

FIVE-MINUTES' SERMON. Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

ON VENIAL SIN.

The mustard seed is indeed the least of all but when it is grown up, it is the greatest of all. (Matt. 13, 31)

As harmless as a mustard seed may appear, it conceals an extraordinary sharpness and bitterness, and though it seems insignificant in size and weight, nevertheless it contains a surprising power of growth, and not rarely develops into a tree.

In the life of the soul I scarcely find anything so similar to the bitter, tall-growing mustard seed as venial sin. To the majority of persons, venial sin also seems to be a harmless trifle, scarcely worthy of notice, and yet there lies in it so much bitterness and malice, that we, as God-loving Christians, ought to fear it, after mortal sin, more than any other evil in the world.

It is true, that virtue in this world is not without stain, and the most God-fearing person cannot walk so circumspectly as not to stumble occasionally. There are, however, two kinds of venial sins: the first is committed through frailty, almost against one's will, and these are rather imperfections than sins. But the other kind is those sins, which are committed intentionally and with deliberation, because they are considered as trifles and signifying naught. And yet, what great reasons have we not to tremble and to be on our guard against these lesser sins of malice!

To convince you of this, I need not speak of the terrible insult and injury done to God by those voluntary faults, neither is it necessary to remind you of the fearful punishments wherewith God has often chastised deliberate, venial sins, as in this world, and the certain punishments which will be inflicted on them in purgatory. No, it will suffice to reflect seriously on the result of refusing fidelity to God in little things.

What becomes of the mustard seed if placed in the earth? Does it not grow to a mighty tree? What becomes of a spark of fire if not extinguished? A ravaging conflagration. What is the consequence of a sickness when neglected? Inevitable death. So it is with the soul if we consider venial sin as of no importance. In time we shall surely become the devil's prey, the certain victim of mortal sin. Do not, I beseech you, imagine that Satan is so foolish as to begin your downfall by presenting gross vices. Oh! no, the tempter is well aware that this would be a fruitless endeavor. He first applies the lever of venial sins. And when he has, so to speak, caught one finger, he then grasps the second, the third, the fourth, and finally the whole hand, and thus slowly, but surely, he seizes man in his clutches and drags him wheresoever he will on the road to hell. King David, for example, failed to curb his curiosity, and thus became an adulterer and a murderer. King Solomon allowed himself to be captivated by the dissipating pleasures of court life, before he was induced to become an idolater by the pagan rabble. The apostle Judas had, in the beginning, an inordinate love of money, then began to steal from the purse, and finally betrayed his Divine Master. Peter was at first rather presumptuous and placed himself carelessly in the danger before he so ignominiously denied his Redeemer. From all these examples you see the truth of Sacred Scripture: "He that contempteth small things, shall fall by little and little." (Eccl. 10, 1.)

And does not the experience of life daily teach us the same by the most impressive examples? Christian soul, you who have had the misfortune of offending God by mortal sin, I ask, how was it accomplished? Must you not with sorrow acknowledge that the abyss was a dangerous occasion which you did not avoid, a fatal friend which you inadvertently formed, the desire to please, to which you unfortunately yielded, a suspicious book that instilled into your heart the deadly poison. Ah! the source was hardly perceptible, but the rapid stream of sin, which was formed thereby, inundated your soul.

See, therefore beloved Christians, how the experience of life no less than the warning expressions and examples of Holy Writ place before our eyes venial sins as the beginning of mortal sins, as the root and source of the soul's destruction. Yes, truly, venial sins are the leaves, of which our Lord speaks, as leavening the whole mass, they are the little mustard seed, which grows and becomes a tree, producing all sorts of deadly fruit. They are a weakness which generally ends in the death of the soul. And can we regard these minor sins as mere trifles? Commit them without scruple? Oh! no, dear Christian, by the salvation of your soul I conjure you: Be faithful to God in little things: for only then will you be faithful to Him in great ones. Preserve your soul from sickness, for only then will you save it from death. In the holy fear of God, tremble when contemplating purgatory: for only then will you escape the fire of hell. Amen.

A Substantial Gain.

"I was very weak and hardly able to walk. My blood was thin and I was as pale as death. Being told about Hood's Sarsaparilla I began taking it and in a few months I had gained twenty pounds in weight. I kept on with it until I was as well as ever." ARTHUR MILLS, Dresden, Ontario.

