

AUG 27, 1887.

Spinning.

Like a blind spinner in the sun, I tread my days; I know that all the threads will run appointed ways; I know such day will bring its task, and, being blind, no more I ask.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS FOR EARLY MASSES

By the Priest Fathers. Preached in their Church of St. Paul the Apostle, fifty-nine street and Ninth avenue, New York City.

By the grace of God I am what I am, and His Grace in me hath not been void. - Epistle of the Day.

These, my brethren, are the concluding words of the Epistle of this Sunday. They tell, as it were, the whole story of the spiritual life in a very few words, and are worthy of our most careful consideration.

The spiritual life; what does that mean? That is worth thinking of in the first place, for many Christians have, I am sure, no distinct idea of it. If, then, we think, we can see that life is in the whole universe of God, something progressive; it goes on from small beginnings, by constant growth and development, till it reaches its perfection.

If it does not do this, it is hardly worthy of the name of life at all. When it begins in the soul after baptism, after a good confession, it is not complete and perfect, any more than a house is complete when its foundation has just been laid.

The habits of supernatural virtue, which make the soul's perfection, have to be acquired, and the acquiring of them is generally a work of time; it requires much effort and fidelity to the grace of God.

The grace of God; yes, that is the source of this life; without it the soul cannot grow, any more than the plant can grow without air and sunshine.

But I think that few Catholics doubt this. We all know that the saints have become what they are by grace, not merely by their own natural powers; that the growth of their souls was a growth in grace, and by grace.

Some people do say that. If you ask them why they have not overcome or at least made some progress in overcoming their faults, or even their great vices, they will say: "I suppose I had not the grace." But that is worse than a vain excuse—it is even a blasphemy, for it is to put the blame on God. They have had the grace—they have it now; but the grace in them has been void, at least, in great part.

"His grace in me," says St. Paul, has not been void. This sounds like a boast, but really it is not. It is nothing but a simple truth. If one has advanced in the spiritual life, if one has become strong in virtue, it is because he has used the graces which God gave him; if he has not, it is because he has despised them and thrown them away. They are perhaps hard words, but they are true. It will profit us to think of them.

The main difference between the saints and ourselves is just this, that they treasured up the supernatural gifts which God gave them, and turned them to good account. They were, for the most part, men and women at the outset not very different from others around them, and the graces they had were very much like those which God gives to us.

It is in us also to be saints, if we will. Not, indeed, that all are called to the first place in the Kingdom of God, but a saint is one who acquires the perfect-

tion which God intends for him; and shall we not place that too low. How shall we know what it is unless we follow where He leads?

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI.

GREAT DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH, AND FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE REDEMPTORISTS.

Alphonsus Maria de Liguori was born in Marinella, in the suburbs of Naples, on the 27th September, 1696. In early youth he edited all with whom he conversed, and those who have written his life in detail mention numerous instances of virtue. While at college his conduct never varied, his devotion to the Sacrament of the Altar and the Mother of God continually gaining strength. Having obtained his degree, he practiced at the bar for a while, giving promise of a brilliant career, but at the age of twenty-seven years he abandoned the law to embrace the ecclesiastical state.

After four years preparation the cherished ambition of his life was realized, and he was ordained priest. He was held in such esteem by his Archbishop, that he had no sooner been ordained than he was appointed to conduct the retreat of the clergy, although there were amongst them many apostolic and eloquent men of old standing. He was peculiarly fitted for the confessional, not by the qualities which he possessed (all of which are indispensable to every good confessor) but by the degree in which he possessed them. His tenderness in receiving, his patience in hearing, his sweetness in admonition, were such as few or none have ever witnessed. The union with which he represented to the sinner his ingratitude, and the moving words by which he sought to excite him to repentance, were irresistible.

His first desire was to join the congregation of the Oratory; being unable to do this on account of the opposition of his father, he devoted himself to evangelizing the poor in the city of Naples, and to the duties of preacher and confessor, residing first in his father's house, afterwards in the college of the Chinese, founded by Father Matthew Ripa, the famous Chinese missionary. He also joined a secular congregation of mission-aries called the Propaganda, and with them gave several missions in the provinces. By this means he came to know the spiritual destitution of the poor peasants and shepherds, and felt a strong desire to devote his life to the succor of the rural population. He was confirmed in these thoughts especially by the advice of Monsignor Falcois, bishop of Castellamare. This prelate had long desired the establishment of an institute of apostolic men, who should strive in all things to copy the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and after His example to evangelize the poor. He had founded at Sala a community of ladies called Nuns of the Most Holy Savior, who prayed continually for the same intention. It was while giving the spiritual exercises to these nuns that St. Alphonsus, at last resolved, under the direction of Bishop Falcois, to gather some companions, who should on the one hand seek their own perfection by the obligations and rules of a religious life, and on the other devote themselves to apostolic work among the most neglected and forsaken souls. The work was solemnly begun at Sala on November 9, 1733. St. Alphonsus being then thirty-six years old.

