FIVE-MINUTE SERMON,

Fifth Sunday after Easter.

THE THREE STEPS TO HEAVEN. Blessed is the man whose help is from es; in his heart he hath disposed to ascend steps." (Psalm ixxxviii. 6)

Next Thursday the Church will cele brate the feast of the Ascension of our Lord; the day on which His sojourn in this vale of tears came to an end, when this vale of tears came to an end, when He entered upon the possession of that glory which He had won by His obedience in this world. In the Collect which is said at Mass on this feast we ask "that we who believe that Thy only Son, our R sdeemer, a cended this day into heaven, may also have our hearts fixed on heavenly things." In order that we may be better able to enter into the spirit of the approaching feast and even in this life raise ourselves up above life raise ourselves up above its transitory interests, I propose to point out how our religion necessari ly elevates the minds and thoughts of those who practise it, how it places them even now in the enjoyment of heavenly treasures, and how, therefore, our minds should even now learn to rest upon things which are above.

est upon things which are above.

We hear a great deal of talk now-adays about the dignity of man, and
there are some few people who main
tain that we ought to make humanity
the superme object of our care and worship. And newspaper scribes sometimes assert that the doctrines and discipling of the Catholic Church unduly cipline of the Catholic Church unduly cipline of the Catholic Church unduly depress mankind, and turn his care and attention into less deserving channels. Now, no one, I am sure, will find fault with those for striving to assist and help their fellow-man by every means in their power; on the contrary, the Church has always fostered and encouraged all such efforts. But when it comes to the worship of humanity, we are unable to acknowledge the right fulness of such a claim; and if such fulness of such a claim; and if such refusal makes us the enemies of pro gress and enlightenment, we must plead guilty.

ing man and his dignity. I venture to say that the doctrines and teaching of the Church raise him to a higher level, and place before him a higher motive and a loftier end than it has ever entered into the mind of the most ad vanced thinkers of this or any other time to conceive. This, I say, has been done by the Christian religion and by done by the Christian religion and by its distinctive teaching, as distin guished from natural religion and what it tells us. Natural religion tells us, and tells us truly, that there is one Maker and Lord of this world, that we are His creatures, that we must be sub j ect to Him, and that punishment awa'te us if we are not so subject. Catholic teaching takes all this for granted, con firms it, builds upon it, and raises us above it. And how?

The first step in the Christian life is Faith. And what is faith? What does faith do for us? Faith is that virtue by which we accept as true those things which God has revealed. Faith, then, brings us face to face with God Himself and His divine veracity. For the truths of faith we have God Himself as the voucher Is not this an ele-vation of the mind of man far greater than that to which the loftiest philosophies can lay claim? They can at best give us opinions and guesses; faith places us at once in the possession of eternal and immutable truth.

The second distinctively Christian wirtue is hope. And what is hope? To what does it raise us? The light of reason teaches us, as I said before, that we are God's creatures and must be subject to Him, and if so subject will receive from Him a fitting recompense. But Caristian hope makes us look upon God not as our Maker, but as our Father; not as a Master, but as a Friend: and makes us look forward to the possession not merely of His gifts and rewards, but of Himself for all etern

With reference to the third great Christian virtue—Charity—I have time only to mention that it makes the ruling motive of our lives the love of God SECRECY OF THE CONFESSIONAL. for Homself because He is what He is. before concluding, I wish to ont the greatest elevation to which we are raised. Take a man who is in the grace of God; what is his position? What does the possession of God's grace make him? I should not have grace make him? I should not have dared to answer had it not been re vealed by God and sanctioned by the Church. It would not have entered into the mind of man to guess; for that which man in the grace of God possesses is nothing less than a partici pation of the divine nature; to use the words of grave theologians, man's very being is placed in a divine state.

If these things are so, and they are elementary Christian truths, have we not reason enough to have our hearts fixed, even in this life, on heavenly

LIRERTY OF THOUGHT.

By Rt. Rev. Bishop McFaul.

