

IV. Spiritual Life
D. Other Issues of Persons
e. Temptation

251.

Sermon, Book 2, No. 11

Temptation

(1st Sunday of Lent)

Our Divine Redeemer encountered and overcame three temptations for our instruction and encouragement. First He was tempted to make his spiritual power minister to the appetites of the body. "If thou be the Son of God, command that the stones be made bread." Second, to use the grace of God not according to the will of God, but for the gratification of a caprice. "Throw thyself down, for it is written" &c. Third, to seek glory and power for Himself, by renouncing the rule of the supreme God, as His tempter had done ages before to his ruin and despair.

That our Savior was not tempted till He fasted is also a noteworthy fact. No one is ever tempted, ever feels any struggle of opposing forces within him, until he begins to lead something of a spiritual life. Along the smooth channel of the Ontario River all the water of the great Western Lakes runs without a ripple or a murmur. Only at the sharp rocks & yawning chasms where Niagara Falls begin, it commences to foam and roar, and dash on with fierce eddies and boiling whirlpools through its narrow outlet to the other lake. So while the current of inclination is unopposed in the soul, it runs silently, and placidly, down towards the abyss of crime and ruin. One may think he is not tempted when he is, in truth, making no resistance, that all is well with him when in reality all is going ill. You feel placid and calm and self-satisfied. You are going on smoothly. Smoothly, yes. But now, at the beginning of this Lent, is the acceptable time for your thoughts to dive down deep below their ordinary channels, and answer the question, going on smoothly, yes, but which way? You must begin to fast before you will be tempted, to work before you will be wearied, to put on the yoke of Christ before its maladjustment will gall you, to curb your appetites before you will have any struggle with them. For aught you know, my properly behaving and respectable friend, you may be farther from salvation than that other who has been tempted and fallen into sin. He will know what to do when his heart is touched with remorse; and you know nothing of what you need to do. He has fallen among thieves and been left bruised and helpless, yet somewhat advanced on the road you never thought of entering, yet must enter if you would have life. There are certain souls whose way to salvation you can see only through the start they may one day give themselves by the commission of a great crime.

The instruction of Christ's example is to those who have entered upon a spiritual life, or have conceived some ideas or made some efforts towards saving their souls.

They have fasted and are hungry. The heart is passionately fond of enjoyment. If denied one pleasure it flies to another. Straitened with present grief it takes refuge in hope; or denied hope it flies to memory. Now the beginning of a spiritual life is to deny one's self unlawful pleasure not only in act but in thought and desire. As yet the soul does not know the higher and purer pleasure of a right conscience and rational hope. Yet it must have pleasure. So it seeks sensible pleasure in devotion, and tries to gratify the flesh it has renounced by making spiritual goods stir up emotions and feelings and fancies in the soul. Being the son of God by grace, it thinks of no higher use for its divine power than to make bread. Many people waste the greater part of well-meaning lives in hunting after sensible devotion about the threshold of the spiritual career. They want to feel when they pray, when they confess and when they go to Communion, or they want to get rid of certain feelings that will return to them, and so they flounder on, without being in the end more humble, more patient, more spiritual minded, more detached from themselves than they were at the beginning.

The grosser temptation passed, another forthwith besets the way. The soul learning that it must leave father and mother and houses and lands, that is, all sensual consolations, has not yet learned to leave itself. In the midst of the spiritual goods of which it begins to discover the value, it has an inclination still to find, not simply a ground for patient hope, but present gratification. Because it has some right impulses it begins to imagine that all its impulses are right; and that the angels will bear it up even where it vainly and uselessly casts itself from the pinnacle of the temple. When the people of a certain city did not receive Jesus Christ the disciples were indignant, and said Lord, command fire from Heaven to come down and consume them. But he rebuked them saying "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." You know not that the indignation you think is love for me is only personal vindictiveness and spite. This is the temptation which masters overzealous promoters of some special good or opposers of some particular evil. They cast themselves down from the pinnacle of the temple, that is, cut loose from the tradition and teaching of the Church, thinking that the angels will bear them up, and are dashed to pieces. It is the same temptation that makes us restive under the guidance of our spiritual director and conceive projects which we are unwilling to submit to his judgment. We grow impatient and want to hurry by some new way to the good we are eager for, instead of following the track made by our cross-laden Redeemer. The tempter is ever whispering, as soon as the grosser passions have ceased to stir us, "Cast thyself down, for the angels have charge of them, and where others have perished, thou shall not dash thy [foot against a stone. End of page]

The plain way of serving God is the safe way. To obey, to be humble, to avoid ostentation, to pray, to keep fasts and festivals prescribed, are things easily understood; and to these we should turn our minds. When God wants to do anything uncommon He will put it in the way of our duty. Martyrs never go about hunting after martyrdom.

