

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

THE REV. F. P. HIGGINS, O. S. B.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OUR BELIEF IN CHRIST

"Jesus asked them, saying: What think you of Christ?" (Matt. xxii, 41, 42)

The prophets had announced the coming of the Redeemer. The Jewish nation expected Him, and yet, when He came, what reception did they give Him? They rejected Him. He challenged them, "What think you of Christ?" If you believe not My words, acknowledge the deeds that I have done in your midst. The evil spirits, that He had cast out of those possessed, cried out, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God!" But "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Had they not taunted Him that, He was a Samaritan and had a devil? How different was that noble answer that Peter gave Him, when our Lord had asked, "But whom do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi, 16, 17).

This same question has been demanded of the world, age after age. And as Christ our Lord triumphed in suffering, so the most glorious answer have been given in the days of persecution. Not a verbal answer merely, but with their lives, amidst all manner of torments, terrified by the rack, the scourging, the fire, the wild beasts in the Coliseum, the martyrs gave their answer, "I am Christ, the Son of God; glorified in being the followers of the Crucified one, and gladly gave up their lives to seal their faith. How crowds of holy witnesses rise up before our memories—children, maidens, mothers, old men, rich and poor, for three hundred years by their death proclaimed their faith in "Christ, the Son of the living God."

And when peace dawned and the Church was allowed to extend and propagate, alas! heresies sprang up. What then did men think of Christ? Arius denied His Divinity. His heresy spread like a devastating plague, and the world "groaned to find itself Arian." Other heresies followed, each with its false assertions in their answer to "What think you of Christ?" And yet, the truth prevailed. The Gospel tidings were received by nation after nation converted to the Faith, and through successive centuries up to the Reformation, the world at large gave the one universal answer, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."

Though the powers of hell cannot prevail against Christ and His Church, yet the invidious warfare continues unrelentingly, and a nation here, a nation there, falls away and denies its Redeemer, for a time leading astray and ruining the souls of men. "What think you of Christ?" Some years ago an atheistic catechism answered: Christ was a working man, and a socialist. And Unitarians deny that He is God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. And at the present time how mistaken is the faith of those who openly declare that Christ's teaching is obsolete, that it needs reforming and bringing up to date! Man daring to aspire to improve the work of the Eternal God! Man, the creature of a passing hour, to sit in judgment on the doctrine of eternal truth!

Living, as we do, in such times as these, it is to us, to teach each one of us, that our Blessed Lord addresses the question once again, "What think you of Christ?" and He looks to us to boldly proclaim an answer that will glorify Him. We cannot shirk the answer. We are Christians, and we have to respond in word and deed, by the profession of our faith, and by our lives that live up to our faith. Alas! some of their sinful lives cry out as of old, and prefer Barabbas to Christ.

But we ourselves, children of the Church, who have been redeemed by His precious Blood, give a loyal and abiding answer before the world of our answering faith in Christ the Son of God. Our faith, our hope, our love, our devotedness to Him proclaim the answer: we stand by every word He spoke: we adhere to His every doctrine, handed down to us in sacred Tradition by His Church. We worship Him and receive Him in the Holy Eucharist, proving our faith by loving obedience to His word, "Do this in memory of Me."

What an example we can be, in our little world, to those who as yet know Him not, and to those who have once professed their faith in Christ, but now have fallen away. Let our lives convey to them, impress even unwilling souls, what we think of Christ our Lord, that we believe that He is the God of Truth, Who became Man to teach us the way to heaven by word and example, that He freed us from the yoke of sin by His Redemption, that we might begin a new life, walking in His footsteps. Let them see, make them see, that He is all in all to us—our light, our strength, the motive of all our endeavors and endurance. This is what we think of Christ. Knowing Him, remembering Him, constantly here in this life makes us faithful to Him now, buoyed up with the glorious hope that we shall reign with Him for ever in the life to come.

A ROYAL SAINT

By C. S. Augustine Rowell, R. C. S.

"Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Arch-
tact who planned—
Albeit laboring for a scanty band
Of white-robed Scholars only—
this immense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high heaven
rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned
for the senses
These lofty pillars, spread that
branching roof
Self-poised and scooped into ten
thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose,
where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as
loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweet-
ness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immor-
tality."

—WORDSWORTH

Some of the English kings have their secure place in the Church's roll of saints, such as St. Edward of the West Saxons, St. Edmund the Martyr, and the great St. Edward the Confessor, once the Patron Saint of England, whose shrine in the Abbey of Westminster is still held in veneration by some of our fellow-countrymen. And now we learn that when our present King George V. was in Rome recently, he heard with interest from His Eminence Cardinal Gasquet that preliminary steps had been taken for the Beatification of his predecessor, Henry VI.

This saintly monarch was a man fitted by nature for the cloister, but destiny placed him in the court. When he assumed the reins of government in 1440 at the age of eighteen, one of his first acts was the foundation of Eton College, dedicated to Our Blessed Lady, as "a first earnest of his devotion towards God," to quote his own words to the Pope at the time. Under the shadow of the towers of Windsor, quite close to the college of "Our Lady of Eton," there now stands the Jesuit College of Beaumont; but at King Henry's own foundation of Eton he is still invoked in the college hymn beginning "Rex Henricus, sis amicus." Moreover, Eton continues to produce illustrious converts to the Catholic Church, such as Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson, Father Ronald Knox, and Mr. Shane Leslie. In the year after the founding of Eton the king established King's College, one of the beauties of Cambridge, a visit to which inspired the sonnet of Wordsworth quoted at the head of this article.

The reign of Henry VI. of Lancaster was one of the most turbulent that England has ever witnessed; the Wars of the Roses were at their height, and yet at the head of the affairs was a man whom the historian Polydore Vergil, who wrote during the reign of Henry VIII., described as "the purest, most honest, and most holy creature in the world." The last twenty years of his life were full of tragedy and sorrow, due to a great extent to his determination "to have only virtuous men around him." Eventually he was despoiled by a Yorkist Parliament, and the battle of Tewkesbury marked the downfall of the Lancastrian cause. It is related that on the day of the battle, which happened to be Palm Sunday, Henry "preferred to spend so holy a day in prayer at York," instead of being present on the battlefield. Often he took refuge from a stormy council chamber in his chapel or with his beloved books, of which he possessed a very valuable store. Four years after the battle of Tewkesbury, in 1471, he was murdered in the Tower by the Duke of Gloucester, on the 4th of May, a day, that less than a century afterwards, was to be made holy by the blood of the first fruits of the English Martyrs under another Henry.

According to Polydore Vergil, no sooner had the king been slain than his tomb, first at Chertsey and then at Windsor (whither his body has been removed), "began to be celebrated for numerous miracles." A historical chart of Henry VIII's reign, now in the English College at Rome, also alludes to them. Yorkshiresmen, in particular, regarded him as a saint, and in 1473 Dean Alexander, his former private secretary, placed his statue on the choir screen of York Minster where, despite Edward IV's disapproval, the populace did reverence to the martyred monarch. Similar statues were erected at Durham and Ripon, as well as in East Anglia. Harpesfield, an Elizabethan historian, of the Anglican Church, has a whole chapter about "the Miracles of King Henry VI.," in which he mentions the votive offerings at Windsor from the persons cured. There is in the British Museum a Latin manuscript of "The Book of the King's Miracles."

The proceedings of the cause of Beatification began as far back as the reign of Henry VII., who strove to obtain the formal canonization of Henry VI. from Popes Innocent VIII., Alexander VI., and Julius II., supported by the evidences of the monarch's sanctity collected by his former chaplain, John Blakman. The saintly monarch's foundations of Eton and King's College, Cambridge, were also an argument urged in support of his canonization. According to Edward Hall, whose work on "The Union of the Two

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Noble Families of Lancaster and York" was printed in the reign of Henry VIII., the fees for the canonization were so high that Henry VII. grudged the money. In the same principle that made a famous Roman Prince declare that it was too expensive to have more than one saint in his family. But Cardinal Gasquet, who is writing a book on "The Religious Life of King Henry VI." (to be published in the autumn by Messrs. Bell and Sons), states that this was not the real reason, which is to be found in Henry VII's death and the subsequent religious upheaval which followed the accession of Henry VIII. Even as late as 1528 the English Ambassadors raised the question at Rome.

