

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. F. PEPPER
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
Jesus said: 'I will come and heal him' (Matt. vii. 7.)

Ever recurring separation governs all our life on earth. What time unites must also be separated by time, for we have not here a lasting city (Hebr. xiii, 14) and it is well for us that this is the case. The fact that we must necessarily be cut off from the things of this world makes us think of Him, from Whom we need never separate; and the remembrance of friends, lost to us by the circumstances of life or by death, and unable to console or help us, reminds us of One who is always near us and whose power to help never fails. Jesus is everywhere, always ready to assist us, and wherever He is, we find comfort, strength and blessing. He stood still beside the leper, stretched out His hand and healed him. To the centurion He said kindly: 'I will come,' although the Roman, being full of faith, knew that Jesus was really present with his sick servant, even if He did not actually come, and his faith was rewarded. Wherever Jesus is, we find comfort, strength and blessing, and He is always in every place; hence there can be no locality and no occasion when it is impossible for us to share His blessing. If we do not always receive it, it is because we do not remain in His presence; we do not remember that He is always with us, and so, though He is really present, He is not present for us, and by our own fault we lose the benefit of His constant and holy presence.

Of all the practices coming under the general heading of prayer, none is more important than a frequent remembrance of God's presence. During the day we ought often to call to mind with lively faith the fact that God sees us and is ready to help us. If we say our prayers in the morning, we consecrate our hearts to God, and throughout the day we ought to remember this consecration, until we say our evening prayers and go to sleep.

God commanded Abraham often to remember His presence, saying: 'I am the Almighty God, walk before Me, and be perfect' (Gen. xvii, 1). The connection of the words here shows that to walk before God means continually to think that He is near us, and to let that thought lead us to true virtue and perfection. Call this divine precept often to mind: 'Walk before Me.' In the same way the Holy Ghost, speaking through the Psalmist, says: 'Seek the Lord and be strengthened, seek His face evermore' (Ps. civ, 4). This means, 'If you never forget that He is near you, you will be strong to do right; under all circumstances remember Him, looking as it were at His face, and then His grace will always be a glance of His eyes falling upon you, admonishing, warning, encouraging you.' We ought to be able to exclaim with David: 'To Thee have I lifted up my eyes Who dwellest in heaven. . . as the eyes of the handmaid are on the hands of her mistress, so are our eyes unto the Lord our God' (Ps. cxvii, 12). Just as the handmaid should be ready to obey her mistress, so ought we often to look up to God and remind our selves of His Will, saying, 'I must do this or that, because He wills it.'

This living thought is a necessary condition of unflinching obedience on our part. For this reason all the fathers of the Church impress upon us the duty of constantly remembering the presence of God. St. Gregory Nazianzen writes: 'In order to derive strength the body must be united with the soul, the branches with the trunk of a tree, and the sun's rays with the sun, and in the same way our spirits must be united with God.' 'Come ye to Him and be enlightened, and your face shall not be confounded' (Ps. xxxiii, 6) that is to say: 'Think often of Him, and then His grace will enlighten you and show you under all circumstances what you ought to do, and your whole life will be such that you need not be ashamed before God, for (adds St. Gregory) we ought to remember God more frequently than we draw breath.'

What is more likely to deter us from wrong doing than the thought whenever we fall into temptation, that He sees us and is with us, Who will one day judge strictly all that is evil? In His infinite goodness He is now still willing to give us strength to overcome. 'Tell me, if you had to stand continually before your Ruler or your Judge, would you not stand in awe of Him? Therefore when you eat think of God as present; before you fall asleep, and when anger is stirring in your heart, and in the hour of joy and amusement, in short, whatever you are doing, remember that God is there.'

What could do more to strengthen our love of God than this remembrance of having a true love of God in our hearts, we shall be strong enough to conquer all the attacks of the evil one; and when one man, through not thinking of God, loses courage and says: 'I cannot do right, it is too hard for me,' another, who is mindful of God, finds fresh energy to begin and accomplish the good work. Much that seems hard becomes easy, if we know that people whom we love and honor are watching us and delighting in our achievements. Even more than ought the thought of God strengthen us to do right.

Masters of the spiritual life suggest various methods of accustoming ourselves to remember God's presence. Some succeed in picturing our dear Saviour as present under the form that He had on certain occasions in His life on earth. We may think of Him as an infant in His manger, as a Child in His Mother's arms, or during His Passion, as crowned with thorns and fastened to the Cross, whilst He turns upon us a glance of loving warning. Or we may picture Him walking beside us, just as when He went about His own country teaching the way of Salvation, or as He accompanied the disciples on the road to Emmaus, or like the Good Shepherd, anxious to lose none of His sheep. It is a good plan to avail ourselves of these thoughts suggested by the various ecclesiastical seasons, and to picture Jesus as present under the form in which each festival, as it recurs, represents Him.

