

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension.

THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Watch in prayer. (1 St. Peter IV. 7.)

To day is the Sunday of expectation, and it brings to our minds that upper chamber in Jerusalem, where the little band of the chosen disciples of the Lord were gathered together waiting for the coming of the Holy Ghost.

There were the eleven Apostles and the faithful women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus and His brethren.

"All these," says the sacred chronicler, "were persevering with one mind in prayer."

Hence the epistle of today urges us to imitate them, and begins with the exhortation: "Dearly beloved, watch in prayer."

We must watch and wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost. He, has indeed, already come into our souls in Holy Baptism, cleansing them from original sin and making them His temples.

He has come again in Confirmation, with all the fulness of His sevenfold gifts, to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Christ.

Yet He comes to us continually every day, knocking at the door of our hearts, begging for admittance. Every impulse of what is known as actual grace is from the Holy Ghost, and such grace we are receiving all the time, every hour of the day.

We must, therefore, prepare ourselves for His coming, and when He has entered into our souls we must strive to keep Him there.

The Holy Ghost is the life of our souls. It is His constant presence and indwelling which is the state of grace which makes us pleasing to God.

To obtain and to preserve this abiding presence of the Holy Ghost we must imitate the Apostles in their watchfulness and prayer. We must watch lest the time of temptation should find us unprepared and off our guard.

Good example is opposed to scandal. Our Lord teaches us this duty when He says: "Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven."

Then the prophet Daniel says: "They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity." (Daniel xii. 3.)

The Lord has left two important offices to each of us—namely, to give glory to Him and to give good example to our neighbors.

There is no one so humble or in such a lowly station of life as to be unable to give good example. The good example of the lowly and their consistent lives have often served as the guiding lights leading others to the church as the wonderful star led the Wise Men to the stable of Bethlehem.

St. Gregory says: "A large portion of mankind is moved to the deities of heavenly things by example than by argument."

A Catholic newspaper in a parish is a continual mission. (Leo XIII.)

LAST OF MAY. TO THE CHILDREN OF MARY OF THE CATHEDRAL OF MOBILE.

In the mystical dim of the temple, In the dreamy dim of the day, The sunlight spoke soft to the shadows, And said: With my gold and my gray, Let us meet at the shrine of the Virgin, And ere her fair feet pass away, Let us weave there a mantle of glory, To deck the last evening of May.

provocation; by praise and flattery; by concealment; by partiality; by silence and by defending the ill done. Scandal may be given innocently, as for instance, when on account of ill-health a person may have a dispensation to eat meat on a fast day.

Then again on account of ignorance or weakness some may take scandal when that is done which is perfectly lawful. This is the "scandal of weak brethren."

There are some Protestants who have prejudices. They have exaggerated notions of Sunday observance and consider it sinful to play the piano, or to toss a ball or have any amusement on Sunday.

As far as possible we should try not to increase their prejudices against the church. Then there is "pharisaical scandal," as when the Pharisees were scandalized at the actions of our Lord, as the healing of the bed-ridden man on the Sabbath.

Our Lord rebuked them, saying: "If you have an ox or an ass fall into a pit on the Sabbath day will you not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath Day?"

We ought to remember that scandal may be given by omission as well as by commission, as when persons in authority fail to perform their duties incumbent on them. Parents may give scandal by failing properly to instruct their children or by not keeping them from bad company or bad reading, or when they permit them to take situations in which faith or morals will be endangered, or who do not firmly correct their faults and failings.

We need scarcely refer to the times that parents actually give scandal by bad language, by insulting their children in positions of authority should remember their responsibilities along these and similar lines.

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And waveless, in the deep silence, Three banners hung peaceful and low— They bore the bright blue of the heavens, Like angels, to hallow the scene, And they seemed to kneel down with the shadows, That crept to the shrine of the Queen.

The singers, their hearts in their voices, Had chanted the anthems of old, And the last tremulous way of the vapors, On the far shores of silence had rolled, And there—at the Queen Virgin's altar— The sun waves the mantle of glory, While the banners of the twilight were weaving, A fringe for the flash of each fold.

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MAKING AMERICA CATHOLIC.

EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN ECCLESIASTICAL REVIEW OUTLINES METHOD FOR MAKING CONVERTS.

Some years ago the editor of this journal was told by Father Brannan, the famous Texas missionary, that in his opinion a few Catholic journals do more harm than good to the Catholic cause by engaging in bitter controversies with Protestants and using abusive language.

A Catholic journal should be firmly Catholic, he said, in substance, but, except in rare instances, should be filled with "sweetness and light" rather than gall and wormwood.

Apparently Father Herman J. Heuser, editor of the scholarly American Ecclesiastical Review, has reached a similar conclusion. In a lengthy article in the March issue of that periodical he asserts that a time has come for the Catholic press to turn away from sharp polemics and adopt constructive methods, if this country is to be won to the faith.

Speaking of the Catholic missionary movement of recent years, he says: "Whilst any one who looks over the literature produced or occasioned by this evangelizing movement during the last ten years, must congratulate the Catholic body on what has been achieved by its most zealous representatives, he will also be struck by one thing—namely, the predominance of the polemical and defensive (as contrasted with the expository and assertive) attitude of the apologists in the Catholic field.