Reference has been made above to a manuscript in the British Museum in Latin. This belonged to Cranmer, and is probably a translation by John Blakman from an English original, made before 1490. Evidence of the earlier stages of the Beatification process is furnished by the appearance in the margin of the Latin words, "probatum," "non probatum," and "non refertur," opposite the accounts of miracles "proved," "not proved," or "not vouched for by witnesses," as the case may be.

Many hymns to the king have also been preserved, and his religious character is proved by the bestowal of the Golden Rose upon him by Pope Eugenius IV. in 1444. The cause was brought forward, after an interval of nearly four hundred years, by Cardinal Gasquet about three years ago. It has not yet, however, officially come before the Sacred Congregation. The late Pope raised to the altars of the Church of St. Joan of Arc, who was the contemporary of Henry VI. and also his opponent. If the cause of our saintly monarch is successful, it will be yet another of those remarkable coincidences so frequent in the history of the Church that the same century should witness the honoring of those who, though ostensibly enemies, were yet one in their common love of holiness.

Of course there is a practical application of all this to ourselves here and now. In the first place there is the obvious point that, just as in days gone by, English kings have lived a life of great sanctity in communion with the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, so it is possible for them to do so again. The bringing forward of the cause of Henry VI. should be a fresh incentive for all true patriots to redouble their prayers and labors for the conversion of our country.

But the point to which this article is intended to lead is this. We can all of us do our little part in helping forward the cause of the Beatification. Many of us have been rejoicing lately in the answer to our prayers for the Beatification of Blessed Teresa, the "Little Flower of Jesus." Our prayers were answered very speedily and in a most signal manner. Now how was this end attained? First and foremost by a great and widespread devotion to the Little Flower. In order to achieve the honor of Beatification it was necessary for her to work some miracles capable of being used as evidence of sanctity. So we asked her for her own sake to work them; or rather we asked God to bear witness to the holiness of His servant by performing wonders through her intercession, as He Himself foretold would happen. "Greater works than Mine shall they do."

Very well then. As good Catholic English folk we all desire to see one of our own sovereigns honored. Let us hasten on his cause by cultivating a devotion to him. If we may use the expression, a saint not yet officially recognized as such by the Church is likely to be very ready to work miracles and obtain answers to prayer, for it is this that will obtain for him a place in the Church's Roll of Honor. All you then who are in need of favors, spiritual or temporal, come and pay your devotions to King Henry VI. of England. The sole purpose of this short article is to arouse interest in the subject, and to make people do something in a cause which the present writer has at heart. And in order that all available evidence may be collected, and nothing of use be lost, it is recommended that any answers to prayer and any favors obtained through

the merits and intercession of our "Royal Saint" should be addressed to us at Officially taken up we may be able to forward them to the right quarter. It is right that Osterley should lead the way in devotion to the Saints of England, for it was the work at Osterley which recently provoked the remark that "God seems to be using England to lead the world back to the Catholic Faith."

So then we expect many letters in the near future containing reports of new wonders and favors granted by the intercession of King Henry. Then when the time comes we shall be able to bombard Rome with these letters of yours, and thus do much to hasten the Beatification of this saintly monarch, and to place him amongst the number of Holy Confessors and Kings and Queens, which includes St. Edward the Confessor, St. Margaret of Scotland, St. Louis of France, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary. "Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis."—Stella Maris.

WEARINESS

Gray has painted for us in his immortal Elegy the portrait of a laborer wending his way homeward at the close of a strenuous day of toil. Although the words of description are, from the graceful and realistic setting, so easily imagined the condition of this man who represents the toilers of the world.

Not only great poets but likewise artists have consecrated their genius to the portrayal of the common man, the laborer, especially him who toils with his hands, working literally in the sweat of his brow to earn his daily bread.

