not keep it." That would be good sense if you were going to swear to your promises, or if you were to make a vow. But a promise to attend Sunday Mass, to keep out of saloons, to stop stealing, to be more god-fearing at home, and the like is a very different matter. In such cases we must shut our eyes and go ahead, and meanly pray hard for God's assistance. There is no such thing as being too fussy about the future, looking back too far into it or imagining temptations not likely to come up. Once there was an army officer who led an edifying life, and who came to a priest of his acquaintance and informed him that he was in great distress, and feared that he could not persevere. "What is the matter?" said the priest. "Why I know that dwelling in a deadly mortal sin; yet if I were challenged to a duel I fear that I should not have the virtue to decline the challenge and suffer the disgrace which would be sure to follow." "But," said the priest, "has any one challenged you or is any one likely to do so?" "Oh, no I not at all; but—" "But wait until the temptation comes. You have made up your mind not to commit mortal sin, and when this particular temptation comes God will give you grace to overcome it."

Do not cast your net too far out into the stream; do not be in a hurry to promise to abstain from any particular sin, or to do any particular act of virtue for your whole life except in a general way. In a general way you are determined to keep God's law, honestly and firmly determined. As to this or that particular sin, you hate and detest it and have made up your mind against it; whenever the temptation comes you are resolved to resist it. There are three things about which one should make good resolutions rather than about any others: First, the practice of prayer; second, going to confession and Communion; third, avoiding the occasion of sins. The first two fill our souls with God's grace and the third keeps us out of danger. Put all your good resolutions into company with prayer and monthly, or at least quarterly, Communion; and you will have no great difficulty in pulling through. From month to month is not so long a time to keep straight, and a good confession and a worthy Communion is God's best help. Morning and night prayers are a mark of preparation to eternal life; keep away from bad company and dangerous places, and avoiding bad reading and all other dangerous occasions, has very much to do with an innocent life and a happy death.

TALKS ON RELIGION.

CONFESSION (THE FORM).

It is not necessary to begin every sentence with the quotation, "I accuse myself." Nor is it absolutely necessary to confess our sins in some special order, as "against the first Commandment I accuse myself," etc. However, it is advisable to use this method in order that there may be less danger of omission. The very essence of confession is self-accusation. "I have said, I will confess against myself my iniquities to the Lord. Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin." (Psalms xxxi.) 1. Confession is not a mere narration. It is accusing one's self. An accuser stands to the side and tells the worst he knows. He puts things in the plainest and a roughest way, and does not try to shield the person whom he is accusing, but brings him before the judge as a criminal. We should use something of this method when we make our own confession. Our Lord has left it to us to be our own accusers, and we must do the work honestly. We must tell our faults and acknowledge them as faults, and say we are sorry for them, and not try to make out a good case by excusing ourselves. It is very important for the penitent to remember that confession should be a sincere self-accusation, in which we are before the judge as a criminal. "I incline not my heart to swindle; I will not make excuses in sins." (Psalms xl.) We should remember that confession is not intended to give us an opportunity for accusing others, but that we may tell our own faults. It is well to remember that in confession we are not to disclose the name of another person, and it is a great abuse of the sacrament when people have a great deal to say about their neighbors. A good confessor does not merely entrain a little corner of the land and

