

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

By Rev. N. M. Remond THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

GRATITUDE TO GOD

"And he fell down on face at His feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan." (Luke xvii. 16.)

The very least that can be expected of any one for benefactions is a thankful appreciation. When there is no expression of this, the most disinterested even feel disappointed. The voice of nature seems to demand it, and religion sanctions the demand as it does every legitimate and praiseworthy move of nature. Both reason and religion condemn the conduct of the ingrate. Ingratitude is the offspring of a depraved nature, whilst a becoming appreciation and thanks for favors received, are never wanting in a person naturally and religiously well disposed. Though the favor be not granted with a view to this, the want of it in the one favored is keenly felt by the benefactor. Since this is so, how great must be the displeasure caused to God by our lack of thankful appreciation for His numerous and wonderful favors! Absolutely to Him is due a grateful, thankful return for favors, no matter what or who may be the immediate cause of them, for, to Him only do all things belong, and He it is who qualifies all second causes to do good. Oh, how much every man has for which to thank God! What can we look upon in ourselves; what can we look upon in nature above us and around us that is not a gift of God! Sin is from man, and the only thing in this wide world that he can lay claim to as his own. Everything else is a gift from the great Benefactor—God. So that we can look upon nothing that does not remind us of our duty of giving God thanks. How fully the holy man of the Scriptures was aware of this, when every object in nature, and the succeeding seasons and their effects, were so many occasions of his gratitude and thanks to God, their Creator and Ordainer! These should be occasions for all of us to constantly tender our thanks to God. But besides the gifts in nature above us and around us, which we enjoy in common with our fellowman, Oh, how much each one of us has for which to thank God! Creation, redemption, and preservation are favors so great, as to call for an eternal thanks. These, too, we enjoy in common with all mankind, but we the children of the household of the faith, have many other extraordinary special reasons for being thankful to God. We, indeed, are in the enjoyment of the good things of God upon earth. We have, as occasion demands the seven glorious fountains of divine grace always flowing abundantly, from which to drink. Their divine waters are life-giving and life-preserving. Unlike the animal of the field, man has a spiritual, a supernatural life to live, to be true to the end of his existence. It is to this life that the graces of these divine fountains—the Sacraments—contribute. To live it at all, we must come under the effects of the first, baptism; to strengthen and fortify it thus obtained, we must be blessed with the effects of the second, confirmation; to preserve it, we must have food and nourishment, and for these we must receive the Eucharist, which contains the body and blood of Christ—"My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." When we are sick, or even dead spiritually, we will find our cure; we will find even life in the consoling sacrament of penance. In our last and greatest sickness, we are protected by the blessed effects of extreme unction; and we have at our service, to give us life—supernatural life by the exercise of God-given power; and to feed and nourish our souls with these Sacraments, a divinely-established ministry God's anointed. There is, too, in every Catholic home an emblem of the holy union between Christ and His Church, in the sacramental union of the Catholic husband and wife. Now, all these are gifts bestowed upon us by our dear Lord, for which eternity is too short in which to thank Him. Oh, we may truly say, that we are in the enjoyment of all the riches of God's goodness upon earth. Besides all these and many other favors too numerous to mention, which we enjoy in common with our brethren in the faith, are there not many that have to thank God for not having cut them off in their sins? How they have for many long years tempted Him to strike them out of life, and cast them into hell, their just deserts. But no, He in His infinite mercy has borne with them till they took the thought to return, like the prodigal, to Him their Father. What a powerful reason for thanks to God this, His mercy, is!

We arrive at some idea, dear people, from this short consideration of how much each one of us has for which to be thankful to God. How do we discharge this sacred duty, is a very reasonable question for us to put to ourselves. Ah, is it not, alas, too true that but too many of us act the unthankful part of the nine who returned not to thank their divine Benefactor? Were grateful thanks to God more common among us, as many would not be so indifferent in their Christian duty. The great cause of a lack of thanks to God on the part of so many people who, perhaps, are nine to one, is a criminal forgetfulness of the gifts of God. We should resolve to remedy this by spiritual reading and devoted consideration. It is a shame for Catho-

lics that they give so much time to reading of little value, and so little, and often none at all, to healthy spiritual reading; it is the height of stupidity on their part to give so much thought to matters of little moment, and hardly ever think of these vital concerns. "The world is in desolation because men do not think in their hearts."

