

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON TRINITY SUNDAY

THE DIVINE JUDGMENT And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. xxviii, 18)

When these words were uttered by our Lord He had risen from the dead. On this occasion He had with Him only the eleven Apostles, whom He had instructed to meet Him by appointment at this time and in this place—a mountain in Galilee. A few words they are, but full of meaning. The Apostles saw our Lord in the flesh again; they heard His own human lips utter this truth: that all power is His in heaven and in earth.

How did they understand Him? They understood that the Man they saw, the human Being Who then stood before them, was endowed with all power that God would exercise in heaven and in earth; that to rule this vast universe was His right; that to sit on the throne of heaven, to be worshipped and adored as God by every creature, to shape the destiny of this world, of its many nations, of its many families, of every single soul, born and to be born in it; to open and shut the gates of hell at His own will, to judge all without exception, each separately at the moment after death, and all together in the great Judgment day of God, is His right and office as the Man, because He is the Man in God and God in Man; the Man selected to be the One through Whom the Divine Nature manifests Himself in all the fullness of the Godhead in human nature.

But what, therefore, is the first thought that must enter our hearts? It is necessarily this: How will that Man receive us when we are called into His presence, one by one, as we leave this world? How will that countenance look to us at that moment? How will those ears listen to our reports of our own lives? How will those lips speak to us in that dread moment?

But why do we ask ourselves these questions? Because we know that we are to meet that Man in God, face to face, to give an exact account of all of our deeds in the body, and that He is the One to praise or blame us, reward or condemn us, receive us into eternal blessedness or cast us out into eternal, never-ending darkness, and deliver us over to the rule of those who shall be our masters in hell.

Can we tell what the result will be? Yes; and to a certainty! If our lives have been good, or if we die in His friendship, the Man Christ Jesus will give us a blessed and glorious welcome; but if our lives have been wicked, that Man will reject us for ever. He will not have us anywhere near Him. He will not endure our presence a single moment, nor permit us to speak in His presence, nor ever again to mention His Holy Name, but will cast us into that region of creation where holy names are not permitted to be uttered.

Do we truly hope that this sad fate will not be ours? Then we are truly good, leading good lives, are faithful to our duties as good Catholics. If we truly hope for His approval we can judge ourselves now and know we shall receive it.

How is this? If each one can say to-day, and the last of the Easter-time, I have obeyed the commands of the Church and made my Easter duty, then each soul is free from mortal sin and knows the judgment of our Lord will be in his favor. Let any such soul die at any moment now and the mercy of God is surely his, for he is now in the friendship of God, his soul is restored to its heavenly state, and every soul in this state is so acceptable to our Lord that He cannot condemn it, but must welcome it to the society of those who are saved for ever.

Unfaithful, negligent Catholics! whose life heretofore has been a dishonor to God, a shame to your family, a scandal to your neighbor, and a disgrace to the Church of Jesus Christ, have you turned from your sins and made your peace with God this Easter-time? Have you washed your past life clean from sin by this Easter duty? Then you, too, know you will receive the welcome of our Lord, the Man Christ Jesus, you are still His enemy, and have right only to His eternal wrath. How can you sleep a moment or be at rest a single instant longer while knowing you are condemned already, because you have not made your Easter duty?

A MANLY CHRISTIAN YOUTH Catholic students in Protestant or agnostic schools and universities—if they must be found in such places—may well look upon with admiration and copy with profit the model furnished by the life of James J. Hogan, the famous Yale athlete, whose premature death occurred recently in New Haven. He won popularity in the student world such as no one else has enjoyed in the memory of the living. Famous on the field of sport, however, falls alone to account for the extraordinary devotion of which he was the object. And not only was the conquest effected without the sacrifice of principle or the slightest compromise on matters which pertain to faith, but it was in itself the fruit of strong religious convictions and simple piety which were betrayed in rugged honesty, fearless self-respect, humble thought and modest bearing. These qualities win recognition everywhere.

