

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT. For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God they are the Sons of God. (Rom. viii., 14.)

The end of our pilgrimage, like that of the three wise men, my brethren, is union with our Lord. Of course union with God, through His power and His being present everywhere, always exists, whether we are His friends or not. But the state of grace is the union of love. By that union God rules our soul. By that union the Holy Spirit of God, the Third Person of the most Holy Trinity, really dwells within us. In that state of grace we are brought into loving contact with the divine Spirit. Now the Apostle, in the words of our text, wishes to teach us one effect of that wonderful union.

"For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God." That is to say, when the Holy Spirit enters into your heart He announces your coming. He assures you of His friendship. He excites within you a sentiment of filial affection for your Heavenly Father. How could it be otherwise? Could God be long in our hearts and we be altogether ignorant of it? Of course He does not take away the natural fickleness of our minds; the star sometimes shines faintly, or even for a while disappears from view. God does not reveal Himself as He is; He does not interfere at all with His eternal work in the holy Church; He does not substitute His interior action on the soul for that exterior action of visible authority and sacramental symbols. It is, indeed, by means of this external order that the Holy Spirit enters into our hearts; it is, besides, only by means of the Church's divine marks, her divine testimony, her divine influence in the sacraments, that we can be quite sure that Almighty God has come down into our souls. Yet the Holy Spirit really has a secret career within us. "Deep calleth unto deep," that is, the infinite love of God calls into life our little love. He has His inner Church in our souls, so to speak; or rather He brings into His spiritual and hidden temple all that is outside, spiritualizes the external order, joins the purely mental with the sacramental, and, having set our faces in the right direction and started our feet moving in the right road, He sets us to thinking right. He stirs up noble aspirations. He purifies our feelings, and finally gives us testimony that it is really Himself, the Spirit of God, who has thus been at work making our inner life such as befits the sons of God.

Now, my brethren, as I said before, this testimony of God within us is not like the splendors of Paradise bursting upon the soul; nor is it so very plain as to be able to stand alone without the eternal friendship, except now and then in the case of some great saint. Yet there are many things in our inner life that, if we study them over a little, show that God has been acting upon us. What else is that wonder of the world called the faith of Catholics? Who else but the Spirit of God could give such power to believe very mysterious truths, such as a stability of wavering minds, such a humility of belief to proud minds? And what except divine love could be as sweet as the taste the soul enjoys in the reception of the sacraments? Call to mind the utter transformation of soul that so often takes place at first Communion; remember the flood of divine influence at your Christian marriage; remember how after that death-bed scene your broken heart was cured of its despair when you turned to God; remember how at missions or during seasons of penance, or at one or other festival, it seemed to you that heaven was beginning before its time. All this is God's work on your life. The tender emotion at hearing the divine promises, the loving regret for sin, the joy of forgiveness, the imagination filled—plainly by no human means—with images of celestial peace, the understanding as clear of doubts as heaven of clouds, the will strong and easily able to keep good resolutions, sometimes the very body sharing the lightness and vigor of the soul—what is all this but the embrace of the Holy Spirit? And if one says he does not feel it and yet hopes that he is in a state of grace, I answer that he will not be long deprived of it. Or it may be he is tepid; his soul is not able to feel more than a hand benumbed with cold; his ear not hearing because his attention is too much fixed on the voices of the world to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. His eye is too much dazzled by the false glitter of the world to catch sight of the star that leads to our Lord's feet.

A HAPPY HINT.—We don't believe in keeping a good thing when we hear of it, and for this reason take special pleasure in recommending those suffering with Piles in any form, blind, bleeding, protruding, etc., to Betton's Pile Salve, the best and safest remedy in the world, the use of which cuts short a vast deal of suffering and inconvenience. Send 50 cts to the Winkelmann & Brown Drug Co., Baltimore, Md., or ask your druggist to order for you.

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OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

The Maxim. The world is all before you, boys. So fight to win—not lose—Let each, according to his bend, His own vocation choose. This golden maxim should I think, Within your bosoms dwell: "Whatever's worth the doing, boys, Is worth the doing well."

So few can scale the giddy heights To Fame's alluring seat, But all may reach some wished-for goal, With steady, plodding feet. And in whatever sphere stands out Our duty, great or small, 'Tis worth the doing well, my boys, If worth the deed at all.

