

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost.
THE LAST SIN.

For the wages of sin is death; but the grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord. (From the Sunday's Gospel.)

This is not the only place in Holy Writ, my brethren, where eternal life and death are set before us as the wages we shall some day be paid. The word of God frequently admonishes us of the choice we are compelled to make between eternal sorrow and eternal joy and for this most evident reason: we are always actually engaged in making the choice. The very essence of our merit hereafter will be that we shall have freely and deliberately chosen Almighty God and His friendship, in preference to any and everything beside. And the reason, and the only reason, why a man will lose his soul will be because he committed mortal sin and died unrepentant—that is to say, choosing to love what God bids him hate. What we call the choice between virtue and vice St. Paul calls the choice between life and death. And with that choice we are constantly confronted. Not that we always realize it, nor do I mean to say that the first time one grievously offends God he settles his fate eternally; but that each mortal sin really earns the wages of eternal death, and only the blessed mercy of God saves us from our deserved punishment. And furthermore, it is some mortal sin or other that at last breaks down God's patience. If at any particular occasion He does not see fit to take us at our word, so to speak, and leave us forever in that state of enmity that we have chosen, it is not because we do not deserve it; it is because He is a loving Father to us, and is often willing to stand a great deal of wickedness on our part; or because we have some dear friends who are servants of God and who pray for us; or because the Blessed Virgin has acquired some special attachment to us and intervenes for us; or because God reserves us for a later day, when He will make such an example of us as will save other sinners; or because, again, He saves us for a later day to make us models of true penance.

But just look around you, brethren; just call to mind what you have heard or perhaps seen of God's judgments, and the Apostle's lesson becomes object-teaching. Have you not heard of a sudden and unprovided death and then remembered how years ago that man started a disreputable business? It was thus that He made His decision for all eternity. On the other hand a man now temperate, once a drunkard, will tell you that long ago he took the pledge and broke it, and broke it again, but still persevered, and finally, by the grace of God, has managed to keep it. He was fighting the battle of fate and he won the victory. That dreadful appetite overcame, the practice of religion became easy to him.

In another case a man is led away little by little from the rules of honest dealing; at last he refuses to pay a certain just debt, one that he can easily pay if he wishes. After that savoric eats into the core of his heart and he is lost forever.

And, brethren, what a relief to hear after a sudden death that the poor soul was a monthly communicant!

Many are tested by Almighty God demanding that they shall withdraw from the proximate occasions of mortal sin. The voice of conscience, a sermon heard in the Church, the private advice of some good friend—for all these are the voice of God—admonish them against what leads them to mortal sin; against very bad company, or the saloon, or the Sunday excursion, or dangerous reading, or lonely company-keeping. Perhaps one's conduct about such dangers has more to do with his choice in eternity than anything else.

I do not mean to say that this fatal decision is a mere lottery, but it is a moment at the end of years of rebellion against God where the effort is made by the grace of God to save the sinner; and for weal or for woe it is the last chance. Some time or other the last sin will be committed, the last grace will be granted.

O my brethren! how very reasonable is the holy fear of God. Oh! how wise are they who have joined fear and love together so that the fire of love has burned the dross of selfishness out of fear, and fear has mingled reverence and humility with love. Alas! that so many should live as if eternal life and death had no meaning for the present hour.

Some are like that millionaire I heard of. Walking home one day, a heavy shower of rain began. He stopped a hack and asked what the driver would take him home for. Fifty cents, was the answer. He began to beat him down, and finally, refusing more than twenty-five cents, he walked home in the rain. But he caught cold, went to bed, and died. He had played the miser many a time before, but the last time had come. So many a one thinks his one sin more, his one other rejection of grace, is but like the multitude of other such offences come before; and all the time he is deciding an eternal fate.

TALKS ON RELIGION.

THE HOLY GHOST.

Our Blessed Saviour, previous to His Ascension, said to His apostles: "It is expedient to you that I go for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." (St. John xvi. 7.) This remarkable declaration should demonstrate to us the great need we have of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord virtually told His apostles that the coming of the Holy Ghost would fully compensate them for being deprived of His own visible presence.

