

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

DEATH

"For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall eat a trench about thee—because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." (St. Luke xiii. 33)

The sinful city of Jerusalem, which caused Our Saviour to shed bitter tears and utter these words of warning, led a bad life, having neglected God's grace, having ignored the day of His visitation, the day of mercy, and his spiritual enemies "cast a trench" about him and bring him to despair of God's mercy.

If he had recognized the time of visitation, the time of mercy, if he had listened to the voice of God calling him to repentance, if he had frequently reflected on death, then his life would have been a preparation for death. "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin." (Ecclesiasticus vii. 40)

Death is a punishment of sin. "In what daysoever thou shalt eat of it," says God to our first parents, "thou shalt die the death." (Gen. ii. 17) It is a punishment of sin, it is also a great preservative from sin. "Remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin." If we would but keep ever before us this thought, that we must one day die and render an exact account of our whole lives, of every thought, word, deed and omission, to a Judge Who knows all things, Who receives neither bribes nor excuses, would it not preserve us from falling into grievous sin and running the risk of dying in that state?

The young die as well as the old. Death is the end of life; and, although the young are but beginning life, they too must die when God wills. Those who flatter themselves that they have before them a long career of usefulness, many years of legitimate enjoyment, seldom or never think that before the morrow's sun death may claim them as His own.

Before the glorious orb of day sinks in the distant west, those who do not wish to surround the bright springtime of their lives with the gloomy atmosphere of death, may be wrapped in its cold embrace. For death is everywhere brought home to us. That grim workman is ever in our midst. He is inexorable to the cries of dear friends and the lamentations of fond mothers; he cares not for age nor condition; he strikes down all, both great and small.

The serpent may whisper in your ear, young friend, that although you must one day die, you have many years yet to live; so, enjoy yourself, and towards the end you can repent and prepare for death.

But he is the father of lies, and as he lied to our first parents in Paradise, so he lies to you. You may not live another day. Life is short and best. And the Great Disposer of life and death often takes the young in the freshness of early youth, or the vigor of early manhood or maidenhood, while he allows the old to whom life is a burden to linger for years between life and death.

Then listen not to the tempter whispering "long life." He is but deceiving you as he deceived our first parents in Paradise. But listen to the Church telling us even in our earliest years, when putting the ashes on our foreheads, "Remember man, thou art but dust and unto dust thou shalt return." And listen to the Holy Spirit when He tells you to avoid sin: "Remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin."

Often think of this; think well on it, and it will be well for you. Often imagine that the hour has come—and it surely shall come—the most important hour of your whole life, the hour when you are to bid farewell to everything temporal, when you are to leave father and mother, sister and brother, relations and friends, when you are to bid adieu to everybody and everything you hold most dear.

Only one step, and you are on the broad, boundless ocean of eternity. One step, and you are standing before the Judge of the living and the dead to render an account. The memory of your many sins will then flash vividly before you, and you know not if they have been forgiven. Would you not wish to strip death of half its terrors? You can do this by remembrance of the great preservative from sin. "Remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin." For the terror, "the sting of death is sin."

One of the best resolutions we could form is to devote to God not alone the last days of our lives, when life is scarcely worth the living, but to give Him the freshness of our youth and the strength of our manhood and womanhood; to devote to His service all the energies of our bodies and all the faculties of our souls.

Then, at whatever time God requires us to render an account, He will find us ready and watching. Impress, then, firmly upon your minds: first, that you shall certainly die; secondly, that the hour so decisive, so full of consequences, is not far distant; thirdly, that God gives us ample means of thinking on death as a preservative from sin in the death; of our relatives and playmates; fourthly, that this decisive hour is so uncertain that we may well be always armed and ready for our departure.

These reflections will have a tendency to make us less worldly and more attached to God, Who,

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while everything else changes, remains unchangeable, our good Father and faithful Friend. Death cannot deprive us of Him; but if we are faithful to the end, we shall see Him face to face a single glance of Whom would more than compensate for a thousand years of penance. If we offer Him our whole lives here, all that we are and all that we have, if we continue to the end to do all for His honor and glory, we shall enjoy forever hereafter the full fruition of the beatific vision.

TEMPERANCE WARNING AGAINST INTEMPERANCE

Not only Christ's life and doctrine, but the sound sense of mankind demands that sincere aversion for any vice shall be shown by the conspicuous practice of the contrary virtue. Do you not see the need of thus making war on intemperance? Do you not know how widespread an evil it is? What family is without its drunkard, or at least some one who is in danger of falling into drinking habits? What neighborhood is without its plague spot, the saloon? What community without its steady stream of horror, crime and misery due to drunkenness? The pathway which leads from the saloon to the poor house, from the saloon to the jail, from the saloon to the insane asylum, is well trod and is strewn with unnumbered wrecks of humanity.