251 - Temptation

The third temptation is of a higher order than the other two and often assails souls much advanced in virtue. The kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof have a charm for the heart that makes delusion comparatively easy even to those of spiritual aims. It is pleasant to command respect, to be widely known and praised. Besides if one has much influence he will be able to do much good. If now you will but desert the way of Christian simplicity, if you will flatter the whims of the powerful and influential, there is no knowing what a power you may become. "All these I will give to thee, if, falling down, thou wilt adore me."

The manner in which our blessed Redeemer encountered and disposed of these temptations was the same in all, and the same He wishes us to employ in ours. He recalls the principles of faith. "It is written," He says in answer to each. As if He said, "You appeal to my natural inclination to urge me on to act. But my natural inclinations are not my law of action. I am not my own but God's. As the potter moulds the clay into what vessel he pleases, so God has moulded me a man to do His will. It is written. I was not created for the purpose of eating bread, nor to display miraculous power, nor to possess kingdoms, but to do God's will and live forever."

This is the way and the only way in which we can successfully resist any of our temptations be they grosser or more spiritual. The evil approaches us under the guise of something desirable. You cannot stop to parley or argue with it on its own ground. When it beckons and says come here to find enjoyment, you cannot answer it. No, not there but a little farther on, or to the right, or left: because, so answering you concede away your whole line of defense in allowing that enjoyment is worth working for, but not that particular one. But when you answer I am not made for enjoyment but to do the will of God, you cut away all the ground from under the tempter's feet, and baffle him. Does he threaten calamities if you refuse to turn your feet upon paths that are slippery? If you do not disregard the fast, your health will suffer; if you do not join the lewd conversation you will suffer ridicule; if you do not follow the dishonest practices of sellers and buyers you will lose money. Grant the tempter all he claims. You will lose your bodily comfort, you will suffer ridicule, you will lose money. What then? You can do without them, and God, your soul, eternal life, left yet.

Does he set forth the pleasures you can gain, by leaving the path of duty? Concede them all. Say that those who crown themselves with roses never feel the prick of thorns; that ill-gotten gold never rusts; that success and honor reward the treacherous and unprincipled. What then? Your heart was not made for these things. And what good will it do to gain them all and lose yourself and them together?

In the heart detached from the world, temptation has no foothold. No one shrinks from losing what he never cared to possess, or goes out of his way to get what he has no wish to have. Remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin. Let yourself to live solely to do God's will and temptation will have no power over you. If thine eye

252 - Why Temptations need not Afflict Us

be single, thy whole body will be full of light. Under the pressure of trial the heart may writhe but will never falter; built high up in its determination to aim at nothing but the eternal it will stand immovable and serene, while the tempest of passion, and feeling, and fancy, roars about it, and beats angrily at its base in vain. Temptation says St. Gregory has three stages: presentation, delectation, and consent. Presentation is the work of the tempter and is no fault, or even weakness of ours. Even the first feeling of delight in it is not ours but nature's; the inconsiderate rush of the appetite to grasp what it longs for. Only when we notice the desire that moves us, does the necessity of resistance begin. Then Satan has spoken, and we must answer, "It is written." Then he must be conquered or we fall.

Many are saddened and discouraged by temptation. This should not be. It is because they desire something else besides to do the will of God. Like Peter they want to build tabernacles and stop on Mt. Thabor all the time. Temptations are no sign of God's displeasure or of His intention to desert us. Whom He loves He chastens. God did not desert Abraham when he told him to sacrifice his son; nor Job when He took away what He had given; nor St. Paul when Satan had power to buffet him; nor His martyrs when He led them through prisons to the fire. There is no victory without a battle, no crown without a cross. Without temptations we grow slothful, conceited, insolent; careless in our prayers, cold in our love for God, harsh, suspicious, overbearing towards others. "They are," says St. John Chrysostom, "to the soul, what use and rubbing are to steel: instead of injuring or wearing it away, they keep it shining and sharp."