This is perhaps not at all noticeable in the sermons and addresses done in the regular mission courses to non-Catholics, nor in the better part of publications of our various Truth Societies, intended for non-Catholics, as in the Catholic journals, especially when these, under plea of protesting against the assertions of individual Protestants take them to task for misrepresenting Catholic faith or conduct.

This journalistic phase of present day apologetics is, of course, also a partial reflection of the manner of missionary work done in the other fields of Catholic propaganda, and therefore suggests similar views touching it. To express these views would indicate a criticism which at first sight must seem unwholly uncalled for, inasmuch as both the aim and the work are of a nature to be encouraged as being calculated to dispel error and to give light.

We must, it would seem, conquer, as did the Israelites, the citadels of Jericho, by proclaiming our right and power, and by overthrowing the strongholds of the adversary, which implies that we must also promptly repel his attacks.

But there is such a thing as spending one's strength in pursuing the enemy into byways and engaging in skirmishes which weary and divert the attention from the main movement of advance. The work of conversion is not entirely, and sometimes not at all, a work of overthrowing an opponent; its main purpose is to associate with us in a bond of fellowship those who are more or less disposed to join in the same work and life purpose with us under our common Leader and King, Christ.

This association is effected mainly by preservative, not by destructive, means. We may indeed teach our people to 'stand up' for their faith, that is, to beat down those who oppose it; thus rendering a service to liberty for the exercise of truth; but the far better way is to teach them to kneel down in proof of their faith, and to show others that there is good reason and wisdom for everyone else to do likewise.

In this way, the malignant opponents will have little room for argument, and their misrepresentations will refute themselves by the strongest sort of an argument ad hominem. Of course, there must be occasional defense and rebuttal.

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and a proper exposition of the historical facts that establish the sanctity and divine origin of the church as teacher of Christian doctrine and dispenser of its sacramental graces. But there may be too much of this for the good of the common cause, which requires something more positive and constructive continually to recommend it. We are all too much like a class of young theologians who, without having a full grasp of the facts and the philosophy of general history, occupy themselves with questions of the early and medieval heresies, which have long ago lost their significance, except in principle, under new forms or as bits of literary archeology, or who enter upon an analysis of the quarrels between Calvinists and Lutherans about credal tenets which the present representatives of these sects will hardly recognize as their own.

In short, the fault in much of our religious teaching is that it is too often polemic; and the fault of our polemics is that they are too often antique, whereas we would gain our end of converting or at least consolidating non-Catholics much better by laying more stress upon teaching simply pure Christian doctrine and living up to it."

MISSIONARY TRIALS.

How little do we realize in our comfortable homes the trials of our good missionaries and Sisters of not one hundred years ago! When the first Sisters of Providence arrived at their destination in Indiana in 1840, they found for their abode, to shelter ten persons, one small room and a corner, with a shed outside for the kitchen.

Their chapel lived "in a little hut, called also the church, which is only ten feet wide and 12 feet long." What was termed, by courtesy, an altar, was really "three boards resting on sticks;" and over this "altar" was thrown by day a blue calico cover.

At the opposite end of the room was a miserable pallet. There were, also, a trunk, an old chair, and two small tables, one covered with books, the other used for a writing-table.

Here had a former Parisian dwelt for four years—"he was brought up in the comforts of the most opulent city in Europe, where now in the flower of his manhood and with his brilliant education, he might be one of the most prominent in ecclesiastical circles. The Archbishop of Paris made him the most advantageous offers to retain him there; but he refused everything, to come and work and suffer for his God, His Kingdom. This truly apostolic man told me laughing that he had yet to learn where the trials and privations are. Is he then to be the most pitted? I do not think so."

Many persons fail to advance in spirituality for the reason that they undertake to master too many sinful habits at a single stroke. Obstacles in the way of worldly success are best overcome by surmounting them one at a time. The same is true in regard to things that oppose spiritual advancement. These, too, must be overcome in a similar manner.

THE PARISH PRIEST.

JOHN DRYDEN. A parish priest was of a pilgrim train; His eyes diffused a venerable grace, And charity itself was in his face. Rich was his soul, though his attire was poor (As God hath clothed His own ambassadors) For such, on earth, his blessed Radsomer bore.

To sixty years he would, and well might last Of sixty years he would, and well might last To sixty more, but that he lived too fast; And made almost a sin of abstinence. Yet, had his aspect nothing of severity, But such a face as prompts his sinners, And sweet regards and pleasing sanctity; With silence innate his tongue was armed; Though harsh the precept, yet the people were charmed.

For, letting down the golden chain from high, He drew his audience upward to the sky: And oft with holy hymns he charmed their ears. (A music more melodious than the spheres); For David left him, when he went to rest, His lyre, and after him he sung the best, He bore his great commission in his look; As hissing serpents, and soft'ning all But sweetly tempered awe, and soften'd all He preached the joys of heaven and pains of hell.

And warn'd the sinner with becoming zeal; But, on eternal mercy lov'd to dwell. He taught the Gospel rather than the law; And forced himself to drive, but lov'd to draw. For fear but freezes minds; but love like heat, Exhales the soul sublime, to seek her native seat. To thrash the stubborn sinner oft is hard, Wrapp'd in his crimes, against the storm prepared.

But when the milder beams of mercy play He melts and throws his cumbersome cloak away (Lightning and thunder at the sinner's artillery) As hissing serpents bore the Almighty fly; Those but proclaim his style and disappear; The stiller sounds succeed and God is there.

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