The laborer is one of the most useful institutions of his country. He is a most perfect type of citizen. What avail it if the man of superior mentality evolve ways and means whereby others may be carried more speedily from one distant place to another? What avail it if some genius thinks out enormous schemes of electrical appliance or gigantic processes of railroads, or communication by telephone or telegraph—if the architect produce a most perfect plan of mammoth building equipped with peerless apparatus for carrying on the giant industries of the world?—were there none to take in hand the axe and the pick, no stalwart shoulders to bear the weight of stone and mortar, no agile feet to ascend swiftly to lofty places?

What advantage to design new and marvelous subway systems if there be no one who is willing to stand knee deep in the trenches of mud and slime digging through to that magical world far below the level of our common ways, toiling in heat and in rains, pausing only at the noon hour to snatch scant refreshment from the little tin lunch-box? Truly the vocation of the laborer is no mediocre one. His trademark is stamped upon the world.

The weariness which comes to such toilers after a hard spent day is richly rewarded by deep and untiring sleep. The common complaint of our day is that of weariness. Men murmur of it on all sides. But they complain not so much of physical weariness as of mental fatigue, the bane of those who have too much time on their hands.

Why so many sanitariums for the relief of this distressing malady which is appropriately termed nerves? A generation ago conditions did not call for such strenuous reconstruction of the mental forces. Physicians and others well acquainted with the facts tell us that it is not so much hard work as worry which causes this distressing condition.

And why this load of worries? Is it because of poverty or of anxious trials? Not so much these as because of the restless striving to acquire the things of the world which, when attained, call for something further still.

Weariness is a common complaint with men who have too much time to spare, as with those who have received more than the needful share of this world's goods. There are people who do not complain of weariness after a hard day's labor in the office or classroom. Perchance they are weary but we do not hear much about it. They understand full well what Emerson meant when he said: "A few pulsations of created beings, a few succussions of acts, a few lamps held out in the firmament, enable us to talk of Time, make epochs, write histories,—to do more—to date the revelations of God to man."

There are men and women who endure the fatigue and the heat of the day in patience, believing that the quiet endurance of such labors ever looking to a high and noble goal, will merit something lasting for the world. They realize that a few restless impulses, a few dissatisfied longings, a few lights extinguished in the soul, will create an inevitable loss to the world. They are unwilling to be destroyers.

All men have periods of inexpressible soul weariness. But trifles do not weary the man of character. Those of us who recall the enthralling pages of Bleak House will remember My Lady Leicester who was bored to death with living, who complained of being frightfully fatigued with reading, having almost read a page during a journey of twenty miles.

The most perfect of created things pall at times. So Michael Angelo said of external beauty: "It is the

frail and weary weed in which God dresses the soul which He has called into Time. According to this intimate testimony, there must have been times in the life of this great and immortal genius when the magnificent colors of his palette became so many splashes or splashes without meaning or form. But because of this he did not drop his facile brush. He struggled onward, upward, and his glorious conceptions reveal the workings of a soul who would not descend from the heights because the sun was scorching or the winds raged furiously and drove lesser men to the safe and pleasant plains.

Augustine, who knew the workings of the human heart so well, complained of this weariness: "When shall I nowhere meet with anything but sorrow and labor? Where can man's life be without temptation? My joys contend with my sorrows, and to what side the victory inclines, I know not."

"I am weary of this life," said Cassius to Brutus when the bonds of friendship, strung too tightly snapped asunder. Victory itself becomes wearisome when once men have achieved it.

"What comfort has life?" asks Cicero. "Say what trouble has it not, rather?" And he concludes his lamentation by yearning for a release from this bondage: "O glorious day when I shall depart to that divine comfort and assemblage of spirits and quit this troubled and polluted scene." Almost the words of Kempis in his age-old cloister.

High minded and brave souls do not yield an inch to this weariness, although they must suffer it.

The mother, holding on her knees her little babe, looks with far-seeing eyes into the distant future. She knows that some day her child will become a man and will go forth from her restraining love. The thought brings inexpressible weariness. And yet she sacrifices all thought of self to the sublime conception of what this man shall do for the world. She offers her soul-weariness as a sacrifice to humanity.