252.

Sermon, Book 1, No. 13

Why Temptations need not Afflict Us, and How to Resist Them

(First Sunday of Lent 1856)

Jesus was led out by the Spirit to be tempted of the devil. Matt .iv.

By as much as the precepts of the law multiply on us, by so much increase our opportunities and temptations to violate it. Hence the Church opens Lent, that season of special mortification and prescribed austerity, with the Gospel of our Savior's temptation in the desert. To the majority of those observing it Lent is no more a time of spiritual ease than it is of corporal gratification. A life of austerity, accompanied by the spirit of humility, brings with it a firm and solid peace of the soul; but corporal mortification practiced for only a short period gives us merely a glimpse of spiritual delights far surpassing the sensual joys we are wont to repose in, without permitting us to lay hold on and enjoy them. We see them as from afar, while our obedience to the Church's commands leads to small but unwonted mortifications; but the tide of our

commonplace sensual thoughts rolls back over our souls too quickly to allow us to live in them, and make them our own.

Lent is therefore a season of peculiar spiritual as well as corporal trial. Fasting from our ordinary meals, and refraining somewhat from our ordinary amusements, instead of lessening our usual temptations, often brings us new ones. Our imagination then becomes wild, daring, uncontrollable; now ascending the mountain to look upon "all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory thereof," as the reward of rebellion against God; now hurried away with fierce fancies of sensual gratification until it gives (in desire) to the very stones of the desert--objects farthest removed from that which delights the senses--some voluptuous form and quality; now clambering up our very devotions thus becoming the hour of temptation, in presumptuous thought to the very pinnacle of the temple of virtue, and persuading us to relax our efforts, to cast ourselves down into inaction, trusting that God cannot do without us and that the Angels will bear us up.

In the tempest of these tumultuous fancies we often lose sight of the shortness of life, the length of eternity, the loveliness of God, the dignity of virtue, the certainty of judgment, the awfulness of hell, the beauty of heaven, and become so worried and disturbed in mind that we know not which way to turn.

A few reflections that will console us in temptations and assist us to resist them are therefore very opportune and seasonable today.

Motives of Consolation in Trial

The first thought calculated to console us in temptations, is that to be tempted is the ordinary and normal state of the sincere Christian. They are therefore a proof to us of the sincerity with which we love God, seek virtue, and desire salvation. To be tempted is the ordinary and normal state of the sincere Christian because the true Christian is he who chastises his body and brings it into subjection, who lives according to reason and not according to feeling.

Against this chastisement, this subjection, the flesh, in fallen nature, rebels, and this rebellion is temptation. A Christian retains after his baptism all his natural dispositions. He has the same inclination to pride, to revenge, to avarice, to sensual pleasure; but he is bound to control them and prevent their unlawful effects. And as those dispositions are always actively at work in the presence of their objects--never lacking in this life--the Christian is always in a state of trial.

Two kinds of people feel no temptations: those friends of God whom out of tender regard for their weakness He is treating for a while as invalids, or babes; and His enemies who know not temptation because they have never resisted it.

The first cannot bear the strong food of the healthy soul, but must be nourished with the milk of spiritual consolations. The latter are the devil's suitors rather than his dupes, and on them he expends no ingenuity whatever. They never feel any conflict

between the flesh and the spirit because in the spirit never assumed an attitude of opposition to the flesh. "In good men," says St. Augustine, "the flesh lusts against the spirit; but in bad men it has nothing against which to lust." The bird that has never beat against the wires of the cage, in an effort to fly away, does not know it is imprisoned. So the man who has learned habitually to disregard the loftier impulses of his nature, and has settled himself quietly down in a life of sensualism, never can feel the domination of his body to be a bondage. He has no temptations. He is asleep in stupid slumber, floating down the current of inclination, towards eternal death. From that sleep no voice of human reason or exhortation can rouse him. We can pray for him that the voice of God's mercy reach his ear; but it is most likely that he will be first startled from sleep by the awful tones of divine justice. "Arise ye dead and come to judgment." That there are some therefore who feel no temptations, proves only that there are some insincere Christians, and it still remains true, as I said in the beginning, that to be tempted is the ordinary normal state of the earnest Christian.