let the weeds grow as they will elsewhere, and so the person who is conscientious in making his confession will carefully consider all the duties and responsibilities which God has laid upon him. The great judgment will assess over nothing. Our hearts and our tongues will all have to answer for their deeds. We shall have to give an account of ourselves as husbands and fathers; as members and members of society. Hence it is necessary that when we judge ourselves, we should carefully consider all the duties for which we are responsible in our state of life. The Church gives us the widest liberty of choosing our confessor. It is quite evident that the intention of the Church is that each one should select the confessor whom he thinks most likely to profit him. In this matter should think of no thing but the welfare of his own soul. He should not consider who is pleasant or unpleasant. He should simply think of which confessor will best help him on the way to salvation. If a person is suffering from a dangerous illness, he exercises the best judgment in selecting a physician having in view his restoration to health. As people do not easily change their physician, especially through a city or country, they should exercise similar judgment in adhering to one confessor. He will thus be able to direct them how to walk the straight and narrow path. What we have to look to in the sacrament is our Lord Himself. The priest is His minister, and whether he is wise or simple, good or bad, the effect of the sacrament will be the same. The stamp of the seal does not depend upon a particular hand to give the pressure. St. Sabas promised the Roman Emperor that God would cure him of his disease, if he would destroy all his idols. This the prefect did, with one exception. The sickness remained, and the saint asked him if he had kept his promise. The prefect said he had with one exception and that exception was an idol of gold, which he said, had been handed down to him by his ancestors. How many sinners have their favorite idols that they will not part with—some sin to which they cling tenaciously. Their sorrow is not universal, and to these treasured attachments may be attributed the inefficiency of the sacrament. A man who is a prisoner, and is chained to the wall by his arms and his feet, could not free himself unless he loosens all his chains. So it is with the sinner; he is bound to bad habits, and must, by a contrition that is universal, break away from the chains that bind him to Satan.—Catholic Universe.

CARDINAL GOTTI.

Jeremiah Curtin, who is best known to the world as the translator of Sienkiewicz, the great Polish novelist, is one of the world's greatest linguists. He is said to be master of seventy languages. Mr. Curtin was born near Milwaukee, Wis. He is a Catholic, of Irish parentage. Curtin laid the foundation for his great philological learning in a little pioneer farm home, in the town of Greenfield, a suburb of Milwaukee. He worked with his brothers and sisters doing the chores of the place and other work in the field, going to school winters, no one ever thinking he was any different from any of the other boys who were all doing the same thing. "But there was a difference," said his cousin, John Furlong, who still resides on the homestead near the old Curtin place, where as boys they played together. "The difference was that after we had gone to bed, Jeremiah stayed up studying late into the night. He would work all day in the harvest field, go home and attend to the chores, and then, taking his candle he would go upstairs to his room in the loft and study and read until the candle burned away. "His desire for learning was omnivorous," continued Mr. Furlong, "and his great passion in those days was to know how to talk to the little German and Norwegian children in their own language. He early laid a foundation for Polish by talking to the immigrants who God naturally taught the eager little boy all they knew of their own tongue. It was told of him while living in Milwaukee, on East Water and Chicago streets, he got to know a French seamstress to whom he became much attached. She gave him a doughnut one day and he allowed it to get cold while he asked her how they said fried cake in French. "At that early day the Indians were not all gone from Wisconsin woods, and the ambitious boy often stole his companions by imitating the red man's speech so well that they were all deceived. The great work of Jeremiah Curtin was accomplished by hard and persistent effort. "Jeremiah was not fitted for farm work, although he never shirked it," said Mr. Furlong. "He went to school winters and studied as much as he could on summer nights. He taught to go to Carroll college at Wausau, and afterward to Phillips academy at Exeter, N. H. He went to Harvard college and was a graduate from there in 1863. From that time his boyhood home has not seen much of him, although it stands there as it did when he studied in the low ceilinged chamber, with its tiny window, by the candle light during the '40's."

Mr. Curtin has traveled far from the little Greenfield home, and many to Harvard his tendency for the languages asserted itself and took definite shape for development. After his graduation from Harvard President Lincoln appointed him secretary of the legation at St. Petersburg, a position that he was well adapted to fill and one that gave him further opportunity of developing his linguistic talents. He has been connected with the Smithsonian Institution and with the Bureau of Ethnology. He returned to America in 1901 from a journey around the world, via Russia, Siberia, China and Japan. He spent three months in

