

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

REV. F. P. HICKEY, O. S. B.
EXAMPLE OF ST. PAUL, THE WORKER

Last Sunday the Gospel impressed upon us the necessity of working to get to heaven—the labourers called to the vineyard—and to-day in the Epistle, we have the example of the great worker St. Paul set before us—the worker who cried out the moment of his conversion: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6); the worker who owns, "I have laboured more abundantly than all they."

We have to be saved as well as St. Paul; but recalling his example stir our hearts up to be willing and anxious to work for God! Now, what was the secret of the earnestness, that carried him through such labours, journeys, perils, preachings, persecutions? Why did he work so hard?

Because he valued the grace of God—the grace which had singled him out. Others had been passed over, but the persecutor had been chosen for an apostle! Guilty of the death of St. Stephen, breathing forth vengeance against the disciples at the very moment of his conversion, yet he was called!

Because he valued the grace of God, which made all things work to his good. The very fact, even, that he had been a Pharisee and a persecutor made his preaching the Name of Jesus all the more wonderful, and aroused the interest, the faith, the enthusiasm, of his hearers. Even that he was a Roman citizen procured him the chance of preaching Christ in the Eternal City.

Because he valued the grace of God by which heaven was secured to him. "That being justified by His grace, we may be heirs, according to the hope of life everlasting." (Titus iii. 7.)

And another reason why he laboured so unweariedly was this, because of the years he had wasted. He wanted to make up for the past. How he would regret that he had not known our Blessed Lord! Others had heard the words of Christ and seen His miracles; others, like Peter and Andrew and John, had been with Him, called, and chosen, and taught, and filled with the Spirit of the Saviour; and, meanwhile, Saul, wise in his own conceit, filled with the pride of the Pharisees, had scorned the new Teacher, who went about doing good to all. The Pharisees had to own that the whole world was gone after Christ, yet Saul had disdained to approach and listen. Oh! those years that had been wasted!

And, worse still, the evil he had done! He had been more bitter against the disciples than anyone else. He was consenting to the death of Stephen. "Saul made havoc of the Church, entering in from house to house, and dragging away men and women, committed them to prison," says St. Luke. (Acts vii. 3.) No wonder, then, St. Paul laboured, hurried, pressed on, filled with remorse and anxiety for the days he had not known Christ.

Let us turn from St. Paul to ourselves. He worked, because he valued the grace of God. We do not work, because we do not value that same grace. He was singled out and chosen, so have we been. There are countless better people than we are, who have not the gift of faith, who have not been called to be God's own true children.

And how God's grace has made all things work for our good—even our sufferings, poverty, sickness, death of those dear to us! All these have happened to us to check us in our evil ways, to recall us to the service of God, to win us back to Christ, who alone can heal the stricken heart. And God's grace, poured out upon our souls by the Sacraments, makes it so easy if we only would, to be saved.

And do not past wasted years urge us on? No; it is too unpleasant to look back, and to shut our eyes, and try not to remember our neglect, our infidelities to God. Those wasted years might now be made a powerful motive to urge us on to work. Think of them, beg God's pardon, and resolve to be up and doing. If not, they will rise up against us at the end and call for our condemnation.

To get to heaven we must work. Make up your minds to that, at once and generously. Then, how must we work? "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." (Luke xi. 28.) God's real glory is our obeying Him through love. So let each of us seek His will and do it, and work it out day after day. Prayer is the work, and regular attendance at church is the work, and forgiving our neighbours, and keeping the commandments. Oh, the work is ready to our hand! Do it for the love of God.

If we have not the courage to act up to grace, to give our hearts to God, to please Him and work for Him, ask St. Paul to help us. He, who converted so many thousands by his preaching, can convert us by his prayers. And his example is preaching to us yet. If we need a friend to help us, in whom can we rely more surely than on St. Paul? If we are converts to the faith, we have a special claim upon him. If we wish to make up for years mis-spent and wasted, he will make us zealous. Remind him how he laboured, congratulate him on his reward from the faithful Lord, and humbly, earnestly ask him to win us over, and bring in another soul to God.

TEMPERANCE

"DANGER; GO SLOW"

We noticed an odd combination recently on one of the excavated streets of a city. The old residences and stores had been torn down to make room for a garage and progress which the excavated street demanded. The first new business place to open for trade was a saloon, although the only trade possible was from the passengers to and from the few car lines that had begun to operate. There were no transient customers, for the pavements had been removed. The sign before the door of the saloon was conspicuously displayed: "Bar Open;" and directly in front of the saloon was another sign which had been placed by the car company: "Danger; Go Slow."