TEMPERANCE

WHAT GOOD IS WHISKEY-DRINKING?

"If alcoholic liquor did a body any good, there would be some reason to drink it," remarks the Catholic Columbian. "But whiskey is no benefit to the system and provides no nourishment. It disturbs the heart, it irritates the kidneys, it clouds the brain, it poisons the blood. Drink a quart of it at one time and it will kill you in short order. Drink a glass of it every morning and night, and it will hasten the day of your funeral. So the doctors say, and they know."

DO NOT JUDGE US BY THESE

"It has been said," says the Catholic Temperance Advocate, "that some temperance folks are proud of their virtue of abstinence, and make the practise of it the sole measure of the Christian life. There may be some such, but we have met few that would charge with any conceit of the kind. Among the few we suspected were those who were loudest in temperance profession when they were half full of whiskey, or at least, variously saturated according to capacity and opportunity. We have not thought it fair to account these as examples of conceit or arrogance in temperance folks. In fact, we have been quite positive that these should not be charged up to us, but to that throng of drinkers among whom hypocrites are legion."

RECKONING WITH RUM

A thick-set, ugly looking fellow was seated on a bench in the public park, says an exchange, and seemed to be reading some writing on a sheet of paper which he held in his hand. "You seem to be much interested in your writing," I said. "Yes, I've been figuring my accounts with old Alcohol to see how we stand."

"And he comes out ahead I suppose?"

"Every time."

"How did you come to have dealings with him in the first place?"

"That's what I've been writing. You see, he promised to make a man of me, but he made me a beast. Then he said he would brace me up, but he made me go staggering around and then throw me into the ditch. He said I must drink to be social. Then he made me quarrel with my best friends and be the laughing stock of my enemies. He gave me a black eye and a broken nose. Then I drank for the good of my health. He ruined the little I had, and left me sick as a dog."

"Of course."

"He said he would warm me up, and I was soon nearly frozen to death. He said he would steady my nerves, but instead he gave me delirium tremens. He said he would give me great strength, and he made me helpless."

"To be sure."

"He promised me courage."

"Then what followed?"

"Then he made me a coward, for I beat my sick wife and kicked my little sick child. He said he would brighten my wits, but instead he made me act like a fool and talk like an idiot. He promised to make a gentleman of me, but he made me a tramp."—Sacred Heart Review.

CATHOLIC PRESIDENT

WINS ALL CLASSES

LI YUAN-HUNG WORKS STARTLING CHANGES IN CHINA WHILE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS FLOURISHING Peking, July 29.

Li Yuan-Hung's accession to the Presidency has worked a wonderful change in China. The whole spirit of public life in Peking has been altered. Democracy seems to have come into its own again. The President lives informally at his palace outside the Forbidden City and drives about Peking in an automobile with only two soldiers to guard him. Chinese of all factions have a high personal regard for Li Yuan-hung, and his life seems to be in no danger. He moves about at will, and conducts himself in a manner which would have been wholly impossible for Yuan Shih-kai. The late President seldom left his palace and was believed to be in danger even within its protecting walls. He was a man of iron, and had ruled by military power and by that alone. Consequently he had many bitter enemies, and few warm personal friends. Even his closest advisers admired him more for his power than for any personal charm.

MEMBER OF CATHOLIC CHURCH Li Yuan-hung is a Christian, a communicant of the Catholic Church, and has always been strongly opposed to the connection of Church and State. He had at different times openly opposed efforts to make Confucianism the State religion of China and stands for absolute religious freedom in the republic.

Until 1911 Li Yuan-hung was little known in China. He was born in

Hupei province in 1864, studied for six years at the Peiyang Naval College and served aboard a cruiser in the Sino-Japanese war. After the war he entered military service at Nanking, and later went to Wuchang, where he assisted in the organization of modern troops under Viceroy Chang Chih-tung. For two years he studied fortifications in Japan and on his return became a major in the cavalry. His service was chiefly at Wuchang, the capital of Hupei province, which lies on the Yangtze river immediately opposite the important commercial city of Hankow.

REFUSED IMPERIAL HONORS

Li Yuan-hung sprang into national fame as commandant of the revolutionary forces at Wuchang in 1911. He was the chief leader in arranging for the Shanghai peace conference, and after the abdication of the Manchus was elected Vice-President of the republic. He was re-elected Vice-President, October 7, 1916.