Therefore, every family should have its member or members who are conspicuous for the practice of total abstinence. Every neighborhood should have its band of valiant men and women who by their pledge protest publicly against the vice of drunkenness. Every community should have its organized permanent, energetic crusade against the saloon. Courageous men and women are everywhere needed to protest against drunkenness and to labor to suppress it. If you love a happy home practice total abstinence, for it is the most efficacious means of showing your detestation of the family's deadliest foe. If you love the people of God, take the pledge; for drunkenness is the worst enemy the true faith has this day to contend against.

If you have the good of society at heart, touch not the intoxicating glass; for most of the evils we have to deplore in our social and political life are the progeny of this prolific mother vice—intemperance. Every element of Christianity in a good man or woman sharpens their anxiety for the welfare of their brethren. The drunkard is my brother; he needs good example to reform; I have made up my mind to give it to him. "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." (1. St. John iii. 14.) I may be too poor to give money for the reform of drunkards, but I can give what is more precious—good example. The family that cannot benefit by having a total abstainer among its members is hard to find. The parish that is not greatly helped by a total abstinence society is hard to find. It is good to be a total abstainer. "It is good not to eat flesh, and to drink wine, or anything whereby thy brother is offended, or scandalized, or made." (Romans xiv. 21.)

It is not sinful perhaps, for me to drink moderately, but for the drunkard to do so is a deadly peril. If he is going to be saved, he must totally abstain. I will help him to do it by keeping him company in total abstinence. Every one of us needs a friend, patient, edifying, loving. Heavenly Wisdom says: "Woe to him that is alone." (Eccles. iv. 10.) When struggling with any overpowering passion, poor human nature looks for a comrade. The heart cries out in danger or in weakness, "Help me!" Every drunkard in his sober moments cries out, "Help me!" I am determined to answer that cry, for one, am going to help that cry, I shall relapse for want of my help. If he is driven by necessity to take the pledge, I am driven by charity to keep him company in it. "The charity of Christ urges us." (11 Cor. v. 14.)

Scorned and despised, the drunkard needs a friend to share his compulsory abstinence I am that friend. I will pick him from the slough of despond. I will cleanse him and strengthen him; I will speak tender

words of encouragement to him. I will be the drunkard's Good Samaritan. But some one might protest, "I do not need to abstain." Yes, do, for what my brother needs, I need; and any man needs help, then the help he needs is the help I need to give him.—Father Elliot.

REMARKABLE CURE OF RHEUMATISM Cured By "Fruit-a-tives"

AN ENGLISH PROTESTANT'S VIEW OF IRELAND

Harold Begbie, an English Protestant writer, confesses that he has inherited, and declares that his experience of the world has deepened in him, "an almost violent antipathy to the Roman Church." Again and again in his book, "The Happy Irish," by which title is republished in America his "new story of a new Ireland which appeared in England under the title, "The Lady Next Door." Mr. Begbie let this antipathy drop out. He has met, he says many Catholics who seem to him charming, delightful and quite sensible people, and yet his aversion from Rome has remained constant. Despite, however, this inherited and ingrained prejudice against the Catholic Church, Mr. Begbie is highly compliment in his power to the effect which the Catholic Church's teachings have had upon the people of the South of Ireland.

A well-financed campaign of calumny has lately been vigorously conducted against the Catholics of the South of Ireland in the English press. Calumny has been the portion of the Catholic South of Ireland for many years, but the Home Rule question has stirred into greater activity the anti Catholic and anti-nationalist forces, and Irish Catholics have been painted as intolerant monsters at whose hands their Protestant fellow-citizens need expect no mercy under Home Rule. Mr. Begbie went, a prejudiced Protestant as he himself confesses, to visit and investigate the "Lady Next Door," and he says, as the result of his investigations:

In the south, where Catholic influence is supreme, the people are almost enchanting in their sweetness of disposition, entirely admirable in the beauty and contentment of their domestic life, wonderful beyond all other nations in the wholesomeness and sanctity of their chastity. Instead of a lazy, thriftless, discontented, and squalid people—as I had imagined them to be—the Irish of the South won my sympathy and compelled my admiration by qualities the very opposite. Impulsive, loving, family-loving, and warm-hearted, people have largely failed to do, even in our villages, to wit, solved the problem of life. The charm, which every traveller feels in the south of Ireland is the character of the Irish people; and my investigation forced me to the judgment that this character is the culture of Irish Catholicism. My problem therefore lay in squaring the admiration I felt for the qualities of the people with my detestation of the Church which had guarded Irish character from the dawn of history. The problem remains unsolved by Mr. Begbie. He admits he is mistaken about the Catholic Church, so far as its effect on the Irish is concerned. But he still writes as if his judgment of the Church as a whole were sound. We hope Mr. Begbie will go into other Catholic countries and study them and their people as closely as he has studied Ireland and Irish. We believe, if he does so, that he will lose the antipathy to the Church. Meanwhile he should be congratulated for presenting to the people of the English and American picture of the state of things in Ireland north and south. His portrayal of the industrial conditions in Belfast, that boasted city of prosperity, is simply terrible. He shows that the slums of Belfast are utterly unfit for human habitation; that wages are pitifully low, as compared with the rest of the world; that a great army of Christian workers is there in constant service on the poor, and many of the clergy of London either protest against the condition of the masses or publicly deplore the failure of Christianity in this respect. They do not boast. On the other hand, Belfast is small and compact, the city may be explored in a day and two, the poverty is conspicuous at every point, and instead of challenging the unholiness of religion, paid for by these rich sweaters, spend their time in denouncing Catholics in exile in the political principles of Lord Londonderry, and in boasting of their city's prosperity.

It is this blatant hypocrisy of Belfast which Mr. Begbie attacks particularly. There is of course great poverty in the south of Ireland—in the villages and towns which the orange faction points to as proofs of the southern Irishman's inability to manage affairs in a large way; but such poverty is a different thing from the poverty of Belfast. "I was often conscious of a certain envy in my commerce with the peasants of



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Ireland," says Mr. Begbie; "for if their poverty is afflicting, it does not embitter them; it seems to purify and sweeten them; and if their toil is hard, it is at least never out of partnership with hope." Contrast this with what he says of Belfast:

I have never before visited a city where the beauty of life is so completely destroyed as in Belfast. I believe this ugliness is due more than anything else to the false religion which has preached the gospel of money to every class in the community. Everything in Belfast, even the success of church life, is tested by pounds, shillings and pence. Nothing is worth while that does not pay. Presbyterians ministers with liberal minds dare not preach sweetness and light, dare not declare themselves Home Rulers, because it does not pay. Everything, among the preachers and ministers of all the churches and ministers of Belfast who preach the dull ranks of respectability, there is not one who has ever moved a finger to save the children of the streets, to bring the slum landlords to account, or to check the headlong advance of the mammon worshippers. Certainly there is not one, if my informants are correct, who has ever warned the rich patrons of religion in Belfast that a man can not serve God and Mammon.

I would beg the reader to bear in mind that which was said at the beginning of this chapter. Belfast is in some ways uglier and more depressing than any city I have yet visited; but I do not mean to imply for a moment that it occupies a worse position morally and religiously than other centers where money-making is the paramount concern of humanity. It is especially detestable and particularly hateful only because it makes so loud a boast of its Christianity, and is so proud of the rest of Ireland, and appealing to the conscience of England on the ground of religion.

It is not to be denied that Catholic Dublin has "slums" as well as Protestant Belfast—wretched streets of wretched houses which are so atrocious," says Mr. Begbie, "that I think they must long ago have destroyed all virtue in their inhabitants but for the constant vigilance of a ruling priesthood."

Mr. Begbie was lucky enough to meet a living exponent of this constant vigilance of the Church in the person of Father Aloysius of whom he writes most enthusiastically of a "noble saint," a temperance reformer and a student of municipal reform. Mr. Begbie says of this priest:

His conversation showed him to be well acquainted with many movements of social reform in England. I discovered that he is something of an expert in public questions, and believing that it is good to be alive and fighting for the progress of mankind, he would make an excellent member of Parliament, invaluable.

LIQUOR AND TOBACCO HABITS

A. McTAGGART, M.D., C.M., 155 King St. E., Toronto, Canada. References as to Dr. McTaggart's professional standing and personal integrity permitted by: Sir W. R. Meredith, Chief Justice, Toronto; Rev. H. Burdett, D.D., Pres. Victoria College; Rev. J. G. Shearer, B.A., D.D., Secretary Board Moral Reform, Toronto; Rev. J. F. Sweeney, D.D., Bishop of Toronto; Hon. Thomas Cuffey, Senator, Catholic Record, London, Ontario. Dr. McTaggart's vegetable remedies for the liquor and tobacco habits are healthful, safe, inexpensive home treatments. No hypodermic injections, no publicity loss of time from business, and a certain cure. Consultation or correspondence invited.