Procrastination—"thief of time"—Is mankind's felliest foe; The present only is our own. The future none may know; And idle dreaming, howe'er sweet, Can naught attain, I trow, "Whatever's worth the doing, boys, Is worth the doing now."

Rome was not built in one brief day, And so, to form the soul, 'Tis little, done with manly nerve, That constructs the perfect whole. The aching brain, the heated brow, Of lengthened labors tell, "But if it's worth the doing, boys, It's worth the doing well."

Then lay this maxim well to heart: 'Twill aid you in the fight; 'Tis recompense alone to know One's duty was done right; But when, the battle past, you lie Within the grave's low cell, Your soul, beyond, God's voice shall hear: "Servant, thou hast done well."

—By M. Park Gill, M. A.

Human Respect. Don't care what people say; keep your own sense and abound in it; as the apostle says: "Let every one abound in his own sense." Don't try to get anybody to agree with you. No two noses are alike, much less souls. God never repents. Every one has the world on his shoulders, and unless his own petty ideas and schemes are adopted and succeed, he prophesies the end of the world. You are on the right road—push on! Our maxim is: Be sure you are right, and then go ahead! How much that is good and noble in the soul is smothered by unwise restraint! The whole object of restraint is to reject that which is false and to correct the preference given to a lower good instead of to a higher one. As for the rest—freedom!

A Little Girl's Kind Act. It was a crowded Detroit street-car. At the corner of Duane street an infirm old lady signalled the driver to stop. Reluctantly he put on his brake, and would have passed by had he half an excuse for so doing. The conductor rather roughly and hurriedly helped the octogenarian in the car. When the knight of the punch called for her fare she felt in the corner of her mitten for a nickel. By the expression on her face everybody in the car knew the money was gone. Men immediately became intensely interested in newspapers, and women were looking every way but at the embarrassed old lady, whose kind and good face evinced pain. The conductor was about to speak when a bright school-girl, probably fourteen years old, walked from the end of the car, and laying a five-cent piece in the conductor's dirty hand, said: "If my mother should ever be placed in the same position as this old lady, I hope some one will be just kind enough to do what I am doing." The remark was a womanly one, and Joan of Arc couldn't have said braver words. The blush of shame mantled the cheeks of every male in the car, and most of them lived or had occasion to get off at the next crossing. The old lady did not thank the little woman verbally for her kindness, as her heart and eyes were too full to speak. She simply pressed the girl's hand and gave her a look of gratitude that spoke more forcibly than words ever could.

Strange Sounds at Sea. It is a well-established fact that the wide-spread sails of a ship, when rendered concave by a gentle breeze, are most excellent conductors of sound. The celebrated Doctor Arnott relates the following circumstances as a practical proof of this assertion: A ship was once sailing along the coast of Brazil, far out of sight of land. Suddenly, several of the crew, while walking along the deck, noticed that when passing and repassing a particular spot they always heard with great distinctness the sound of bells chiming sweet music, as though being rung but a short distance away. Dumbfounded by this phenomenon, they quickly communicated the discovery to their mates, but none of them was able to solve the enigma as to the origin of these seemingly mysterious sounds. Several months afterwards, upon returning to Brazil, some of the listeners determined to satisfy their curiosity. Accordingly they mentioned the circumstance to their friends, and were informed that at the time when the sounds were heard the bells in the Cathedral at San Salvador, on the coast, had been ringing to celebrate a feast held in honor of one of the saints. Their sound, wonderful to relate, favored by a gentle, steady breeze, had traveled a distance of upward of one hundred miles over the water, and had been brought to a focus by the sails at the particular locality in which the sweet sounds were first heard. This is but one of the several instances of a similar kind, trustworthy authorities claiming that it has often happened under somewhat similar circumstances. To this class of phenomena is doubtless due a great many stories about mysterious voices and other sounds heard on the ocean.

He Did His Share. It was in India. Dinner was just finished in the mess-room, and several English officers were sitting about the table. Their bronzed faces had the set, but not unkindly look, common among military men. The conversation, at best, had not been animated,

and just now there was a lull, as the night was too hot for small talk. The Major of the regiment, a clean-cut man of fifty-five, turned towards his next neighbor at the table, a young subaltern, who was leaning back in his chair, with his hands clasped behind his head, staring through the cigar smoke at the ceiling.

