

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

"A sower went to sow his seed." (Luke viii, 5)
When a very great multitude was gathered together and hastened out of the cities unto Him, He spoke by a similitude. Very many people assembled to hear Jesus, brought no doubt by various motives. Some came out of mere curiosity, so as to be able to say: "I have heard Him"—probably these were few whose hearts were eager to receive His teaching, and the parable that He uttered shows this to have been the case.

Jesus looked at all the crowd, but an outward glance did not have much effect; then He looked into them all, and all their hearts lay bare and open before Him as He began to speak, to teach them how these hearts should appear and how they should not appear when the word of God was preached to them.

Your hearts, too, lie open in our Lord's sight. You may be able to hide from men how much or how little you care for the salvation of your souls, but you can conceal nothing from Jesus. You may impress men with an idea that you are deeply interested in the things of God, but you cannot deceive God. You may mislead men by a merely respectable, orderly way of life, devoid of all inward love and fervor, but your appearance, looks and manners are nothing to our Lord. Who cares only for your hearts and not the outward husk, as is, were, of your hearts, but their inmost centre. We may describe the outward husk or feelings, which appear to be good, gentle and pious, but, like the apple of Sodom, often contain nothing but repulsive dust and ashes. The centre of the heart is the will, which should be firm and steadfast, ready for any conflict and any suffering for the sake of what is right. This is what our Lord sees, and He found it in very few of the multitude that followed Him.

We are but few, would that. He could find such a good will in every one of us, few as we are! May the seed of the word of God, sown by the Divine Sower, not remain without fruit in our hearts! "The sower went out to sow his seed, and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it." Our Lord Himself explained this parable:

"The seed is the word of God, and they by the wayside are they that hear, and the devil cometh and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing, they would be saved." Our Divine Master speaks of the word of God as seed, it is not yet fruit. The seed requires labor on the part of men and God's blessing before it can grow, blossom and bear fruit. Much toil and exertion are necessary before God's word can produce in us true piety, and practical, living Christianity. It is not enough merely to hear and know God's word. The misleading argument: "I have learned my religion"—is worthless; we must be able to say as to: "I have practised it by self-denial, and wholesome severity towards myself."

Why do so many people learn our holy religion, and yet possess so little real religion? At school they sit and listen, they go to church and hear sermons, and in the confessional they receive good advice. They talk about pious subjects, they read good books; they romance about supernatural things, but their way of life remains unaffected by all this. They take no pains to practice their religion, nor to make the seed of God's word bear fruit. Our Lord referred to those who hear, but do not practice what they hear, in the third part of the parable, where He compares their hearts with a much trodden path, where the seed is trampled down and carried away by the birds. I teach and preach, and scatter the seed of God's word in the name of Christ; but what is the use of my speaking to you, if your hearts are set only on earthly desires and fancies, and if you do not try to control your perverse inclinations, your whims and fancies, your temper and passions? What is my making no impression upon you, for you are hard as a well trodden path. The word is uttered; it is a tiny seed and yet how powerful! The sound of the word soon dies away, but your sentence of everlasting misery or eternal happiness depends upon your reception of it with a hard or a docile heart. Your hearts should be docile, not soft and yielding to sweet, romantic feelings, but ready to accept what is good. Some day we shall meet again, face to face, before our Judge, who will ask: "Where is the fruit of the seed that I entrusted to you to scatter?"—Lord, I scattered it with a good and honest purpose." "But where is the fruit?"—Lord, it was my task only to sow the seed; it did not depend upon me whether it fell on good soil or on bad." And then the Judge will turn to you and ask again: "Where is the fruit?" Well will it be for you if you can produce some; but if you cannot, excuses will avail you nothing.

Many people on that day will probably plead as an excuse that the birds of the air devoured the seed, i.e., that the devil took the word away from my heart, Adam and Eve put the blame of their transgression upon Satan, and human beings have always followed their example. But would he be able to take away the seed from a heart in which it was planted deep in the love of God? such an excuse is worthless. If your heart had not been hardened by the footsteps of worldly thoughts and by the constant hurrying to and fro of evil thoughts and desires, Satan could not have carried away the seed of

the Word of God, for he has power only over such as are superficial and frivolous, not over those who love God. The excuse is worthless and the punishment eternal.