The Holy Ghost is absolutely necessary for us, because He has a work to do which is so absolutely necessary for man that without it he could not be saved. This work really began with man's advent into the world. The great manifestation of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost was the commencement of a new outpouring of His gifts which

were henceforth to be in greater abundance to man.

All the works of grace are attributed to the Holy Ghost. Though the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are but one Being, each of them has His special work for creatures. The work of the Holy Ghost is sanctification, making man holy through His supernatural gifts to the soul and inducing it to perform the works of holiness.

The grace which was in Adam at his creation was from the Holy Ghost; the grace which enabled him to repent and to persevere afterwards in God's service was from the Holy Ghost. The grace of Abel, of Enoch, of Abraham, of David, of Elias and of all the other saints of the Old Law was from the Holy Ghost.

Pentecost was the great day of the first public manifestation of the Holy Ghost and the inauguration of the reign of grace. Hence we think it well to consider the Holy Ghost as the Guest of Christians. As a rule we do not reflect enough on the presence and the power of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit in the hymn Veni, Sancte Spiritus, is called dulcis hospes animae, or Sweet Guest of the Soul. A guest is entertained in the house of another, and comes on invitation. So comes the Holy Ghost and remains only as long as we consent and show our appreciation of His presence.

This is clearly expressed by our Lord in His promise: "I will ask the Father and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever." (St. John xiv. 16.) St. Paul emphasizes the same thought when he says: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. iii. 16.) The soul is God's temple. The presence of the Holy Ghost in it is compared to the presence of God in the temple and this was very real. St. Paul insisted that the presence of the Holy Ghost in the soul is just as real for he says: "If any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which (temple) you are." (I Cor. iii. 17.)

How abundant and how explicit is the instruction which St. Paul gives us on this point. Do we really belong to God? Here is the answer: "You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom. viii. 9.)

St. Paul tells us that the presence of the Holy Ghost in us is a consequence of our being the sons of God. "Because you are sons, God hath sent the Holy Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying Abba, Father." (Gal. iv. 6.)

The Holy Ghost will care for His own and will richly recompense those who made Him their Guest and honored Him as such. He will raise them to "Life everlasting." St. Paul tells us of this in Romans viii. 11: "If the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies, because of His spirit that dwelleth in you."

It is difficult to explain the manner in which the Holy Ghost dwells in the soul, though it is clear from the teachings of the Holy Scriptures that He does dwell in the souls of men. He is in the souls by means of a created gift of wonderful beauty and perfection, a thing so holy that it cannot remain with mortal sin. This gift is sanctifying grace.

Love is the fulfilling of the law. Our Lord says: "If any man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love Him, and We will come to him and will make our abode with him." (St. John xiv. 23.) Such love, a true love of God for His own sake, induces that Holy Ghost to make His dwelling in the soul. This is the teaching of the Church. An act of true and pure love of God expels sin and makes the soul the temple of the Holy Ghost.

No pen can truly describe the wonderful effects which the Holy Ghost produces in the soul which He has entered as a Guest. As the sanctifier He brings into the soul supernatural gifts, divine virtues and qualities which penetrate and ennoble the soul. St. Catherine, who was permitted to see a soul in the radiance and splendor of supernatural grace, says that neither tongue nor pen can describe its entrancing beauty. The antithesis of this is a soul in mortal sin.

The sanctifying grace brought by the Holy Ghost to the soul is also called habitual grace, because it remains permanently in the soul. The mortal sin is kept from it. In addition to this the Holy Ghost brings with Him actual grace, which is a certain divine help given to enable us to serve God and to perform the duties He requires of us. It helps us "to avoid evil and to do good," as the Catechism teaches.

The presence of the Holy Ghost as our Guest brings certain effects; adoption as sons, heirship to heaven and the special favor of God. He cannot but look with love upon those in whom He Himself has taken up His abode, and must fill with heavenly blessings those souls whom He has consecrated as temples for Himself.

After Solomon had spent years of labor and had lavished untold riches on the temple which he had built for God's honor, he said: "Is it, then, to be thought that God should dwell upon the earth? For if heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built." (III Kings vii. 27.) How wonderful then is the favor which the Holy Ghost bestows on us in the mystery of becoming truly our Guest.

