

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

THE ACCEPTABLE TIME

The time to serve God is now, and the place to serve God is right here. Such, brethren, is the lesson of New Year's Day. This day is the starting-point of the whole year, and we should appreciate that the day itself, the present time, is of greater value than the past and the future.

Now, many a one says: "I cannot be as good a Christian as I should wish because I am too busy just now." So you see he takes it out in good wishes by saying, "I wish I could be a good Christian."

But somebody might insist: Father, that is all true, and yet what I say is true. I am too busy to attend to my religious duties, and I cannot help it. My occupations force themselves upon me. I must work as I do, or I and my family will suffer.

The time to serve God is now, and the place is right here. That is the principle upon which our Sunday school teachers act. They are busy, industrious young men and women.

LEST ANGELS AVENGE OUR NEGLIGENCE

Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament has always been pre-eminent in the Church. Other devotions may be popular at certain periods and in certain places, but this is a devotion of every age, of every clime and of every race.

When the shadow of the Cross hung over Him, He bequeathed to the human race His last and greatest legacy, which would preserve until the end of time the memory of Himself.

The Holy Eucharist is the consummation and crowning of all His gifts. It is both Sacrament and sacrifice. Saint Alphonsus tells us that God Himself cannot allow an action to be performed which is holier and grander than the Mass.

be," says Pope Urban VIII, "in human affairs anything which is plainly Divine and which, if the citizens of Heaven could at all envy, might make them envious, that evidently is the ever Blessed Sacrifice of the Mass, by the benefits of which men in a certain sense possess Heaven on earth, while they hold before their eyes and touch with their hands the very Creator of Heaven and earth."

Manifold are the ends to which we can apply this stupendous sacrifice. We owe God a number of debts. We owe Him a debt of adoration because He is our Creator and Sovereign Lord; a debt of gratitude because of our manifold and repeated offenses against Him; a debt of petition to obtain the necessary helps for our welfare here and hereafter.

The Mass is the center of Catholic worship. It is the priceless treasure of the priest, it is the joy and consolation of the devout laity. Privileged indeed are those Catholics who live within easy walking distance of the church and can assist not only on Sundays and Holydays but on every morning of the year.

The merits of the Mass can be gained for ourselves or they can be applied to others. During this month of November countless Masses are being offered for the relief of the poor souls in Purgatory, countless thousands of devout Catholics the world over are supplicating Heaven for themselves and for their dear ones at the Holy Sacrifice.

At this critical time devotion to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament will fill the void created in the hearts of men by war and suffering. It will interpret the true principles of life, and detach men's souls from the things of earth and center them on their one true home which is in Heaven.—The Pilot.

HATING GERMANS

Among the encouraging signs of retreating sanity it is delightful to find newspapers in England and America protesting against the continued hatred of Germans. The New Statesman, of London, has recently had a most interesting article protesting against further insistence upon hating Germans as a duty of true Englishmen.

The New Statesman maintains that hating is not only a very unlovely attitude, but it is a very painful affliction. It admits that under the heat of passion and in the wild delirium of War, hatred may be an almost irresistible impulse, and thus easily appear as a satisfaction and an indulgence. As such times it may take on the appearance of heroic virtue, and its votaries may appear as veritable angels of light.

The Brooklyn Eagle and The Springfield Republican have been saying some admirable things about the absurdity of continuing our hatred of the Germans. They base their opinions on reasons quite different from those given by The New Statesman.

It is about time for all of us to become sane enough to realize that hatred of one's neighbor is not consistent with Christian principles. True as it may be that we are justified in hating iniquity and the workers of iniquity so far as they are such, there is no justification for hating even the guilty if they have ceased their iniquities and repented of their offenses.

When the shadow of the Cross hung over Him, He bequeathed to the human race His last and greatest legacy, which would preserve until the end of time the memory of Himself.

Most of us that are not feeling the immediate sting of wrongs against our country are hungering for peace. There is no sentiment deeper than this longing for peace. We pray that it may be a permanent peace. But the world is still full of War and rumors of War. We even fear that we are planting the seeds of greater wars in our every effort at making peace.

has been strengthened. It is less with Christ everywhere—Christ, their all sufficient, everlasting portion, to make up to them, both here and hereafter, all they suffer, all they dare, for His Name's sake?

THE OLD YEAR'S BLESSING

I am facing from you, but one draweth near, Called the Angel-guardian of the coming year, If my gifts and graces coldly you forget, Let the New Year's Angel bless and crown them yet.

For we work together; he and I are one: Let him and I perfect all I leave undone. If I gave you sickness; if I brought you care; Let him make one Patient and the other Prayer.

Where I brought you sorrow, through his care at length, It may rise triumphant into future strength, I gave health and leisure, skill to dream and plan; Let him make them nobler—work for God and man.

—ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER

FAITH IN PURGATORY IS APPROVED BY NON-CATHOLIC CLERGY

ANCIENT BELIEF OF GOD'S CHURCH IS ONE OF HOLY COMMON SENSE SAYS A PROTESTANT MINISTER

Defense of the theory that provides between heaven and hell an intermediate state for the purging of sin-stained souls was made by Rev. H. Page Dyer in a sermon in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Philadelphia, recently, according to a report in the Record of that city.

"Almost everybody," he said, "believes there is a heaven, but there is a diversity of thought as to when the saved shall reach there. Of course it is evident that the bodies of all the saved will be reunited to their souls at the time of the resurrection for not until then will they have arisen from their graves. But what about the entrance of the souls into heaven? The Protestant belief is that every soul that does not go to hell goes to heaven at the moment of death. One difficulty about this is that it takes no account of the quality or character of a man's mode of life.

"The ancient belief of God's Church is one of holy common sense. Few souls are so pure that they are fit for heaven, where nothing that is defiled may enter. And yet there are many millions of people who are too good to go to hell. This vast body of immortal beings will at death go neither to heaven nor to hell, but to an intermediate state, a sort of vestibule to heaven, in an antechamber, where their stains will be removed, and where a divine process of purification is mercifully provided by Almighty God."—New World.

PERVERTING THE SCRIPTURE

There is classic authority that Satan can quote scripture to his own purpose. The latest illustration of how holy writ may be perverted to furnish credentials to a false creed is supplied by Conan Doyle in the current Hearst Magazine. It may be known to the reader that the creator of Sherlock Holmes has lately given up the investigation of purely mundane mysteries that he may give his whole attention to the solution of psychic problems. It may also be recalled that this author once professed the faith to which we cling and that his training was received from those educators whom Senator Aschurst recently praised in the United States Senate as the best teachers in the world—the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. Incidentally in the present article Mr. Doyle pays them the tribute of a laudatory paragraph in which he brushes aside the accusations of casuistry and intrigue which most outsiders love to lodge against the Jesuits.

has been strengthened. It is less with Christ everywhere—Christ, their all sufficient, everlasting portion, to make up to them, both here and hereafter, all they suffer, all they dare, for His Name's sake?

Most of the readers may be surprised to hear that Christ was a great medium, possibly the greatest of the inhabitants of this lower with the residents on some higher planet. When Christ groaned as He was about to raise Lazarus to life the spiritualist is not amazed since every medium groans when some particularly difficult task must be performed. As He chose His apostles it was not because of the reasons that tradition has handed down, but because He recognized that these men were endowed with strong psychic powers which would enable them to continue His spiritualistic activities when He had departed life.

When the disciples were gathered in the upper chamber on Pentecost morn they were in accord, that is to say, they had created an atmosphere conducive to and provocative of the coming of the "spirit," a condition which must be created in all those seances where great manifestations occur. The mighty wind and the tongues of fire are only early anticipations of what occurs frequently at the present hour since invariably such appearances are preceded by kind of wind or disturbance of the air in the meeting place which often causes papers to be blown from desks on which they repose.

It is needless to follow the several applications of texts and incidents, culled from the sacred page, by which one who could not accept the work of God in its purity seeks to justify himself for substituting the puerilities of an interpretation which he must know to be false. It is a modern illustration of the words of Paul, the handing over to shameful vice those that deny the natural craving implanted in the heart of man. Not possibly in the strictly moral order, but in the intellectual sense, those who rear themselves conceitedly as judges above the powers which Christ constituted to be the authoritative tribunal of interpretation are deprived of the supernatural aids to belief and are condemned to wander in all the silly by-paths of discreditable superstitions. One need not be an authority on the much mooted subject of spiritualistic manifestations to determine how feeble is the argument which would take simple words of scripture and by extravagant distortion seek to make them bolster a cult with which the widest lights of imagination cannot connect the references. It is only another case of the wish being father to the thought. For Mr. Doyle's supernatural faith has failed, that is to say, the faith of his early upbringing. In vanity he identifies himself with the entire Christian body and declares that the faith has failed throughout the world. Inconsistently he accepts the revelation upon which that faith was reared and grounded to recommend his latest spiritualist meddling, with what consolation to himself time will tell, or perhaps another and more modern religious fad may decide.—F. in The Guardian.

THE LAST HOUR OF THE OLD YEAR

It is certainly a fine old custom, this observed in Rome these many centuries of gathering in the chief churches of the Eternal City during the last hour or so of the dying year to chant the Te Deum in thanksgiving for the favors received from the Almighty during the last twelve months. Like most customs in Rome this is one to which the people, rich and poor, in lofty and in modest stations, cling tenaciously; for all flock to perform what their forefathers taught them to be an act which common gratitude demanded from them. Nor do these vast crowds (you can scarcely breathe in the closely packed congregations, even though all are standing) leave the singing of the grand hymn of St. Ambrose to the clergy and the choir. They take up every alternate verse and singing it right to the end without the aid of a book, send a huge volume of melody out into the square and the streets. On such occasions one truly realizes that he lives in the center of Christendom—the Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament.