You ought to have soft hearts when you come to hear the word of God—soft, not in the sense of effeminate or emotional, but in that of being ready to receive what is good. Our hearts are softened to emotion at times of prayer as well as in temptation; in prayer, they are inclined towards what is good, in temptation towards what is evil. Emotion makes us shed tears when our sins are laid bare before our eyes, and tears, too, of self pity, when we have to carry out our good resolutions. Emotion leads us to listen patiently both to the teaching of religion and also to words and suggestions against it. Emotion makes us enthusiastic admirers of morality and yet is easily led away by the false doctrines of immorality. It exists simultaneously with the hardness of heart that refuses from the constant action of a worldly disposition.

But softness of heart is incompatible with firmness and strength of character, the want of which often causes the sower to sow in vain, and the birds of the air, that is to say, bad companions, bad books and bad examples, to destroy the seed, so that many hear the word of God, but have no faith and therefore are not saved. Think often of this first part of today's gospel! Consider how necessary it is for strength of character to be united with readiness to accept all that is good. May God preserve your hearts from the two fatal extremes, which have plunged so many into destruction, namely, weak emotion and the hardness of a worldly disposition. Amen.

TEMPERANCE

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

A very significant straw which shows how the wind is blowing appeared in Sunday's Examiner. It was a letter from Mr. Hearst to his editor, ordering his papers in the future to reject all advertising of ardent liquors and ordering them to begin an active campaign against the drink evil and the drug evil as a matter of public health, morals and righteousness.

Hearst is reading the hand-writing on the wall. It may sound like Satan rebuking sin, but as a matter of fact, the prohibition wave, which has been sweeping the country, added on New Year's Day seven States to the dry column, making eighteen States in all at present on the list. A resolution for National prohibition is now before Congress and promises to be one of the important features of the present session.

In foreign countries the temperance tide has been accelerated by the war, bringing about the abolition of the sale of vodka in Russia and absolute in France and curtailing the sale of spirits in the British Isles. The sale of spirits in the British Isles is a "dangerous business," and an "unbecoming way of making a living." If total prohibition sweeps the country the saloons will have to blame themselves, for they have killed the goose that lays the golden egg. We commend to our readers the letter of the Rev. J. M. Cleary of Minneapolis, a noted and beloved advocate of temperance, which was published in this month's Ecclesiastical Review.—San Francisco Monitor.

While the Church has ever taught temperance and her children scarcely ever abused the use of light wines and beers as in Italy and France, the real evil arose in more northern countries addicted to the use of heavy alcoholic drinks. On account of these excesses the Fathers of the Council of Baltimore in the United States branded the business of selling intoxicating liquor as a "dangerous business," and an "unbecoming way of making a living." If total prohibition sweeps the country the saloons will have to blame themselves, for they have killed the goose that lays the golden egg. We commend to our readers the letter of the Rev. J. M. Cleary of Minneapolis, a noted and beloved advocate of temperance, which was published in this month's Ecclesiastical Review.—San Francisco Monitor.

SOWING AS THEY REAP
We learn from a correspondent that a prominent man of Oklahoma City who has always boasted that he was free born and could drink all he pleased, filled his young children with egg nog on all occasions and freely served it to everybody in his own home, had the pleasure of seeing his eldest son, now a young man, looked up in the city jail for being brutally drunk at a so-called respectable watch party on New Year's eve. Those who seem so surprised at the modern prevalence of women drinking, need not be so. When fathers, husbands and brothers insist on keeping liquor and serving it in their homes with their womenfolk as "waitresses," they need not feel astonished if women first learn to endure, then ply, then embrace the habit.

We don't believe there is a woman in the world who has the same respect for a man, once she has seen him under the influence of liquor, that she had before—it matters not who he is or what his station. If women feel this way towards men, what disgust there must be in both men and women who see a woman drunk or even drinking freely. The man who teaches his children and wife to drink, telling them never to get drunk, uses about as much sense and logic as the simpleton of a parent who gives his baby matches to play with and then spansks it for starting a fire.—Catholic Advance, (Wichita, Kan.)

