

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

THE USE OF TEMPTATIONS.

"God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able." (1 Cor. x. 13.)

There are Christians, dear brethren who talk as if God were anything but faithful—Christians who look upon the trials and difficulties and temptations of this life as so many traps set by Almighty God to ensnare them. So it would seem, at least, from the excuse they offer for committing sin: "I was dreadfully tempted and could not resist." To talk and act in this wise is to do a great injustice to a faithful and loving God, and comes either from an imperfect knowledge of the nature of the temptation, or an ignorance of God's providence in regard to it.

Know, then, that we must be tempted, and this from the very nature of our existence. We are made up of body and soul—at present two conflicting elements. There was a time when the soul, being the superior, had the right to command, and the body obeyed; but original sin destroyed that happy union of authority and submission, and the result has been a pitched battle ever since, the body with its passions striving for the mastery over the soul and its faculties.

Now, brethren, in this conflict the soul has to contend with many enemies. We have a battle-ground within us, our own evil inclinations and inordinate desires—a source of contention ever present, which we will carry with us throughout life, and for every action, every impulse, a battle has to be fought, and a victory or defeat has to be scored.

And again, we have our enemies from without. The devil, who is always on the alert, ready to pounce upon us in our unguarded moments—who employs the world and the flesh in order the better to accomplish his ends—this is our great enemy from without.

All this is not very encouraging, this perpetual struggle with flesh and blood, with powers and principalities. But we must never forget that we are not alone in this conflict; that we have God with us, a God Who is faithful and will not suffer us to be tempted beyond what we can bear. We must also remember that temptation, of whatever kind, is never permitted save for our good, as a source of merit, the raw material out of which our glory comes. Our moral powers need exercise. This is a principle in the divine economy. The use of a limb strengthens it, while an arm tied up loses its power. So it is with the soul—without temptations and trials it would lose most of its spiritual vigor. Things which much depends are worth nothing until tried, and an eternity of happiness or woe depends on the trials to which the soul is exposed.

Let us understand, then, the true nature of these temptations. A temptation may be said to be an allurements of the soul towards evil under the guise of something good, or the allurements of the soul to a forbidden good. It is this very appearance of a good to be obtained that makes the temptation dangerous and sin at all possible. For no man is base enough or fool enough to commit a sin simply and solely because he wants to offend God. For example: a man commits theft, certainly not for the mere pleasure there is in robbery—no, but because he discovers that there is to accrue to him some present good from his theft. It is, therefore, the apparent good in the temptations that makes it at all palatable.

So it happens, brethren, when the devil would lead us astray he transforms himself, says the Apostle, into an angel of light, and we must be on our guard to detect him. If you were to meet, for instance, some venomous snake with loathsome spots upon his scales, his eyes full of rage, his head raised to strike you, hissing and showing his fangs, there would be no temptation to have to do with him; you would know that you had to do with an evil reptile, and you must either kill him or escape from him at once. But if, again, you were to meet, as you may meet in the tropics, a lovely little coral snake, its mouth so small that it seems impossible that it can bite, and so gentle that children may take it up and play with it, then you might be tempted, as many a child has before, to fondle it, breathe it around the neck for a necklace, till the play goes one step too far, the snake loses its temper, gives one tiny scratch upon the lip, and that scratch is certain death.

So it is with most of our temptations; they appear pleasant at first, but their sting is soon felt, and we discover our dismay that the wages of sin is death. Take this lesson, brethren: let us fight our battles manfully, knowing that God is with us, that He is faithful, and that His grace is sufficient.

FATHER VAUGHAN ON SHOCKING HOCKING.

Father Bernard Vaughan, S. J., addressed a large meeting at Commercial road, London, recently.

Father Vaughan said that the meeting of the National Council of Free Churches at Swansea, in the midst of much talk about politics and Socialism, and a little about religion, an eruption of Protestantism took place, of real old-fashioned protesting Protestantism and dissenting. Dissent not of the milk-and-water anti-Romanism of the Establishment. This eruption was caused by the Rev. Joseph Hocking, whose chief work in life, on which no doubt he based his hopes of eternal reward, appeared to be the writing of anti-Catholic novels. This reverend romancer said that Catholicism was spreading in England, as might be seen first by its influence with the press, and secondly by the growth of conventual establishments. Mr. Hocking had no reason to complain of the press, which had done full justice to his diatribe and falsified his own statement in the act. On the other point they had a more serious quarrel with the story-teller. All they could do was to deny his charges flatly and defy him to prove them. He had no right to make them without evidence, and he had not a scrap of evidence to support him. Catholics knew that their

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Bishops exercised a careful surveillance over the convents, that their clergy instructed and directed them, that the Superiors of the various congregations visited them periodically, so that no evil or abuse could possibly spring up in them without being instantly detected and nipped in the bud. They courted the fullest publicity for Mr. Hocking's charges. If he did not know of anything wrong, let him, in the name of purity and decency, keep his filthy imaginations to himself. In almost as many words Mr. Hocking accused their Bishops, clergy, all who had relatives in convents and dealings with nuns, of conniving at the abominations he was afraid to mention but not ashamed to hint at. As Mr. Hocking had gratuitously made the vilest insinuations about the homes of others, Father Vaughan concluded, it might be in the interest of public morality that there should be a public inspection of the homes of Free Churchmen, with the start to be made from the Rev. Joseph Hocking's establishment.

