

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. N. M. REDMOND
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

WE ARE ALWAYS UNDER GOD'S EYE
Now when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: "Peace be to you." (John xx, 19)

Whilst it may be reasonably presumed that large numbers have obeyed the voice of our Mother the Church, and honored the glorious Resurrection of our Divine Redeemer by rising from their sin and tepidity in a good Easter confession, it cannot well be doubted that there are those who still remain in their sins. It becomes us, therefore, to give our thoughts today to a subject fraught with consolation for the former, and with terror for the latter. No sane person will undertake to deny that it is a sense of great consolation to the good, and of terror to the man in his sins, that nothing which happens in man is hidden from the all-seeing eye of God. What a variety of impressions flashed to the minds of the Apostles regarding their shortcomings during the awful tragedy of our Saviour's Passion and death, as He suddenly appeared before them in His sacred humanity! Yet in His Divinity He was never absent from them, but was constantly reading the book of their interior, as He does that of every man that exists. Let man exhaust his wit in precaution, let him fancy as much as he will, that he alone is its witness to what transpires, the futility of his precaution, and the deception of his fancy must appear, when he reflects that God is more the principle of the life of his soul, than she is that of the life of his body. Hence his deepest thoughts and most latent motives are better known to God than to himself. The operations of his soul that are so nice and subtle as even to escape herself unnoticed, as well as their influence on her for good or for evil, are by God thoroughly analyzed, and most minutely recorded. God is a pure, indivisible spirit, hence whole and entire He is everywhere. Thus it was that the Psalmist understood this truth when He said: "If I ascend to Heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there" (Psalm cxxxviii, 8). "In Him we live, move, and have our being," and He with all His divine attributes and perfections is in our souls, and everywhere. Oh, what a thought! Each one of us can say to his soul with the absolute certainty of divine faith: My soul, you have within you, and around you on all sides, the eternal, immense, omnipotent, self-existing, infinite God; whose omnipotence with a word made all things leap into existence; within whose immensity all things exist, and without whom there could be no creatures, no earth, no heaven, no men, no angels, no time, no eternity.

If the presence of the master have such an effect on the conduct of the servant, as we know in practice it has, what a salutary influence the consciousness of God's presence would have on the conduct of every Christian! What a source of good to his soul for time and eternity it would certainly prove! How different, indeed, would be the daily conduct of a great majority of Christians, if the blessed consciousness that they are everywhere, and always under God's eye were constantly with their souls; if they would bring home to themselves the thought that He observes, penetrates, and has ever present with Him all that they do; and that He in His goodness, and consistently with His justice, will not allow the least iota of good to pass unrewarded, or the slightest title of evil to go unpunished! Could they then dare to be so negligent in their Christian duties, or could they possibly offend Him with so much boldness? They certainly could not, nor would not. To be convinced of this, we have but to call to mind the great care with which they conceal their misdemeanors from men whom they fear or respect. Yet the very most they have to fear, or expect from their fellow-man pertains only to their present life, and is therefore of infinitely less importance than that which they have to fear from God's justice, or that which they hazard, and their eternal gift of His goodness. Their great misfortune is, that they live in forgetfulness of God's all-seeing eye, which is always on them, yea, peering in upon the most latent springs of their souls. The sad consequences of their forgetfulness is, alas, but too well displayed in the number of offenses which they both internally and externally offer Him in their daily lives. When they have studiously concealed themselves from all human eyes, when they have their criminal projects wrapped secretly within their hearts, in their forgetfulness of God's presence, they falsely imagine that they are safe from the gaze of all. What a blessing it would be for them when thus concealed from all human witnesses, that the recollection of God's presence would not be wanting to their minds! Oh, that they would always be so conscious of it, as to say each to himself: God sees me. If I commit the sin which the temptation suggests, He cannot behold it without detecting it, and He cannot detect it without being willing to punish it. If I commit it, I cannot escape His justice—sooner or later vengeance will come upon me. Can I be certain that God will not strike me in the very act, as He has thousands? Have I any guarantee that He will give me time and grace to confess and repent? Empirically no, for this sin may fill up

the measure of my iniquity beyond which He will not allow me to proceed, at least with any hope of mercy.