HOOD'S PILLS cure nausea, headache.

THE MOST POPULAR PILL.—The pill is the most popular of all forms of medicine, and of pills the most popular are Parmelee's Vegetable Pills, because they do what it is asserted they can do, and are not put forward on any fictitious claims to excellence. They are compact and portable, they are easily taken, they do not nauseate or gripe, and they give relief in the most stubborn cases.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

The Boy Who Ran Away.

"I'm going to run away," said little Sammie Green one day. "Then I can do just what I choose. I'll never have to black my shoes, or wash my face or comb my hair. I'll find a place, I know, somewhere; And never have any sin to fill. That old chip basket—so I will."

"Good bye, mamma," he said—"good bye!" He thought his mother then would cry. She only said: "You young, dear? And didn't shed a single tear. There, now," said Sammie Green, "I know she does not care if I do go. But Bridget does. She'll have to fill the old chip basket—so she will."

But Bridget only said: "Well boy, you off for sure? I wish you joy." And Sammie's little sister Kate, who swung upon the garden gate, said anxiously, as he passed thro': "When you can't get no lasses spread At supper-time on top of bread?"

One block from home and Sammie's dear Weak little heart was full of fear. He thought about "Red Riding Hood;" The wolf that met her in the wood; The bean-stalk boy who kept so mum When he heard the giant's "Fee to tum!" Of the dark night and the policeman. Then poor Sammie homeward ran.

Quick thro' the alley-way he sped, And crawled in thro' the old wood shed. The big chip basket he did fill; He blacked his shoes up with a will; He washed his face and combed his hair; He went up to his mother's chair; And kissed her twice, and then he said: "I'd like some lasses top of bread!" —Mrs. Susan T. Perry, in Golden Days.

Keep in the Middle.

Children, did you ever play that the street was poison and the sidewalk safe, and then try how long you could walk on the curbstone without stepping into the gutter? And did you ever see a boy or girl who did not step off it once in going home from school? Just when you feel sure of your footing and begin to run you lose your balance, and off goes one foot on the ground below.

If the street really were poison you would think it very silly to walk on the edge of the sidewalk instead of safely in the middle; but we have seen children, and grown people too, walking just as near to a line as they could without touching it. How long do you think they can do so before they lose their balance and step over the boundary, staining the pure souls that God gave them? Way, just about as long as the children could keep from slipping off the curbstone.

It is only a question of time. Take care; do not walk too near the edge. Ashamed of Their Parents. The girl or boy who is ashamed of his or her parents because of their lack of education, can never expect any of the blessings of God. We pity the parents of such children. There is no sadder sight than that of a father who has set his heart upon his children born in this country, who has sung at his work remembering that they wanted for nothing his labor could purchase; who has said in his heart they will be better than himself, every way nobler than he could be in the land of his birth, and who discovers in his old age that he has spent his life in rearing up a top, a libertine, a knave, something more horrible than King Lear driven mad by the ingratitude of his daughters. For Lear only gave his children the crown, but this father gave them everything—his sweat and blood, his nights and days, his purse and heart, and all but life itself, of which at last, their parried ingratitude deprives the miserable man. We say this is a tragedy to make angels weep over the false system of social life which makes men monsters. The man who is ashamed of his parents is really bereft of all true manhood.

A Mother's Influence.

Lord Macaulay, the great essayist and historian, wrote these words: "Children, look into those eyes, listen to that dear voice, notice the feeling of even a single touch that is bestowed upon you by that gentle hand! Make much of it while you have that most precious of all gifts—a loving mother. Read the unapproachable love of those eyes; the kind anxiety of that tone and look however slight your pain. In after life you may have friends—fond, dear, kind friends; but never will you have again the inexpressible love and gentleness lavished upon you which none but a mother bestows. Often do I sigh in my struggle with the hard uncurving world for the sweet, deep security I felt when of an evening, nestled in her bosom, I listened to some quiet tale, suitable to my age, read in her tender and nurturing voice. Never can I forget her sweet glances cast upon her kiss of peace at night. Years have passed away since we laid her beside my father in the old church yard, yet still her voice whispers from the grave, and her eyes watch over me as I visit spots long since hallowed to the memory of my mother."

Education.