Selfish irritability is a short cut to misery, but patience that lives, not for self but for the good of our fellow-men through supernatural charity, confers strength and fortitude, and leads, even here on earth, to the possession of even peace and happiness.

Our Lord cleansed ten lepers, and but one returned to give thanks for the benefit received. The other nine took their cure as a matter of course. We are all apt to belong to the same class of people as these ungrateful—or, what is nearer the truth—these thoughtless men.

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THE ROSARY.

Have you ever thought seriously on this beautiful and effective form of prayer? Not on its origin and history, but on the various parts which it contains? If not, you have not recited it intelligently, neither do you appreciate its power nor meaning.

For our better understanding therefore, let us briefly consider its parts.

First, there is the cross, the emblem of our redemption, the Christian's sign of loyalty to his God. The Catholic's first stamp of heavenly heirship and his last object of earthly vision. Clinging this blessed symbol of salvation we begin the Rosary with that beautiful and touching profession of faith composed by the apostles just previous to their going abroad into the world to preach as commanded and which we call the Apostle's Creed.

To understand and fully appreciate what the words imply it is only necessary to repeat them slowly and thoughtfully. It will then be found what a world of meaning they contain. It is the epitome of the essentials to salvation.

Next, we recite the Lord's prayer, the Hail Mary and the glory be to the Father. Here we have the prayer of all prayers, the Our Father, because it is the prayer composed by our Saviour Himself and contains every necessary petition spiritual and temporal. Then there is the Hail Mary the prayer whose authorship is due to the Angel Gabriel, St. Elizabeth and the Church. The part contributed by the Angel reminding us always of the Incarnation; that of the Saint impressing upon us the exalted honor conferred upon us; the Virgin Mary and that of the Church sanctifying and urging us to seek her assistance in life and at the hour of death. And lastly the Glory be to the Father by which we pay tribute to the Blessed Trinity.

These are the component parts of the beautiful and powerful devotion so far as the prayers employed are concerned. Every Catholic, of course knows that it is further divided, namely into the five glorious, joyful and sorrowful mysteries. And here we reach a consideration of importance, for they represent the glories, the joys and the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, to practice the devotion intelligently and profitably, meditation upon these mysteries becomes essential.

Herein lies the fruit of the whole devotion. It is this meditation which has made humble men great and great men humble. It has been profitably practiced by the poor and the rich, by the ignorant and the most learned. It has been and still is the devotion of Popes and peasants. Simple, and at the same time sublime, it has been well styled "the queen of all prayers"—the Rosary.—Church Progress.

GARIBALDI'S GRANDSON TO BE A PRIEST.

"The history of the Church in our time," says the Ave Maria, "affords many curious illustrations of how compensation is made to her. She suffers oppression in one country, and makes wondrous progress in another. Here she is attacked, there nobly defended. A great leader falls, one better qualified succeeds him. For every apostasy there are conversions. Scandal is nullified by some striking example of heroic virtue, like that of Father Damien. Roman abandons the Church, Newman submits to it. Garibaldi was an uncompromising foe of the Papacy, his grandson is studying for the priesthood and hopes to lay down his life for the faith in some foreign land. General Ricciotti Garibaldi does not deny that he himself is what is called 'anti-clerical,' and that his son's vocation has been in every respect a bitter blow. He had hoped that the boy would gradually abandon the idea of entering the priesthood, and especially that of becoming a member of a religious order; but, like a reasonable man, he now submits with a good grace to the inevitable. Those who are acquainted with young Garibaldi remark in him all the ardor and strenuousness which characterized his celebrated grandfather, but he will now be directed to the furtherance of lofty and noble aims. The qualities formerly employed against the Church will henceforth be devoted to her cause."

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"MY CURSE UPON ALL DRINKING."

"There is another Irish rising in the County Wexford presently," writes Seamus Macnamus, in the Catholic Union and Times. "But this time the pikers have nothing to do with it—only the Irish language. As in '88, it showed itself the boldest county in Ireland, leading the way in bidding defiance to Saxon law, so to-day it sustains its gallant record, showing to the other counties a shining example in Gaelic League revival work. No other county of Ireland is so well organized or doing such splendid work as in County Wexford. They may yet work a revolution more memorable than that of '88."

