

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

REV. F. P. HICKEY, O. S. B.
TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

GOOD DISPOSITIONS

"If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed."—Matt. ix, 21.

The miracle of the woman, who touched the hem of Christ's garment, is narrated three times in the Gospels. Evidently, then, there is some special lesson in it that we should learn. Putting the accounts of Saints Matthew, Mark, and Luke together, the narrative is this:

Jairus, a ruler in the synagogue, came and fell at our Lord's feet, and besought Him to come to his daughter, who was at the point of death. "And He went with him, and a great multitude followed, and they thronged Him." (Mark v. 24.) And in that crowd was a poor woman, who had been troubled with an issue of blood for twelve years, "and had suffered many things from physicians, and had spent all that she had, who came behind Him in the crowd and touched the hem of His garment." "If I shall touch only His garment I shall be healed." And Jesus stopped and said: "Who is it that touched Me?"

And all denying, Peter and they that were with Him, said: "Master, the multitude thronged and pressed Thee, and dost Thou say, Who touched Me?" And Jesus said: "Somebody hath touched Me, for I know that virtue has gone out of Me." And the woman, seeing she was not hid, came trembling, and fell down before Him, and declared before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was immediately healed. But He said to her: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole, go thy way in peace." (Luke viii, 45-48.)

Picture that crowd—Jesus going to the dying girl, that poor woman, as a last chance of remedy, creeping up behind Him, and touching His garment.

Now there was love, nearness, and power enough in Christ for all that crowd to have been healed. There was no miracle worked on the others, but there was on that poor woman on account of her dispositions.

There are crowds often in our churches, and He, the same Master, is here, and there is love enough in Him, Who dwells in the Tabernacle, and power enough, and we are all near enough to speak to Him, and not only to touch His garment, but to receive His sacred Body and Blood—and why is there no miracle of mercy worked on us? Why are we no better than we are?

For want of the proper dispositions. That woman was conscious of her disease; she had been trying to be cured for twelve years.

She had faith in Christ, Humble faith—"If I shall touch only His garment I shall be healed." And she made an effort to approach Him. Think how everything was against her. There was a crowd that thronged Him, and yet she worked her way to get to Him. She was, according to the law of Moses, the vilest in the crowd, her touch was pollution, but she worked her way, in spite of disdainful looks at her poor bent form.

Her coming was most ill-timed, for Jesus was on His way to heal the daughter of Jairus, who was at the point of death. And the eager father and the crowd were hurrying along. Yet she managed to do what she was longing for; she touched the hem of His garment, and she was healed.

Contrast ourselves with that poor woman, and what can we say? Do we deserve a blessing from God at all, for where are our dispositions?

There are diseases troubling our souls, perhaps for longer than twelve years. And are we anxious for them to be cured? If we are not humble and fearful about the state of our souls, our danger is great. Let us pray that our eyes may be opened to see ourselves as we are in the sight of God. His verdict now may be, "Thou knowest not; thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Apoc. iii, 17-19.)

And if she had faith in Christ, that He could and would heal her, how much more faith and confidence should we not have, who know our Lord so well?

And the effort she made disgraces us in our tepidity and sloth. But we must make an effort! There is a crowd round our souls—past sins, worldly desires, unholy friends, the evil, tempting spirits—and we have to work our way through them to come to Jesus. She had to come publicly; we can go to confession easily and secretly. Her coming was ill-timed. She delayed our Lord, and even as He spoke to her, word came that the girl was dead. But for us, Jesus is waiting, perhaps has been waiting in the Home of His Love for years.

Such were the dispositions of this afflicted woman, that earned the working of the miracle. She was conscious of her infirmity, and longed to be free from it. She had full faith in the power and love of Christ to hear her. She had the good will and earnestness to make the effort to get near Him. Nothing kept her back—neither the crowd, nor her weakness, nor the hurry of our Lord.

Let us try to imitate her. Let our prayer be: "Open our eyes, dear Lord, to see how much we need Thee; to see the dangerous state of our soul; to see how the rescue could be made so easily; for Thou art loving, and powerful, and near us, Oh, if we were only longing, and

anxious to be saved! Give us, then, the dispositions that touched Thee in this poor woman's case—to be conscious of our misery and sin; to have faith in Thy power and love; the good will to make the effort to approach Thee." "If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed."

TEMPERANCE

A WOMAN'S WARNING CRY

There is a pathetic story in a New York newspaper about an actress dying in the city hospital on Blackwell's Island. The object of charity and the victim of intemperance, it is stated, is the young and formerly popular actress, Mabel Bouton.

From the "slough of despond" she cries out: "Oh, how this despairing wall rings in my head! My young life is spent. All my hopes are withered. I cannot turn back. It is 'too late, too late.'"

"But it is not 'too late' for you to whom I am talking—all you women who may take a few moments to read my poor little sermon which I preach to you from this prison house of tears—you women and young girls who are just beginning to take an occasional glass because you think you need it; because you are tired, or blue, or discouraged, or just want a little 'innocent fun,' and think it will do you good. Good! If I could only burn into your souls what evil it will do—what awful, irremediable evil!"