It is said of Hogan that, when he studied at Exeter, he used to walk every Sunday, rain or shine, six or seven miles to assist at Mass. At St. John's Church, New Haven, which he attended regularly and punctually, one Sunday morning after one of the big football games he arrived late for the services, limping, stiff and sore, bearing on his face the marks of the hard struggle of the previous afternoon; but he came and meeting the pastor, apologized for his tardiness in rising. They used to say of him at Yale that he was out to be a priest.

Whatever the temptation of college life, young men of this caliber who cultivate manhood and the manly virtues, never suffer in faith or morals; nor need they fear to lose caste. A strong faith is no handicap to a strong physique. A clean-cut athlete is none

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the worse for being morally clean. Piety does not interfere with pluck. Men everywhere admire him who scorns the bigot's fling and the libertine's taunt as much as him who stands undaunted by the host arrayed against him on the field. A robust body loses nothing by being brought into subjection by a still more robust soul. James J. Hogan's brief and honorable career proves all this. May others learn the lesson and imitate as well as admire.—Hartford Transcript.

CHURCH INDEFECTIBLE

Having shown that it is historically evident that Christianity spread rapidly during the first three centuries, it may be asked: "What caused its wide-spread success throughout the world?" Like strong and stable government, Christianity commends itself because it is authoritative and proclaims its dogmas with certainty. In its code of morality are embraced the most sublime doctrines, which, when compared with paganism shows its superiority and divine origin by proclaiming a fundamental truth which the latter never discovered, namely, that there is but one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, without Whom "was made nothing that was made." (John 1, 3.)

What could be more consoling to the mind of man than what Christianity teaches regarding man's redemption? It tells of the existence of future state where peace and happiness reign forever. The revealed mysteries of redemption, the Incarnation and original sin shed a flood of light on the highest and most abstruse problems of philosophy. They do not, it is true, control the phenomena of the natural order, but they control their explanation, and to this fact Christianity, especially among profound thinkers, owes, in a measure, its wide and rapid progress.

What is true of the authoritative teaching of Christianity applies also to its ethical code, which is the most perfect ever given to man. During the first ages of Christianity, its moral code changed the aspect of the world. Those who embraced the teachings of Christ in those early ages were, for the most part, pagans. They did not abandon their deities nor change their licentious mode of living, for lives of charity, meekness, justice, humility, purity and temperance, until convinced that Christianity was divinely instituted. They conformed their lives to the standard of the gospel. By doing so, their very example was more eloquent than words in demonstrating the truth of the Christian religion and spreading its light in the darkness of paganism. So wonderful was their charity towards one another that the pagans would exclaim: "See how they love one another." This Tertullian paraphrased, saying: "Well may they thus exclaim, for see how they hate one another."

OTHER CAUSES

For two thousand years the teaching of the synagogue was a forecast of the coming Messiah, the prophets foretold His advent, and the patriarchs prayed and sighed for His coming. Paganism, which had been on trial for four thousand years, had run its course, and proved a failure in supplying the religious aspirations of mankind. At this period Greek philosophy, which was wide-spread, furnished an accurate terminology to express the truths of Revelation. The political condition of the world at the time served to spread the growth of Christianity. Rome was the mistress of the world. Nations hitherto separated and goaded on by savage barbarity, hating each other, were then united, and rendered the spread of Christianity easier. The missionaries, not tied down by national prejudices, had freer and fuller scope.

Another cause, the early Christians displayed such superhuman courage and bravery in the midst of suffering and torture as to elicit the admiration of their persecutors. Not only men, but women and children, in those early ages, endured and suffered the most excruciating tortures and death. Like sheep led to the slaughter, without a moan, they displayed heroic fortitude, often

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showing feelings of intense joy at being given an opportunity of being dissolved and being with Christ. Many pagans who witnessed not only the extraordinary fortitude, but even the desire to meet death, were converted to Christianity; because they saw that a religion which could produce such heroes and so many martyrs was more than human. Hence the truth of Tertullian's remarks against these pagan persecutors: "Your ingenious cruelty is vain, or, rather, it is a spell which increases our numbers; we multiply under harvest of slaughter, for the blood of Christians is their seed."

