

APRIL 20, 1908

FIVE-MINUTE'S SERMON.

Third Sunday after Easter.

PLEASURE IN SERVING GOD.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. (Phil. iv. 4) It has often been noticed, my dear brethren, and we every day come across examples of it, that when things are going well men think very little about God and about the practice of their religious duties. We may almost say that, as things are at present, most men will not perform their duty to God unless they are driven to do so by something unpleasant and hard to bear. It is when a man is taken ill that he sends for a priest and makes his confession and receives the Sacraments. As soon, however, as he gets well it is only too probable that he will return to his old ways.

Now, this shows that the service of God is felt by a great many to be a heavy burden and yoke. And I am sorry to say that this feeling is not confined to those whose passions and low propensities are so strong as to hold them down for a great part of their lives in slavery and subjection to sin and vice. Many even of those who have freed themselves for the most part from this degrading bondage seen far from the possession of that spirit of holy joy with which every one trying to serve God should be filled. Many even of these seem to find the yoke of the Lord a heavy one; and if they do not cast it off, it is chiefly because they are afraid to do so.

Now, I am not going to say a word against the service of God which springs from the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. The fear of God is not merely good—it is necessary for salvation. But it is only the beginning, not the perfection of wisdom. Moreover, it should not be the habitual dominant and constant motive of our religious life; it should serve as a motive to fall back upon when higher motives are not felt. As St. Ignatius says: We should ask of God the grace to fear Him, so that if and when through our faults, we grow forgetful of God's love, the fear of punishment may hold us back from offending Him. In other words, we ought, as a rule, to be serving God from love and holy joy rather than from fear and dread.

This is the teaching of the Holy Scripture, and especially of the great Apostle St. Paul. The text is but a simple or similar injunction which might be found in every one of his Epistles—"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice." Do not be always looking upon the service of God as a heavy burden and yoke to which you must be driven as a fear of punishment, but let that service fill your souls at all times with delight and satisfaction. That is what St. Paul enjoins. Why is it not so with us? Why should it be so?

Well, there are ten thousand reasons why the service of God should be delightful and satisfactory; but I can refer to one only this morning—one, however, of which I think that we can all feel the force. As a rule, the man who is carrying on a profitable and successful business is, so long as everything goes well, tolerably happy. You don't see him going about with a long face, and although he may grumble a little, as most men do, you can see that he does not mean it. Now, if this is the case in the midst of the uncertainties which are inseparable from all human transactions, what ought to be the satisfaction and contentment of a man who has seriously taken in hand the one necessary business? For how does the case stand with such a man? The man who seriously taken in hand the business of saving his own soul must succeed—for him there is no such thing as failure. So long as he is willing he must be prosperous. And why? Because he has Almighty God as a partner. And God is ready to give him what I hope it is not irreverent to call unlimited credit. In this life he pours into his soul His heavenly grace, and this grace gives him a right to an eternal recompense. No action from morning till night, from week's end to week's end, may be made profitable and fruitful, if done with a right intention and, of course, if there is nothing sinful in it. This is the position in which any and every man may be placed and may remain if he so wills, and of the sense and judgment of a man who is not satisfied by such terms I have but a poor opinion.

A True Nobleman.

He is a nobleman in God's peerage who goes out every morning, it may be from the humblest of homes, to his work until the evening, with a determination, as working for a heavenly Master, to do his best; and no titles which this world can bestow, no money which was ever coined, can bring a man who does no work within the sunshine of God's love.—Ave Maria, from Dean Hole.

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OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

THE OAK TREE AND THE IVY.

EUGENE FIELD.

In the greenwood stood a mighty oak. So majestic was he that all who came that way paused to admire his strength and beauty, and all the other trees of the greenwood acknowledged him to be their monarch.

Now it came to pass that the ivy loved the oak tree, and inclining her graceful tendrils where he stood, she crept about his feet and twined herself around his sturdy and knotted trunk. And the oak tree pined the ivy. "Oho!" he cried, laughing boisterously, but good naturedly,—"oho! you love me, do you, little vine? Very well, then; play about my feet, and I will keep the storms from you and will tell you pretty stories about the clouds, the birds, and the stars."

