

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. F. FERRER
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

"He spoke right." (Mark vii, 35)
Our Lord conferred a great benefit upon the man who was deaf and dumb, by opening his ears and loosing the string of his tongue; and the multitude that witnessed the miracle cried out: "He hath done all things well; He hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

We may ask whether these people applied their own words to themselves, and recognized what great blessings speech and hearing are to man. They rejoiced that the man who was cured could articulate and pronounce the various sounds and words clearly; but did they consider that it is not enough to have the gift of speech, but that we ought to use that gift properly? Speech is given us by God, but unhappily none of His other benefits are more frequently misused. Men are only too apt to say what is wrong, and disregard our Lord's solemn warning that we shall have to give account of every idle word.

Of all the sins of the tongue, none is commoner than lying. Not only to the deaf and dumb whom Christ healed, did He give power to speak right, but He will give it to us also, if we are faithful to Him, and this power is indispensable to our salvation. Holy Scripture contains many exhortations to truthfulness, and many warnings against lying, besides several instances of the disastrous effects of falsehood. A man who lies, it may be said, injures no one so much as the person uttering it; it may mislead others, but it most injures the liar himself, for no other sin so quickly destroys a man's character as the vice of lying. It degrades the soul to all that is sacred and noble, and lays the foundation of a low, mean way of thinking. How can love of God exist in the soul of a liar, who knows that his lies render him absolutely unlike the God of all truth? How can a liar be charitable towards his neighbor, when in his heart and on his lips falsehood and deceit have their abode? Even if a liar does not actually injure one's neighbor, some amount of scorn of the person deceived is always present in the heart of the liar, and thus ridicule and contempt are hidden under an outward semblance of friendship. What an abominable character! When once the habit of lying is firmly rooted in a heart, all its consequences appear one after another; and a cunning, hypocritical, deceitful disposition is formed, which is an obstacle to all better development of character. A liar, as I have said, injures himself; what is his object in telling a lie? As a rule he is trying to avoid some blame or correction, or to secure praise for what he has not done, and for some virtue that he does not possess. If his lie is believed, he escapes the censure that he dreaded, and receives the praise that he sought. But what good does he derive from it? Would it not have been better for him to accept the reproof, and amend his ways, than to have the praise, but to be scorned on really to deserve it? Truth might have cost him something, but its fruits would have been sweeter than those of a lie.

A liar injures himself by losing the respect of his fellow men. A man must have sunk very low before he ceases to care for this respect; why, then, does he risk the loss of it by telling lies? Who can possibly feel much esteem for a liar? Christian charity may make us, out of compassion for him, conceal the poor opinion that we really have of him, but at the bottom of our hearts we all know that a liar deserves contempt. When we cease to respect a man, we cease also to trust him, for how can we confide in one whose words may be true or false, we know not which?

If we need advice, the last person to whom we shall apply is a liar, for how can we be sure that he is not telling us to do the exact opposite of what he recognizes as proper? And should the liar himself need counsel, who can give it him? Is it possible to advise a man, who may not have given us all the information requisite to enable us to form an opinion regarding his difficulties? May he not be seeking advice simply in order to ridicule it or make a bad use of it?

In the same way when a liar asks help, we often doubt whether his need is genuine, and thus his lies check the stream of Christian charity. We must acknowledge that nothing is so great a hindrance to progress in this world as lying. The world is corrupt and often laughs at simple honesty and truthfulness, but nevertheless everyone likes to have honest, straightforward people about him. Who would care to have in his house, or to associate with, persons whom he can not trust not to misrepresent all that goes on in his household, and not to rob him and his family of that good reputation that is the best foundation of temporal happiness? We all try to avoid liars, for they often do more harm than the thieves, who deprive us only of our goods, whilst liars take away our honor. A liar causes confusion in houses and families, and sows distrust between those who previously had full confidence in one another. He tells one what the other is supposed to have said and done, until he has fanned a flame of discord, where harmony used to reign. Even in society a liar is hated, and when he is found out, everyone shuns him, or, if it is impossible actually to avoid him, we do so mentally, by being on our guard,

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holding aloof from him and showing so much caution in our dealings with him as to prove our want of confidence in him. How true are the words of Holy Scripture: "The mouth that belieth, killeth the soul" (Wisd. i, 11). The liar injures himself in time and in eternity; therefore you should resolve firmly always to speak right, always to adhere to the truth and avoid lying, as if it were a serpent, ready to kill whoever touches it. If you are faithful to the truth, you will be faithful to Jesus, who is all Truth, and a heart loyal to Him is fruitful in every kind of virtue, none of which can flourish in a lying soul. The heart of the honest and upright has a claim to the everlasting kingdom of all truth and purity. Amen.