KINDNESS TO CONVERTS.

The "road to Rome" is not so short or so free from difficulty for the prospective convert as Catholics in general think it to be. The person having prayed, studied and meditated decides finally to set out upon the journey. It is not impossible that his family will oppose itself strongly, will urge all sorts of difficulties, will even threaten, and, as has been done not infrequently, will "cast him out" forever. Friends and acquaintances use their utmost endeavor to persuade him that the proposed step is ill-advised and bound to result disastrously. Catholics cannot measure the full weight of this opposition, nor do they usually appreciate the hurt which his own incline upon the traveler to the Church of God.

Finally he decides to overcome opposition. The prospect of the enjoyment of the "peace which passeth understanding" moves him to bear the pain of parting from family and friends. He comes within the "City's gates." The beauty of it all encompasses his very being. Where before he was harassed by doubt, he has found solid, unchanging and unchangeable grounds of faith. His soul is filled with a new-found joy. The roughness of the journey is forgotten; the coldness of family and friends is no check to that absorbing calm and serenity and utter peacefulness which the pilgrim finds now in his Father's house.

As one who from the mountain top has witnessed a scene of gorgeous splendor, would express to others the compelling force of Nature's beauty upon him, so the convert enthused by the sight of a great new vista, turns to his brethren to share with them intimately the beauty of the vision that has long been theirs and now is his. But he finds no hand to grasp, no voice to echo his: "How good God has been to me!" and, astonished, he asks himself: "Are not these my brethren?"

We may be proud of the great number of converts yearly received into the Church; we may help in a material way the furthering of missionary endeavor for the spread of Christ's Kingdom on earth, but we neutralize the effect of much missionary effort and we are recreant to a plain duty of charity and brotherliness when we treat converts, as many of us but too often treat them as strangers still.—Providence Visitor.

HOLY MOTHER CHURCH.

NON-CATHOLIC WRITERS ADMIT HER POWER AND GREATNESS IN THE WORLD.

Rev. Canon Farrar, Dean of Westminster Abbey (Anglican), says:

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James Anthony Froude, the biased Protestant historian, says:

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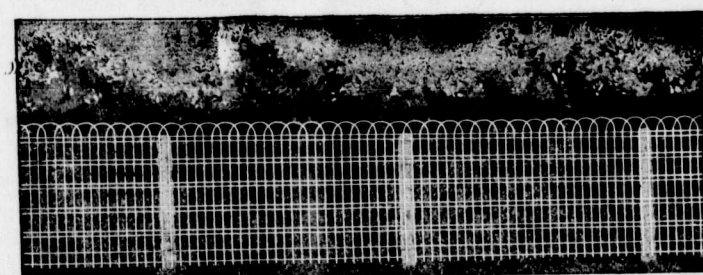
"Wisdom, justice, self-denial, nobleness, purity, high-mindedness—these are the qualities before which the freeborn races of Europe have been contented to bow; and in no order of men were such qualities to be found as they were found six hundred years ago in the clergy of the Catholic Church. They called themselves the successors of the Apostles; they claimed in their Master's name universal spiritual authority, but they made good their pretensions by the holiness of their lives. Over prince and subject, chieftain and serf, a body of unarmed defenseless men reigned supreme by the magic of sanctity."

Rev. E. Cutte says: "In the Middle Ages, the (Catholic) Church was a great popular institution. In politics the Church was always on the side of liberties of the people and against the tyranny of the feudal lords. In the eye of the nobles the laboring population were beings of an inferior cast; in the eye of the law they were chattels; in the eye of the Church they were brethren in Christ, souls to be won and trained and fitted for Heaven. By means of its painting and sculpture in the churches, its mystery plays, its religious festivals, its catechism and its preaching, it is probable that the chief facts of the Gospel history and the doctrine of the creeds were more universally known and more vividly realized than among the masses of our present population."

SEEING THE LIGHT.

DR. EMIL HIRSCH, OF CHICAGO, SAYS CATHOLICS ARE RIGHT ON THE EDUCATION QUESTION.

Speaking at Sinai Temple, Chicago, on a recent Sunday, Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, the famous Jewish rabbi, said in part: "The best minds of the nation now agree that there must be some system of moral training in the Public schools. The eighteenth century theory that knowledge is all sufficient to the building of character is a mistake and an exploded idea."



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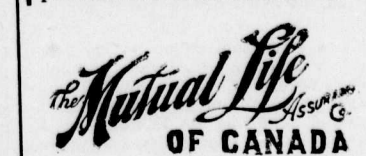
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