The ivy marvelled greatly at the strange stories the oak-tree told; they were stories the oak tree heard from the wind that lolloped about his lofty head and whispered to the leaves of his topmost branches. Sometimes the story was about the great ocean in the East, sometimes of the broad prairies in the West, sometimes of the ice-king who lived in the North, and sometimes of the flower-queen who dwelt in the South. Then, too, the moon told a story to the oak-tree every night,—or at least every night that she came to the greenwood, which was very often, for the greenwood is a very charming spot, as we all know. And the oak-tree repeated to the ivy every story the moon told and every song the stars sang.

"Pray, what are the winds saying now?" or "What song is that I hear?" the ivy would ask; and then the oak-tree would repeat the story or the song, and the ivy would listen in great wonderment.

Whenever the storms came, the oak-tree cried to the little ivy: "Cling close to me, and no harm shall befall you!" or "How strong I am; the tempest does not so much as stir me—I mock its fury!"

Then, seeing how strong and brave he was, the ivy hugged him closely; his brown, rugged breast protected her from every harm, and she was secure. The years went by: how quickly they flew—spring, summer, winter,—ah! life is short in the greenwood as elsewhere! And now the ivy was no longer a weakly little vine to excite the pity of the passer-by. Her thousand beautiful arms had twined thick and thither about the oak-tree, covering his brown and knotted trunk, shooting forth a bright, delicious foliage and stretching far up among his lower branches. Then the oak-tree's pity grew into a love for the ivy, and the ivy was filled with a great joy. And the oak-tree and the ivy were wed one June night, and there was a wonderful celebration in the greenwood; and there was the most beautiful music, in which the pine-trees, the crickets, the katydids, the frogs, and the nightingales joined with pleasing harmony.

The oak-tree was always good and gentle to the ivy. "There is a storm coming over the hills," he would say. "The east wind tells me so; the swallows fly low in the air, and the sky is dark. Cling close to me, my beloved, and no harm shall befall you."

Then, confidently and with an always growing love, the ivy would cling more closely to the oak-tree, and no harm came to her.

"How good the oak-tree is to the ivy!" said the other trees of the greenwood. The ivy heard them, and she loved the oak-tree more and more. And, although the ivy was now the most unbragging and luxuriant vine in all the greenwood, the oak-tree regarded her still as the tender little thing he had laughingly called to his feet that spring day, many years before,—the same little ivy he had told about the stars, the clouds, and the birds. And, just as patiently as in those days he had told her of these things, he now repeated other tales the winds whispered to his topmost boughs—tales of the ocean in the East, the prairies in the West, the ice-king in the North, and the flower-queen in the South. Nestling upon his brave breast and in his stout arms, the ivy heard him tell these wondrous things, and she never wearied with the listening.

"How the oak-tree loves her!" said the ash. "The lazy vine has naught to do but to twine herself about the arrogant oak-tree and hear him tell his wondrous stories!"

The ivy heard these envious words, and they made her very sad; but she said nothing of them to the oak-tree, and that night the oak-tree rocked her to sleep as no repeated the lullaby a zephyr was singing to him.

"There is a storm coming over the hills," said the oak-tree one day. "The east wind tells me so; the swallows fly low in the air, and the sky is dark. Clasp me round about with thy dear arms, my beloved, and nestle close unto my bosom, and no harm shall befall thee."

"I have no fear," murmured the ivy; and she clasped her arms most closely about him and nestled unto his bosom.

The storm came over the hills and swept down upon the greenwood with deafening thunder and vivid lightning. The storm-king himself rode upon the blast; his horses breathed flames, and his chariot trailed through the air like a serpent of fire. The ash fell before the violence of the storm-king's fury, and the cedars groaning fell, and the hemlocks and the pines; but the oak-tree alone stood not.

"Oho!" cried the storm-king, angrily, "the oak-tree does not bow to me, he does not tremble in my presence. Well, we shall see."

With that, the storm-king hurled a mighty thunderbolt at the oak-tree, and the brave, strong monarch of the greenwood was riven. Then, with a shout of triumph, the storm-king rode aw. y.

"Dear oak-tree, you are riven by the storm-king's thunderbolt!" cried the ivy, in anguish.

"Ay," said the oak-tree, feebly, "my end has come; see, I am shattered and helpless."

"But I am unhurt," remonstrated the ivy, "and I will bind up your wounds and nurse you back to health and vigor."

And so it was that, although the oak-tree was ever afterward a riven and broken thing, the ivy concealed the scars upon his shattered form and covered his wounds all over with her soft foliage.