The public could infer, without any stretch of the imagination, that the warning had a close connection with the open bar. And how true it is! If before every bar there were in brilliant colors, with electric surroundings, the words that have been verified in every part of the world: "Danger; Go Slow," how many noble characters might have been turned aside from the path of ruin and degradation! How many ruined homes might have been preserved the reign of peace and joy! How many unhappy wives might have been linked to domestic honor and happiness! How many impoverished, ill-fed, degraded children might have been saved from the awful gulf of misery and want, and from the prisons and reformatories of the country!

The experience of ages has proven that for the one who can guard his appetite and moderate his craving for drink under the seductions of the open bar, thousands are daily sinking lower and lower, becoming confirmed victims of drink, and offering the homage of their lives to Alcohol, the great and powerful King of the Day.

And what is astonishing is the fact that not one of those victims intended to become a victim of alcohol, not one had the least knowledge that he was in any danger. He was becoming a drunkard without his knowledge, and without his consent. Little by little, slowly insidiously, the craving grew, and the demon of drink placed his claws gently at first, then firmly and secretly, upon the heart of his victim, and claimed him for his own. There was no need of haste. Drink is the great instrument of the devil, the instrument that renders the subject fit to commit any offense against the law of God. It suffices for him that the soul is finally vanquished, the appetite confirmed, the victim enchained.

The duration of a human life is not too long for this result. The devil has an eternity in which to enjoy his triumph.—Catholic Temperance Advocate.

THE GOLDEN WEDDING RING

Joseph Husselein, S. J., in America

Three scenes are intimately related in the mind of the Church. Far back in the golden dawn of human history the first is laid, when from the side of the sleeping Adam, from a member close to the beating of his heart, woman was formed. And God brought her to him, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, that they might be inseparably united. Wherefore was man to leave father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they were to be "two in one flesh."

The second scene, of which the first was the symbol and type, has for its background the darkened sky round the mound of Calvary, where the world's great tragedy was enacted. There, from the opened side of the Second Adam, cast in the sleep of death, the Church was created, Christ's mystic Spouse, holy and without blemish, to be forever His glorious Bride. In that union between the Divine Bridegroom and His Spouse the world was to possess for all times the model of the perfect bond between man and woman.

The third scene, like the first, is a symbol of this union of Christ with the Church. Yet it is no mere symbol, but an efficacious sign of the life of grace. Its background is the lighted altar, with the white-vested priest, prepared to offer up in an unbloody manner the same tremendous Sacrifice that took place on Calvary. In the foreground, at the altar steps, are the Christian bridegroom and his bride. Not a mere civil contract, not a tie to be lightly formed and as lightly broken, but a lasting and inviolable bond is the union effected there. It is a solemn pact witnessed not merely by men, but by God and His Holy Angels, and recorded for all eternity in the registry of heaven, with sacred obligations to posterity and to the Church.

From the opening of His public ministry our Divine Lord manifested His deep concern for the sanctity of the marriage bond. "The beginning of miracles" took place at a nuptial feast in Cana of Galilee. Here, too, the Mother of Christ appeared in her great role as intercessor with her Son. "Even from that day forth," wrote Pope Leo XIII, "it seemed as if the beginning of a new holiness had been conferred on human marriage." Christ it was who hereafter saved woman from the degradation of polygamy and from the heartless rejection on the part of man by restoring to its primal purity the marriage bond and sweep-

ing away forever the bill of divorce. So through Him did woman achieve her true emancipation.

But the greatest gift that Christ bestowed on her in married life was to raise marriage itself to the dignity of a Sacrament of the New Law. He has done so in reality we know beyond doubt. Such is the tradition of the Universal Church, such is the doctrine of the Councils and the evidence of the earliest liturgies of the East and West which even call it in express terms a "Sacrament of the living." Such is the testimony of St. Augustine when he ranks Christian marriage with the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Orders. (De Bono Coniugii). Such is the teaching clearly intimated in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians.

The words of the great Apostle, referring to Christian marriage as a "sacrament," might well perhaps be taken in a broader meaning were it not for the sense of the entire context. Christian marriage, as he describes it, is a sacred and mysterious symbol of the union of Christ with His Church; it is a faithful representation of the relations existing between the Divine Bridegroom and His mystic Bride, mirrored in the relations between husband and wife. The marriage of Adam and Eve in Paradise was a symbol of this union; but Christian marriage was to be something even greater. The rites of the Old Testament were, in the words of the Apostle to the Galatians, "weak and needy elements"; but this is clearly distinct from them, more than they: "This is a great sacrament." Unlike them it is therefore not an empty sign, but an efficacious sign of the life of grace, or, in other words, a true sacrament. Well might Tertullian exclaim in the second century of the Christian era: "How can we describe the happiness of those marriages which the Church ratifies, the Sacrifice strengthens, the blessing seals, the Angels publish and the Heavenly Father propitiously beholds!" (Ad Uxorium).