TEMPERANCE

DIFFERENCE SEEN THE MORNING AFTER

"He decided to stop drinking, and that meant avoiding the club. He found it very hard at first and very lonely, but kept at it. Soon he perceived a new zest in business, a recurrence of grasp in regard to problems, a better feeling all around. He ended by saying that even now he feels lonely at times, thinks of the good fellows at the club laughing over their cocktails and highballs in the evening, but he added, and I recall the words well: 'I have all those fellows lashed to the mast the next morning.' Now, here is what may be called the 'punch' of the argument. It will go home to any man who has serious work in life to do; it means money and many other things—the drinkers lashed to the mast' in the morning."

Saturday Evening Post.
"MAMMA, HE ISN'T DRUNK!"
While spending an hour or two with a friend one afternoon, a little incident occurred which seemed to me the strongest and most forcible argument for temperance I had ever heard.

The home was a comfortable one and well kept by a good and careful wife. But the shadow which the intemperance of the husband was casting over it was blighting the lives of the otherwise happy mother and two bright little children. The oldest, a boy of about eight years, was of a sensitive, nervous disposition, and loved his parents devotedly. Looking up to his father to share in all the little joys and sorrows of his child life.

Little Workers Do Big Work with Old Dutch Pans and Pots Cleaned in a Jiffy

down every few minutes and look down the street in the direction from which his father would come. The memory of that little eager, anxious face pressed against the window pane is often with me. It was a slight to bring tears to the eyes of the most hardened. Its expression said as plainly as words: Will he come? Will he meet me with that loving fatherly kiss while he takes me by the hand, or will he thrust me aside with angry words?

As I was bidding his mother good-bye the child suddenly sprang from the window, his face lit up with gladness, and excitedly clapping his hands cried out joyfully as he ran to his mother: "Oh, mamma! He isn't drunk." And without cap or jacket—for the evening was cool, he rushed out as I opened the door, and down the street to meet his well-beloved papa, a thing he would not dare do had his father been drinking.

A father who would continue to grieve the tender heart of his loving child is not worthy to be called a man.—Elizabeth Malcolm in Our Young People.

PROBLEM OF LIFE

The solution of man's destiny is one of the most serious and important questions of man's life. Yet how few concern themselves about the truth in religious matters. Religion, one of the prime factors of man's history, is partly ignored. The great bulk of mankind simply take matters as they come. Guided by passion and the senses, they follow their inclinations, whenever a suitable opportunity presents itself. Pain and pleasure, not reason, principle and conscience, become their guiding star through life. Some unforeseen event in life may give a check to this thoughtless way of life. They reflect on this visible world, and the part they are playing in it. All is mystery.

The explanations given to solve the problem of life are numerous; but nearly all are in line with man's thoughts, environments, and passions. They think by a set rule, adjusting thoughts and actions by what is seen in the outside world. Religion is judged, not on its merits, but by the actions of its members. This is a very shallow way of judging. The yard measure, as applied to religion, is, in most instances, incorrect, and that principally because "it is human that errs."

Christianity, rightly interpreted, solves the all-absorbing question—the problem of life—in the crucifixion of the Son of God. "For in the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, by the Holy Ghost, offered Himself once for all, cleanse our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God?" Heb. ix. 13-14. Herein is the solution of the great question—the problem of life—viz., it will be found in the crucifixion of the Son of God.

Gazing on the Cross, and its victim, a most valuable lesson regarding this visible world may be learned. Honors, dignities, wealth, pleasures, and the pride of life are measured according to their true value. It reconciles the true and the false, the harmonious and the discordant, and teaches man how to live, how to use the world, what to desire and hope.