But what a consolation the truth of God's divine presence is to the faithful Christian. In the clouds as well as in the sunshine of life's journey, it cheers him on, and every day makes him a better man. It acts as a holy stimulus under the happy influence of which he daily becomes more resigned to the Divine will, more mortified in spirit, and more rich in positive Christian works. In every state of life persons living under its blessed influence distinguish themselves by the practice of the rarest virtue. Solicitous to conceal their works as far as possible from the eyes of men, they are happy in the thought, that God sees and records not only what they do and suffer, but also what they would gladly do and suffer for His sake, if they could.

The Scriptures abound in records which show that this has always been the practice of faithful servants of God. They tell us that "Enoch walked with God," that God commanded Abraham "to walk before Him and be perfect," as if He should have said, keep thyself in My presence, and thou shalt be perfect in virtue. The Psalmist tells us that this was the practice of His daily life: "I set the Lord always in my light." In fact the Scriptures say the same of all the other fathers of the old law: they walked in the light of God. Not less but even more has this been the practice of the Saints of the new law of grace and love, as the history of their lives fully verifies.

Should it not also be our daily practice, dear Christians? Why is it that you,—I speak to those who have not yet fulfilled their Easter duty,—are so slothful and negligent? Oh, the answer is to be found, in no slight degree, in the fact that you live oblivious of God's divine presence. Would you not be ashamed to treat the presence of an earthly friend with such indifference? Awake, then, to a wholesome sense of shame for having so long treated God's presence with such cold and sinful indifference. But to you who have corresponded with your Easter duty, I will, in conclusion, address the words of the Psalmist: "Seek ye the Lord and be strengthened; seek His face," that is, His Divine presence, "evermore."

TEMPERANCE

DRINK PROVES TO BE INJURY TO STUDENTS

With students, particularly, the action of alcohol and special intellectual and nervous strain operate frequently to bring about very obstinate nervous troubles. There are many more breakdowns from beer than from books.

This fact is recognized by the scholarly men who have charge of the United States Army and Navy schools. These have absolutely forbidden the use of all alcoholic liquors including beer, to their bright young students in the art of scientific assassination.

These objections are shared by the majority of our university heads. Their general attitude toward alcohol is ably summed up in a letter from Dr. Howard McClellan, dean of Princeton University, who says: "We regard drinking as harmful, especially for young men, and we therefore are making every effort to discourage and prevent it. We forbid absolutely the keeping or drinking of alcoholic liquors in college buildings or dormitories. We forbid also the frequenting of saloons and drinking places. In addition, the University conducts a course of education upon the influence of drink."

Dr. Charles W. Eliot, President Emeritus of Harvard University writes me: "My observation among students of Harvard University during the last sixty-five years is that the use of alcohol among them has very much diminished—particularly during the last twenty-five years. This improvement has been the result of voluntary action altogether. Locally in Cambridge the absence of saloons has been of advantage. So far as I am able to judge, the recent physiological demonstrations, that alcoholic drinks diminish efficiency in all occupations, have not yet had much effect on the educated class; but, as these demonstrations become known, I cannot but think that they will re-enforce the general tendency towards temperance.

"For myself, I can perhaps best put my conclusions about the use of alcohol in the following way: If I were to begin life over again I would start as a total abstainer from alcoholic drinks, and would not offer them to friends or guests in my house. This conclusion is based on the conviction that alcoholism is the greatest evil which afflicts the white race—first because of its own effects, and secondly, because it induces or promotes other grave evils."

THE VALUE OF USED STAMPS

We have all shared in the perplexity of the editor of The Lamp, as to what value attaches itself to cancelled stamps. The usual answer—"They buy babies in China with them"—gave no light, because the question would come—"What do the Chinese do with the stamps?" Our contemporary is able to inform its readers that the collectors of the ordinary cancelled stamps sell them, for 3 cents a pound, to be made into paper pulp. It only takes several

thousand stamps, incidentally, to make a pound. If a rare issue or a very old stamp is among the number, it is sold to a collector. That the profits arising from this type of charity-work have been sufficient to justify its continuance, is only another evidence of the value we should attach to little things.—Catholic Transcript.

LOSS AND GAIN IN THE CHURCH

During the past few years it has been the custom on the part of many Catholic writers to deplore the great losses which they claim the Catholic Church has sustained in recent times in this country. We are told that during the past century large numbers ranging from thousands to millions have been lost irretrievably to the faith in America. In this connection it is a pleasure to call attention to an illuminating article in the January number of the Catholic Historical Review. Right Rev. J. F. Canevin, Bishop of Pittsburgh, Pa., presents an examination into the question from the standpoint of critical analysis.