"I had hoped, dear one," she said, "to grow up to thy height, to live with thee among the clouds, and to hear the solemn voices thou didst hear. Thou wouldest have loved me better than I?"

But the old oak-tree said: "Nay, nay, my beloved; I love thee better as thou art, for with thy beauty and thy love thou comfortest mine age."

Then would the ivy tell quaint stories to the old and broken oak-tree,—stories she had learned from the crickets, the bees, the butterflies, and the mice when she was an humble little vine and played at the foot of the majestic oak tree, towering in the greenwood with no thought of the tiny shoot that crept toward him with her love. And these simple tales pleased the old and riven oak-tree; they were not as heroic as the tales the winds, the clouds, and the stars told, but they were far sweeter, for they were tales of contentment, of humility, of love.

So the old age of the oak-tree was grander than his youth. And all who went through the greenwood paused to behold and admire the beauty of the oak-tree then: for about his severed and broken trunk the gentle ivy had so entwined her graceful tendrils and spread her fair foliage, that one saw not the havoc of the years nor the ruin of the tempest, but only the glory of the oak-tree's age, which was the ivy's love and ministering.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

Advice to Young Writers.

Mr. Edgar Fawcett, the well-known litterateur, giving an account of his own career as a writer, says: "I wanted, above all things, to be 'original,' just as every young author wants to be and too often deceives himself that he is. But when the truth is told there have been only a very few absolutely original authors within the memory of man. We are all of us imitators of somebody else or a group of somebodies else, whether we concede it or not.

"There is," continues Mr. Fawcett, "another principle of literary attempt that the young author cannot too closely observe. He should seek to convince himself what particular accomplishment in letters he is best fitted to attain."

"Here his surest guide will be the personal enjoyment which he secures from his task. If he is bored or wearied by it, he may make up his mind that it is very likely to bore and weary others. Nothing is more certain than that the work which gives pleasure to its readers has given to him who wrote it a keener pleasure still. Having made sure of what he can do best, he should then enter upon its performance with all possible caution and care. As for trusting to the 'inspired moment,' or waiting for it, or deploring its delay, he should take heed how he permits any such folly or superstition to clutch him with its vitiating grasp. 'Inspiration' either means, with a writer, good mental and physical health, or it has no meaning whatever. The mind is powerless without the body's aid; and to abuse one is to dull and incapacitate the other. Late hours and stimulants are especially fatal to the young writer when both are employed in the sense of literary conjudtors. While he burns midnight oil and quaffs midnight beverages—even though the last are non-alcoholic, like the coffee of Balzac—he will be apt to cloud his clearer perception of the purpose he has in view, and to substitute frenzy for intelligence. A feverish self-reliance will replace in his mind that wholesome distrust which is the natural, modest accompaniment of a beginner's inexperience. He will rarely approve by day-light what has seemed to him noteworthy a few hours before. To the tried and veteran writer these late colloquies with the muses may be altogether a different affair—the only angered goddess whom they must face is Hygeia, the offended deity of health."

All young men are eager to win success, but some of them have no clear idea of what success is, unless they make money the object of their lives, and others of them even with wealth as their ideal, desire to achieve success by speculation, by good luck in some unexpected form, by a legacy, by any quick and easy way, but not by thrift and hard work. To them this brief article will be of strong interest: Success, and How Achieved. What makes success? That depends much upon what is regarded as success. One of the greatest evils threatening America is a false idea of success: the glamor of wealth; the love of money; the haste to be rich. This leads to defalcations, breaches of trust, embezzlements and the other crimes following in their train, with which the daily papers are full. Speculation and gambling and rascals—these are the means used to attain "success." Broken banks, shattered business, ruined houses, bankruptcy, suicide; these are the final harvest. No duty seems more pressing than to cry aloud against this false idea of success; to save young men from the belief that success is anything else than that growth and development of character, out of which must come objective results that sound judgment will recognize and the lapse of time demonstrate to be real success. That "the love of money is the root of all evil" very few seem to believe. Yet a short time since that maxim was taken as a text for a thoughtful and philosophic address, delivered in one of our large cities, in which the noble word seemed to be clearly demonstrated by an unbiassed man, speaking from an entirely worldly point of view. Success will be determined, in the first place, by having a sane idea of what success is. Secondly, sound principles upon which that success shall be founded—principles that have stood the test of time and of experience. Thirdly, hard work. You may have the first two, but success will not be devolved out of theory. This is the age of applied things; and the best theory of life must be worked out. Mr. Disraeli, in Lothair, expressed the opinion that anything is within the reach of him who is willing to pay the necessary price for it in devotion and labor. It was so in his career, and it has been so in multitudes of other careers that could be cited. Recently ex-President Harrison, whose life will be regarded as a success, said that whatever he had attained in his professional career as a lawyer had come to him because of steady and laborious application to the work of a lawyer's office. He came into the active life of a young man with no adventitious aids. He applied himself, with clear ideas and true aims, to the mastery of his profession. His great ability to do things is the result of his hard work. He knew no royal road to success. He never attempted any "short cuts." Two good motives can be taken from the scriptures: "Work out your own salvation;" and "Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings."

