

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Fourth Sunday after Easter. TEMPTATION. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation...

These words, my dear brethren, are from the Scripture read in the Divine Office for today. They also, and very appropriately, have a prominent place in the Office read on the feast of martyrs throughout the year.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." "Yes," you may say, "certainly," if a man does endure and resist temptation, it is a good thing, and one for which he has reason to be thankful; but for my part, I would rather get along without being tempted.

Now this wish is not altogether wrong; it is certainly pleasing to God for us to desire that it might be impossible to offend Him, and that our own salvation might be made secure. But it is a mistake, when he does allow temptation to come on us without our fault, to think that it would be better for us if he had not done so.

It is a mistake, and why? Because far the greater part of us cannot acquire supernatural virtue in any high degree, give much glory to God, or be entitled to much reward at His hands, without a good deal of temptation. If it would please God to infuse all the virtues into our souls without any trouble or labor on our part, it might indeed be very well; but this He does not choose to do.

He prefers that we should obtain our virtues partly by our own exertions. And as we will not pray or meditate, do penance or mortify ourselves enough to accomplish this end, there is no way to make any virtue strong and hardy in us except by forcing us to oppose its contrary vice. It is quite easy to seem very pleasant and good natured when one has no crosses or provocations, but let a sharp or insulting word be said, and it will soon be seen how much real patience there is in this seeming good humor; perhaps passion will flame out in all the more violently for being long in repose. But if one's patience is often tried, and stands the test by means of our own earnest struggles, it will become after a time something which we can really count on.

This, then, is one good in temptation, that it makes our virtue really strong and solid for future use. But another value of it is to enable us to make acts at the very moment which will have an eternal reward and merit, and which we should never make were we left alone. Let one be tempted by impure thoughts for a day, and faithfully resist them; in that day he will perhaps have done more to please God and obtain merit and glory in heaven than in a year of ordinary life.

So if temptation comes without our own fault we may indeed rejoice and count ourselves blessed, as St. James says; for it is indeed an earnest of the crown of life which our tried and strengthened souls shall win, and which shall be decked with the innumerable gems which our battles with sin have merited. But let us not allow it to come by our fault, for then we cannot hope for a blessing with it. "Lead us not into temptation," we say every day; profitable as the contest may be to us, it would be the contempt to offer ourselves to it, or to ask from God an opportunity for it. Let us wait till He chooses to call us to the strife, and then thank Him for the trial which shall give us, with His help, the crown of life which He has promised to those who love Him, and for His love hate and resist sin.

TALKS ON RELIGION.

FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES—FRATERNAL LOVE.

Our Lord should be our Model. He Himself says: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls." (St. Matt. xi, 29) Then St. Peter says: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving an example that you should follow His steps." (1 Peter, ii, 21)

Meekness is, in a very particular way, a Christian virtue, and the special badge of Christ's followers. The world loves selfishness, generosity and upright dealings and admires the man who "stands up for his rights."

It has no special regard for the meek man, because it looks upon the meek man as a weak man and a cowardly individual. The cry is: "Come down from the cross; save yourself." Knowing that it is hard for man to practice this virtue, the Lord had to put Himself at the head of His followers and say: "Learn of Me, I am meek and humble of heart."

Meekness shows itself in the forgiveness of injuries. Pride turns away and seeks satisfaction from the culprit. But pride is a deadly sin. Our Lord, referring to the punishment of the unforgiving servant, said: "So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not everyone his brother from your hearts." Remember that the forgiveness is not to be perfunctory, but "from your hearts."

Then how many times our Lord insists on this virtue. It is repeated in the Lord's prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Then in St. Matthew we read: "If there offer thee gifts at the altar, and there thou rememberest that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift." How many declarations of our Lord go to show that forgiveness is an essential virtue for all His followers!

Yet men are not called upon by

Christianity to be pitiless and to surrender their rights at the behest of swaggering bullies. Self-defense justifies the death of the unjust aggressor; how much more will it justify a less measure of retaliation to defend your dignity and self-respect. Were there a total surrender of our rights, men would hardly be able to live in society.