Li Yuan-hung's popularity with the masses was in no way diminished by his service under Yuan Shih-kai. Although he and the late President had been intimate friends for years, Li Yuan-hung absolutely refused to endorse Yuan Shih-kai's monarchical movement, and declined all imperial honors which Yuan Shih-kai attempted to heap upon him. The late President issued edicts making Li Yuan-hung a prince and conferring great wealth upon him. Li Yuan-hung absolutely declined to accept such honors, and repeatedly expressed his disapproval of all attempts to abandon the republic. He was finally permitted to move without the Forbidden City, and for months has lived in a palace provided for him by the government in the best residential section of Peking. It was his desire to return to his native province of Hupei, but Yuan Shih-kai refused to grant him permission to do so.

No other man in China is as universally beloved as Li Yuan-hung. He has always enjoyed the reputation of being absolutely honest and patriotic. Many other leaders are more forceful, more energetic and have a better grasp of public affairs. But Li Yuan-hung is the one man who enjoys the complete confidence of the Chinese people, southerners as well as northerners.

THE CHURCH IN CHINA

Rev. M. Kennedy, a Jesuit missionary, who has been working in China for the past thirty years, tells an absorbing story of the marvelous growth of Catholicism in that country. He says in part:

The China Catholic Church reckons at present forty-seven dioceses or Vicariates-Apostolic, each under the immediate control of a Bishop, and in some cases of two, the younger or assistant Bishop helping the other when disabled by age or infirmity. The aggregate number of Catholic Bishops including assistant ones, is fifty-four.

Working with the bishops and under their control, is the missionary staff. This comprises 1,462 foreign priests, thus with the bishops comprised making a total of 2,322 ordained clergy. The foreign priests hail from all the countries of Europe, and thus splendidly bespeak the universal character of the Catholic Church. Among them are French, Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, Belgians, Germans, Austrians, Dutch and eight Britishers, the latter all home-born, except one who is a Canadian.

These missionaries are on the whole a splendid set of men, admirably equipped for their arduous work, zealous, active and leading a life of self-denial which would appall even a London or Manchester day labourer. They live entirely among the natives, speak their language, adopt their dress, share their coarse and scanty fare, and are thoroughly devoted to their interests, whether these be religious, educational or philanthropic. This is the secret of their moral influence, which is immense.

The large number of the Chinese clergy is a feature peculiar to the Catholic Church, which excludes no race from the ranks of its clergy, provided that the men come up to the intellectual and moral standard laid down by canon law. All these native priests are trained in divinity, philosophy, science and literature, and work in the field side by side with their foreign brethren for the conversion of their countrymen. The mission is also helped by several teaching congregations of brothers and nuns, principally in Hongkong, Shanghai and the large open ports. Native nuns are likewise a special feature of Catholic mission work.

NEARLY TWO MILLION CONVERTS

Fifty years ago when the great missionary movement commenced, Catholic converts were but a mere handful of 800,000 souls. To-day they number close on 2,000,000 or to speak according to the latest returns of 1915, they are 1,750,675—that is, they have increased sixfold during the last fifty years. To these must be added 424,000 probationers for baptism who, when well instructed and prepared will soon swell the ranks of the above to 2,000,000. Converts are recruited from all classes; literary, industrial, agricultural, laboring, and even a few from official ranks.

The Chinese convert is tested long, generally a year or two, before being received into the Church. He must give up polygamy, opium-smoking, gambling and all superstitious practices. During his probation he must learn the doctrine, prayers and practices of the Church. All this assures that his desire is solid and real. Once a Christian, he is sin-

cerely attached to his religion, and thousands have given ample proof of their faith, and laid down their lives rather than recant during the Boxer outbreak of 1900. He loves his clergy and helps them in building churches, erecting schools and hospitals so far as he can.

EDUCATIONAL WORK

Besides the conversion of pagans, the Catholic Church in China maintains numerous seminaries for the formation of the native clergy and carries on educational work in schools and colleges. The Shanghai mission, one of the most flourishing of China to-day and reckoning 228,000 converts has two seminaries, a university, two large colleges (attendance 1,175), two convents for girls (attendance 890) an observatory, a museum of natural history, an industrial school and printing press, which excite the admiration of all visitors.