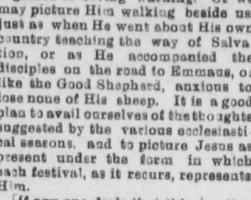
If any one feels that this practice involves too much strain, he had better give it up as in that case it might easily prove injurious. Another method is to make an act of faith in God's presence, without trying to call up any imaginary picture. We all believe in the truth expressed by the Apostle in the words: 'God is not far from every one of us, for in Him we live and move and are' (Acts xvii, 28). Let us accustom ourselves gradually to make every thing about us, that we perceive by means of our senses, remind us of God's wisdom and goodness. An ordinary man, perceiving pleasant and useful things, thinks only of the pleasure and advantage that he derives from them, but a Christian remembers Him Who in His incomprehensible goodness has created all these things and bestowed them upon us in love. In this way everything about us may serve to make us think of God's universal presence.

The best way of all of thinking about God is to remind ourselves very often that He is dwelling in our innermost heart, as long as we possess sanctifying grace. St. Paul says: 'Know you not that you are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Cor. iii, 16). Let us resolve never to drive Him from our hearts even by a sinful thought, but to keep them always filled with His Holy Love. When we are engaged in business or in society, we can address a short but heartfelt prayer to Him quite secretly, so that He may counsel, uphold and strengthen us, and that, just as He now dwells in our hearts, we, too, may someday dwell in glory and perpetual happiness with Him. Amen.

THE QUESTION OF DRINK IN ENGLAND
We learn that every day the demand in London for a stricter regulation of the sale of liquor during the war becomes more insistent.

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Military authorities are disgusted with the drunkenness of soldiers brought about by the disposition of civilians to treat all men in uniform. Lord Kitchener has issued numerous protests against the treating of his soldiers, but without the desired results. Even the closing of public houses at 10 o'clock at night has not cured the evil, and stricter regulations seem inevitable.

The increase of drunkenness among women, especially among those whose husbands have entered the service, has fallen under the observation of the British Medical Association, and many delegations of prominent women have appeared before the licensing justices in an effort to check this practice by regulation.

In his last days Lord Roberts made this appeal to the public to cease tempting soldiers with liquor: 'I feel it is my duty to point out to the civil population that putting temptations in the way of our soldiers by injudiciously treating them to drink is injurious to them and prejudicial to our chances of victory.'

Sir James Crichton-Browne, the famous physician, in an interview on 'Alcohol and War,' said: 'Tea has been one of the saviours of mankind. I verily believe that but for the introduction of tea and coffee Europe might have drunk itself to death. I am so uncompromising or fanatical opponent of alcohol. I believe it has played a part in human evolution, that it is an invaluable remedy in certain stages of unhealthy disease. It is probable, however, that its medicinal mission is fulfilled, and as regards its social use, it is becoming more and more circumscribed.'

Sir James expressed the belief that alcohol would be found to play an important part in the issue of this war, both actively and negatively; that it had been responsible for atrocities and barbarities, and that the Russian prohibition of vodka strengthened her arm and helped her to victory. 'The handling of a magazine rifle is a very delicate operation,' he said, 'and those men will perform it best who have had no alcohol.'—St. Paul Bulletin.

THE CATHOLIC HABIT OF PRAYER

Nothing bespeaks the practical Catholic so much as the salutary habit of prayer. In temptation, in surprise, in danger, in fear, in anguish, or grief, the well-trained soul, like a confiding child running to the protecting arms of its mother, turns instinctively to God, and in so doing but follows the maxim of Our Lord to 'Pray always.'

Prayer for the Catholic is the armor of the soul which from constant use is kept clean and bright; it is the ever-present shield against which the fiery darts of enemies strike, but are powerless to harm. It is as natural for the good Catholic to pray as to breathe, and prayer will always spring spontaneously to his heart and lips with even the first intimation of danger. If he be victorious over temptation; if he be successful in overcoming an inclination to evil; if he is to accomplish any good whatsoever, it is traceable always to prayer. All good things must come to him through prayer.

NEED OF RELIGIOUS TRAINING

Not long ago Dr. Burton of the University of Minnesota bawled the decline of religious training in higher educational institutions and declared that the students are so 'ethically insensitive' that they do not hesitate to lie when it suits them to do so.