Every boy should have his head, his heart and his hand educated. Let this truth never be forgotten. By the proper education of the head he will be taught what is good and what is evil, what is wise and what is foolish, what is right and what is wrong. By the proper education of the heart he will be taught to love what is good, wise and right, and hate what is evil, foolish and wrong. And by proper education of the hands, he will be enabled to supply his wants, to add to his comforts, and to assist those around him. The highest object of a good education is to reverence and obey God, and to love and serve mankind. Everything that helps us in attaining these objects is of great value, and everything that

hinders comparatively worthless. When wisdom reigns in the head, and love in the heart the man is ever ready to do good; order and peace reign around and sin and sorrow are almost unknown.

Which do You Think.

I saw four men carrying bricks one day. One worked busily while his master's eyes were watching, but smoked by a sunny wall in his absence; another tossed the bricks into his hod with feverish energy and ran up the plank with hurried steps in the morning; but by night was unable to work from fatigue; again another wandered with idle steps, stretched his arms, yawned, and slowly half filled his hod; while the fourth industriously plied backward and forward from the brick pile to where the masons were at work, diligently, methodically working without waste. Which of the four do you think had at night best earned his day's wages?

Partners.

A sturdy little figure it was trudging bravely with a pail of water. So many times it had passed our gate that morning that curiosity prompted us to further acquaintance. "You are a busy little girl to day?" "Yes'm."

The round face under the broad hat was turned toward us. It was freckled, flushed and perspiring, but cherry wistful. "Yes'm, it takes a heap of water to do a washing."

"And do you bring it all from the brook down there?" "O, we have it in the cistern mostly, only it's been such a dry time lately."

"And there is nobody else to carry the water?" "Nobody but mother, an' she is wassin'."

"Well, you are a good girl to help her."

"It was not a well considered compliment, and the little water carrier did not consider it one at all, but there was a look of surprise in her gray eyes, and an almost indignant tone in her voice as she answered: "Why, of course I help her. I always help her all the time; she hasn't anybody else. Mother's me's partners."

Little girl, are you and your mother partners? Do you help her all you can?"

A Poor Scholar.

The captain of a certain large sailing vessel insists upon being addressed as "sir" by every one on board. One day a new hand joined the ship, and a short time after leaving harbor, being a well-seasoned old sail, he was entrusted with the wheel. The captain came up and put the usual question, "How's her head?"

"Nor'-by east," answered the old tar, very gruffly, taking the customary hitch in his trousers. "My man," suavely answered the captain, "on this craft, when one of the crew speaks to me, he gives me a title of respect. Don't you think you might do so, too? Now, how's her head?"

"Nor'-by east, I tell yer," shouted the tar, displaying not a little irritation. "I'm afraid you don't quite understand me," responded the captain, good humoredly. "Let me relieve you at the wheel, and then you take my place and ask the question. I will then show you how it should be answered."

They accordingly changed places. "Ow's her 'ead?" roared the tar. "Nor'-by east, sir," replied the captain, with gentle emphasis on the "sir."

as you have kept her in, all day, and insisted upon her reading, playing and amusing you from morning till night, till she is worn out, I suppose you must have thought so."

Rex peeped through the doors into the sitting-room. Mamma did look very tired, as she sat leaning back on the couch where he had left her. Hardly waiting till his father had arranged the sling, he ran across the hall, and getting down on his knees beside the couch, put his one arm around her neck.

"Mamma," he whispered, "I'm sorry I was cross, and I thank you very much for being so good to me all day." It made all the difference in the world. Rex was surprised to see how quickly the tired look went away, and I do not think that he ever forgot again that we must not punish other people for our faults or burns.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

Aim at perfection in everything, though in most things it is unattainable; however, they who aim at it and persevere will come much nearer to it than those whose laziness and despondency make them give it up as unattainable.

Be On Time. No matter how small an engagement is, always be on time, because you waste two persons' time if late. If working for some one else you can never do your work right if you are always late and you don't suit your employer, no matter how well you do your work after you do arrive.

Don't Give Up. Exert your talents and distinguish yourself, and don't think of retiring from the world until the world will be sorry that you retire. I hate a fellow whom pride or cowardice or laziness drives into a corner, and who does nothing while he is there but sit and growl. Let him come out as I do and bark.—Dr. Johnson.