"In fact in the County Wexford two revolutions are presently proceeding: a language revolution is one, a drink revolution is the other. It was in this county that the Anti-Treating League, a short time ago, sprang forth. The Wexford men recognized that the ill habit of treating, more than a love of drink, was the root of the drink curse which blighted Ireland. So they formed societies, members of which blind themselves neither to take nor give a treat in any house where liquor is exposed for sale. From Wexford this league spread over Ireland doing much good already and having a great future before it. In the county Wexford itself, it has done most good, and it is acknowledged, revolutionized things generally. The Wexford men recall with bitterness the cry (in the ballad) of the poor rebel whose cause was lost in '88:—

'My curse upon all drinking! It makes my heart full sore
For bravery won each battle, but drink lost ever more.
We had no drink beside us on Tubberneer's day.
Depending on the long, bright pipe—and well it held its way.'

The Wexford men are determined with God's help to lose no more battles through drink."

TOLD BY FATHER TABB.

"I'll go in," she said, for I've never yet seen a Catholic service, and it will amuse them at home to hear how these poor people do."
The Benediction was just beginning. What on earth could it mean? There was light enough surely. Strange that this inward darkness of the mind should express itself so! Then the flowers and the incense and the tinkling bells made her wonder more.

Vespers over, the Rosary begins. Ah, there is idolatry! Hail Mary, full of grace!—ah! that! Then the Lord's Prayer. "Well, they keep at heart a glimmer of Christian faith, so there may be some hope for them bled as they are."

She was amongst the last to leave the church. Seeing a rosary in one of the pews, she took it home with her.

"How they will laugh when I show this," she said, "and pray on it to them! She had the words by heart. Bedtime came, and the young girl, taking this rosary with her, went to her room."

She knelt as was her custom, to say her prayers. "Hail Mary—God forgive me! I didn't mean to say that! 'Our Father'—'Blessed art Thou'—foolish distraction!"

She got up from her knees and walked the room. The fatal words haunted her. "Hail Mary, full of grace."
She knelt again, trying to fix her thoughts, but the effort failed. "It is better to lie down for a while, perhaps."

She had never before slept without saying a prayer. Can she do so now? "Hail Mary, full of grace"—ah! that! I had the grace to pray well—the Lord is with thee. When in thy company I was also with me. "Hail Mary, Mother of God, Mother, surely, she loved her Child. He made thee; some portions of those same graces ask him for me."

Apologizing thus for the words she had uttered, she lay down again, and this time slept soundly.

Next morning the same words came to her lips, and from that time forth she daily repeated them. She entered the church a few weeks later, and lived to be the mother of a Catholic family and was buried with the beads (her stolen property, as she called them) clasped to her bosom.

The account was related to me by her daughter.

FATE KIND TO THE TRANQUIL OF HEART.

One of the best things a man can bring into the world with him is natural humility of spirit. About the next best thing he can bring, and they usually go together, is an appreciative spirit—a loving and susceptible heart. If he is going to be a reformer and stir up things, and slay the dragons, he needs other qualities more. But if he is going to get the most out of life in a worthy way, if he is going to enjoy the grand spectacle of the world from first to last, then he needs his life pitched in a low key and well attuned to common universal things. The strained, the loud, the farfetched, the extravagant, the frenzied—how lucky we are to escape them, and to be born with dispositions that cause us to flee from them!

When I was a young man I wrote a little poem called "Waiting," which has had quite a history, and the burden of which is "my own shall come to me." What my constitution demands, the friends, the helps, the fulfillment, the opportunities, shall find some where, sometime. It was a statement of the old doctrine of the elective affinities. These who are torn to strife and contention and strife and contention ready at their hand; those who are born for gentleness and love find gentleness and love drawn to them. The naturally suspicious and distrustful find the world in conspiracy against them, the unkind, the hardened see themselves in their fellows about them. The tone in which we speak to the world the world speaks to us.

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