

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Feast of Pentecost.

If any one love Me he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him; he that loveth Me not, keepeth not My word.

To-day, dear brethren, the church sends up her voice of praise for the coming of the Holy Spirit. On this day the Holy Ghost, the personal love of the Father and the Son, came upon the disciples in that upper chamber in Jerusalem, where they were gathered together in prayer awaiting the promise and timid men, but when He had poured Himself upon them behold we have the great Apostles, the teachers of the divine word, the fearless and untiring preachers after souls, the founders of the church.

Alas! what a change had been wrought in these timid followers of Jesus, who had fled from Him in the hour of His need, and who, after His resurrection, lay hid with barred doors for fear of the Jews! Their fear and their weakness have disappeared, and the whole world is not large enough for the exercise of their zeal, nor less than the conversion of all nations the end of their noble ambition.

But, dear brethren, the self-same Holy Ghost, who brought about this change in the Apostles, comes to us, nay, abides in us, if we fulfil the condition our Lord lays down—namely, that we love Him. And He makes the test of our love the keeping of His word. If we love Him the Father will love us, and the Father and the Son will come to us and make their abode with us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is our sanctifier. It is He to Whom are ascribed the works of love. He dispenses the graces which the merits of Jesus Christ have won for us. He purifies from sin and unites our souls to God. He dwells in every one who is free from grievous sin, and by His light and strength He gives us help to overcome the temptations which assail us.

He is the Spirit of joy and sweetness, filling us with the fear of God, urging us on in the love of God, guarding us from the loss of God's friendship by the winning sweetness of His consolation. How greatly, then, should we love and adore the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the Blessed Trinity! We should often call upon Him and pray to Him. We do not invoke the Holy Ghost enough. We pray to the Father and to the Son, and so indirectly honor God, the Holy Spirit; but we should pray more frequently to Him directly. We should call upon Him to give us, if we have it not, the grace of God, and to increase in us the fire of divine love that we may realize in ourselves the promise of the abiding of God in us by keeping His laws.

What folly it is for us to imagine that God can have a dwelling-place in our sin-stained souls! How can the Holy Spirit find pleasure in one who by mortal sin has made himself God's enemy; who has been guilty of a deliberate act of rebellion against his Maker and been unfaithful to or left unheeded His own sweet drawing? Alas for us, if this Pentecost finds us in this awful state! Alas! if the voice of our conscience has been silenced; this day then brings no joy to us! The Holy Spirit has no abiding-place within our souls. We have not loved the Son because we have not kept His words: "He that loveth Me not keepeth not My words." And because we have not loved Him the Father and He will not come to us. The loving Holy Ghost is not master in our houses; we have banished Him out; who was our best friend and thrown open the gate to our enemy. Will you remain thus, you who are in sin? Let not this day go by and tomorrow find you unrepentant. Grieve for your past offences, keep the law of God, and you shall have the fulness of the Holy Spirit.

TALKS ON RELIGION.

BLESSED ARE THE CLEAN OF HEART—FROM THE HEART COME FORTH EVIL THOUGHTS (ST. MATT. XV. 19.)

The attention of men is directed especially to external acts and to the external consequences of sin. They do not generally trouble themselves very much about that which really constitutes sin, because it is the essence of sin. Sin by its very nature is an act, but it is not an act so much of the body as of the will. The external act which follows, or may follow, does not add much to the gravity of the sin, except that it gradually makes the act of the will more distinct and energetic and, on occasion, produces scandal. The peal of thunder calls attention to the deadly flash, but does not add to its force. Since sin is an act of the will, it may be complete and grievous without going beyond the mind of the sinner. Suppose that any suggestion of hatred, of malice or impurity be brought before the mind, and the will accepts and welcomes the thoughts instead of rejecting them, and has the knowledge that such ideas or thoughts are hateful to God, then the act of the will is a complete and distinct act of rebellion and a mortal sin, though there has been no external act or signal of what transpired within the mind of the culprit.

Sins of thought are our most dangerous enemies, because they belong to our moral kingdom and are so easily committed, and because sins of thought are the foundations of all the evil which men commit. "An evil man out of an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." (St. Matt. xii. 34.)

We are not permitted to abuse or misuse any of the powers of mind or body which God has bestowed on us. These sins do not necessarily imply that injury is inflicted on others. However, if such be the case, a fresh element of evil is introduced.