The doctrine teaches us to be forbearing and patient in our self-defense and not to be moved by hatred or malice, in the means we take to preserve our self-respect, our standing and our rights. Revenge is never lawful. "Revenge is mine," saith the Lord, "and I will repay in due time." Persons actuated by revenge generally go too far and assume a part which clearly does not belong to them. People sometimes say of their enemies: "I will leave them to God." This may be said with good dispositions, and again it may have the essence as well as the color of a curse.

We often hear the expression, "I will forgive, but I will never forget." People cannot forget in the literal sense, and a serious offence by a neighbor will naturally change the estimate in which you formerly held him. If the words mean that you will cherish some desire of revenge and some ill-will your protestation of forgiveness means nothing.

The standard of Christian conduct in this matter is laid down by our Lord in the words of St. Paul: "If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat, if he thirst give him to drink, for doing this thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good." (Romans xix.) We can easily understand that were persons to do this fully they would "find rest for their souls."

One of the most consoling of the "eight beatitudes" is: "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." All of us feel that we stand in need of mercy. Now and then we realize some thing of our sins, and if we are merciful ourselves, we hope for forgiveness, entire and complete, from Him Who says: "With what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." (St. Matt. vii, 2.) As we all stand in need of forgiveness, we should be ready to bestow it upon those who have offended us. Man is naturally bitter and revengeful against those who have injured him. Forgiveness is a supernatural virtue. We acquire it by prayer and by practice. "To err is human, to forgive, divine." St. Peter asked our Lord: "Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me and I forgive him?—till seven times?" Jesus will not say: "I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven times." (St. Matt. xviii, 21) We do not hesitate much about offending God again and again, but we do think it a terrible thing if any one offend us more than once.

Most of us know the story told of St. John the Evangelist. In his old age he went on repeating in all his sermons: "My children love one another. So often did I repeat this to the disciples who were many and they asked him why he continually repeated it. To this he answered: "It is a precept of Christ, and if you do this it will be sufficient." St. John had previously written: We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." And again: "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." The law of love does not apply to our friends only, to agreeable people only, or only to those of our own nationality. It applies to all men. "If you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this?" (St. Matt. v, 46) This a mere natural love which any pagan must possess.

Yet we may have a special love for those who are our brethren as members of the church, as St. Paul points out: "Let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith." (Gal. vi, 10)

The good Samaritan is the model of a good neighbor. His charity did not stop with mere words. He put himself to much trouble and spent money and time to help the poor and wounded man. How we love ourselves! Yet the command is: "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Our Lord's estimate of charity is: "Amen I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me." (St. Matt. xxv)

Sapricus was near to martyrdom on the 9th of February, A. D. 260. He entertained feelings of enmity against Nicophorus. The latter, after reflecting that hatred comes from Satan, begged forgiveness. Sapricus refused, though he had endured torments for Christ. Nicophorus on headed knees begged him to say: "O whom thou hast confessed before many witnesses is waiting to crown thee." Sapricus refused. Mark what happened. As the sword was raised to strike, Sapricus cried out: "Strike not, I will sacrifice." He apostatized and lost the crown. He had failed to forgive and was not worthy of heaven. Nicophorus stopped forward, confessed himself a Christian and won the martyr's crown.

Speaking of the growth of the church in the United States Secretary Bonaparte said: "Fifty years ago most Protestants and even some Catholics believed that American institutions and Catholic doctrines were essentially antagonistic and the church could exist in our republic as an exotic only; that if she ever became a factor of moment in our policy, either her teachings or our principles would be radically changed. The half century has shown these fears and theories to be groundless. The Catholic church is at home in the American Republic; she is here to stay and while staying is not to languish, but to live a healthy life and, to my mind at least, it is no less certain that she is here, not to undermine, but to strengthen our political liberties, not to prevent and thus control, but to sustain and purify our popular government."

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THE NATURAL ADVANTAGES OF THE CONFESSIOAL.

Rev. Morgan M. Sheedy.