No man can make a habit in a moment or break it in a moment. It is a matter of development, of growth. But at any moment one may begin to make or begin to break any habit.—William G. Jordan.

MISSIONARIES

The Sunday Watchman, Jan. 2, 1916

The missions conducted by Protestants in South America have been a failure for seventy years. Rev. Mr. Spear's pamphlet on South America was intended only for private circulation among the missionaries; but I was fortunate enough to come into possession of it. It contains a surely humiliating confession of ineffectual energy, 1,680 propagandists are working for 41,807 communicants. That means an average of 26 souls to each missionary. Of course, the numbers vary in different places. In Ecuador, 24 missionaries have gathered a flock of 61 souls. In Venezuela, Paraguay and Peru, the relative numbers are about the same as in Ecuador. There is an unintended touch of humor in this Protestant record of apostolic work. Imagine the tremendous outlay of energy required for one man to look after 26 souls; or for 24 missionaries to take care of 61 souls. Now their failure is not due to a lack of funds; for the E. U. S. A. spends more than \$48,000 a year on its missions, is it a good business proposition for any moneyed man of St. Louis to contribute to a fund so unproductive, an abnormally large portion of which must go to the support of the missionaries themselves, their wives and children?

And, in the light of facts, is it not a piece of concentrated brass to headline the billboards of this city with a phrase like this, "National Missionary Convention, a world movement for better living for all mankind," as though the missionaries were doing a titanic work in South America? Five thousand men wanted—5,000 to enlist for service—is their outcry. What do they want men for? Aren't 1,586 men sufficient to take care of 41,807 disciples? Why not use the men they have to better advantage? Or are they sticks, as Bishop Kinsolving himself hinted the other day that they are?

Moreover a considerable part of the total sum of money, collected for the missions, never gets to South America. The year before last \$66,000 was collected by E. U. S. A. Nearly \$20,000 of this sum appears to have been expended on home charges, including the expense incurred in vilifying Catholic South America in printed matter and lectures. But you may say: Do they vilify and do they pay to do it? Here are a few choice samples of their courteous attitude towards Catholics: "Do you know that S. A. is a continent without Christianity, without God and that its people have never heard of a Saviour? Do you know that the Christian Indians (so-called) i.e., those who belong to the Roman Catholic Church—know nothing whatever of Christianity?" Taken from leaflet: "Do you know?" published by E. U. S. A. Rev. C. Inwood improves this. Speaking of South America he says that Catholicism "hates, curses, proscribes and burns the Bible; it belittles and discards Christ; it pollutes womanhood; it is the most active propagandist of vice and immorality. It is Romanism and not Christianity. In South America to be allowed to go to the devil unwarned because it is cursed with a baptised paganism?" Hamlet would say that this out-venances the Menace. Personally, I can almost stomach the Menace. It is so delightfully outrageous, so rampantly abusive, and it makes no bones about it. It is least what everybody to know that it abominates the name of Rome. But when men with claims to respectability indulge in such amenities of speech among their own, against Catholicism, while professing before the world at large to be innocently engaged in "a world movement for better living for all mankind," I feel a great disgust. They would make a nobler and more acceptable appeal for help to fair-minded Americans if they thought and said with Edmund Burke: "I shall never attempt to raise myself by depreciating the merits of my competitors." If I were partial to the gentle art of throwing bricks, I also could distribute a few of them among the opposition with some force and precision of aim. But with Daniel Webster I shall refrain from "raking among the rubbish to see what I can find to fix a blot on their escutcheon."

But, it may be urged: Are not these aspirations of their desired? I answer in the negative and refer the reader for proof to the Globe-Democrat of December 4th. I might, however, add one more argument in favor of the Church's work, Don Figueroa, Consul from Brazil, called me up on the phone after the appearance of the letter, thanked me, and in unmistakable terms expressed his indignation at such crude misrepresentations of his country. He knew the Right Rev. Kinsolving in the South, found him courteous and his change of front here. He says that the reverend gentleman's statements about the degree of illiteracy and irreligion are a gross exaggeration. I may add on my own account that much of the illiteracy which prevails can be condoned. Slavery among the negroes of Brazil was abolished only in 1888. Can we of North America point to a greater proportionate improvement in our liberated slaves than the improvement in Brazil? As to the Indians, the Church would have done better work but for the greed of adventurers. Witness the destruction of the Jesuit Reductions of Paraguay. Moreover the Indians, as all are aware, are lazy. Education does not appeal to them. The Church has done a fine piece of work even in making them good. She