This is the meaning of the cross, in which alone St. Paul teaches us to glory; of the tribulation, in the midst of which the same apostle tells us he rejoices; of the sword, which Jesus Christ said he came to bring upon the earth, to sever the cords of sensual affection, though the heart be left bleeding thereby; in a word this interior struggling and battling, suffering and enduring is the essential characteristic of the Christian life, of the life of faith hidden with Christ in God.

In the midst of trials that make life weary to us, of thoughts and fancies that appall us, of emotions that quite upset the common order of our feelings and make the world seem hideous and intolerable to us, we must gather in our harvest of merit and go on higher and higher towards heaven. "Virtue is perfected in infirmity."

Advantages Brought by Temptations

God has planted the cross along the road to heaven with the most tender regard for our interest, and the most careful view of the advantages it brings to us.

The first advantage of temptations is that they are occasions of merit, and therefore sown in the corruption of our bodies to bring forth fruit of incorruptible glory. Though all in heaven are filled with delight, yet the wisdom of God has decreed that not all in heaven have the same capacity of enjoyment, nor the same grade of glory. These grades of glory are nicely proportioned to the good works, sifted, weighed, and counted, of the inhabitants of heaven. For every temptation we resist, therefore, for any trial we endure, we shall have a corresponding crown of eternal glory, a proportionate thrill of everlasting delight.

Now, to our dull unloving hearts, it may seem enough to arrive in heaven at all, and a foolish ambition to strive for a high place; but hearts that have been warmed and quickened by the fire of true charity attest the contrary and show us that we ought to aim at the highest place in heaven, not to be above others, but to be very close to Jesus

forever, to nestle down right at Mary's feet for all eternity. By as much more as tribulations bound, by so much brighter glory will crown us. By as much more as we are humiliated here with internal sorrows, by so much fuller a tide of joy shall inundate us hereafter.

How can we fail to be consoled with this thought in our times of trial? God is above, looking lovingly down as each minute passes, as each heart string cracks, as [each] pang pierces, and preparing for every effort of patience, every moment of endurance, its inconceivably great reward. We should bid humiliations and crosses welcome, therefore. They are the voice of Jesus urging us to keep close to Him along the dolorous way, they are his very touch pressing upon our brow His thorny crown, whose every jagged point shall bloom one day and bring forth for us a fruit of everlasting joy.

The second advantage of temptations is that they keep us from setting our heart on the world and forgetting God. On earth we are strangers and pilgrims, and it is our interest to be often reminded of it. If we had every thing our own way here, if we felt always pleasure in our devotions, never were disturbed with suggestions of sin, or fears of falling away from God, we might become content with our exile, and forget our home. The soul, says St. John Chrysostom, is like a sword or any other edged instrument of steel. If it be out of use, no matter with what care it is kept, rust will soon begin to spot its polished sides and blunt its keen edge.

Now temptations are the cause and object of the soul's activity, they are its use. Without them the rust of sloth, of sensual and worldly aims, would spread itself imperceptibly over the spirit; but under the pressure, the soul is cleansed from low aims, sensual and useless affections, and is full of life, energy, and hope of heaven. In fact, when do we turn with such singleness of heart to God, as when we feel that there is no good out[side] of Him?

The third advantage of temptations is that they teach us a most necessary knowledge of ourselves, and in consequence humility. We are never farther from God than when we imagine ourselves better than other men. St. Peter was never farther from the spirit of his Master, as the event proved, than when he cried out so confidently, "Although all should deny thee, yet will I never deny thee."

Humility is the foundation of every Christian. On the humility that yields intellectual homage to divine authority, faith is built. On the humility that throws itself unconditionally, with childlike trust, in the arms of God's providence, is built Hope. On the humility that can see and acknowledge beauty and goodness without itself, is built charity. In a word, as pride is the root of all sin, so humility is the foundation of all virtue. And by as much deeper as the foundation is laid, by as much more profound as is our humility, by so much loftier will the edifice of our virtue rear its head on high, even to the very throne of God.

252 - Why Temptations need not Afflict Us

How soon temptations teach us more humility than we can learn from a thousand books and years of meditation! Humiliation, says St. Bernard, [is] the best teacher of humility. If we knew our own interests how we would bless God for the slights we have received, the trials that have made us appear so little, so vile, so despicable in our own eyes! And how fervently we would exclaim with the Psalmist, "It is good for me that thou didst humble me, that I might learn thy justification!"