1900 among the Barlats, the only tribe of Mongolia who have retained the great horse sacrifice and preserved the splendid creation of myths of their race. It was while he was at the court of St. Petersburg that he met Sienkiewicz, the great Polish author, himself, who suggested that Mr. Curtin undertake the translation of his works. Sienkiewicz was a master of English, but he recognized the genius of the American and felt that he could do the work better than he could. "Pan Michael" was the first book undertaken, followed by "Fire and Sword." It was Sienkiewicz who finished "Quo Vadis" that Mr. Curtin introduced Sienkiewicz in the English-speaking world. It is said that his share in the proceeds of that publication was \$25,000. Besides his translations, Mr. Curtin is the author of a large number of books, among them are: "Myths and Folk Tales of Ireland," "Creation Myths of Primitive America and Their Religious and Mental Relation to the History of Mankind," "The Mongols," and others. In appearance Mr. Curtin is a trifle more than the average height. His face is keen, intellectual one, a though it is mostly covered with a long red beard. His hair is also red and brushed back, which would give him a fierce expression, were it not tempered by his kindly Irish eyes. Some of the languages with which Mr. Curtin is thoroughly familiar are French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Roumanian, Dutch, Danish, Polish, Swedish, Icelandic, Gothic, German, which he knew when he left college besides having had courses in Greek and Latin. Later he studied and mastered Hebrew, Sanscrit, Russian, Bohemian, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Slavonian, Croatian, Serbian and Bulgarian. During his residence in Caucasus he learned Mingrelian, Akkasian and Armenian.

FAITH OF THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. FEBRUARY 2. Fair as the snowdrops which mark her feast this day, gentle as the doves which are its symbol, the Maiden Mother, guarded by St. Joseph, enters the Temple with her Babe Who is Lord of the Temple, coming to fulfil in the deepest humility and unswerving obedience, the ancient Jewish law of purification. The law forbade mothers to appear in public after child birth or to participate in holy things for a certain length of time. This time was forty days for male children and eighty days in case of females. The period elapsed, the mother was to present herself at the Temple, bringing a lamb to be sacrificed to God in acknowledgment of His supreme dominion and in thanksgiving for the happy delivery, and a young pigeon or dove for her legal purification. The poor were permitted to present a second dove instead of the lamb. May we not read in this mystery a lesson for those who "enraptured over with worldliness," have all the worship of the heathen for wealth and material success, and fear and despair the pinching of poverty. It is not unimportant for us to realize that Jesus and His Mother loved poverty so well that they embraced it voluntarily. Was our Lady really so poor that she could not offer a lamb? "It is certain," answers the great theologian, Father Suarez, "that the Blessed Virgin fulfilled the law as truly and strictly as though she were bound by it. Now the terms of the law stated that if the mother could not offer a lamb she should present two doves. Therefore, the Mother of Jesus would fulfill the law perfectly unless it was really difficult for her to procure the lamb, and unless her means were so limited as not to justify her giving it."

THE REAL PRESENCE. Let non-Catholics admit the Real Presence and they will understand, writes the Rev. J. A. McCullen, S. J., why we call to the west of earth, in home on earth for one God all that is highest and best in architectural art; all that is most beautiful in painting, sculpture, for adornment, and then have but one regret left, that our poverty does not allow us to go farther. Thus one problem is solved which causes perplexity to those outside the fold. A house is built for Christ our Lord really present in our tabernacles. The Real Presence explains why our church doors are always thrown open, and is not the religion of a day or a few days in the week, but of every day of our lives. Hence it is that when the choir is silent, the organ hushed, the pulpit vacant and the priest absent at the bedside of some dying Christian or elsewhere engaged in the affairs of the Father's house, one never enters a Catholic church without finding devout souls kneeling in adoration of the God of the Eucharist. They are there to seek light from the Divine Light, strength and courage from the Omnipotent, grace from its Divine Author and consolation to their troubled breasts from the loving Sacred Heart which beats for men within His Holy Tabernacle on earth. The Divine Presence likewise explains why in rain, storm, cold, heat, thousands of devout Catholics seek the church to assist at Mass, the adorable Sacrifice of our altars. Routine is the religion that has most devotees.—Dr. Depros.

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THE FACE OF THE INFANT JESUS.