Beneath the shadow of the Cross all are on an equality. The birth of some royal dignitary is heralded. The daily press tell of the pomp that surrounds his cradle, and of the rich treasures placed at his feet. To what purpose? To honor the Child of Man. It is, indeed, valiant. But what is its worth? With uplifted eyes fixed on the Cross and its victim, a ready answer will be found.

During the past year we have been daily reading of the havoc made by human lives in Europe. National jealousies and greed of wealth and power have led to the slaughter of millions of brave soldiers. Who is responsible for the yearnings of the ambitious, and the intrigues of the crafty? What has been the result? Death and its measure will be the death of the world. To it all is subservient. In it is the center and interpretation of all; for Jesus lifted on the Cross draws all man and all things unto Himself.

To this view of life, furnished by the Cross, is opposed that of the world and passion. Man left to himself naturally seeks the latter, and what he craves the world offers. Then with his tendency and capacity for such enjoyment and the world supplying the means, why suppress those feelings and take, as a substitute, the Cross, an entirely different road in the pathway of life? That difficulty found its solution in Paradise. Adam and Eve saw that the fruit of the forbidden tree was good food, and therefore to be desired. They tasted the same, and the result was woe and misery, and ultimately death. The vision of the Cross is gloomy and sorrowful, as compared with the gaudy and attractive appearance. But the difference is superficial, and the surface always presents its best and brightest appearance. The doctrine of the Cross is concealed from human gaze. When the veil is removed the senses, if not trained to subjection, will revolt at its first sight. Yet this is the true doctrine and the only solution of the problem of life. Truth is rarely found on the surface. It lies deep down.

"Error, like straw, upon the surface flows. He who would seek for pearls must dive below." As it is with truth, so it is with the soul in which it is securely planted. It becomes the guiding principle of a truly religious life, but is carefully hidden from the vulgar gaze, and this in accordance with the command of the Good Master, Who tells persons that fast "to anoint their heads and wash their face, to appear cheerful, so that their sorrow burned deep in their hearts be known only to God."

"Physically considered, human nature is good. So is all creation, since every creature of a perfect and good Creator must be good. Morally, human nature is not so as was fully demonstrated in Paradise. From the very beginning man's natural direction is away from God, i. e., from the end which man is bound at all times to seek, and try to attain. Man, in seeking his own pleasure, cannot serve God, since "no one can serve two masters." Man's sensitive nature must be subjected to his rational; an impossibility unless man, by the grace of God, unceasingly fights; for the carnal mind is not, and cannot be subject to the law of God. In the battle of life there can be no compromise. The Cross, the emblem of man's salvation, must be the standard under which we fight. Being the antithesis of man's natural proclivities, it may cause wounds, but from those wounds issue the balm which heals. If there be sorrow at what is sure to end in joy, the real happiness, the anticipation of which is the only solution of the problem of life.—Intermountain Catholic.

DISCIPLINE AND EDUCATION

The world is shocked at times by the revelations of criminality among men of force, genius and power. Frequently the daily press carries the story of misdeeds by men whose education, wealth and social position lead public interest to the matter. These incidents, somewhat rare when considered in relation to the total population, do much to discredit secular education as a foundation for morality, and emphasize the necessity of education along lines not intended to develop the earning capacity of the individual. It is all very well to prepare each individual for the "battle of life"—for earning a livelihood by honest work. The weakness of the system is occasionally displayed by the wrongdoings of persons whose preparation has been thorough, whose education is complete, according to the ethical standard of certain schools.

If the life story could be told of those individuals whose failings furnish the sensations for the daily press, it is more than likely that the one thing most needed to make life complete has been neglected in their education. They no doubt have force, vigor, genius, enthusiasm, and other attributes which make for success, but they are deficient in self-control and discipline. Lacking these essential elements, they make the blunder that is their undoing, and all their happiness is clouded and obscured by the clouds that will not blow away. There may be some other means of acquiring self-control, of strengthening one's moral self, of gaining discipline and self-denial, but as far as we have been able to observe, the Christian religion alone stands as the bulwark of true education against those forces which conspire to wreck the world. It requires more than a broad grasp of human affairs to make a life; strength of character is not acquired through ability to marshal a long array of facts. If ever the world was in crying need of men with self-control, surely that time is now.—Intermountain Catholic.

