

FIVE MINUTE SERMON  
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

EVIL CONVERSATION  
And He said to them: What are these discourses that you hold one with another? And they said to him: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth. (Luke 23: 67-69)

Brethren: Suppose our Lord should stand in our midst to-day and demand from each one of us, as He did from these two disciples. What are these discourses that you hold one with another? Do our conversations, like theirs, contain nothing reprehensible? Would our answer be as pleasing to God as theirs was? If so, brethren, we have reason to thank God and go on our way rejoicing. But of what do the majority of men most readily converse? It is sad that we have to confess it, but God and His works, the soul and its wants are topics anything but agreeable to most of the men of our day. And so every legitimate means must be resorted to in order to make the things of God and spiritual conversation at all palatable.

And you, fathers and mothers of families, what are these conversations which you hold one with the other? What are the topics most commonly treated in your Christian homes? Is it the virtues of your neighbors that are spoken of and recounted for your own edification and your children's imitation? Would to God it were always so! But there are homes supposed to be occupied by Christians where God's holy name is never mentioned, save to be blasphemed, where the neighbor is never spoken of except to recall his follies, his vices, or even his atrocious crimes. Christian parents, beware of the scandalous conversations which may give to your family, but especially to your innocent children. Remember that many a soul to-day steeped in vice received its first sinful impulse from some unguarded word, some improper topic of conversation heard in the home that should have been the nursery of every virtue.

And from you, young men and women, an answer might be profitably demanded to this important question. What are the conversations which you most readily indulge in one with the other? Are they in any way improper, or such that you would be ashamed to have them repeated in the presence of your parents? If so, then your discourses are not concerning Jesus of Nazareth, and you are not following the example of His disciples. But if in your conversations, following the Apostolic rule, the things that savor of uncleanness are not so much as mentioned amongst you, what is to be said about the precious time you squander in idle, frivolous talk? Remember that time is but the threshold of eternity, every moment of which is of the highest value to you now; and this is why on the last great day we shall be held to account for every idle word.

Young men and women, never admit into your company those whose conversations are unworthy of a Christian, and especially let your own language be always in harmony with your high calling.

Indeed, brethren, to all of us this question of our Lord brings home an important lesson. For if we would lead good Christian lives we must not only abstain from all that is unbecoming or scandalous, but we must also regulate with all diligence our ordinary commonplace conversations. Let them be always such that we would not hesitate to repeat them before God or his most virtuous servants. If we would have our conversation agreeable to God and men, we should make it a rule never to speak disparagingly of those absent, and never take advantage of their absence to say anything which we would not dare say in their presence. And the other rule we should follow is this: never to say in the presence of others anything which could give scandal or leave a bad impression.

Brethren, if we think often of this question of our Lord, if we are diligent in following these rules, our conversations will be always edifying to our neighbors and useful to ourselves. Then, if called upon at any moment by our Lord, we can answer with his disciples. Our conversations are "concerning Jesus of Nazareth."

DR. BROWNSON'S REASONS

For becoming a Catholic, if they could be put into formula, would read something like this: "I found that I could not solve the problems of human destiny in harmony with reason without the aid of Catholic teaching and discipline."

Father Hecker, who knew Dr. Brownson well, says of him: "What native trait of Dr. Brownson's marks him off from other men? I answer, 'Love of Truth, devotion to principle.' Oh, how many hours did he spend agonizing for the Truth! His predominant passion was love of truth. This was all his glory and all his trouble; his quarrels, friendships, aversions, perplexities, triumphs, labors—all to be traced to love of truth. His earnestness was rewarded by possession of it in a supreme degree, for he was received into the Church and baptized in October, 1844.

"God alone knows how much I am indebted to him. He was the master, I the disciple. To the channels of thought opened to me by Dr. Brownson, I owed more than anyone else my conversion to the Catholic faith."

There are many Hecker and Brownsons in America to-day; year-

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ing for the truth wandering like sheep without a shepherd. Who shall lead them to the true shepherd?

Catholic reader, do you feel no responsibility?—The Missionary.