The wall which comes from those who have gradually approached and finally have fallen over the precipice of intemperance should make others fear to either touch or taste that which is so potent in its fearful destructive powers. Young women, all women, are pathetically appealed to by the young victim in the pauper's ward of Blackwell's Island.

Fortitude is the virtue that not all possess. Some are not inclined to battle against adversity and too easily succumb to trouble. Mabel Bouton tells us that she had the "blues" owing to a difficulty of obtaining a theatrical engagement. A "woman friend" then gave a glass of sherry and then another. There was a merry evening, followed by others, and cordials supplemented sherry.

The engagement came but the stimulants were not discarded. People who are color blind cannot read the danger signals. Frequently they learn of their defective vision only after the wrecked train is in the chasm and the walls and moans of the victims pierce the darkness. So the drunkard is sometimes sobered by the ruin and desolation he witnesses as the result of his criminal folly.

The victim in Blackwell's Island is writing for those of her own sex, but all can learn a lesson from her ruined life. We quote from her eloquent plea the concluding words of her letter:

"Take me as an example. Remember my story when you are tempted to take that first glass because you are tired or blue, or because some one says, 'It will make you feel better.' It will for a second or a moment; but in the end, unless you are protected by riches, it may bring you where I have told you I am."

"And I am in the dreariest, most forsaken place in the world—the almshouse of the greatest city in the modern world—and all alone."

"Don't drink because you are lonely or sad. That first drink is only the beginning of a long loneliness and a lasting sadness."

"Oh, how easy it is to begin a bad habit, and oh, how hard it is to stop! Learn to conquer trouble within yourself. Conquer it by work, by philosophy, by religion, through love—anything but drink. For as sure as I am lying here waiting, helpless, for my release, in the end drink will conquer you."

The sister of Mabel, Madeleine Bouton, two years ago married a count. But the countess was no more beautiful and no more talented than her unfortunate sister. But Mabel, influenced by an evil companion, took the wrong road—the road that leads to most every evil—the road strewn with human wrecks, the road of intoxicating drink.

Women, as well as men, are found on that highway and too many are entering upon it almost imperceptibly. When once a woman is branded as a drunkard, her race is run, her good name is blasted, and the grave will not hide the shame and disgrace of her life. Milton well says:

"And they so perfect in their misery, Not once perceived their foul disfigurement. But boast themselves more comely than before, And all their friends and native home forget, To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty."

—The Catholic Universe.

AMERICAN BISHOP MAY BE CANONIZED

On March 28, 1811, there was born in Praetitz, Bohemia, a babe who was baptized John Nepomucen. His parents were of the family Neumann of Bohemia. In early childhood his piety was noticed, and when old enough (1831) he entered the seminary of Budweis. His ability to acquire knowledge was wonderful, especially his power to learn different languages. He graduated from Prague in 1835. While he was at the seminary his attention was directed to the missionary needs of

FAMILY DOCTOR'S GOOD ADVICE

To Go On Taking "Fruit-a-lives" Because They Did Her Good

ROCHESTER, N. Y., JAN. 14th, 1915.
"I suffered for many years with terrible indigestion and constipation. I had frequent dizzy spells and became greatly run down. A neighbor advised me to try 'Fruit-a-lives'. I did so and to the surprise of my doctor, I began to improve, and he advised me to go on with 'Fruit-a-lives'."

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America by reading or hearing read letters from Bishop Baraga, of Northern Michigan. On June 2, 1886, he landed in America, and on June 25 of the same year, he was adopted into the diocese of New York, and afterwards became a Redemptorist. Father Neumann was consecrated Bishop of Philadelphia on March 28, 1852. He was one of the American bishops invited by Pope Pius IX. to Rome, in 1854, for the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. He was the first American Bishop to introduce the devotion of the Forty Hours into his diocese in 1860. He died in Philadelphia, January 5, 1860. The process of his canonization has been begun.—Catholic Bulletin.

FAR REACHING DECISION

CONVICTION OF SLANDERERS AFFIRMED BY OKLAHOMA COURT OF APPEALS

It is to be regretted that the statute does not prescribe imprisonment in the penitentiary as the punishment for this class of crime, were the words used by Justice Armstrong of Oklahoma in a recent decision affirming the conviction of Roy Crane for criminal libel.

Crane had written a book which contained the time worn calumnies usually aimed at the Catholic Church by criminal villifiers of his kind. He reprinted the horrible bogus oath declaring it to be the one taken by the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus and to his vile production made affidavit, falsely declaring that "every word in this book is given under a sworn affidavit and is itself establishes beyond a reasonable doubt that the book's contents are true and correct."

Crane published his scurrilous libels with audacity, trusting for safety in the fact that he had not mentioned the names of any individual Catholic or Knights of Columbus. It was an artifice often used to shield criminals of his type from the clutches of the law. But it failed, and Roy Crane must pay the penalty.

Crane argued before the court of appeals that the decision of the lower court should be reversed because the information failed to show that he had mentioned the names of the complaining witnesses in his book or that he had specially referred to the Knights of Columbus in Canadian County, Oklahoma. The court held the argument was without merit.