A fourth and more obvious advantage of temptations is that they teach us charity for the failings of others. In a restless, news-seeking community, no special sin brings more ruin to souls than the sin of rash judgment. In temptation we feel that we need the commiseration of others, and we are ready to grant they are not any worse than ourselves, and the consideration we feel the need of we are ready to accord to them. Surrounded with infirmity ourselves we can sympathize with the erring and drop a tear of pity over the sad fate of even the most abandoned and degraded.

Resisting Temptations

These few considerations, beloved friends, impressed deeply on our minds, will assist us greatly to resist temptation in a proper and successful manner.

If temptations are a proof [of] our sincerity, if they are fraught with so many spiritual advantages to us, we ought not to be grieved or discouraged when we have them.

It is true temptations to sin, being a threatened spiritual evil, are a keener torture to the soul than any other kind of affliction. The soul is unscathed by the loss of worldly honor, dignity, health and even life; it can rise above them, and, surveying their ruins, say with holy Job, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed by the name of the Lord."

But when a spiritual and irreparable loss is threatened us, when a tempest of tumultuous thoughts threatens to detach us from God, and destroy us utterly, we are constrained to cry out with the psalmist, "Save me, O God, for the waters have entered even unto my soul!"

But it is only in proportion as we are spiritual that we feel this grief keenly. Our dislike of temptations comes for the most part, not so much from the love of God as from sloth that dreads the trouble of resisting or pride that is humbled at the practical knowledge of our own frailty.

We should endeavor to possess our souls in patience, and if we do this our enemy will be completely foiled at his first onset. He never hopes to reach his ends except through confusion.

It is not with the hope of suddenly corrupting the virgin heart, that he fills it with loathsome images of sin; it is not to prompt to quick murder that he sends fierce thoughts of bloody vengeance into the irascible mind; it is not to create sudden apostasy that he raises dark doubts not only of the truth of revelation but even of the

existence of God and of the immortality of the soul, in our minds; but it is to create mental confusion, terror, discouragement, despair, neglect of prayer, of the Sacraments, to take away the desire with the hope of improving.

We must always therefore maintain peace in our hearts; and if there is such a tumult of temptation about us that we cannot feel at peace, we must be as regular with our devotions, as often at Confession and Communion, as generous in our alms giving, as quiet, uncomplaining, and persevering as if we were really without interior disturbance.

The first means of resisting temptation is therefore patience, equanimity. The chief means, however, is prayer. Man lives by every word that cometh out of the mouth of God; His power alone can shield us from temptation.

While we are here among ourselves, forming our selfish schemes of advancement or gain or pleasure, the angels are about us, bearing us up in their hands lest we stumble and fall into the abyss.

While the Children of Israel were passing through the Red Sea, and affrighted mothers were looking with trembling at the mighty walls of surging water miraculously piled up at the right hand and at the left, the little babes, all unconscious of danger, looked smiling on the thousand hues of the watery precipice and wondered why amid such marvelous beauty there should be such undisguised terror and haste. Like those unreasoning babes, we are travelling through the Red Sea of life under the guidance of our Mother the Church. Through her prayers and the mercy of God the waters of temptation, though piled high up on either side our path, are still held back from overwhelming us.

We gaze upon them with giddy wistfulness, we seem to catch from afar the sweet perfume in pleasure to see the bright hue of the rose in its honors, the most luscious fruits of autumn in its wealth, and we fain would stretch forth our hands not only to dally with them but to grasp them, but our Mother hurries us on, and God's mercy still holds back the waves. How little do we know what spirit we are of! How imperfectly do we appreciate our own frailty, helplessness and malice! We read the accounts of crimes perpetrated by abandoned men, and the punishment they receive at the hands of human justice, and we secretly congratulate ourselves on our virtue and morality. Yet place us in the midst of the temptations that surrounded those poor criminals, and how much sooner we might have succumbed, than they! Let God desert us for one moment, let the light of grace be quenched in our hearts, and we are at once lost, in utter darkness. God may desert us, at any moment; we must beseech Him still to remain near us. Our great remedy against temptation is prayer.