This week Dr. Vincent, President of the same institution, attributes the low standards of honor in college athletics, petty stealing, profanity, peddling indecent stories, and other questionable practices of college and university students in part to the inertia of college Y. M. C. A.'s. 'Too often Y. M. C. A. members, who are good, goody goody fellows who are courageous to have not the courage to be anything else. They have not the stamina to protest against the wrongdoing they know is going on about them all the time.'

Laziness and moral indifference are a curse both of college morals and of our country generally, the price of which we are going to pay by the most painful discipline we ever have experienced.

These men, in touch with the conditions that prevail in our institutions of higher learning, cannot be accused of not knowing whereof they speak. They are courageous enough to give public expression to their convictions with a view, no doubt, of arousing the better class of citizens to a realization of the needs of the hour, in the hope that some step may be taken to apply the proper remedy.

The things they criticize are but symptoms of a disease which is not confined to the student body, but affects every stratum of society. Disregard for the moral law is frightfully prevalent at the present time. It leads almost insensibly from petty infractions, which mark the initial steps of the transgressor, to the great sins which shock the public and sully the name of citizenship. It is from time to time, too, characterized as youth, so diphthery, characterized as 'wild oats,' are but the straw which indicates the direction in which the wind blows, the incipient flame, which unless stamped out will burst into a great conflagration. To save the coming generation these indiscretions, as they are too often called, must be checked in their very beginnings.

There is only one remedy for this deplorable moral condition—a practical and ever-present recognition of the Supreme Being, whose right to lay down laws for the moral guidance of the individual and of society is indisputable. Whose will must be obeyed in all things under pain of His eternal displeasure. This recognition of human dependence upon, and relationship to, God we call religion; and the inculcation of the same principles of morality of which it is the source must be made the basis and mainstay of every system of education worthy of the name.

It is unfortunate that the name of God has been banished from the educational institutions conducted by the state. That is a condition made necessary by the religious affiliations of the citizens of the Republic. It is a condition which right thinking men bewail and for which the better class of educators are striving to find a remedy that will prove acceptable to all.

They have come to the conclusion that nothing short of definite religious training in youth and early manhood will lay the foundation for that high and holy regard for God and 'the things of God' which will lead into the arena of public and private life citizens whose norm of conduct is an enlightened conscience, whose standard of right and wrong is based on something more substantial than the whims and fancies of the individual.

Beauty Doctor Tells Secret

Detroit Beauty Doctor Gives Simple Recipe to Darken Gray Hair and Promote Its Growth
Miss Alice Whitney, a well-known beauty doctor of Detroit, Mich., recently gave out the following statement: 'Anyone can prepare a simple mixture at home that will promote the growth and make it soft and glossy. To a half pint of water add 1 oz. of bay rum, a small box of Orlex Compound and 1/2 oz. of glycerine. These ingredients can be bought at any drug store at very little cost. Apply to the hair twice a week until the desired shade is obtained. This will make a gray-haired person look twenty years younger. It is also fine to promote the growth of the hair, relieve itching and scalp disease, and is excellent for dandruff and falling hair.'

A thorough religious training is what the youths of this land need to fit them for the enjoyment of the blessings and opportunities it promises to all—a recognition of the presence of God everywhere encircling them with the atmosphere of the supernatural and an humble facility in obeying the laws He has laid down for the moral well-being of man and nations.

The children who are receiving such an education in Catholic schools are favored indeed. To them we look for the highest types of Christian culture and devoted citizenship.—St. Paul Bulletin.

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THE WORLD SEEMS TO BE OUT OF JOINT

From a pastoral by the Right Rev. John F. Cunningham, D. D., Bishop of Concordia, Kansas, the following extract is taken: 'The world of late seems to be out of joint. A terrible war is spreading its horrors and devastation over many a land flooded with blood, and the holocaust of thousands and tens of thousands of human lives. The inhabitants of these unfortunate regions, where the tidal wave of a mighty strife has rolled and mercilessly continues still to roll forward and backward, are wandering homeless in the midst of smoking ruins, or seek refuge in distant countries, there to endure the pangs of hunger and the rigors of wintry elements. The tremors of Mother earth, as if frightened by the titanic clash of contending armies, has added new terrors to a situation that casts an appalling gloom over the present, and is freighted with evils for the future.'