Finally, one of the greatest and most powerful means that led to the rapid spread and growth of Christian teaching was the power of working miracles possessed by the early missionaries. Christ promised this power to His apostles, because it was necessary in order to convince the pagan world of the divinity of their mission and of their religion, which was to supplant their deities bronzed by the smoke of sacrifice and covered with the dust of ages. Hence, whenever the good of religion required it, these early missionaries exercised the power they had received, which was the last proof that could be given by God to man.

St. Augustine used this argument of miracles wrought by the apostles and their successors against unbelievers of his day. He wrote: "Either miracles accompanied the propagation of the Christian religion, or they did not; if they did, then it is divine; if they did not, then its rapid spread is the greatest of all miracles."

Waiving the effects of grace, we have given here what we consider the chief causes for the rapid spread of Christian teaching during the early ages of the Church.—Intermountain Catholic.

WHERE REFORM SHOULD BEGIN

There is not a word in the English vocabulary that has been so overworked for a considerable time past as "Reform." A wave of alleged reform has been sweeping over the country, and the political, social, and business worlds have been caught up and carried forward in its currents. It was declared that most things were in a bad shape. Graft, dishonesty, and demoralization were too prevalent to be longer endured; so a few offenders, and not always the most flagrant ones, were singled out and put in the pillory, "a mark for the moving finger of scorn to point at."

But the disease lies too deep to yield to such superficial treatment as this. The evil will continue to exist and flourish until the surface, ready to show its ugly head again at the first opportune moment. The reform that requires investigation by committees and lawyers cannot check the work of corruption. The plain truth is that any reform worthy of the name begins, and it might almost be said to end, in the home; and it is not always the children who need reforming either. Often the parents need it far more, for it is to them the child is to look for those examples of integrity and righteousness that are to form the characters of the future man or woman. If the parents are to fulfill their mission in this regard they must illustrate what they teach by the probity of their own lives. It will be admitted that the homes where such ideal conditions exist are few and far between, and that the average home is not only susceptible of improvement but in need of genuine reform. One has but to open one's eyes and look about him at the vast army of wayward and incorrigible youth of both sexes, to become painfully aware that many parents abdicate their just authority and shirk their duty and responsibility. Under ordinary circumstances, the boy and the girl may be trusted to take care of their own physical development and the schools will usually take care of their mental training, but the foundation of moral training, the education that makes for good manhood and womanhood, that establishes character, must be laid, if at all, in the home, and the parents cannot shift this burden upon pastor or teacher and be free from the evil consequences that may follow from their neglect.

This is the sort of training that will give a generation of men and women who will make the world better for their having lived in it. The children who are brought up under the right kind of home influence seldom go very far astray.—B. C. Orphan's Friend.

BISHOP URGES SUPPORT OF CATHOLIC PRESS

Preaching in his cathedral at Saranton, Pa., a few days ago, Bishop Hoban said:

At a conference of the priests held a couple of weeks ago I stated that they should subscribe for three or four Catholic papers, and that they should urge the people of their respective parishes to subscribe for at least one Catholic paper, more if they could afford them. My dear brethren, in this age the Catholic family is hardly worth the name if he is not a subscriber for at least one Catholic paper. How otherwise are Catholics to keep in touch with affairs in the Catholic world? How will they be in a position to make proper answers to objections and misstatements of the magazines and secular papers? Only a couple of weeks ago the secular press of the country exhibited much indignation because of the punishment meted out to the infamous Ferrer. Perhaps in the whole area of these United States there were not five secular papers that printed an inkling of the truth. How many of them misstated the facts? How many of them contained editorials that were based on falsehood? How many retracted when Catholic papers, a little later on, gave publicity to the facts in the case?

In contrasting the conditions of the Church in Germany and in France, the Bishop said: German Catholics support German Catholic papers, French Catholics do not support a Catholic press, hence a French Catholic press does not exist. This lesson should not be lost by Catholics in the United States, and I entreat you to support the Catholic press. The cost to you will be found to be trifling. The advantages that will accrue to you will be found to be very great."

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FATHER BENSON'S SERMON

At the Solemn High Mass of a recent Sunday in the Cathedral, Rev. Robert Hugh Benson preached the final sermon of the course he has been giving. The Most Rev. Archbishop occupied his throne during the services.