Work Does Not Kill. Few men work too hard. Many fret hard, dissipate hard, eat hard, drink hard, smoke hard, scorch hard, treat their bodies in a hard way, and keep themselves under an unreasonable strain. He is a wise man who can regulate his manner of life so that he can get the greatest amount of service out of his body and his mind but keep his heart fresh.

Man's Most Perilous Hour. The most perilous hour of a person's life is when he is tempted to despond. The man who loses his courage loses all. There is no more hope for him than for a dead man; but how much pushed by circumstances, how much deserted by friends, how much lost to the world, if only he keeps his courage, holds up his head, works on with his hands, and with unconquerable will determines to be and to do what becomes a man, all will be well. It is nothing outside of him that kills, but what is within that makes or unmakes.

The Man Who Succeeds. Look at the man who succeeds in life. What does it? This: He chooses a calling, a trade, profession, or what not, and sticks to it. He digs, works, labors in it, making all circumstances, and, as far as may be, all men tributary to it. The successful man is always the man of enthusiasm. He invariably does everything, small or large, with a heart—just as though the thing in hand came into the world for his special execution. There is not a business followed by man, if it be reasonable in its nature, and carried on in a decent place, but will be successful if the right means be applied to it. It is the man behind that determines the result.

Keep it to yourself. You have trouble in the family—your feelings are injured, your husband is unkind, your wife frets, your home is not pleasant, your friends do not treat you fairly, and things in general move unpleasantly. Well, what of it? Keep it to yourself. A smouldering fire can be found and extinguished; but when the coals are scattered who can pick them up? Bury your sorrow. The place for sad and disturbing things is under the ground. A cut finger is never benefited by pulling off the plaster and exposing it under somebody's eye. Tie it up and let it alone. It will get well sooner that you can cure it. Charity covered a multitude of sins. Things thus covered are often covered without a scar; but once published and confided to meddling friends, there is no end to the trouble that they may cause. Keep it to yourself. Troubles may be transient, and when a sorrow is healed and passed, what a comfort it is to say: "No one on earth knew it until it was all over."

Resorts for Young Men. In how many places of less than twenty thousand population can be found any provisions made for our young men to spend their evenings, either pleasantly or profitably? It must be remembered that, as a rule, we Catholics are comparatively poor financially, and of necessity our young men are compelled to labor hard for a living. Our young men are hearty, strong and active, their work naturally makes them so; they are full of life and vigor, physically and mentally. They are of a sociable disposition. They toil all day; at night they must have recreation. They must leave their homes or boarding houses, as the case may be, and come into the busy parts of town

to meet their associates and fellow-workmen. Then where are they to go? Stand on the street corners? That may do for a little while, but it gives no chance for the rest they need, nor for social conversation. There is then nothing left for them to do but to drift to the saloon or theatre or other resort, and all know these are not the best places for passing the evening. How different it would be if we, like our Protestant friends, had a pleasant room in every city or town where they could go, and pass the evening in reading, conversation or innocent games. Would not these rooms offer the same attractions for our young men that the Y. M. C. A. does for their Protestant fellow workers?

Every-day Heroism. The need of the world is not for great generals but for home heroes—men who will be faithful all their lives long in little things, who will do their duty conscientiously in obscurity, who will transmute the humblest occupation with the philosopher's stone of a high motive into an employment worthy of angels. Mr. F. B. Meyer says: "Do not try to do a great thing; you may waste all your life looking for the opportunity which may never come. But since little things are always claiming your attention, do them as they come, from a great motive, for the glory of God, to win His smile of approval, and to do good to men. It is harder to plod on in obscurity, acting thus, than to stand on the high places of the field, within the view of all, and to do deeds of valor at which rival armies stand still to gaze. But no such act goes without the swift recognition and the ultimate recompense of Christ. To fulfill faithfully the duties of your station; to use to the utmost the gifts of your endowment; to bear chafing annoyances and trivial irritations as martyrs bore the piliory and the stake; to find the one noble trait in people who try to molest you, to put the kindest construction on unkind acts and words; to love with the love of God even the unthankful and evil; to be content to be a fountain, in the midst of a wild valley of stones, nourishing a few lichen and flowers; or now and again a thirsty sheep; and do this always not for the praise of man, but for the sake of God—this makes a great life."