The sixth and the ninth Commandments prohibit all sins of impurity, be they of word, or act or of thought and imagination. The Apostle says: "The Lord is the avenger of all these things, as we have told you before, and have testified." (1. Thes. iv. 6)

Every rank and station is exposed to

temptation, and, we may state, in a particular way to temptation against purity. The seed of this temptation may be considered as part of man's original corruption, and man is ever subject to it during his sojourn on earth. "Lead us not into temptation," is the petition our Lord taught all as a daily prayer. To convince us of the danger St. Paul tells us of himself: "Lest the greatness of the revelation should exalt me, there was given to me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me; or which thing thrice I brought the Lord that it might depart from me, and He said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity." (II. Cor. xii. 7.)

These words, while they warn us that we cannot look for freedom from temptations, give us confidence that with God's help we need not fear them. The thief may try the doors and windows of the dwelling, but if they be properly secured, he can do us no harm.

Faithful souls guarded by prayer and strengthened by the sacraments are in the midst of temptations, like the three children in the fiery furnace; "Not a hair of their head had been singed, nor their garments altered, nor the smell of the fire had passed on them." God's grace is always sufficient.

Willful and deliberate consent to any temptation against purity with a knowledge of what you are about and fully meaning it, constitutes grave sin. The smallness of the matter does not find place as in other transgressions. Death can follow from the very slight prick of a serpent's tooth, because the one drop of poison corrupts the whole mass of blood in circulation. To consent to slip down the first few yards of a precipice means the abyss. There are frosts that blight and destroy so thin layers yield the inward kingdom of the heart. "Know you not, that to whom you lay yourself servants to obey, his servants you are whom you obey, whether it be of sin unto death, or obedience unto justice." (Rom. vi. 16.)

"He that loveth the danger shall perish in it." (Eccl. iii. 27) Hence bad company, bad reading, bad conversation and bad plays are to be avoided. Temptations arise both from the senses and from the imagination. The imagination creates a world for itself and fills it with creatures which excel in brilliancy anything that the existing world can produce. These may be the source of temptation, and as such be avoided and must not be fed by bad shows, pictures or books.

The care of avoiding all approaches of this sin might be so excessive as to lead to scrupulosity. Scrupulous persons create sin, and to create means to form out of nothing. So they make sin out of the ordinary occurrences of life, or the ordinary duties of life. No human being can be kept in ignorance of all sin, because he would have to be blind to all that is going on in the world. Innocence cannot be kept simply by ignorance of evil. As soldiers are trained for warfare, so Christians must be trained for the battle of life, otherwise the life of a Christian would not be a warfare. With an honest purpose to do what is right, and to resist what is wrong with God's help, issue can be taken with temptations and with dangers which are met but not sought.

God is good and gives His grace to all. He called back Mary Magdalen and made her such a saint that He first appeared to her after the Resurrection. St. Augustine through supernatural help and by the prayers of his mother, became a saint and doctor of the church. The prodigal repentant children are ever welcome to their Father's House.—Cleveland Universe.

THE DEVOUT AIMS OF COLUMBUS.

BY JOSEPH JORDAN DEVNEY.

On May 20, 1508, Christopher Columbus, the greatest discoverer of all time, and one of the most remarkable men who ever lived, was called to his reward. This year, therefore, witnesses the four hundredth anniversary of his death. In commemoration of that event it is considered appropriate to call to mind a few of the pious acts with which his life, was filled, also to point out some of his sublime ambitions and show what an immense influence they had on his accomplishments. It is refreshing, too, in this materialistic age, to review the deeds of a truly great man who had an infinitely higher aim in life than to make money merely for money's sake, but instead devoted his energies to the accomplishment of great works for the glory of God.

Many histories of the life of Columbus have been written, and consequently the story of how, on that never-to-be-forgotten Friday morning, October 12, 1492, the illustrious navigator and his men caught the first glimpse of American soil is well known. Most of the events which led up to this incident, as well as the subsequent ones, have also been told. But there is a feature of his life which has seldom, if ever, been made sufficiently prominent—that is, his ardent desire to do God's will as he saw it, namely, to rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the Turks; to carry the divine faith to the heathens beyond the seas; to found religious institutions; to aid the Pope in case of need; to educate missionaries; to assist the poor and do other pious works. Noble resolves these for a layman of humble birth, but they show unmistakably the lofty character of the man. That his zeal was deep-seated cannot be doubted, for there is an abundance of evidence to indicate that it was his ambition to execute these projects which caused him to persevere a fifth of a century securing the necessary means to make his westward trip and fifteen years longer endeavoring to make his discoveries yield proper and adequate compensation. Instead of detracting, it adds lustre to his fame to make manifest the fact that what he did was for the glory of God.