In the course of his sermon, in which he explained the relation of the Catholic to the Church, he said:

"When we lay stress upon that great society to which we belong, we are told that we neglect the individual. When we, too, lay stress upon individual life, when we say that no man, for no cause, however great and good, must risk the salvation of his own soul, then we are told that we do not lay enough stress upon the great society to which we belong, that we insist too much upon the individual to the exclusion of the body."

"When we turn to our blessed Lord's teachings we find these two characteristics of Catholic life which the world criticises, expressly stated. We find our Lord telling us that a man cannot save his life unless he lose it; that he cannot preserve his own individuality unless he is prepared to risk it. And yet, again and again, He insists that if we would truly preserve our individuality we must lose it, but that we must not lose it in such a way that we really risk that eternal existence of individuality which God intended."

"The Catholic Church is the only Church in which nationality means nothing; in which the individuality of men counts for nothing at all; in which all partitions between nations, between persons, are broken down. One divine society containing truth equally true for all nations, for all times! And it is in this divine Church only that the individual can truly lay down his private judgment and his personal likes and dislikes in order to be filled with a higher love and a higher knowledge than he can possess individually."

"This is my first visit to the United States. I have not traveled enough to warrant me speaking about the country. I hope to come out some day and see more of it. I was impressed deeply by the great congregations at the Boston Cathedral on both Sundays I preached there. I was amazed at the extraordinary attention of the people. Congregations vary so much. Sometimes you feel as if you are speaking against a wall of brick or stone, you get no response of any kind. But your Cathedral congregation was a most responsive and keenly attentive gathering."

"I was astonished also to find that more than 60 per cent. of the people of Boston are Catholic, and that all the churches are crowded many times on Sunday. The only approach to anything like this that I have seen in Europe was in Ireland."

Speaking of the hope for the return of England to the Catholic Church, he said: "Not all of England, but all the Christians of England will, I believe

enter the Catholic fold. When they see the spirit of compromise which prevails outside the Church on the most sacred principles, their faith in Protestantism must begin to shake. One day the thinking English Protestant sees a great religious body denying the divinity of our Lord, the next day the leader of another religious body says that all we want is morality, and that dogma is not needed.

"Substitute morality for dogmatic religion, and in the next generation we shall have people saying, 'Why should I believe in morality, why should not I please myself?'—Boston Pilot.

A SENSELESS QUESTION

Some one, evidently in a more or less irritated state of mind, sends in the following—unsigned, of course:

"In your last issue, commenting on Colonel Roosevelt's visit to Rome, you give expression to this impertinent remark: 'Our Methodist friends may dance the highland fling and resolve until doomsday, but their antics will have no effect on the head of the Catholic Church, who will remain long after all present-day disturbers have become food for the worms?' On what do you base such a statement?"

At the risk of again appearing impertinent, we are forced to exclaim, what a senseless question!

Our statement is based on the word of Christ, the Divine Founder of the Catholic Church; it is based on the world's history; it is based on the convincing fact that through all the ages nations have come and gone, governments have been organized, have prospered and have dropped out of existence, the Church meanwhile having outlived them all. Our remark is further based on the martyrdom of saints, on the thousands of lives given in defense of Christianity.

Let our inquiring friend take a look down the corridor of time. What will he see? Scarcely had the message of salvation been addressed to old Rome (then the world) when detestation for it burst forth in all its murderous fury. But did that destroy it? No; rather it was the more eagerly embraced by many people everywhere. Wild beasts had no effect; the stake did not stop it; cruelties the most atrocious the world has ever known only caused it to be the more popular, until imperial Rome bowed to the teaching of the lowly Nazarene and the Emperor Constantine became a Christian—a Catholic, just as is Pius X. now.

The Catholic Church was here long before any of the sects of to-day were conceived in the erratic mind of rebellious man. It will be here when the religious outcasts of the world are but a memory. The more liberal, the more scandal brought against her, the greater will she become. We have the word of the Crucified One for that, and He was truth.

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