The Right Reverend writer lays down the principle that to solve the problem with any degree of accuracy we must begin with some definite period and with a sufficient knowledge of the Catholic population in this country at that time. Given

the Catholic population at that date, its increase in the nation can come from births, immigration, and conversions. Its decrease will be by deaths, emigration, and perversion.

He notes that the first official records of immigration began with the year 1820. At the time of the first government census in 1790, Bishop Canevin estimated the Catholic population of the United States at 30,000. Between 1800 and 1820, Louisiana, and the West, with a Catholic population of 75,000, had been added to the territory of the United States. Bishop Canevin arrives at the conclusion that in 1820, our Catholic population all told numbered 243,000. The number of Catholics among the foreign-born can be found by the percentage of Catholics in the population of the country from which the immigrants came. Following out this principle the Catholic population should have grown by natural increase and immigration to about 18,483,320, in 1910, and in 1915, the Catholic population would have reached the total of 20,701,318.

The Catholic Directory for 1916, gives the Catholic population as about sixteen and a half millions, but this does not mean, however, that since 1790, over four millions of Catholics were lost to the Church. In the first place, there are today in the United States more than four million immigrants from France, Italy, Belgium, Cuba, Mexico, and

Spanish America. Although these people are thoroughly Catholic today, not 30% of them would be included in the census which furnishes the figures for the Catholic Directory. There are besides great numbers of recent immigrants, who are practical Catholics, and who are not enumerated in the parish census. All in all, it seems impossible to prove from figures that the Church has lost in numbers, while on the other hand, she has certainly gained in prestige.

The Church in what is now the United States began the nineteenth century with about fifty priests, fifty churches, and a Catholic white population of not more than 100,000. Today, after a century of struggle, poverty, and obscurity, churches, schools, colleges and universities have sprung up all over the land; institutions of mercy and charity are there to testify to the love which Catholics profess for their fellow-men. These things prove that the faith and fidelity of our ancestors supported and sanctified their lives and work. In a word, our losses cannot be proved, while our gain through conversions have been as great, if not greater, during the last hundred years than in any country of Europe.—Catholic Bulletin.

To attack other men's faults is to do the devil's work; to do God's work is to attack our own.—Faber.

A GIANT OF THE WEST

Father Dempsey's hotel in St. Louis had its tenth birthday during the holidays. The Reverend manager modestly gave out the record of the institution that long ago began to be the marvel of the West. He records that 67,699 different guests have been entertained at his Hotel for Workingmen, while 88,562 free lodgings and 100,613 free meals have been provided. Through his free employment bureau he has secured work for 6,981, and has placed free in the Catholic hospitals of the city 370 of his guests. Father Dempsey's guests are supplied with transportation to their homes, and during the past seven years 71 of them have been buried in "Exile's Rest," Calvary cemetery. St. Patrick's Home for Working Women, St. Patrick's Day Nursery and Emergency Home, St. Patrick's Dispensary are some of the other institutions that the energetic priest maintains. Incidentally Father Dempsey manages to find time to take thorough care of St. Patrick's parish of which he is the pastor.—Catholic Transcript.

Religion, to be of any real value must enter into a man's soul, lay hold of his convictions, and control the springs of his actions; and where religion fails to do this, it can scarcely be regarded as a blessing.—Rev. T. E. Shields.

Learn the luxury of doing good.—Goldsmith.

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A Call to Sow-that We May Reap

This call urges upon all Boards of Trade, Chambers of Commerce, Patriotic Societies, Urban and Rural Mayors, Aldermen, Councillors, Reeves, Retired Farmers and others to hold local meetings at the earliest possible moment and determine upon the best ways and means of meeting a great emergency in their locality

The world's available reserves of grain are gone. We are living literally from hand to mouth.
Ontario's farms stand in dire need of labor at this seeding time. Results of investigations by the Ontario Department of Agriculture show it. There is about one man per hundred acres left on the farms—not enough! Unless labor is forthcoming in thousands—men and boys—the farmer cannot now sow even a normal harvest, much less the increase the Motherland expects Ontario to produce.

This labor must come from the cities, towns and villages. Retired farmers should lead in this great movement. They can at least direct the inexperienced help that will volunteer. Business and professional men, high school boys, Y. M. C. A. members and others are called upon to make a sacrifice and take part in this honorable duty of helping to feed the people, the Motherland and our gallant lads at the front.

For further particulars regarding the Need, rates of pay, location where help is needed, etc., etc., write at once to
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