That Catholics do not enjoy liberty of thought because their religion is dogmatic is an accusation that is ofton made against them. The aronbrought forward are specious and therefore calculated to deceive minds of ordinary education. Liberty and freedom! These two words are frequently employed without a proper conception of their meaning. They appear at first sight very simple, and easily grasped on account of their wide application to various subjects. They express, it is true, certain fixed ideas, but they extend to such a large field that, without close thought, we do not always see clearly their strict signifi cation. For example: We give the prisoner his liberty; we speak of the liberty of the press; of freedom of con-

"Whatever may be the acceptation in which the word liberty is taken, it is apparent that it always inplies the absence of a cause restraining the exercise of a power. Hence, it
follows, that, in order to fix in each

| The Catholic of the catholic

case the real meaning of the word, it is indispensable to pay attention to the circumstances as well as to the nature of the power, the exercise of which is to be prevented or limited." Certainly no reasonable man will claim that he has the liberty to think and act as he pleaser. Reason, puless and act as he pleases. Reason, unless it would lose itself in the labyrinths of it would lose itself in the labyrinths of the laws of thought, and man must harmonize his acts with the laws of morality. An infringement of either the laws of thought or those of morality is not liberty but license.

Mr. Mallock thus elucidates the freedom of thought or have do to the freedom of thought on his code of the laws of morality.

freedom of thought enjoyed by Catholics in religious matters: "It (infallibility) is not a fetter only; it is a support also; and those who cling to it can venture fearlessly, as ex to it can venture fearlessly, as explorers, into currents of speculation
that would sweep away altogether men
who did but trust to their own powers
of swimming. * * * It is said that
the Pope might any day make a dogma
of any absurdities that might happen to occur to him; and that the Catholic would be bound to accept these, however strongly his reason might re pudiate them. It is quite true that the Pope might do this, in the sense that there is no external power to pre vent it. Bul he who has assented to the central doctrine of Catholicism knows that he never will.'

knows that he never will."

Just as the scientist, when he has conquered and made his own the truths of physical knowledge has narrowed the field of his speculation to the extent of the truths ascertained, so does divine authority, acting through its duly commissioned teach the field of ers, take possession of the field of divine truth, and thus the dogmas of revealed religion support, strengther and elevate human reason, place it upon a reliable basis, and by illumina-tion, enable it to pierce more safely into the realms of undefined and speculative truth.

Permit us to quote another passage from the author already mentioned: "The Catholic Church is the only dogmatic religion that has seen what dog matism really implies, and what will in the long run, be demanded of it, and she contains in herself all appliances for meeting these demands. She alone has seen that, if there is to be an infallible voice in the world, this voice must be a living one, as capable of speaking now, as it ever was in the past; and that as the world's capabili-

ties for knowledge grow, the teacher must be always able to unfold to it a fuller teaching. The Catholic Church is the only historical religion that can conceivably adapt itself to the wants of the present day, without vir-tually ceasing to be itself. It is the only religion that can keep its life without losing its identity; that can enlarge its teachings without changing them; that can be always the same, and yet be always developing.

As this is an important point, we should like to make its explanation very clear, and therefore, may be pardoned from presenting another quotation.
The celebrated D. Brownson says:
The Protestant is fond of calling us slaves because we recognize the Papal Supremacy, and forgets that, unless he is fibbing, he is, to say the least, as great a slave as we. He is no more at liberty to believe or to do anything contrary to the teachings and precepts of the Bible than we are to believe or to do anything contrary to the defi-itions and rescripts of the Holy Father * * * How then are we less free than he? The only difference between us in respect to authority is that he places it in the record of what God said by men in ancient times, and we in what He teaches and commands through he voice of a living Pontiff * If he holds that in believing and obey ng the Bible he is believing and obey ing God's word, so we hold that in be lieving and obeying the living Pontiff we are believing and obeying God. He asserts an apostolic authority that was, and we an apostolic authority that was and is."