CHESTERTON ON DIVORCE

The large number of divorces in America, says Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton in The Illustrated London News, is a matter of grave distress to the most public-spirited Americans, but not to Professor George Elliott Howard, as quoted in Munsey's Magazine. It is an "incident," according to Professor George Elliott Howard, "an incident in the mighty process of spiritual liberation, which is rapidly changing the relative positions of men and women in society and the family."

I do not suggest that the Professor would say in so many words that the less husbands and wives could put up with each other the better; or that the happiest society would be a perpetual succession of unhappy families. But there is an unconscious sentiment of that sort behind all this way of talking about the spiritual liberation of sex. All the talk about freedom in this connection is utterly out of place; because marriage itself is an act of freedom and responsibility; and the desertion of one is the desertion of one's self; and is always at least humiliating. Even if divorce is not a sin, it is most certainly a disgrace. It is not like the breaking of a chain, which has been forcibly imposed upon a slave. It is like the breaking of a sword, that has been deliberately taken up and deliberately dishonored by a traitor.

I think, therefore, we may appeal to the sane and self-respecting people even among those who would permit divorce, that they should tell their weaker brethren not at least to glorify it. It may be a piece of very silly sentimentalism to represent the world as full of happy marriages. But to represent the world as full of happy divorces seems to me much sillier and much more sentimental. Surely everyone who knows the world, however much he may approve of divorce in desperate cases, knows that divorce is not usually the gate of a good life for the bad partner or even of a specially happy life for the blameless partner. It would not be easy for a middle-aged man to move his house to the next town; but if it be hard to move his house, it is harder to move his home.

As a preliminary to all fair arguments, therefore, I propose that if we give up the romantic fashion of calling all marriage love, our opponents should give up the yet more ridiculous fashion of calling all divorce liberty. You might as well call cutting a man's leg off asserting his liberty. Certainly he is free

LIQUOR AND TOBACCO HABITS

A. McTAGGART, M.D., C.M., 75 Yonge St., Toronto, Canada

References as to Dr. McTaggart's professional standing and personal integrity permitted by Sir W. R. Meredith, Chief Justice, Sir Geo. W. Ross, ex-Premier of Ontario, Rev. N. Burwash, D.D., Pres. Victoria College, Rev. J. G. Shearer, B.A., D.D., Secretary Board Moral Reform, Toronto, Hon. Thomas Coffey, D.D., Bishop of Toronto, Hon. Thomas Coffey Senator, CATHOLIC RECORD London.  
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from the leg, and the leg is free from him; and certainly it is a matter of opinion which of the two is more to be congratulated. And it is so with divorce. But, when all is said and done, at the best the man is less useful without the leg; and the leg is quite useless without the man. And it is so with divorce.

So much I think we have a right to ask from all recent disputants in such a matter: we have a right to ask for the sober tone suitable to the alleged existence of a necessary evil. But I myself should go further than that, and say that divorce, as lately urged by many before the Royal Commission, is not only not a necessary evil, but is a brand new, gratuitous and highly artificial evil. I am sure that this is especially so regarding that curious passion shown by some authorities for preaching divorce among the poor—who, of all classes of the community, have kept most the religious idea of the reality of marriage. The fundamental truth about this particular crusade is very sinful and very ugly. It is not, as Mr. George Elliott Howard says, it is an incident in the gradual liberation of mankind; it is just the opposite. It is an incident in the gradual enslavement of mankind, which is proceeding so systematically in so many branches of legislation and commerce. It is really part of that general attempt of the wealthy to get the needy well under their control, whether for good purposes or bad, which is the universal mark of modern "social reforms," even the most well-meaning, and even the most well-planned.

Of course, I do not mean that most prosperous people are so abominably wicked as to know what they are doing. They put things to themselves in their own way; they think chiefly of particular cases; they have always had a hand-to-mouth philosophy that excused them from facing matters of principle; and it is not a little helpful to them that they generally talk of everything in a very vague sort of slang. Let me take an imaginary but characteristic case.