TRIBUTE TO CARDINAL

DR. CADMAN EXTOLLS PRIMATE OF BELGIUM

Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, speaking at the Bedford, New York, Branch of the Y. M. C. A., made the following reference to Cardinal Mercier:

"It is palpable that names are now carried abroad which five years ago were comparatively unknown. Who for example, had then heard of Marshal Foch, Field Marshal Haig, Admiral Beatty, Marshal Petain, Marshal Joffre, Field Marshal Allenby, Herbert Hoover, General Pershing and Admiral Sims, outside their immediate localities? Cardinal Mercier was known to churchmen of the Roman Catholic and Protestant persuasions as an erudite Christian philosopher and an able apologist. But the undoubted prince of the people, the shepherd who did not fly when the flock was smitten, who manfully withstood a haughty foe that dared not to lay its crimsoned hand on him, defenseless though he seemed to be—who among us knew that Mercier for what he really is? None! No, not even his nearest colleagues and compatriots. He is distinguished from the general body of churchmen, great or small, as the shining exemplar of those imperishable attributes which adorn the anointed servant of God and of the race. The depositum fidei in him overcame the most formidable engine of destruction which man's iniquitous energies have invented. No Christian has to despair of Christianity so long, as it produces the apostolic type to which Cardinal Mercier belongs."

"THE APOSTOLICAL CHRISTIAN" OF TODAY

In a well known sermon preached two years before he became a Catholic, Newman, it will be remembered, first described by the adroit use of numerous texts from Holy Writ the most striking characteristics of "The Apostolical Christian," namely his piety, his unworshipfulness and his spirit of joy, and then the preacher, to the astonishment, no doubt, of his Protestant hearers solemnly added: "This model of a Christian, though not commanding your literal imitation, still is it not the very model which has been fulfilled in others in every age since the New Testament was written? You will ask me in whom? I am loth to say; I have reason to ask you to be honest and candid; for so it is, as if from consciousness of the fact and dislike to have it urged upon us, we and our forefathers have been accustomed to scorn and ridicule these faithful, obedient persons, and in Our Saviour's very words, to "cast out their name as evil, for the Son of man's sake." But, if the truth must be spoken, what are the humble monk, and the holy nun, and other regulars, as they are called by Christians after the very pattern given us in Scripture? What have they done but this—perpetuate in the world of Christianity of the Bible? Did Our Saviour come on earth suddenly, as He will one day visit it, in whom would he see the features of the Christians whom He and His Apostles left behind them, but in them? Who but these give up home and friends, wealth and ease, good name and liberty of will, for the Kingdom of Heaven? Where shall we find the image of St. Paul, or St. Peter, or St. John, or of Mary the Mother of Mark, or of Philip's daughters, but in those who whether they remain in seclusion, or are sent over the earth, have calm faces, and sweet plaintive voices and spare frames, and gentle manners, and hearts weaned from the world, and wills subdued; and for their neediness meet with insult, and for their purity with slander, and for their gravity with suspicion, and for

DISCUSS POST-WAR RELIGION IN FRANCE

France will be the last nation to go Bolshevik, declared William Graves Sharp, formerly United States Ambassador to France, speaking at the Madison Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, Manhattan.

"The result of the election held in France, the first since the declaration of War, may bring most important consequences," Mr. Sharp said. "But because of her religious impulses and inherent conservatism, I look for no danger from the radicalism and conservatism."

Mr. Sharp suggested, however, that owing to the valiant work in the War by the priests there was a great question whether the Church, separated from the State twenty years ago, had not entered into harmonious relations with the State again.

"No matter what is said of France," he said, "she is an intensely religious and moral nation. Without her deep-seated religious convictions France could not have sustained herself during the War. We all know the antipathy felt for the Church before the War, but the bravery of her churchmen has greatly restored the Church in the eyes of the Government. The fires of patriotism and of religion burned as one during the War."

In line with this, Mr. Sharp cited instance after instance of the religious attitude of the great men of France. Marshal Foch, he said, never started a day without worship, whether in Paris or at the front. The same held true of General Castelnau and members of the Cabinet and the Chamber of Deputies.

Even Premier Clemenceau, who, Mr. Sharp said, never had been known for his love of the Church, had occasioned much speculation when on a visit to Alsace in December, 1918, he heartily returned the embraces of his sister, a nun, on a chance meeting in the street.

The thing that most profoundly impressed him during the entire War, Mr. Sharp said, was the worship by men in equal numbers with women in all the churches of France. The cure for present day evils, he said, lies in a capitalization of the spirit shown in the cause of liberty and a spiritualization of the masses.—Catholic Standard and Times.

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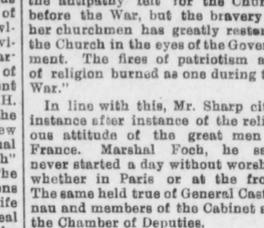
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