FORTY HOURS' ADORATION

"It is our earnest desire to introduce in this diocese also, if possible, the Perpetual Adoration in this sense, that at all times during the year the Forty Hours' Adoration shall be proceeding in one or more of the parish churches. For this reason, we request the reverend fathers to name three days that would be the most suitable for their congregation. As far as practicable, we shall follow their suggestions."—Archbishop Katzar.

Although authors are not agreed with regard to the date, place, and circumstances of the establishment of the Forty Hours' Adoration, yet they differ only in minor details, and the following from the Raccolta (p. 79) must be accepted as the most reliable account: "The prayer for forty hours together before the Blessed Sacrament, in memory of the forty hours during which the sacred body of Jesus was in the sepulchre, began in Milan, about the year 1534. Thence it spread into other cities of Italy, and was introduced into Rome, for the first Sunday in every month, by the Archconfraternity of the Most Holy Trinity of the Pilgrims (founded by St. Pailip Neri in the year 1545) and for the third Sunday in the month, by the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Prayer, called La Morte, in the year 1551. This prayer of the Forty Hours was established forever by Pope Clement VIII., for the whole course of the year, in regular, continuous succession, from one church to another, commencing with the first Sunday in Advent in the chapel of the Apostolic Palace, as appears from the constitution Graves et Diuturnae, November 25, 1592. This Pope was moved to establish this devotion by the public troubles of holy Church, in order that day and night the faithful might appease their Lord by prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in solemn exposition."

The constitution of Pope Clement VIII. referred to is commonly known as the Clementine Instruction, by which the whole matter relating to the Forty Hours' Exposition was regulated for Catholic countries. But there are certain modifications permitted in missionary countries, of which mention will be made as we proceed. There has been, as we have seen, a gradual development in the external devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament, by which it has been brought down to what we have at present. First, there was the procession with the Sacred Host concealed, which was made on but one or two days in the year; next, the procession with the Blessed Sacrament exposed to view; then the short procession with the long continued exposition; after that the benediction during and at the close of the Forty Hours; and, finally, the benediction after a short exposition and without the procession, and that once or oftener in the week. But we have only meagre details of the manner in which the gradual development was effected. Many a reader, however, will remember the time when both the Forty Hours' Adoration and the benediction were rare in this country.

It is not certain who introduced the devotion of the Forty Hours into the United States; but it was most probably either Archbishop Kenrick, of Baltimore, or Bishop Neumann, of Philadelphia, and about the year 1854. Finding that the Clementine Instruction could not be followed out in this country, so far as keeping out in this Sacrament exposed for the forty hours continuously, Archbishop Kenrick applied to the Holy See for such modifications of it for his archdiocese as circumstances demanded; and Pius IX., by a rescript dated December 10, 1857, granted the following, which were, at the request of the Fathers of the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, extended to the whole United States in 1868:

"1. That, as long as circumstances require it, the Blessed Sacrament may be exposed to public adoration, in the form of the Forty Hours' Prayer, in all the churches and oratories of the diocese of Baltimore once or twice a year, as the Archbishop may think best in the Lord, in the day-time only, and that at night it may be replaced in the tabernacle. 2. That the procession may be omitted, even inside the church, if it cannot properly be had. 3. To all the faithful, of either sex, he grants the Indulgence of seven years, and as many quarantines to be gained each day that they visit the church where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed and remain there for some time in prayer, and a Plenary Indulgence to all who, besides visiting the church where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, and praying there once on each of the three days, also go to confession and receive Holy Communion. But, according to a more recent decree, three visits are not necessary to gain the Plenary Indulgence."—Catholic Citizen.

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