A rich spinster, a lady whose benevolence is genuine, though narrowed by her refinement, employs some charwoman and her husband as caretakers or lodge-keepers or anything of the kind. Now, if I said that the rich old lady plotted to poison the family life of the poor couple, and to seduce the wife from her husband, that way of putting it would be unfair and cruel; because that is certainly not how the spinster would put it to her own conscience. But though it would be unfair it would be literally true. And though it would be cruel, it might very well be salutary. The spinster would feel a sympathy with the wife if she were handy or economical or grateful or religious; she would feel no sympathy with the husband if he were coarse or heavy or horsey or fond of his glass. She would exaggerate the inevitable quarrels of all married life because of the more plebeian and pungent style of speech. And all the time she would have the subconscious but still selfish thought, "The woman is a use to me; the man is not." It is almost impossible that she should not at last come to think that the woman would be better off if the man were out of the way. And in our society, which has largely lost its religion, and therefore its spiritual sense of honor, there is no one to stand up and remind the rich spinster that there are vows more important than idle oaths and books more terrible than betting books; where is no one to say to her: "Those whom God hath joined."

And thus this dear old maiden lady,

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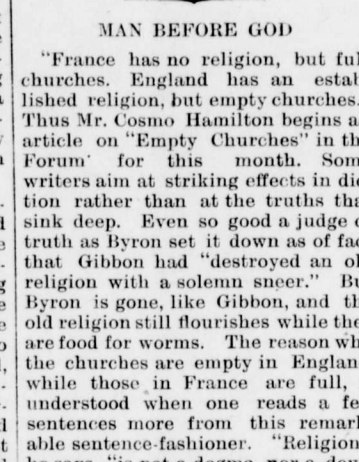
why there are so many empty churches; and the contrary why those in France are again so crowded as to excite the jealousy and wonder of men like Cosmo Hamilton—men who cannot see the sunlight though they gaze straight into the sun's face.—Standard and times.

The day that prayer dies in a man's soul he commits spiritual suicide.

What a blessing would come to us if we could but learn to live faithfully each day and cease the vain attempt to bear to-morrow's trials, which may prove to be only imaginary.

MAN BEFORE GOD  
"France has no religion, but full churches. England has an established religion, but empty churches." Thus Mr. Cosmo Hamilton begins an article on "Empty Churches" in the Forum for this month. Some writers aim at striking effects in diction rather than at the truths that sink deep. Even so good a judge of truth as Byron set it down as a fact that Gibbon had "destroyed an old religion with a solemn sneer." But Byron is gone, like Gibbon, and the old religion still flourishes while they are food for worms. The reason why the churches are empty in England, while those in France are full, is understood when one reads a few sentences more from this remarkable sentence-fashions. "Religion," he says, "is not a dogma nor a devotion, but a service. Men do not stand in need of dogma, nor can they be fired by an emotion which finds no echoing words. No man can serve God who does not understand how to serve man." Here is the grand mistake—the reason why England has empty churches. If men do not stand in need of dogma, religion does—and very badly. Men cannot serve man unless they have been first taught what their duty to God is. In order to learn what that duty imposes they must be taught who and what God is—and this is dogma, nor can they be fired by an emotion which finds the Lord thy God" is the first command insisted on by the Divine Teacher. He places service to fellow-men in the second place. Mr. Cosmo Hamilton would have us understand that he knows better, and that service to man stands at the head of all virtues. And there are thousands of would-be teachers and repudiated preachers insisting on the same heresy to-day. That is the reason

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The Old Couple

The old couple were visiting their son and as they sat in the den, the room was filled with welcome warmth from the radiator behind them. The old man remarked to his grey-haired wife, "This is a mighty nice house, John has here." "Yes," replied the old lady, "and it is powerful comfortable too. You would never know it was winter, when you are inside this house." "Well," said the old gentleman, "Jack tells me he spent a lot of time investigating before he put in this hot water heating system. I used to be prejudiced against these new-fangled notions, but Jack has convinced me of the value of a PEASE 'ECONOMY' BOILER. Just think, how comfortable our old home would be if we had one. John says that a PEASE 'ECONOMY' BOILER costs comparatively little to install, and will last as long as the house will stand. He says that his coal bills are far less than with his old boiler, in fact, he has proved to his own satisfaction that a PEASE 'ECONOMY' BOILER actually 'pays for itself by the coal it saves.'" Write to-day for free booklet.

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