INTERESTING DISCUSSION BY THE HON. WILLIAM J. ONAHAN.

rejoinder to his luminous article of the Secreey of the Confessional, re pub lished in last week's Telegraph from the Chicago Record Herald, has called forth another interesting communication to the same paper on this subject from the Hon. William J. Onahan. Writes Mr. Onaban:
There is scarcely occasion or necessary

sity that I should make any reininder to the courteous notice by Mr. David of my article on 'The Secrecy of the Confessional." Substantially he is in concurrence with it on the essential point—the justice and necessity for exempting priests from disclosing the onfession of a penitent.

I need not say that, law or no law, a priest would under no circumstances yield to such a demand. Indeed, it is hardly conceivable that any court or judge in this country, or indeed, any other country would seek to enforce a deed, with many Masons. requirement so repugnant to every consideration of religion, of honor or of

ommon justice, Mr. David seeks to place the pro fessional privilege of the attorney and the physician -and also the pressthe same plane as that of the priest. The position of the priest in his relation to the penitent is of a different character, involving a solemnly higher responsibility, and far deeper and

graver consequences
The confidence intrusted to the liberty of the press; of freedom of conscience, civil liberty and political freedom.

The celebrated Balmes maintains that: "Whatever may be the accent

The force of this point needs no

ecrecy and individuality of the con-

In the decree of the Council of Trent on the subject of the sacrament of penance it is declared :

"As all are anxious that their sins should be buried in eternal secrecy, the faithful are to be admonished that there is no reason whatever to appre hend that what is made known in con-fession will ever be revealed by any priest, or that, by it, the penitent can at any time be brought into danger or difficulty of any sort.

* All laws, human and divine, guard the inviolability of the seal of confes-sion, and against its sacrilegious in-fraction the Church denounces the

heaviest chastisements."

The great Council of Lateran admonished priests in the most solemn manner to "take especial care, neither by a word nor sign nor by any other means whatever, to betray in the least degree the secret trust confided to him by the sinner.'

It is a striking and significant testimony to the inviolability of confession—to the sanctity attaching to this sacrament of penance—that scarcely an instance has ever been known of the violation by a priest of the obligation of secrecy.

In the period of the atrocious penal laws, when Catholics had, I may say, no rights and their religion and their priests were under ban, attempts were sometimes made to enforce the priests to disclose the confidences given to them in confession. The prison, the most barbarous torture, every diabol-ical device to inflict pain that inhuman ingenuity could devise, were employed without avail. The scaffold did not daunt, and death, with its attendant horrors peculiar to that evil period, never once found a priest weak enough to betray his sacerdotal obligations.

More remarkable still, in the case of priests who have abandoned the faith nd who, in instances have fallen into evil ways otherwise, no example is known, as far as I am aware, that any of the class proved unfaithful in this

My purpose in taking up this subject was suggested by the publicity given to the case lately before a local court, in which it was sought to obtain from the priest information which appeared to have been acquired in confession. The New York case, which I cited, similar in character, appeared to be little known—even to the profession—hence I thought it would serve a useful purpose to present a summary of it, which I accordingly did. The authority of a name as well known in American history as that of Governor De Witt Clinton, who presided over the court, seemed to me to give special weight to the decision, which was unanimous, there being four sitting magistrates.

Still more I was impressed by the lucid and luminous reasons given by the court in the judgment exonerating Father Kohlmann, and upholding the sacredness and inviolability of confession to a priest.

The court found justification for this

action in the principles of the common law, and even higher and more binding force in the constitution of the State, which assured religious freedom to all and guarded the rights of conscience with scrupulous jealousy.

To maintain the contrary, as that court declared, would be 'to render court declared, would be 'to render the liberty of conscience a mere illu sion, to subvert all the principles of sound reasoning and overthrow all the convictions of common sense.

MASONRY LEAVES CHRIST OUT SIDE ITS WORSHIP.