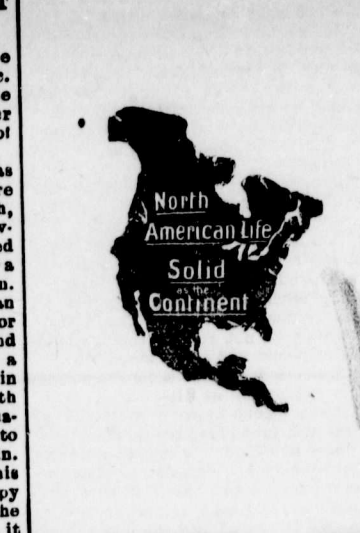
In a "Christmas Sermon" in the Christian Register (Unitarian), Dec. 20, the Rev. John C. Kimball tells the following story illustrating the power upon brutalized men of the picture of the Child Jesus: "Out in Western Texas, where I was awhile before our Civil War, there stood an old Spanish mission church, named San Jose, nearly ruined by having been made the scene of repeated battles, but still having over its altar a very fine picture of the crucifixion. One day a party of roughs from San Antonio, fearing neither God nor man, broke into the building and with their pistols, began making a target of its picture. The old priest in charge of the place implored them, with tears in his eyes and with every possible look of straight and trusting into his eyes, and holding it up before that of the Crucifixion, bade them, if they must shoot, to fire at that. The brutal leader, with a ringing oath, at once leveled his revolver at the Child Face. But those calm, sweet, unapproachable eyes, the marvel of all art, and he did what, fronting man, he never yet had done—dropped its muzzle with a bit of tremor. His companions jerked at him for his cowardice, and again he raised the weapon, but with the same result. A third time he tried and failed. Then, with a strange look in his own eyes, but a voice there was no jeering at now, he faced his fellow-ruffians shouting: 'A way with you all! The man who shoots at that Child, I'll put a bullet through him!'—Sacred Heart Review.

CATHOLIC CHURCH'S GROWTH. MORE THAN 13,000,000 COMMUNICANTS IN THE UNITED STATES. Milwaukee, Jan. 18.—Advance sheets of the 1907 official Catholic directory show that the Catholic population of the United States is 13,089,353, an increase of 437,309 over the previous year. The total number of Catholic clergy men is 15,493, an increase of 609. In the year 1906, 334 new Catholic churches were established, making the grand total of 12,148. There were 86 ecclesiastical seminaries with 5,697 students, and 4,364 parochial schools with 1,096,842 pupils.

The Catholic hierarchy of the United States consists at present of one Pope Delegate, one Cardinal, fourteen Archbishops, ninety Bishops and eighteen abbots. There are fifteen vacancies in the college of Cardinals. The oldest Archbishop in the world in point of service is the Most Rev. Daniel Murphy, of the archdiocese of Hobart, Australia, who has been a prelate for sixty-one years. The oldest dignitary in the United States is the Most Rev. John Joseph Williams, Archbishop of Boston, who became a Bishop forty-one years ago. In Greater New York there are 266 Catholic churches, in the city of Chicago, 175; in Philadelphia, 91; in St. Louis, 76; and in Boston 52.

ANGLICAN VIEW. After the bitterness of The Churchman to the wise and statesmanlike policy of Pope Pius X. in the present crisis in France, it is refreshing to meet such expression of Christian understanding and sympathy as the following from the Living Church of Chicago: "Certainly the sympathy of Anglican churchmen cannot be withheld at this critical moment from their brother churchmen in France at the ordeal through which the latter are passing. This is not the time to inquire whether the blame for the present condition be not in a divided one whether a larger statesmanship on the part of the French clergy might not have averted the crisis, etc. The immediate fact is that, at the beginning of winter the French clergy of high and low degree are being driven from their parishes and their homes, the churches are in process of confiscation by avowed infidels who hate the Christian religion and the powers of darkness seem to have shaken the ancient Church of France from top to bottom. Patacicoe the stories that come to us daily from over the water; and they are only typical incident seen now here, now there by our correspondent or another of what is transpiring throughout the length and breadth of that fair land. If our own general convention were in session we should wish that some message of that sympathy which, no doubt, springs to-day from the hearts of all American churchmen, might be sent to the sister church of France. Our differences are as nothing in the presence of this great crisis. Might not our presiding Bishop, who has more than once officially addressed letters in the name of the American church to the church of Russia toll similarly to the church of France that which all of us feel? The living Church is distinctly the

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organ of "the Catholic party" among the Episcopalians. It realizes that the French Atheistical Government is fighting Christ Himself.—Boston Pilot

Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not.—(John xii 35).

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