WONDERFUL PERSEVERANCE. What wonderful and commendable perseverance he displayed! For four-

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teen long years, he tells us himself, he brought the King of Portugal to provide him with the necessary means to sail westward to the land of the spices, but in vain. He would probably have been successful, but the share of the profits and the honors which he demanded were considered too great. He would take nothing less, because he believed great riches were to be gained from the enterprise, and he wanted a proper share in order to execute his pious designs. Finally, when the King, having scoured his ideas, sent out an expedition surreptitiously to try the scheme, and thus avoid paying Columbus what he demanded, the future discoverer promptly and properly quit Portugal and sought the sovereignty of Spain to back the enterprise. Here he labored eight years more before good Queen Isabella, acting independently of her husband, King Ferdinand, made the heroic declaration to undertake the enterprise for her own crown of Castile, and pledged her jewels to raise the necessary funds.

This assistance would have been granted Columbus sooner but for the same reason he failed in Portugal. They said he asked too much. But his high aim caused him to remain firm; it aided him in his arguments before the court. In writing about it later he said: "In thinking what I was I was overwhelmed with humility, but in remembering what I brought I found myself equal to crowned heads. I was no longer myself, but the instrument of God, chosen and marked out to accomplish a vast design."

But after eight years of working and waiting negotiations were broken off. "Twas now twenty years before Columbus solicited aid, and he was getting along in years, but his zeal had not abated in the least. So, mounting his mule, he started for the court of France to press his suit. Ere he had traveled far, however, he was overtaken by a messenger, who brought him the happy news that Queen Isabella had changed her mind. He immediately returned to the court and a contract was entered into April 17, 1492. As soon as it was signed Columbus, with tears of joy, declared that he would devote a large share of what should come to him to the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre. Since the mouth speaketh out of the heart, it is evident that this was uppermost in his thoughts.

THE AGREEMENT. The conditions of the agreement which he had sought so long were that he be made admiral over that part of the ocean lying west of an imaginary line, drawn from pole to pole, one hundred leagues west on the Cape Verde and Azores islands; that he be made Viceroy and Governor over all continents and islands he might discover beyond said line; that he be succeeded in these offices by his heirs forever; that he be granted a tenth part of all valuables found in said jurisdiction and of all rents and revenues arising therefrom, and that he be permitted to designate the Holy Communion. What an eighth of all lands, etc., together with the salary corresponding to the rank of admiral, viceroy and governor.

But though the long sought for agreement was signed, much had yet to be done before the expedition could sail. It was difficult to get ships and still more so to induce men to undertake the voyage, which was popularly looked upon as foolhardy. But at last all was in readiness. The expedition was placed under the special protection of the Blessed Virgin, and the crews of the three small ships, with Columbus at their head, marched to the monastery of La Rabida, where they heard Mass and received Holy Communion. What an edifying spectacle it would be now—a day to see a party of explorers, bound for the North Pole, for instance, emulating this devout example!

A favorable wind having sprung up on August 3, the admiral boarded his flagship, the Santa Maria—which name he had changed from Galleya—the anchors were weighed, and with a loud voice he ordered the sails unfurled in the name of Jesus Christ.

At last he was afloat. Over a score of years he had longed for this moment. So confident was he that he would reach Asia that he carried with him a letter from the King and Queen to the Great Khan, the ruler over a vast territory in the East, whom he hoped ad believed would accept the Catholic faith and be baptized with all his people. He felt sure also that the necessary funds which he needed for the rest of his work would be forthcoming. This must truly have been a happy moment.

The story of his heavy trials on this voyage are well known. His sailors begged and entreated him to turn back, and finally even threatened to throw him into the sea, but he remained firm as adamant in his determination to proceed. It took bravery of the highest type to sail on and ever on, day after day, week after week into that sea of darkness, with its accumulated uncertainties of ages, and with three crews on the verge of mutiny. But Columbus was equal to it. He placed his trust in God, which gave him the strength he required. He shut himself up daily at a certain time to meditate and say his office like a monk. He encouraged his men, and at last every heart was overjoyed with the sound of the signal which indicated that land had been sighted. In the early morning they disembarked, and for the following description of that event we are indebted to Murray:

"Scarcely had he (Columbus) touched the new land when he planted in it the standard of the Cross. His heart—great, noble heart that it was!—swelled with gratitude. In adoration he prostrated himself before God. Three times bowing his head, with tears in his eyes, he kissed the soil to which he had been conducted by the divine goodness. The sailors participated in the emotions of their commander, and kneeling, as he had, they elevated a crucifix in the air. Raising his countenance towards heaven, the gratitude of his soul found expression in this prayer, the first accents of which have been preserved by history: "Lord! Eternal and Almighty God! Who by thy sacred word hast created the heavens, the earth and the sea, may Thy name be blessed and glorified everywhere. May Thy Majesty be exalted with gratitude. In adoration he prostrated himself before God. Three times bowing his head, with tears in his eyes, he kissed the soil to which he had been conducted by the divine goodness. 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