These splendid results have been secured with a small staff of men and helpers and with very limited resources. They are therefore, the more wonderful and the more honorable for the Catholic missionaries, if Catholics had the wealth and the equipment of Protestant missions, their results would simply stagger the world.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

"What are the hopes of the Catholic Church in China?" To this the reply is that they are most encouraging. The Catholic Church has behind her an uninterrupted chain of long experience; she has encountered many problems in the mission field and solved them to the best of her ability; she has battled splendidly against sin and evil, against the tangled jungle of superstitions and the deadening influence of a backward and stagnant civilization. She has already effected a great change of thought, and impressed on her converts, and through them on the masses, a high standard of life. She has done much for education, much for relieving the ills and sufferings of the people; she has rescued thousands of abandoned and destitute children, and brought them up in a bright and happy Christian home. Her men are thoroughly trained, organized and disciplined; she bears to the Chinaman a uniform message, uniform church government and Christian practices. The Pekingese convert, when he comes to Shanghai, as much at home in a Catholic Church as he would be in his native city. More could be done if more money and more funds were available. The fewness of English Catholic missionaries is a great drawback and calls for redress in the near future. Despite these short comings, it must be said that the Catholic Church in China has achieved wonderful success—and this is the best warrant for what she expects to perform in the future. Like warring Europe she wants peace, and if she enjoys it, in the next fifty years she will draw millions to her fold.—Associated Press Correspondence.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD—IN JUDEA OR JAPAN?

A Japanese satirist has come forward in a magazine for young people, published in his native country, to tell of the failure of Christianity, as he sees the case, because many Christians are now fighting against each other and causing much sorrow and suffering to the families of those who fall in the unbrotherly strife. A good many people of the Western hemisphere who are not Japanese, but cynical Western agnostics, have argued in a similar shallow strain. Christianity is not affected in the slightest by such sophistry. The very name indicates a condition in the supernatural realm which demanded a Messiah, a Saviour and a Mediator. Though our Divine Redeemer assured humanity and laid down His life for the salvation of our souls, He told His disciples, after His Resurrection, that He came not to bring peace, but a sword, for He knew that His doctrines would not be accepted without a bitter and protracted struggle over a large portion of the earth's surface. We have been told by the Divine Teacher that we shall have false prophets rising up to mislead and disorient the road of life, ere the millennium shall arrive. Every age we can recall has produced living evidence of the absolute inerrancy of that remarkable adumbration. It is the teaching of some of these pseudo seers—these Cornish wreckers of civilization's ships—that has brought about the bloody maelstrom of war across the ocean. The false teachings of Nietzsche and Kant have displaced the law of charity, humility and love of one's neighbor, enjoyed by Christ. How, then, support the plea that Christianity is a failure? The rejection of Christianity by a horde of thinkers and men of action who do not want to be bound by its humane fetters is not a proof of unsoundness, but of its tremendous superiority to the cult of the material and the pragmatic. The Darwinian era brought forth, as a corollary to Darwin's hypothesis, the theory that there is a law of Natural Selection. This proposition brought in turn the effort of Egotism to apply the idea of unconscious superiority in Nature to the imaginary superiority of the individual, basking in his own conceit and satisfied that he personifies the highest expression of Nature and training in "the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals," all the but

angel, Man. The theory of a "Light of Asia," applicable to and emblematic of Japan, has evidently been productive of some misleading ambitions in the Far East. The claim for Christianity that it is "the Light

of the World" is seemingly resented by some of the "Supermen" over there, as well as those who have imbibed the cult of Sir Edwin Arnold and his Oriental school.—Philadelphia Standard and Times.

MORE NOTED CONVERTS

Among recent converts noted by Scannell O'Neill are: The Rev. Charles Henry Walters, an Episcopalian minister, Iowa Falls, Iowa, formerly of the Protestant Diocese of Marquette, Mich. Mr. Walters will study for the priesthood. Miss Elizabeth Irene S. Hodder, daughter of the late Rev. Alfred Hodder, pastor of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, New York. Judge Albert C. Baker, attorney, Phoenix, Arizona; Chief Justice of Arizona, 1893-7.



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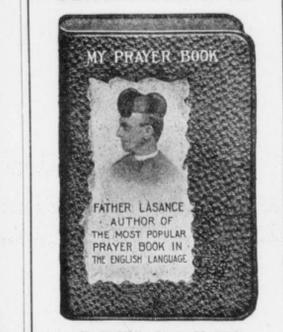
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