AN ITEMIZED STATEMENT

OF THE FULL CATHOLIC TEACHING

Catholics believe in the Trinity: in other words, that God exists in three divine Persons; they believe in the Incarnation of the Son of God, and hence in the Divinity of Christ. They accept the whole Bible, from cover to cover as containing God's revealed word. They believe that Holy Scripture ceases to be God's word when wrongly interpreted. They believe in Original Sin; they believe that Christ instituted baptism to remove Original Sin and to impart a new birth, or supernatural life to the soul; and that He instituted six other sacraments to sustain and strengthen the spiritual life or to restore it when lost through sin. They believe that Christ empowered His Apostles and their successors, through another sacrament, to remove sins committed by people after their baptism; they believe that Christ gave His real Flesh and Blood to His Apostles at the Last Supper, and that He empowered them and their successors to communicate Him to His followers. They believe in the immortality of the soul, a place of eternal reward, and another place of eternal punishment. They believe that the grace of God gives them to realize in their holy bond this sublime resemblance of the union between Christ and His Church, are clearly explained by St. Paul. In words replete with tenderness and surpassing in beauty all that poets have sung of the sacred flame of human love, the great Apostle thus describes the obligations of the Christian husband:

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and delivered Himself up for it: that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life; that He might present to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the church: because we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Could there be a closer intimacy, a greater tenderness, a more delicate affection, a sweeter solicitude than that which is here prescribed as the husband's duty towards his wife? Christ loved the Church even to delivering Himself up for her to the death of the Cross; such is the ideal of that love the Christian husband is taught to cherish towards his wife. Her virtue is to be sacred to him as the sanctity of the Church is dear to Christ. He is to aid her to preserve the splendor of her soul in its spiritual beauty that it may flourish in a perpetual youth, which the years can never steal away, though her outward charms should wither like the flowers they resemble. To attain to this perfection of devotion, rendered to the creature for the sake of the Creator, the grace of the Sacrament will never fail him. Verily this is a great Sacrament, in Christ and in the Church.

But woman, too, has her duties to perform. As the Church is subject to Christ, so is she to her husband in true love and fidelity. He is "the head of the wife" by the law of creation and by the express will of God, but in such wise "as Christ is the head of the Church." Her subjection is not ultimately to man, but "to the Lord," whom she beholds in her husband as every Christian sees Him in all rightful authority, rendering cheerful obedience for the love of God. Such subjection is the highest glory of the Christian man and woman. His supreme examples are Christ Himself and His Virgin Mother. Clear and explicit, again, are the words of St. Paul: "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord: because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church.

He is the Saviour of his Body. Therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let wives be to their husbands in all things."

A great difference is indicated here between the headship of Christ and of the husband. Christ is the "Saviour of His Body," the Saviour of the Church. Such the husband can never be in regard to the wife. Her soul equally with his is the direct creation of God. His authority extends to the things pertaining to domestic government, and in so far as the comparison applies. Only for the pagan wife can subjection become an indignity, in so far as she obeys man alone and not God. Hence the agitation and the clamor of modern paganism for "emancipation" from domestic government. Not such is the subjection of love on the part of the Christian woman, repaid by the devotion of love bestowed on her by her Christian spouse.

Enlightened and strengthened by the Spirit of God, woman must make it her task to preserve and perfect in her husband the image of Christ. She will understand his weakness only that she may save him from a fall. She will perceive the nobility of his soul that she may daily point out to him the opportunities for Christian service and evermore inspire him to mount to the exalted heights of Christian manhood, while she seeks to realize in herself the perfection of Christian womanhood. She will pray with him and watch with him that together they may attain to the ideal made possible for them both by the grace of this great Sacrament. So will the image of Christ stand forth revealed in the souls of both. They will not live now, but Christ in them, that of two there shall be only one flesh, one soul, one Christ, who is above all and in all. The Lord alone will they serve and love. Such is the meaning of the golden wedding ring the Christian bridegroom places upon the finger of the Christian bride.

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FATHER GORDON PREDICTS THAT THEIR NUMBER WILL REACH 200,000 IN TWENTY YEARS
There will be 200,000 Indian Catholics in the United States in twenty years, according to Rev. Philip Gordon, a Chipewyan Indian Catholic priest, who spent a few days in Sioux City, visiting priests.
"Here are already 120,000 Indian Catholics in the United States," said Father Gordon, "and there are about 80,000 pagans—those who have nothing but the native religion. There are about 70,000 Protestant Indians. It is not our intention to seek converts among the Protestants, because they are already cared for, but it is our ambition to win the 80,000 pagans into the Catholic faith, and it is no little task.
"Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord: because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church.