WHY THE CHURCH'S CONDEMNATION OF THE CRAFT IS WORLD-WIDE

"Freemasonry" was the subject of a lecture delivered by Rov. Joseph M. Woods, S. J., of Woodstock College, in Gonzaga Hall last Sunday night, says the Washington Catholic.

"The principles of Freemasonry are anti-Catholic and anti Christian," said "It is not so hard to Father Woods. understand why the Catholic Church should be opposed to Freemasonry in tries like France and Italy.

" In those countries the lodge have shown by their deeds, by their perse cuting treatment and by their open re-jection of religion that they are emphatically not only anti Catholic, but anti Christian.

But in America and England it is quite different. Here Freemasonry poses as the friend of religion and professes to be a staunch upholder of Di vine and human law. In all its proceedward show of honor and respect. The lodges boast of their benevolence and

"It is not because of these things that the Catholic Courch condemns the craft. It has not a word to say against the good it does or may do. But these good things, like the benevolence of the sect, are only the accidental and secondary element of Freemasonry, Men's lives are happily often better

"What the Catholic Church does con demn in Freemasonry are its principles, and these principles are the same in all Freemasonry. In America, in England, on the continent of Europe, everywhere the principles of Freemasonry are anti Catholic and anti-Christian, and here the Catholic Church has placed the organization under the ban.

To prove his statement that the prin ciples of Freemasonry of America and England, though not carried to their sonal honor, which should be respected, but is far, very far, from carrying with it, for imposing the degree and conditions of sanctity and solemnity which as founded in England, and changed by the Masonic architects and authors, had ado ted the universal creed, based on the Fatherhood of God and the Christian creed, and all it implies was replaced by a universal creed that any

man of any religion might accept.

This is not Christianity as understood by orthodox Christians, "he add-

not the God of revelation, and, there-fore, not the God of the Bible. This certainly is not true Christianity. "Masonry in America and England leaves Christ outside its worship. In its basic principles it has set aside Christ. This it must do to be true to its fundamental principle."

Admires The Irish.

Father Bernard Vaughan, S. J., the eminent preacher, although a thorough Englishman, is a great admirer of the

eminent preacher, atthough a thorough Englishman, is a great admirer of the Irish people.

Speaking in the East End on the Feast of St. Patrick, Father Vaughan eulogised the Irish as a race o' brave men and pure women whose Faith, to borrow the language of St. Parl, "was spoken of throughout the world." He was glad to read that Mr. Redmond, the Irish leader had told them how the Irish party were going to fight for the rights of Catholic parents. The Education Bill had overlooked the legitimate claims of Catholics. Instead of being penalised for their religion, Catholics ought to be subsidised for it. In the not distant future, if the birth-rate continued growing horribly less, the country would have to rely on Catholics for school-going children. Father Vaughan exclaimed: No words of mine can express my admiration for that Valghan excitation of mine can express my admiration for that race of men and women who, recognizing God's claims upon them and the sacred trust committed to their care, continue in spite-of bad example and of sin in the face of poverty, to uphold the laws of God and to transmit to the children lent them by the Almighty a physique untainted, a nature unsoiled and a Faith "unspotted from the world."—True Voice.

Rev. J. B. Haslam was a member of an order known in the Presbyterian Episcopal Church as the Companions of the Holy Saviour. He was born in Eigland and had been in charge of parishes in St. Paul and Chicago. He was received into the Church in Phila delphia, and has taken up his residence with the Paulist Fathers in New York. In a short time he will enter the Paulist House of Studies at the Catholic uni-

versity, to prepare for the priesthood. In an interview he was asked: D d the adoption of Canon No. 19, on the open pulpit, by the last general conven-tion of the Episcopal Church, influence

"No, but the adoption of that canon No, but the adoption of that canon accentuated the dissatisfaction which exists among the High Church party by throwing open the pulpits and handing over the Episcopal Church to Protestant revivalists during Lent. In connection with the open pulpit, too, the increasing domination of the laity is a growing and alarming feature. It was the laymen who really compassed the passage of Canon No. 19."

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MAY CHATS

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