By the aid of prayer we can do all things. We are irresistible in Him who strengthens us. We can triumph over every temptation. We can rejoice in the midst of tribulation, walk smiling along the blood-dyed path to Calvary, and in the privation all

the natural heart holds dear, remembering that if we suffer with the Redeemer, with Him we shall be glorified.

253.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, December 1, 1855

Scandals.

Those who have least faith are most readily scandalized. The most corrupt, are most withheld from virtue by the faults of others. Where a man has true and practical faith, he is virtuous for God's sake, and as he finds not his encouragement to do well in the well-doing of others, so he is not discouraged with their evil-doing. He remains firm, though he see those whose sanctity he venerated fall, as stars from heaven, from the height of virtue into the abyss of crime. His soul is his own, his destiny his own, God his hope still.

Still, taking the world as it is, the evils of scandal are immense. Few men think enough to go beyond the pale of custom for aims, motives, and rules of action. When they arrive at the use of reason, they think and aim and act as they find others thinking and aiming and acting. Custom, like a mighty torrent, catches them on its bosom during the first years of their young life, and goes rushing on with them as such giddy speed that they scarce think ere their body is at the grave, and their soul in the abyss to which custom leads.

Hence the wisdom of Catholic veneration for Saints--of the Church's commending, by festivals, to our imitation those heroes, who, thinking for themselves and acting for themselves, stood fast in virtue while the torrent of customs laden with worldlings--their schemes of ambition, their plans of gain--their delights of gratified sensuality--rushed roaring on to hell. Scattered over the world and along the ages, they are like mountains towering above the deluge of corruption, and the festivals coming day after day and recurring year after year, are as pillars of fire to guide us through the night of time.

"It is impossible but that scandals should come." There always have been scandals, and there always will be, so long as there is sin, scandals given by friend, by parents to children, yea, and by pastor to people. Even among the clergy, from Judas to Gavazzi, no age has existed without some of those who took advantage of their bosom friendship with Christ to lacerate His loving heart. Scandals shall still come, to mislead, deceive, and destroy.

Yet it is gratifying for those who have at heart the defense of God's providence, in permitting scandals, to reflect that the scandal of one is not the cause nor an excuse for the sin of another. Whoever is sincerely virtuous, that is, virtuous from right motives, will never swerve from his integrity for the failings of others. Every one has

lights enough and grace enough to save his own soul. Every one must carry his own burthen before the tribunal of Christ, and each man's eternal destiny will be of his own carving. Hence the providence of God, whereby He shows forth His mercy in the just, and His justice in the reprobate, is manifestly full of equity, from the fact that the doom of each is the work of his own free will.

We have lately read a scandalous story of some Catholic priest in New York. We do not believe the story; but even if it were true, it will be a stumbling block only to the corrupt and wicked, and a salutary motive of humility and watchfulness to the pure and clean of heart.

254.

Lecture, *The Catholic Columbian*, February 6, 1875

Instruction in St. Joseph's Cathedral

Human Respect

God alone is our Master and Judge. He alone knows the secrets of our heart; and He alone has the right to call us to account for them. Before Him we stand or fall, and not before men, or even angels. Men--our neighbors, those most familiar with us--do not know us. They may know what we eat and drink, what we wear when we work and sleep, but their knowledge ends with what they see. The life of the soul is all unseen; the mystery of that restless activity of will, affection, aim, desire, love, hate, fear, which ends with life either in heaven or hell, is hidden from all but the soul and God. It is nothing, therefore to be judges of men.

They may bless us as we pass by, and say, "How good," and all the while sin may be festering in our hearts. They may curse us, and say, "Out, wicked wretch!" and we linked to love of God none the less.

These are plain truths, and very familiar. Perhaps it is their very familiarity which has made us forget them. The soil that drinks the frequent rain and yields no fruit becomes nigh unto being accursed, says the apostle. The soldier who sees many killed forgets that he is to die himself. You hear God's eternal truths announced to you Sunday after Sunday and you settle back in your seat, wishing the instruction were done, or wondering which neighbor will feel the reproach, which to your mind is directed to him.

Let us repeat the maxim above enunciated, and see whether it is really as familiar as it seemed: God's judgment of us is the only judgment worth caring for. The good opinion of men is not worth striving for, and their bad opinion is not worth fearing. Plain truth.

I wish this address to explain to you the sin of human respect, and to feel in your hearts with hatred and horror of it.