thinks that though the acquirement of secular knowledge is very desirable, morality is far more so. She thinks more of the ten C's of Mr. Sinal than of the three R's of the classroom. Finally no one can get around the big fact that she preserved the Indians, whether illiterate or not. The Right Rev. Kinsolving tags the South American Indian "illiterate." We must, to our shame, tag the North American Indian "illiterate." For he is practically done out of existence. The S. A. I. is a live illiterate; the N. A. I. is a dead illiterate. The one (L. K. says) is buried in the depths of ignorance, the other (I say) is buried in the depths of the grave. The Paraguay Indians of the Jesuit Reductions were only interned. The North American Indian has been interned. "No safe Indian but a dead one," has obtained too often among us. "Let the Indian live by all means and then, if possible, let him shed his illiteracy," has prevailed, under the influence of the Church in the South.

Can these new missionaries do better in South America than the Catholic Church did? They have to prove it; and not merely presume it. "Possession is nine points of the law." Their past work certainly gives them no encouragement. Moreover if they went there to help, no objection would be entertained. But they go to destroy the Catholic influence, if they can, as their utterances abundantly testify.—J. A. McCloskey, S. J.

Cutting Down Expenses
A great number of people have, unfortunately, had their earnings reduced since the war, and consequently they deem it wise to cut down living expenses. A sensible plan is to eat less of the highly refined foods and meat and more of the coarser and more nutritious cereals such as Dr. Jackson's Roman Meal. This is the most wholesome, most nourishing, and most healthful cereal food on the market, and costs much less than the highly refined breakfast foods. Sold by live grocers at 10 and 25 cents. Try the ready-cooked Roman Meal Nuggets. They are delicious with hot milk. Made by Roman Meal Co., Toronto.

WHAT THE CHURCH WAS IN THE MIDDLE AGES
Canon Farrar in "The Victories of Christianity"

From the fifth to the thirteenth century the Church was engaged in elaborating the most splendid organization the world has ever seen. Starting with the separation of the spiritual from the temporal power, and the mutual independence of each in its own sphere, Catholicism worked hand in hand with feudalism for the amelioration of mankind. Under the influence of feudalism, slavery became serfdom, and aggressive was modified into defensive war. Under the influence of Catholicism the monarchies preserved learning and maintained the sense of the unity of Christendom. Under the combined influence of both grew up the lovely ideal of chivalry, molding generous instincts into gallant institutions, making the body vigorous and the soul pure, and wedding the Christian virtues of humility and tenderness into the natural grace of courage and strength.

During this period the Church was the one of Catholicism for order in an age of lawlessness, for personal holiness in an epoch of licentious rage."

THE COMRADE IN WHITE

"Voices" are heard again at Domergue; angels are seen by the English at Mons; St. Michael and St. George appear; and now one is told of the Friend of the Wounded, who has been visualized by both French and English. The French call the Friend of the Wounded LeComrade Blanc or the "White Comrade," and they claim to have seen him after many a violent battle. Soldiers lying in the hospitals at Nice say they have seen the vision on the battlefields of Soissons, Nancy and Ypres.