The Major was slowly looking the man over, from his handsome face down, when, with sudden alertness, and in a quiet, steady voice, he said: "Don't move, please, Mr. Carruthers. I want to try an experiment with you. Don't move a muscle."

"All right, Major," replied the subaltern, without even turning his eyes. "Hadm't the least idea of moving, I assure you; what's a game?"

By this time all the others were listening in a lazily expectant way. "Do you think," continued the Major, and his voice trembled a little, "do you think you can keep absolutely still, for, say two minutes, to save your life?"

"Are you joking?" "On the contrary, move a muscle, and you are a dead man. Can you stand the strain?"

The subaltern barely whispered "Yes," and his face paled slightly. "Burke," said the Major, addressing an officer across the table, "pour some of that milk into a saucer, and set it on the floor here just back of me. Gently man! Quiet."

Not a word was spoken as the officer quietly filled the saucer, walked with it carefully around the table, and set it down where the Major had indicated on the floor. Like a marble statue sat the young subaltern, in his white linen clothes, while a cobra de capello, which had been crawling up the leg of his trousers, slowly raised its head, then turned, descended to the floor, and glided towards the milk.

Suddenly the silence was broken by the report of the Major's revolver, and the snake lay dead on the floor. "Thank you, Major, said the subaltern, as the two men shook hands warmly. "You have saved my life."

"You're welcome, my boy," replied the senior; "but you did your share."

A Way to be Wise. Almost all of my girl and boy friends are fond of good books; but I have noticed that many of them, when they have read a volume through to the period at the end, toss it quickly aside, and without giving a second thought to the contents of its pages, hasten away in search of some new entertainment or occupation.

Now, I want to give a bit of advice on this subject of reading, which I hope every reader will follow, for a few weeks at least, so as to give my suggestion a fair trial. You all, of course, wish and intend to become intelligent and well-informed men and women; it is for this end that we all learn to read in the beginning; in order, however, to succeed in our ambition, we must not only

know how to read, but how to make use of what we read. And some knowledge of the nature of our minds is a great assistance in learning this important lesson. The writings of all the learned men in the world could not make us wise if our mental faculties were not first trained to think, reason, and remember.

So here is my advice: After reading a book, or an article, or an item of information from any reliable source, before turning your attention to other things, give two or three minutes' quiet thought to the subject that has just been presented to your mind; see how much you can remember concerning it; and if there were any new ideas, instructive facts, or points of special interest that impressed you as you read, force yourself to recall them. It may be a little troublesome at first until your mind gets under control and learns to obey your will, but the very effort to think it all out will engrave the facts deeply upon the memory, so that they will not be effaced by the rushing in of a new and different set of ideas; whereas, if the matter be given no further consideration at all, the impressions you have received will fade away so entirely that within a few weeks you will be totally unable to remember more than a dim outline of them.

Form the good habit, then, of always reviewing what has just been read. It exercises and disciplines the mental faculties, strengthens the memory, and teaches concentration of thought.

You will soon learn, in this way, to think and reason intelligently, to separate and classify different kinds of information; and in time the mind, instead of being a lumber-room in which the various contents are thrown together in careless confusion and disorder, will become a store-house where each special class or item of knowledge, neatly labeled, has its own particular place and is ready for use the instant there is need of it.

Now, shut your eyes, and see if you can remember my advice.

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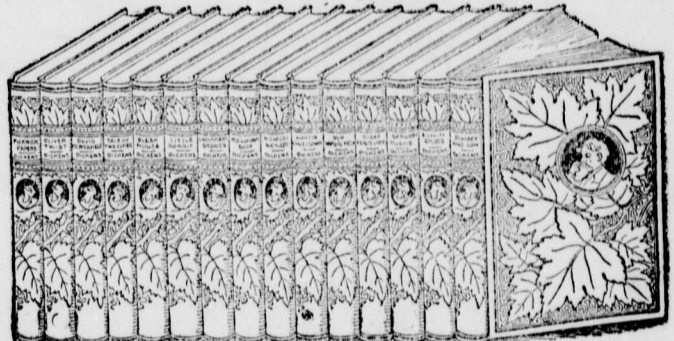
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