

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOU, D. D.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE JOY OF THE LORD

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice." (Phil. iv. 4)

Mingled with the other things of life is a certain amount of joy. This joy does not pervade the whole human race at the same time. When one individual may be experiencing great joy, another may be steeped in the deepest sorrow.

All this is true of worldly joys. There is a joy, however, that flows from a loftier fount and which always may dwell in the heart of man. This is the joy of which St. Paul speaks.

Worldly people, that is, people who give little or no time to God, often appear happy. Who has not seen them on the streets, in the theaters, in other amusement places, in the club rooms, wearing a perpetual smile?

The lips of another may not wear this smile; in his words there may be but little if anything that would reveal a joy dwelling within him. Nevertheless, it is often there, and its manifestations break forth in something more serious than smiles and more weighty than words.

To many people joy would seem to consist in an absolute freedom from all restraint. Of course, they realize they must observe the laws of God, and many, if not all, of the laws of the country, but beyond this they recognize no restraint.

It should be the desire of every Catholic, gifted as he is with faith and a knowledge of the high things of God, to acquire the true joy of the Lord. He is bidden to do so many times in Scripture. Experience teaches him also that it alone counts. The happiness all crave for, he realizes can never come to him if his heart be void of this true joy.

On the contrary, what a precious blessing it is to him who possesses this joy. The burdens of life will be lightened for him; the sorrows and pain that afflict him will be lessened, if the joy of the Lord be among his spiritual possessions.

Perhaps the principal cause for this collapse of the League is the spirit of nationalism, which was never so hot in Europe as in this day. The fires of chauvinism are

LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND EUROPE

A. J. Muench, in America

Public opinion in Europe has grown very pessimistic regarding the League of Nations. This has become so epidemic that London papers are demanding an immediate convocation of the Council of the League with a view to have it formulate a declaration of the extent of its authority and the measures necessary to enforce respect for this authority.

Already, in the early days of the existence of the League, Persia had become a problem. Persia, an original member of the League, called upon it for help when the Bolsheviks advanced on the country and captured Esfah, the chief Persian port, on May 18, 1920.

In proof of this, more evidence was soon to be piled up by the course of events. The Saar coal basin is placed under the jurisdiction of the League of Nations, to be governed in its name by a commission of five members.

Then came the Russian danger to Poland's stability. Poland sent out a call of help which was heard in London and in Paris. Both England and France as members of the League with Poland, were pledged under the Covenant to come to Poland's aid, but the call was left unheeded.

The small nations of Europe know now that it is a matter of help yourself. In consequence all of them are making provisions for an increase of armaments. Thus Queen Wilhelmina of Holland in her speech from the throne pleaded for an enlarged military organization on the grounds that, even though Holland was a member of the League, the League had thus far shown itself so ineffective that the nation, if it would enjoy safety, must put reliance upon its own strength of arms.

These words of the realist Clemenceau were flung into the Chamber of Deputies on Dec. 31, 1918, at a time when the idealist Wilson was being feted in the cities of Europe and hailed as the savior of the world. From that hour the theory of the balance of power and the theory of world cooperation entered upon a death struggle with each other.

In view of these facts history will write the names of those men who had the courage in the face of the whole world to stand out against the League, as a chimerical and even a dangerous proposition, into its pages as men of keen foresight and well-balanced judgment.

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burning high, and they are being fanned to such heights by the winds of the principle of self-determination of nations sweeping over all the lands. Each nation insists, and vigorously insists, that it must determine not only its rights, but also its duties, with the result that it suspiciously watches every move of neighboring nations, nervously retaliates against real or alleged aggression and continually searches for sinister motives in the words and deeds of leading statesmen.

The realities of this world are usually cold, stern, unrelenting facts. Statesmen who rub elbows with these facts every day make no reckoning without them. Seeing them as they are, they do not put their trust in the League, but in larger armies and navies and in favorable alliances with other nations.

Japan, a member of the League, starts the world by building the battleship Mutsu at a cost of forty million dollars, fourteen million dollars more than England's best battle cruiser, the Hood. France today maintains an army whose cost is more than double that of the Prussian military machine. England is carrying out a navy program that surpasses the fondest hopes of navy enthusiasts before the War.

France and Belgium have formed a military alliance, the terms of which, as is coolly announced by Delacroix of Belgium, they will not register for publication with the Secretary General of the League, although Article xviii of the Covenant explicitly requires this, in accordance with the Wilsonian principle that all secret engagements shall be abolished for all times.

"There is an old system which appears condemned today and to which I do not fear to say that I remain faithful at this moment. Countries have organized the defense of their frontiers, with the necessary elements and the balance of power."