An English soldier writes to "Life and Work," a British paper: "George Casey asked me if I had seen the Friend of the Wounded. "After many a hot engagement a man in white had been seen bending over the wounded. Snipers sniped at him. Shells fell all around. Nothing had power to touch him. The man in white, whom the French called the Comrade in White, seemed to be everywhere at once. At Nancy, in the Argonne, at Soissons and Ypres, everywhere men were talking of him with hushed voices. "I exclaimed that for me seeing was believing, and that I didn't expect any help but a German knife if I were found lying out there wounded. "It was the next day. At noon we got word to take the trenches in front of us. They were two hundred yards away, and we weren't well started till we knew that the big guns had failed in their work of preparation. We had advanced 150 yards when we found it was no good. Our captain called to us to take cover, and just then I was shot through both legs. "I fell into a hole of some sort. I suppose I fainted, for when I opened my eyes I was all alone. The pain was horrible, but I didn't dare to move lest the Germans should see me, for they were only fifty yards away, and I did not expect mercy. There were men in my own company who would run any risk in the darkness if they thought a comrade was still alive. "The night fell, and soon I heard a step, not stealthy, as I expected, but quiet and firm, as if neither darkness nor death could check those untroubled feet. So little did I guess what was coming that, even when I saw the gleam of white in the dark, I thought it was a peasant in a white smock, or perhaps a woman deranged. Suddenly I guessed that it was the Comrade in White. "At that very moment the German rifles began to shoot. The bullets could scarcely miss such a target, for he flung out his arms as though in entreaty, and then drew them back till he stood like one of those wayside crosses that we saw so often as we marched through France. And he spoke. The words sounded familiar, but all I remember was the beginning, "If thou hast known," and the ending, "but now they are hid from thine eyes." And then he stooped and gathered me into his arms—me, the biggest man in the regiment—and carried me as if I had been a child. "I must have fainted again, for I awoke to consciousness in a little cave by a stream, and the Comrade in White was washing my wounds

and binding them up. I wanted to know what I could do for my friend to help him or to serve him. He was looking toward the stream and his hands were clasped in prayer; and then I saw that he too had been wounded. I could see, as it were, a shot wound in his hand, and he prayed a drop of blood gathered and fell to the ground. I cried out. I could not help it, for that wound of his seemed to be a more awful thing than any that blither had shown me. "You are wounded, too," I said. Perhaps he heard me, perhaps it was the look on my face, but he answered gently: "This is an old wound, but it has troubled me of late." And then I noticed sorrowfully that the same cruel mark was on his feet. You will wonder that I did not know sooner. I wonder myself. But it was only when I saw his feet that I knew him."

The following letter on the subject appears in our London contemporary, Light: "Sir: I was much struck by the account 'Light' of the Comrade Blanc, as for some time past I have heard of him through the wounded soldiers I came across in the hospitals at Nice. Many of them men from the 87th and 128th Infanterie who have been fighting in the Argonne have seen him, and on several occasions he has walked through their trenches. "He has chiefly been observed after severe fighting, bending over the dying and helping them to pass away in peace; he has often been shot at by the Germans, but apparently pays no heed to them. I had heard all this weeks ago, and had been much interested, so that when the article in Light caught my eye I translated it into French and gave it to some of the men to read; they said it must be the same apparition which comes to the soldiers in the Argonne; they also added that it seemed to flit from one place to another, and has been seen by many at Soissons, Nancy and Ypres. Yours, etc. E. B. M. "Nice, France, June 6, 1915."

ENGLAND'S CELTIC CHAMPIONS
Father Bernard Vaughan, S. J., who lately paid a visit to the Front, has summarized his impressions to a tribute to the gallantry of the Irish regiments. There is no doubt," said Father Vaughan in an Evening Standard representative, "that the best fighting stuff in the whole world is supplied by the Irish regiments. Supernaturally, as well as naturally, they are the best equipped men that I know to report themselves with effect to the enemy. No man who is an impartial student of history would care to deny that both on land and sea the Celtic race is serving the British Empire with a gallantry, a dash and daring that falls nothing short of heroic. You would think that Paddy was born to fight, and what is more, he knows how to prepare for the life and death struggle. During this present scientific slaughter, so carefully prepared for forty years by the enemy, the Irish regiments have lived up to their fine traditions of gallantry. You may ask, as I ask, why have they not been singled out for more conspicuous commendation in despatches from the Front? To that question I answer it might perhaps be invidious to make too clearly a defined distinction between the nationalities fighting under one and the same flag. But though the Irish names have not been poured out upon us as much as some of us could wish, still everybody knows what they have done, and every right-minded man is proud of the services rendered to the Empire by the Celt, whether from Ireland itself or from the Colonies."

PRAYER WITHOUT WORK
There is no good in praying for anything unless you will also try for it. All the sighs and supplications in the world will not bring wisdom to the heart that fills itself with folly every day, or mercy to the soul that sinks itself in sin, or usefulness to the life that wastes itself in vanity and idleness.

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