To act through human respect is to have thought, in acting and speaking, of how we appear to those who see and hear us. It is the sin of our country and of this congregation.

Do not understand me to say that it is a sin to court our neighbor's good opinion. The desire of praise is natural and legitimate; the praise of our Creator and Judge is what we are born for. It is lawful, therefore, to desire the praise of man, since man can acknowledge and honor worth.

But it is not lawful to shut out God from our thoughts when we desire praise, much less to offend Him for the sake of applause.

Now, the spirit of our age sets up public opinion for a divinity; and this is the logical meaning of what is called the fundamental principle of the Reformation. Everyone has the right to interpret the divine commission or infallible authority. The standard of truth is, therefore, what people think.

In one of the old spelling-books was a wood-cut frontispiece, representing two lofty temples, one towering far above the other. On the lower one was the scroll KNOWLEDGE; on the higher FAME--from which the frowzy-headed school-boy easily inferred that hard study would gain him knowledge, and knowledge, fame; and as in the picture there was nothing above the temple of fame--not even sky--he inferred also that there is nothing higher for the soul to aspire to than FAME. So the poets--you "brief abstracters and chroniclers of the times"--talk. So, also, the philosophers and the statesmen. So even the preachers, outside of their pulpits, when they forget to talk through their noses. They tell young men to aim higher than eating and drinking and frolicking. At what, reverend friend? Why higher? The highest offices of the state are open to you. Labor and you may win immortal fame! O mockery of the heart's high hopes--*immortal fame!* Your monuments of brass and marble will crumble into dust; the hearts of men will wither and perish; the earth and all that is in it will be reduced to ashes. And then where is fame?

The day of general judgment will gather together the praised [and] the praisers, in one appalled mass, in the Valley of Jehosaphat. One by one the deeds of men will be rehearsed and judged. The crowd of the reprobate shall "go away into everlasting punishment," but "the just into life eternal." And then where is fame? In the regions of the damned there are curses and despair, but no praise. In the kingdom of the blessed only ONE is praised--"the LAMB who was slain from the foundation of the world." Fame is the gilded vanity by which the soul is beguiled into forgetting that praise is from God, and that the heroism of the aspiring soul is to deserve it. Yet what is the whole framework of modern civilization and religion, but a structure built upon human respect, and held together by it? Everywhere you find the two great paths--reformers and conservatives--the one urging changes and the other desiring the present state of things. Each conceals his real motives by false reasons. The reformer does not say, "I

want change because I have not power, and I want it," but he talks of truth and human liberty, and the cause of the downtrodden. The conservative does not say, "Let me alone in my abundance and my comfort," but he talks of peace, national glory, the stability of society, the respect of nations.

We have in our midst hundreds of jarring sects, united in but one common hatred of the Catholic Church. Their leaders will not say, "I will not be Catholic, because the Catholic Church is unpopular; because I want to believe all the evil that has been spoken of her," but they talk of truth and justice, and Gospel liberty, of things, namely, that are far away from their hearts' love.

In commercial and social life what is there but almost perpetual deception? The wit and the tongue take the place of the tomahawk and the scalping-knife; but the war goes on. To out-wit and never be out-witted; to flatter but not be moved by flattery; to strike when the blow will go home, but be covered with the darkness; to corrupt the [un?]corrupted--this is social and business life. Language and habit become the means of concealing thought, which the telltale eye or gesture or blow might betray. Yet high over all this corruption there is stately talk of freedom and honesty and truth, as though freedom and honesty and truth were springs of action to men who have nothing for eternity and God.

To one calmly observing these things, they need no voice of the inspired writer to know that all is vanity, pretense and self-delusion. To one passing out of the river's mouth into the pathless sea, what are the pleasant sights through which the river flowed! To the soul, entering the ocean of eternity, what are the panegyrics, the resolutions of respect, the shouts of applause of the days now forever flown? Vain--empty. The real judgment is now at hand.

But let us come nearer home to our own hearts, and try to pluck the beam from our own eye. We glory in the Catholic faith. The cross of Christ is marked upon our souls by baptism; the seal of Catholic manhood has been set upon us in Confirmation; our lips have been empurpled by the blood of Christ, and our hearts lifted up by His sacred body. From pagan times to the penal days of Protestant misrule, the great army of martyrs, dying, have left us their heirs. "Our conversation is in Heaven." Our heart is there, where our treasure is. We live now, yet not we that are compounded of passions and frailties like the rest of men, but Jesus Christ, the Crucified lives in us.