Preaching in St. John's pro Cathedral, Altoona, on a recent Sunday evening Rev. Morgan M. Sheedy discussed auricular confession from the standpoint of its natural advantages. "There is no institution," said the reverend speaker, "in the Catholic Church to which the average non-Catholic, with the exception of high church Episcopalians, who at present practice it, has more deeply rooted antipathy than to the practice of auricular confession. He regards it as an unwarrantable invasion of the privacy of the individual conscience, an intrusion into the sacred domain of domestic life; as dangerous and demoralizing; a source of weakness to the will, and destructive of the habit of independence and spiritual self-reliance. The very name of the confessional carries with it to non-Catholics an unpleasant sound. I know that I am advocating with these outside the Catholic Church an unpopular cause in undertaking to plead in its behalf. Yet I am quite sure that they will give me a fair hearing and listen with unprejudiced minds while I speak from my knowledge of an institution with which as penitent and confessor, I have had some experience."

"My object this evening is to state as fairly and impartially as I can the manifold advantages to the individual and to society which are the result of auricular confession and try to remove if I can, some of the misconceptions which prevail respecting it even among those who are educated minds. I have nothing to say to the 'anti popery' lecturer or to the professional declaimer against the 'abominations of Rome,' with whom the Catholic confessional is a favorite topic for abuse. Their manners and methods and the intemperate literature they scatter broadcast are quite sufficient to condemn them."

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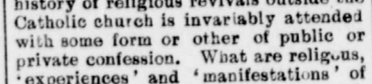
"Farther still, we all know that self-knowledge is the hardest kind of knowledge in the world to acquire. We apply ourselves on account of our self-will, our personal interests; besides, our passions cloak and hide the evil in which we are from time to time immersed. Now, the man that examines his conscience in the light of God's law and the example of Christ and His saints, who then tells frankly and candidly all that he finds in himself of manifold evil, who opens to himself a calm and quiet way to this confession in the name of the father if the prodigal says to us, 'Go in peace, your sins are forgiven you.' Catholics know by experience that they feel the same joy, the same relief, the same sense of being unburdened that Mary Magdalene had when she heard from the lips of Christ Himself those blessed words 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.'"

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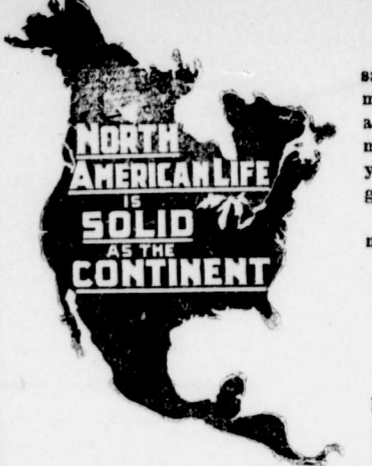
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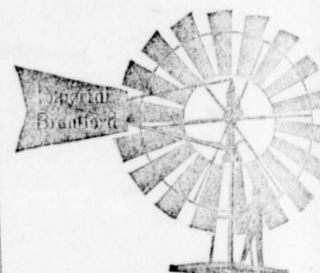
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CHATTS W

Money should be... To a certain... the Paulist... only standard... regard to a fr... bargain? W... Money? How... only question... their... When... person they w... a fortune. S... quering of pe... forming of a... into a kind... man—that to... The Littl... smooths the... than the litt... I know it no... in which ma... cannot or wi... They are go... half of their... not give... every day... being, is w... occasions I... sacrifices ar... big things... the chance... in little thi... great brain... tion in thi... kind heart... Boston Pil... know... Be a w... a time... those who... thing. Many... with a g... knowledge... but comp... how to thi... Many... faculty of... of achiev... the thing... marshall b... polon did... united str... he is doin... never ac... The gr... education... and colle... This is a... memory... nearly a... executive... Some of... dowed... memories... thing be... recite by... or the K... perhaps... were, ab... Learn... to act... purpose... It... new fe... one car... for it... one's b... tried pr... they m... pretent... in, and... some... to mak... to star... when... turn... ceive... coura... ables... to hel... and s... while... his m... Th... do w... take... rect... not... at or... of th... get... and d... beg... ding... for... He... us... some... line... I... one... the... on... a g... str... cri... fra... tr... ch...