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In view of these facts history will write the names of those men who had the courage in the face of the whole world to stand out against the League, as a chimerical and even a dangerous proposition, into its pages as men of keen foresight and well-balanced judgment. Whilst all statesmen gifted with political wisdom thought so, not all were honest in expressing their convictions. Their deeds now express them without the utterance of a single word. Their deeds are full of mistrust as regards the efficacy of the League. It is a silent concession of the futility of the League. It is, therefore a gross libel on the good name of the United States if it is stated, as it sometimes is stated, that the League's failure is due to the non-entrance of the United States. No charge could be more stupid. It is based on gross ignorance of the causes of Europe's political troubles. These arose from sources, and ran courses, so independent of any nation's entrance or non-entrance into the League, that it is absurd to give thought to such a charge. Entrance of the United States into

the League would not have changed the course of events in Europe by long lots, excepting, perhaps, to have increased the entanglements which have already been aggravated by the conflicting policies of the various governments.

What the world needed at the time of the formation of the League, and what it still needs, is not a stiffly-jointed piece of mechanism, but an organism capable of development and growth according to the quickly changing needs of these quickly changing times. Clumsy, awkward machinery was entirely out of place. But good counsels were spurned. Pope Benedict XV. had pronounced in his peace note of August 1, 1917, an idea of a League along lines so facile and so flexible that because of the very flexibility of its design it was ignored. Mr. Root has recently advanced plans for a League quite similar to those of Pope Benedict XV., but this has evoked little interest in Europe. It is a plan that is considered workable by the very best legal talent on international law, and this for no other reason but that it combines healthy idealism with healthy realism. Its secret is that it takes men as they are and not as they should be. Upon this knowledge of the difference between is and ought-to-be, it builds its house, and usually such houses are not built on sand. But politicians seem to prefer the sand.

SECULARISM AND RELIGION

A celebrated aphorism of Gilbert Chesterton gives expression to the thought that Christianity has not been tried and found wanting, but that it has been found hard and not tried. While the epigram is more clever than true, it is undeniable that the world of today is, for the most part, not guided by the spirit of Christ, that secularism rather than faith prevails.

The most obvious evidence of this condition is the lack of religious atmosphere in the daily lives of men. As Lord Marlborough claimed that all the English history he ever knew was derived from the historical dramas of Shakespeare, so the average man of today derives most of his knowledge and much of his inspiration from the newspaper, and the latter has been a poor vehicle for the conveyance of religious thought other than that of a sensational and dangerous character. The photoplay, which is a rival of the printed sheet in the education of men, rarely can be said to add to their religious education. The literature which forms our ordinary reading again makes little account of religious ideas or ideals. As a consequence man's everyday life is marked by too little to indicate any idea of the passing nature of the present world or of the reality of the next world.

As Cardinal Newman once said, there are many men who have neither fear nor hope concerning the life to come; either they do not think of it at all or they think of it in a purely impersonal way, as though it were not a matter of vital and individual concern to themselves. Even those who are exact in the performance of religious duties are apt to be influenced by the spirit of secularism to the extent at least of a certain formalism in religion which would make the latter a kind of church garment to be cast aside when not in church or at prayer.

There is no wish to present a pessimistic picture of a world in which there is much faith and much fidelity to conscience under trying conditions, but rather to register a photographic impression of the lack of religious atmosphere in the ordinary lives of men, which deadens the spirit of faith and which tends to

make religion too formal an observance. A wider acquaintance with Catholic literature and a more real appreciation of Catholic ideals fostered by the spirit of prayer will give new and forceful meaning to the truths of faith which we all believe and profess.—Catholic Standard and Times.

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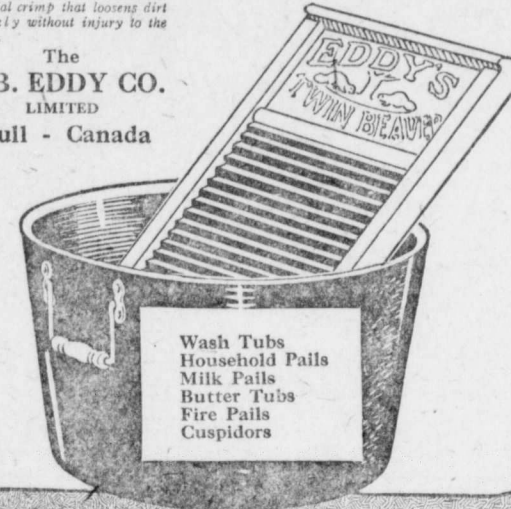
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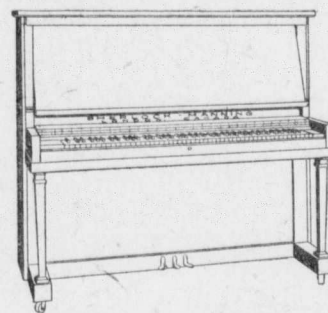
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