That while it might be used in a civil suit for damages it was of no avail in a criminal prosecution for libel which are sustained principally because the publication tends to the disturbance of society at large. The court pointed out that a libelous attack on a body of men, though no individuals be pointed out, may tend as much or more to create public disturbance as an attack on one individual and that numbers might add to the enormity of the act.

NO ATTEMPT TO DEFEND STATEMENT
The following is part of the severe arraignment of Crane made by Justice Armstrong in the course of his decision:

"The proof offered on behalf of the state fully supports the allegations in the information, to the effect that Crane published and distributed a book containing the libelous matter set forth in said information. Numerous witnesses testified to the falsity of the scurrilous charges contained in the book. Many members of the Knights of Columbus residing in Canadian county offered in testimony the correct oath taken by the fourth degree Knights of Columbus. The court excluded this on the ground that it was not necessary to disclose the true oath of this order, but that it was sufficient to show that the purported oath was false, and was not the one taken by the members of that order. These witnesses testified that no part of the alleged oath set forth in the information was subscribed to by the members of the fourth degree Knights of Columbus, and no part of same was taken by them; and further, that all those named in the information were members of the order and residing in Canadian county at the time Crane's book was circulated in that jurisdiction. There was no proof offered

contradictory to the facts testified to by witnesses on behalf of the state. Crane himself, although publishing a sworn statement that the matters set forth in his book were true and holding himself out as the author of a document of unimpeachable verity, testified to no facts in support of his statements, and clearly disclosed by his own offer of testimony that his published statements on these propositions were based on hearsay of unworthy origin.

REGRETS INADEQUACY OF PUNISHMENT

"It is to be regretted that the statute does not prescribe imprisonment in the penitentiary as the punishment for this class of crime in order that such characters as this record discloses plaintiff in error to be should receive the judgment which this author in this book says would be proper if his statements are untrue. That they are untrue and false in toto the proof offered in this case overwhelmingly establishes. The writing, publication, and distribution of a book or document containing the matter complained of is libelous per se, and there is no contention made in the brief of counsel for plaintiff in error to the contrary."

"It is remarkable that in this country, where freedom of conscience in religious matters was of the chief basic doctrines upon which the government was founded, people who held themselves forth as possessing even ordinary intelligence would indulge in this character of criminal conduct. There are few, if any, intelligent people who can be duped by that class of writers who indulge in these vilifications and misrepresentations of those who happen to disagree with them in church or fraternal matters."

NO ONE HAS RIGHT TO LIE ABOUT ANOTHER'S RELIGION

"The fundamental law of both the state and the nation guarantees to each individual the right to associate himself with any religious creed of his own selection, and no person of any other faith has the right to interfere with or publish false statements against the individual or organization nor its lawful mode or method of religious worship. Law-abiding citizens and law supporting organizations—church or otherwise—are not given the practice set forth in this information. The purported oath set forth as that of the fourth degree Knights of Columbus would be a discredit to the most anarchistic organization permitted to exist. The charge that members of an honorable organization, secret, religious or otherwise, subscribe to such an oath as that complained of or the doctrines alleged is not tolerable, and is not permitted by the law. The statute was intended to suppress criminality of this character, and its provisions are ample to punish those who have no more respect for themselves, society, or law than to indulge in this unwarranted and illicit business. The law is intended to and does protect the self-respecting law-abiding citizen against these calumnies, whether made against an individual specifically, or a class of individuals collectively."

"The plaintiff in error was properly convicted by the jury."—The Guardian.

THE CAUSE OF HIS REGRETS

One of the regrets recorded by Cardinal Newman was that in his early life he did not properly observe the Lord's Day, recalls the Sacred Heart Review. Writing to a young sister, he reproached himself for having "profaned Sunday," while he was an undergraduate, by "reading newspapers" on that day. We can safely assume that in the school days of the great English churchman the present proportions of the Sunday press were not dreamed of. How much more would the reading matter, prepared especially for the first day of the week in our times, have intruded on the peaceful atmosphere consistent, according to his mind, with the Lord's Day. Even now, a century later, Sunday newspapers still afford cause for regret, but chiefly on the part of those who can't get them. When the voluminous Sunday supplement fails of delivery, "the day seems lost," to use the expression of certain individuals who would probably feel not the least compunction at having neglected to attend Church services the same morning. We can learn many things from the late and great Prince of the Church. His attitude in the above matter points to one of them.

INCREASE IN CATHOLIC COLLEGES

The attendance at Catholic colleges and universities increased from 60,259 in 1890 to 190,278 in 1915, a growth of more than 300% in twenty-five years. Nine of our universities had last year more than 1,000 and several nearly 2,000 students. During the past ten years the number of students at Catholic colleges, including professional and engineering students, has more than doubled. During the same decade the number of students for the different professions increased threefold. Seventeen Catholic institutions now teach courses in engineering. It may surprise our readers very much to learn that the Catholic college enrollment has increased of late years more than twice as fast as the general collegiate enrollment in the United States.—Catholic News.

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