Ah! my brethren, does not the picture put us to shame? I confess, for one, that it does me. The blessed Redeemer, who was so meek, so patient, so consumed with love of God and of souls, so untiring in seeking the lost sheep--does He live in me, who am His ambassador to men? Sweet Heart of Jesus, make my heart like Thine!

And you, my brethren, do you not see and tremble at the power which human respect has over your hearts? Whence come anger and quarrels among you? Whence uncharitableness and tale-bearing and evil speaking? Shall I say that your very

devotions, the profession of your faith, and your obedience to its mandates is but the fruit in you of human respect? That you pray and give alms to be seen of men? I will not say so harsh a thing, and so untrue of many among you whose faith I honor and sincerity I would be glad to imitate. But there is danger for us all. Human respect can corrupt the holiest actions and stain the purest motives. Often what was begun in the spirit from a high and supernatural motive, ends in the flesh in the basest of human motives. You go constantly to Mass moved by conscience. Would you go if you were among strangers, or if your dress was so shabby as to make you ashamed? You reverence our Lord in the Sacrament of the altar; how is it that you seem so much more modest and recollected when the church is full, than when you happen within its walls with but one or two companions or alone?

You all believe in the admirable sacrifice of the Mass, and the untold treasure of grace hidden in it for those who assist at it devoutly. How is it then that week after week it is offered up each morning on yonder altars with but eight or ten present, unless there happens to be a wedding or a funeral.

You are liberal in aiding the building and adorning the house of God, and say, "I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of thy House and the place where Thy Glory dwelleth." How is it that you give more where the subscription list is carried about, or stop to ask how much does my neighbor give?

I will frankly confess here, though to my own reproach, that I have done less than my duty to you in this respect. Though conscious that I never have, and resolved that I never will deserve it, I have feared the reproach of "money-getter." My life and all that is in it belongs to the Church. This cathedral, the seminary, the orphan asylum and schools are all that I shall ever want means for.

I have become a stranger to my brethren. No heirs are waiting for me to die. My home is here. Your souls are my possession, and you will have to see to my funeral. Therefore, I say to you, with loving plainness, that there is among you a spirit of human respect, which is slowly undermining the spirit of faith. This is the spirit that makes some Catholics ashamed of being called the associates of others; that makes some envious, jealous and suspicious of others; that makes the poor speak ill of the rich and judge them hastily, and makes the rich hold themselves aloof from the poor, and even aid them contemptuously, as if they were of other and coarser flesh and blood. This is the spirit which is the chief obstacle to our having efficient and ample Catholic schools for all our children, which makes some go on, at their peril, disregarding the warning of the Holy Father and the law of the Church forbidding Catholic parents to send their children to schools in which religion is despised, and go to Communion without making their disobedience rank among their sins. This is the spirit that makes grown up boys and girls ashamed of the language and manners of their fathers and mothers, and makes [them] both desert their practices of piety and take up habits of dissipation,

foul language and shameful action. Human respect is working these evils amongst us. And what is it, to be the author of damnation to so many? What is this tyrannical fashion or public opinion, that it should exact from us the service of our bodies and the ruin of our souls? Look at it closely and what is it but a mass of ignorance, insolence and helplessness.

"People will think!" What do people know? They do not care to know. They are busy with themselves. They take up the cry of the gossips and repeat it carelessly whether it is true or false. They could not know if they wanted to. People generally delight in hearing the evil deeds of others, not reflecting that they cannot see into anyone's heart, or tell with what temptation the deed was done. Yet they judge; he is good--he is bad--he is proud--he is humble--basing their judgment on his demeanor towards them. Thus they set themselves up in the place of God, forgetting the awful injunction, "Judge not that you be not judged."

To a man who lives for this world, public opinion is a power, but in reality it has no power but what the coward heart may choose to grant it. Its frown will not put anyone down in the Day of Judgment, and its favor will not uphold. The ambitious of by-gone times courted the favor of public opinion, and won it. Their bodies now rest in forgotten graves and their souls are paying the forfeit. The martyrs of the Church defied public opinion to the death and now their bones are honored on our altars.

Despise the judgment of men.