A SPECIMEN OF "ROMAN NEWS"

On more than one occasion we have warned our readers against placing credence in the daily press cablegrams from Rome, dealing with Catholic matters. It is always safe to take them with a very big grain of salt. The latest specimen of the lies cabled from the Eternal City is one in which the Holy Father, the Archbishop of Milwaukee, the Archbishop of Cincinnati and the Bishop of Toledo, O., figure. The Archbishops and the Bishop are represented as appealing to the Pope, urging his intervention to prevent the war spreading to America and suggesting the mediation of the Holy See with the object of preventing the rupture in German-American relations." The Pope is quoted as saying, in reply to these suggestions, that reliance should be placed on the wisdom of President Wilson, whose peaceful intentions are well known to the Holy See. The cablegram winds up with the statement that "the Pope strongly urged upon German-Americans loyalty to their adopted country." The whole thing is a clumsy forgery concocted for the purpose of maligning German-American Catholics, who indirectly are represented as being disloyal to the United States because, forsooth, they do not take a pro-British view of the present war!

The lying cablegram with which we are dealing appeared originally in the London Daily News. It was promptly cabled across the Atlantic and laid before millions of readers of the American dailies in all the cities, towns and villages that stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It

is a sample of the facility with which concoctors of lies can spread them over the world, provided they have control of the means of communication as has the country in whose interests this lie we are writing of was hatched.

It appeared in the American press on July 12. On the same day the Archbishop of Milwaukee exposed its character as is shown by the following press dispatch: "Milwaukee, July 12.—Archbishop Messmer denies that Catholic prelates have appealed to the Pope for intervention to prevent the United States from entering the war."

With similar emphasis the Bishop of Toledo denied that there was any truth in the London Daily News dispatch. Here is the way the lie is branded by him: "Toledo, July 12.—Bishop Schrembs to day denounced the report that he, with Archbishop Moeller, of Cincinnati, and Archbishop Messmer, of Milwaukee, had asked the Pope to use his offices to prevent war between Germany and the United States. 'There is not the slightest foundation for such a report,' he said.

Unfortunately all the numerous lies which have been cabled from Rome and which have found their way into American newspapers, have not been exposed as quickly and as effectively as has been the one named

by the Archbishop of Milwaukee and the Bishop of Toledo.—New York Freeman's Journal.

TEMPERANCE AT AGRA

St. Peter's College, Agra, is following in the movement at the head of which His Majesty the King Emperor has unselfishly placed himself. The Rector has started what we believe to be an entirely new venture in the schools, as far as India is concerned, by inaugurating among his pupils "The League of the Cross," and giving the pledge to children. That such a movement is calculated to do good needs no proof; those who wisely become total abstainers in their youth are in later years saved from the curse of drink and its awful consequences. We draw the attention of our schools to that excellent move. We cannot believe that a single parent could raise any objection to the powerful inducement which the League may offer, especially once the children leave school. The Formula of Pledge alone would dispel all possible objections. "I promise," it says, "with the assistance of God to abstain from all intoxicating liquors, except as used medicinally by order of a physician for the period of my life, as much as possible, being advised and example, to prevent intemperance in others."

Of course, it will be necessary to keep up the interest by meetings or addresses, etc., according to circumstances; but this is easily done.—Catholic Herald of India.

HOLY COMMUNION

Even one Communion here and now, bringing to you the precious gift of grace, will have an effect in this moment leaving some star in the sky. That ray will not be seen for years, but some day your eyes or the eyes of others will respond to that ray and enjoy its brightness. So every act of love or worship of the Blessed Sacrament imparts to your souls a splendor which will light up your minds and wills for eternity, flood with its effluence your risen bodies and unfold to you in clearer brilliancy the entrancing vision of the Most High.—F. F. Donnelly, S. J.

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