Weariness is the common portion of pilgrims. It is only when one reaches the desired land that he will clearly see how providential were those toils supported in infinite pains of soul and body.—The Pilot.

PATTI'S FAVORITE SONG

Here's a good story found in the musical section of an English paper:

"As this is the centenary year of 'Home, Sweet Home,' it is appropriate to recall the circumstances in which Mrs. Adeline Patti, whose name will always be associated with the song, first sang it. During the Presidency of Abraham Lincoln she received an invitation to sing at the White House. After singing several songs she finished with 'The Last Rose of Summer.' She noticed that both Lincoln and his wife were much moved by it, and remembering that they had just lost their son Willie, she felt that she had made a mistake, and was about to begin some rollicking song, when the President asked her to sing 'Home, Sweet Home.'

Her accompanist, Maurice Strakosch, did not know the air, and although she knew it she was unacquainted with the words. On hearing this Lincoln took down a small music-book from a shelf, and, opening it at the song, placed it on the piano-stand. When she had sung it Lincoln expressed the great pleasure that her singing of the song had afforded him. On their way back to the hotel Strakosch referred to the incident, and suggested to Mrs. Patti that she might do well to introduce the song at her concerts as an encore.

She adopted the suggestion, and 'Home, Sweet Home' proved so popular that she continued for almost half a century to sing it to her English-speaking audiences. The majority of the people who attended a Patti concert were never quite satisfied with the programme unless the great singer favored them with this song of home.—Catholic Standard and Times.

What does that solitude about future accidents bring thee, but only sorrow upon sorrow? Sufficient the day is the evil thereof." Matt. vii, 34, 0.



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The most perfect of created things pall at times. So Michael Angelo said of external beauty: "It is the

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BUBBLES AND SHARKS

Capt. Lawson Smith, a New York diver, is authority for the statement that sharks are afraid of air bubbles. "When a diver sees a shark," says the captain, "he nips the valve of the tube through which he receives air from the surface and then lets it go again. This makes great air bubbles in the water, and usually the shark swims for its life when it sees them."

Here is a chance to moralize. Many of us, immersed in the deep sea of life and hedged in by the diving suit of daily duty, often see great sharks of worry and care coming towards us with bared teeth. They seem to hover about in the water everywhere, grinning grotesquely, ready to devour us. We are filled with fear and dismay; we prepare to drop everything and flee; we make ready to jerk the air line and ascend to the surface leaving unfinished the task we set out to accomplish.

But we never think that many, if not all, of the sharks that fasten their hungry eyes on us would flee to unknown and invisible depths if we but opened the valves a bit and let bubbles of laughter, of joy, of common sense escape. Many of our cares are shadows; they fade away at the slightest gleam of calm rationality. In needs only a little effort, a little forethought, to release a few bubbles of optimism occasionally. If we do so with regularly, most probably the great sharks of anxiety and trouble will swim away; and if any remain, they will have grown so small and insignificant that either we will not be troubled by them any more, or we will be able to despatch them with little effort.—Canisius Monthly.

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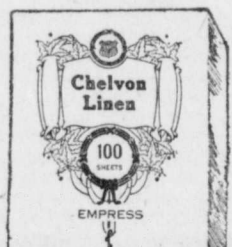
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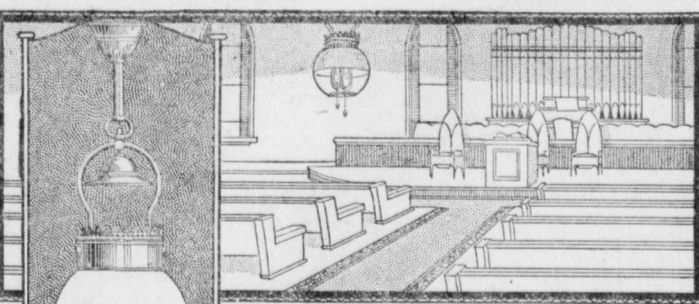
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