In carrying out this design the Saint encountered innumerable obstacles—the part of the good men who looked on him as misled by enthusiasm or spiritual ambition, and afterwards from the civil authorities. The times were indeed most unfavorable to such a project, and it is one of the miracles of the Saint's life to have founded and maintained a new religious congregation at the time when the Marquis Paucoli was all-powerful in Naples. In spite, however, of these obstacles, Saint Alphonsus succeeded in establishing several houses in different parts of Naples and Sicily, and before his death saw his institute spreading in the Papal States and already transported beyond the Alps.

On February 25, 1749, Pope Benedict XIV. approved the rules and confirmed the new institute by a solemn approbation. By the name of the Most Holy Savior, but to prevent confusion with the canonically changed title to that of the Most Holy Redeemer. The members of the congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, besides the three simple but perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, bind themselves by a vow of perseverance until death in the institute, which they confirm by a promissory oath. They are bound by their vow of poverty to renounce all benefices, offices or dignities outside their congregation. Whenever a Redemptorist has been raised to a bishopric it has been by command of the Sovereign Pontiff, and by his dispensations. It was in this way that St. Alphonsus himself was obliged to accept the bishopric of St. Agatha of the Gotha. In order also more effectively to pursue the principal end of the institute, which is to succor the most ignorant and neglected souls, St. Alphonsus forbade his Fathers to undertake such works as the instruction of youth, the government of seminaries or the direction of the nuns. Their main occupation is the apostolic ministry in the preaching of missions and retreats to all classes of persons, but with a preference for such as are most neglected, especially those who live in remote villages or hamlets. As, however, in many countries, the most neglected souls are to be found in the great cities, the intention of the founder is carried out in laboring for them. St. Alphonsus died on August 2, 1787, in his ninety-first year.

Consumption Surely Cured.

To the Editor—Please inform your readers that I have a positive remedy for the above named disease. By its timely use thousands of hopeless cases have been permanently cured. I shall be glad to send two bottles of my remedy free to any of your readers who have consumption if they will send me their Express and P. O. address. Respectfully, Dr. T. A. SLOCUM, Branch Office, 37 Yonge St., Toronto.

FATHER ELLIOTT IN PHILADELPHIA.

HE TELLS WHAT IS THE TRUE DOCTRINE OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

The Rev. Walter Elliott, of New York, spoke at the great meeting of the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. He said that while it could not be affirmed that religion makes total abstinence a special question of its own, yet it adds to it attributes that nature cannot give. Religion needs the man before it needs the Christian. It cannot make a good Christian out of a weak man, and it needs a man out of which to make a good citizen. To be not only a man, but secure in one's manhood is what is needed to make a good citizen or a good Christian. The true doctrine of total abstinence, he said, is shown by the power of man's own personal nature over his mind, giving him opportunity to show the integrity of his manhood. Dr. Elliott said that he stood with the Philadelphia Brigade at the stone wall at Gettysburg, and that he would not yield in his admiration of the Constitution of the United States to any one, but the Constitution does not make the man. The Republican party, he said, is a great party; it fought the war; it was always fighting for liberty; but if he were asked to vote for a drunkard in that party he would say the man who is a drunkard is not a good Republican, nor a good citizen, and I cannot vote for him. If it should be a Democrat, although there was something about the name itself that made his heart flutter, he still would not vote for a man who could not govern his passion for drink.

Prescription for a Dyspeptic.

Scientific American. General John A. Dix was at one time the unhappy victim of dyspepsia. After seeking in vain for relief he was at length led to consult the famous Dr. Abernethy. After listening impatiently to his story, Abernethy interrupted him with these words: "Sir, you are pretty far gone, and the wonder is you are not gone entirely. If you had consulted common sense instead of the medical faculty you would probably have been well long ago. I can say nothing to you excepting this: You must take regular exercise, as much as you can bear without fatigue, as little medicine as possible, of the simplest kind, and a modest quantity of plain food, of the quality which you find by experience best to agree with you. No man, not even a physician, can prescribe diet for another. 'A stomach is a stomach,' and it is impossible for any one to reason with safety from his own to that of any other person. 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