And its close is apt to be glorified with peace and hope.

A TWO-FOLD MASTERPIECE. The following particulars concerning an incident which has already been mentioned in the Catholic Standard and Times will be of interest: The literary genius of Leo XIII. has stirred the musical genius of the great maestro, D. Lorenzo Perosi, to devote himself to a work which will be the highest expression both of the gratitude that the Catholics feel towards the divine goodness for the benefits received in the course of this dying century and of the faith and hope with which the next century will be begun.

The Holy Father, after having received so celebrated maestro special tokens of his benevolence—among which the conferring of the title and functions of director adjunct of the Cappella Sistina—received him some days ago to entrust him with the aforesaid work. It is a fine poem that His Holiness has already composed almost entirely and intends to dedicate to our Saviour in order to celebrate the benefits of redemption at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth. To make the impression of it more efficacious, general and popular, Leo XIII. desired Don Perosi to set it to music by one of those so genial and expressive compositions which aroused so much admiration for the young maestro. So we shall have a two-fold masterpiece, being the product of two superior talents.—Catholic Standard and Times.

UNKINDEST CUT OF ALL. There was a time when to mention the Salt of the Sultan in the same breath with the Sultan of Turkey would provoke a storm of indignant remonstrance; but nowadays people know more about history and Luther than they did then. Everybody has his finger at poor Martin now, and is even thought the better for it. In the January Harper's Mr. Sidney Whitman paints a sympathetic portrait of the present Sultan, and denies that he is of a melancholy nature. "On the contrary," he says, "I know that his Majesty enjoys a joke and a laugh as heartily as ever did Martin Luther; even though it must be admitted that the nature of some of the doctory reformer's jokes would scarcely suit the refined taste of the Caliph of the Mohammedans." How the good old boys who read Harper's less than fifty years ago would have stared and gasped at such a statement in its pages! —Avo Maria.

When Beauty Fades. In response to repeated inquiries from ladies with whom Dr. Chase's Ointment has become so popular for skin diseases, asking if face powders are injurious and can be used while using the ointment, we state that while the majority of face powders are injurious we can recommend the recipes given in Dr. Chase's supplementary recipe book on page 45, which will be sent to any address on receipt of 25c. in stamps. Dr. Chase's Ointment is the ladies' friend for all skin diseases. Address Dr. A. W. Chase Co., Toronto.

If your children mean and are restless during sleep, coupled with awake with a loss of appetite, pale countenance, picking of the nose, etc., you may depend upon it that the primary cause of the trouble is worms. Mother Graves' Worm Exterminator effectually removes these pests, at once relieving the little sufferers.

THIS SETTLES IT.

MR. CHARLES DEAN ON DODD'S KIDNEY PILLS.

He was Asked if Dodd's Kidney Pills Cured Him of Kidney Disease, and Declared They Did After His Doctor and Other Medicines had Failed.

London, Feb. 6.—The publication a few days ago, in the press of this, and other cities, of the statement that Mr. Charles Dean, of the City Hotel, had been cured by Dodd's Kidney Pills, of a disease that every other remedy he had used, failed to even relieve, created widespread comment and discussion.

The majority of the citizens agreed that the case was not a remarkable one for Dodd's Kidney Pills, which they said, cure every case of Kidney Disease for which they are used. Some few persons, however, doubted the accuracy of the report. To settle the question, once for all, we interviewed Mr. Dean, and asked him if the press reports were true.

"Certainly they are true," said he. "The only fault they have is that they are not strong enough. "I used to suffer so much that I had to lie down to get relief. My doctor said my Kidneys were affected. He gave me medicine, but it didn't help me. "One day I met Mr. M. L. Daffy, architect, who was cured of Kidney Disease by Dodd's Kidney Pills. He advised me to try them, and I did so. When I had taken four doses I was relieved. One box made a new man. I have taken three boxes, and am completely cured. Dodd's Kidney Pills cured me. They are worth their weight in gold."

This certainly settles the question. Nothing further can be said. Dodd's Kidney Pills cure Kidney disease—that is proved. Those who require Dodd's Kidney Pills can get them at all drug stores for fifty cents a box, six boxes for \$2.50, or by sending the price to The Dodd's Medicine Co., Limited, Toronto.



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