In those parts of the world that have, as yet, from actual warfare, a restless feeling has taken possession of the masses, and from among the ranks of the rich and the file of the poor, arises a cry of discontent, of defiance, of hatred, threatening the very foundations of society. The Holy Father has pointed out in his first encyclical the principal causes of the moral disturbances, and sees salvation only in the return of man to the teachings of Him, from Whom His sent to be the Saviour of mankind, Christ Jesus, Our Lord.

Holy Church, speaking through the voice of her consecrated ministers, never tires of insisting upon the necessity of a Catholic to be true to his Maker, to his fellow-being and to himself. Nations vainly tried to do away with God and His laws, and the results have been the saddest and most fatal. Facing this condition we would remind you, dearly beloved in Christ, of the elementary duty of prayer, of the sacramental obligation of hearing Mass on Sundays and holy days, of frequenting the Sacraments, for through them grace is conveyed to our souls that grace, which alone can enable us to live up to the full measure of high ideals and solid virtue.

You are members of that magnificent organization, the Church of Ages, founded by the Son of God, and justly proud to have the privilege conferred upon you. See to it, that you may not lose this glorious title, and like Esau of yore, exchange your birthright for a mess of pottage.

We will mention some means, that after prayer and the receiving of the Sacraments, are calculated to keep alive the blessed fire of Faith kindled by the Holy Ghost in your hearts. In the first place, we would like to see established in every parish of the Diocese, the Holy Name Society. Experience has demonstrated that it is a great factor for the fostering of devotion, while its simple rules and regulations have a tendency that makes for right living and Christian conduct.

We call again your attention to the strong prohibition proclaimed by the Church in regard to mixed marriages. The evils resulting therefrom form the history of everyday life. Whilst in some isolated cases the effects of disregarding this salutary law may not be plainly visible to all, misery, domestic and spiritual, is the lot of such unnatural unions. Christ, who knew well the human heart, raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament, because without its grace, it is high impossible to attain the sublime end for which this institution was divinely established.

You were taught and believe, dearly beloved, that God created us to enjoy ultimately his beautiful vision in heaven; but a condition has been placed to this happy consummation. We must believe and we must do what God demands that we should believe and do. This implies the absolute necessity of instruction concerning the articles of Faith and the rule of conduct. This instruction to be lasting and abiding, must be imparted when the mind is as soft as wax to receive, and as hard as marble to retain. Instruction supposes a

teacher, and in the natural order of things the parent is the first instructor in the sanctuary of a Christian home till the time arrives for the delegation of his right to those who are called from above to continue the good work in the class room of a Catholic school. We most solemnly adjure parents to discharge their little ones the blessing of a Catholic education.

Be insistent in prayer; attend Holy Mass daily, if possible; frequent the sacraments, going to confession and receiving Communion often; be present at the religious services held every week in your parish church; open your hearts to the action of divine love and exemplify it always by deeds of charity, giving particularly now to the needy and the poor of God; put the sign of the Cross on your flesh and the sweet restraint of the gospel on your will; read pious edifying books, especially the Life of Our Blessed Lord so beautifully and simply portrayed by the pen of the evangelists.—The Guardian.

A RANCID STAGE

Nobody objects to a 'thriller.' Indeed into the drab monotony of our daily lives a thrilling play may inject new enthusiasm, new interest. Anything that helps us to forget for a moment the dreary of our daily routine is perfectly legitimate, if moral. In fact, it was in days when the stage did not know the morbid plays that have lately come into fashion that the art obtained for itself the title of 'legitimate.'

But a great many of the plays upon the stage to day are not legitimate, for the simple reason that they pander to the lowest passions in man. Anything that makes a man brutish, even by the most artistic means, is not a high or legitimate form of amusement, however we may seek to justify it by fine-sounding names. Anything that 'leaves a bad taste in the mouth,' as the popular saying goes, is not healthful for the mind or soul. And that is precisely what we can say of no small number of plays that have been highly advertised, artistically staged and cleverly acted in many of our great cities.

Take, for instance, 'Marie Odile,' which had a long run in New York last winter and is now being given in all the smaller cities and towns throughout the country. Although the play has been highly commended by the dramatic critics, it is one which should never have been produced, since the theme is the intelligence one of 'war babies.' And what renders its whole tenor and atmosphere more disgustingly unpalatable to Catholics is that the scene is laid in the convents of nuns, and the heroine is none other than an unrepentant aspirant for the holy veil of religion. It does not save the play from utter morbidity that the innocent victim looks upon her sorry plight as a miracle, and upon her pythical betrayer as St. Michael. Do you wish to know the impression produced upon an audience of panted, powdered women by the betrayed novice?

It was a titter!—The Rosary Magazine.

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