able on committees and commissions his letter to the Times would receive the most respectful treatment. Mr. Begbie does not seem to have run across the bull-dozing, hectoring, brow-beating, tyrannical priest who has figured so prominently of late in the British Protestant press (already judge the British Protestant people against the Irish Catholics. The Catholic cleric he writes about are all worthy, all doing their best in a quiet way to better the condition of their people temporarily as well as spiritually, but all insisting upon the spiritual motive underlying all their efforts toward good. He found no intolerance in Ireland save among those who clamor loudly about the possible intolerance of their Catholic neighbors. In the south of Ireland with Catholics overwhelmingly in the majority he found Protestant Irishmen respected and even beloved by their Catholic fellow-citizens. He found Protestants who were willing to testify to this; and he gives as follows what one such Protestant said:

As for Catholic intolerance, that is the purest moonshine. I do not know anything that more disgraces me with our Protestants than their shameful use of this detestable invention. I am in excuse for you in England, but none for Protestants in Ireland. You in England might imagine the Catholics would try to pay off old scores under Home Rule, but the Protestants here know perfectly well that the Catholics are far more charitable, far more tolerant, far more courteous and well-behaved than themselves. When they talk about Catholic intolerance, they give us no grounds for uneasiness. I don't know how theologians would classify such statements but, in business we should call them lies.

All this, of course, is an old story to Catholics who know that their Church teaches them to deal honestly and charitably with all men regardless of differences in religion; but it is a pleasure to find it acknowledged, as it is over and over again, in this book of Mr. Begbie's.—Sacred Heart Review.

ANSWERING THE QUESTION

Answering the question: "Do you think Socialism has gained ground?" Father Bernard Vaughan said: "I think Socialism always and everywhere is coming in like a tide, and if you tell me we don't notice it, the reason is because it is so ubiquitous. I think that Socialists have done two great things for us; that we owe a debt of gratitude to Socialists first, for setting us to work to work with sturdy enthusiasm and self-disinterestedness in a cause; and, secondly, they have put us under an obligation by revealing to the world itself many social sores, which, but for them, might have been kept hidden away from the public. Personally, I have great sympathy with Socialists, but I do not believe in their scheme of action."

THE CHURCH IN HOLLAND

The information presented in an article on the Church in Holland published in the recent issue of the London Tablet certainly bears out the writer's contention that perhaps no other Protestant country affords a more encouraging illustration of faithful Catholic zeal can accomplish. According to the last census, the faithful in Holland numbers 2,053,021, which is twice as many as there were a century ago. Of course the increase has been much greater in recent years—since the restoration of the hierarchy. It is estimated that between 1853 and 1912 nearly 1,000 churches have been erected or enlarged. And this activity in material advancement has been matched by a similar progress in devotional, charitable, and social work. As an illustration of the first, it may be mentioned that in the diocese of Haarlem the annual number of Communions has risen from 2,588,832 in 1887 to 9,237,925 in 1912. Among charitable works, that of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is one of the most popular. The Societies for the Propagation of the Faith and of the Holy Infancy are also thriving, and the prolific fraternal associations for young men, and for the assistance of soldiers and sailors and refugees, 80 hospitals and sanatoria, deaf and dumb institutions, etc. Since 1906 no fewer than 10 houses for retreats have been opened, and the membership of the Confraternity of the Holy Family stands at 74,972 men and 23,891 women. The chief organization for Catholics is provided by a popular League, which has in the five dioceses 186 sections, with a total membership of over 40,000. To it are due the annual diocesan congresses, clubs, etc., and it has been mentioned that in other organizations—the Catholic Syndical Bureau, with nearly 30,000 workmen under its direction; the Agricultural League, with a membership of 65,000; and even greater still an organization called Catholic Social Action, with 100,000 members.

There are 920 Catholic elementary schools, with an attendance of 184,907 children. This is a large number for so small a country, yet it would no doubt be much larger but for the fact that in the South at many of the public schools the attendance is preponderantly Catholic. In the matter of secondary education the advance has been less, partly from a lack of appreciation of its necessity, and partly from the fear of the cost, but there are 5 important schools at Rolduc, Maastricht, Ruremonde,

Nimeguen, and Amsterdam; two others with a two instead of a five years' course, and Catholic secondary classes in six other large towns. We learn from the London Tablet that several of the religious communities, male and female, expelled from France and Portugal have met with much success in Holland. The flourishing institution at Heerle-

Maastricht conducted by the Fathers of the Sacred Heart, was made the subject of a surprise visit some time ago by the Minister of Justice, M. Ort, who was accompanied by 2 inspectors. They saw everything and expressed not only satisfaction, but delight with the institution and how way it is being carried on.—Ave Maria.

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