

## FIVE MINUTE SERMON

REV. F. P. HICKET, O. S. B.  
SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

## WORK

"Why stand you here all the day idle?" (Matt. xxiii.)

The parable of the Gospel, my dear brethren, can easily be understood, and conveys a lesson that we cannot afford to miss. We are called to work—we must work; and if we do work, thank God, we are sure of a reward. This is, in brief, the lesson.

For the Master of the vineyard is none other than our Heavenly Father; the vineyard the service of God. The various hours denote the different stages in our fleeting life. And who are the labourers? None other than ourselves, dear brethren, variously typified by the sixth, ninth, and eleventh hour, according as we have worked for God all life long or only a part of it.

We are called to work. No one can complain that he has not had the chance to work out his salvation. There need be no unemployed in the spiritual life. There is work for all, and God calls us and bids us enter His service. Of our own neglect we can miss the call of God. The Master went out at different hours, and still found men not employed. They had not been seeking work when He had gone out previously, or they would have been engaged. So, perhaps, hunger and want had brought them to seek work. Others, again, had idled all the day long, and only entered on their task one hour before sunset.

It is not a pleasant thing for anyone to look back and see how many times he has disregarded the voice of God calling him to His service. How happy those who responded in the first fervor of their youth, and who have never looked back or played the sluggard in their Master's service! How happy; but how few of this kind! Most of us can recall making excuses, putting God off, promising to begin some other time. But, my dear brethren, listen to Him this time. We know not what hour it may be. For some it may be the last reproach they may hear, "Why stand you here all the day idle?"

We must work. "Labour and toil all the days of thy life." In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. (Gen. iii. 16, 19.) This is God's sentence on fallen man, and holds good in our spiritual as well as our earthly life.

And what is the work of our soul in the service of God? The work is prayer. It is a work, a labour, because it is supernatural. We have to raise up our minds and hearts to do it. That implies an effort. Not that we can do it unassisted; no, but the grace and power of God will never be wanting to us. But we ourselves have to will and make the effort.

And prayer is a labour, because it has to be continuous. "Pray without ceasing." We cannot pray once and for all and be finished with it. It is the spiritual breath and food of our soul. "Give us this day our daily bread."

It is a work, because the world, the flesh, and the devil raise up obstacles against it. They try to obstruct the regularity, the routine of prayer. Persevere in prayer, and you are the faithful labourer in the vineyard.

Prayer is the work that accomplishes the salvation of our souls. All-important work that it is, how time is begrudged to it, how interest in it wanting! Prayer is speaking to God, interceding for grace and giving thanks for blessings received; and yet often our attention and love are wandering to other things during that sacred time. To pray well is, indeed, a labour; but one that cannot be shirked, if we would save our souls. We must persevere in regular and daily prayer, for we never know when evening may come and the Lord say: "Call the labourers and pay them their hire." Alas for our poor souls, if we are not in the vineyard labouring when the wages are paid! If we are working till the sunset we are sure of our reward.

And notice the reward. There is no comparison between the labour and the reward. The reward is so great, because "I am good," says the Lord. Life eternal, the infinite happiness of heaven, the wages for the work of this short life in the service of God. Short life! How little of the short life do we give to God! Whatever little may be left of it, let it now at least be all for God.

Contrast our worldly wisdom with the sluggish folly of our spiritual life. We understand quite well the connection between work and wages. How keen we are to get the utmost for our money, if we are the master, and to get the best money for our labour, if we are the workmen! Six days a week we are smart and business-like for a few shillings or a pound or two; but when the Sunday comes, and we are called by the Almighty to work for Him, and the wages offered are eternal life, we, the same people, have not the sense to care, nor the thrift to secure the bargain. To put it plainly, a week's wages in our hand now is much more thought of than the joys of heaven promised for the future. If men are so apathetic about their souls, what can possibly arouse them?

The warning that Lent is approaching is given us to-day—Lent, the time for work, extra prayer, and repentance. The Master is calling us: "Come ye also into my vineyard." No loitering now, no delay. Enter in, and with good and willing hearts let us work whilst there is light.

"Why stand you here all the day idle?" Yes; this may be the last Lent for some, who hear these words to-day. The Master may never come again bidding them to His service. The next time they are bidden, it will be a summons to the judgment.

## TEMPERANCE

## "THE MIRROR"

There is one man at least on the municipal bench at Chicago who has learned enough philosophy and opened his heart sufficiently to the call of the human to make him worthy to be a judge. Solon was no wiser.

A recent dispatch from the Windy City says that when, one day last week, Robert Atkins, an accountant, was arrested in a state of intoxication, and later brought before Judge Hopkins, the penalty imposed upon him—and, mark you, the only penalty—was that he should look at himself in a looking-glass.

"Baillif," the justice is reported to have said, "get a mirror and make this man take a good look at himself."

And the Chicago "wire" goes on to affirm that the prisoner, having looked, begged to be allowed to go to a Turkish bath.

Now, I do not, of course, know that Judge Hopkins is a disciple of Walt Whitman, or even if he is a reader of Whitman, but certain it is that he absorbed from life something of the same sagacity, discernment and illumination which are so marked a feature of the message of the great poet. He has learned, as Whitman learned, that there is no punishment as just to set the soul face to face with itself. If only we can be got to raise our eyes and look, the probabilities are we are saved. The trouble is to accomplish that one clear, honest look. For of veils there are many.

In the mirror which this wise judge caused to be held up before a weakened, and it may well be, a diseased man, the man saw not only his bloated and blotched skin, his distorted features, his hanging mouth, his bloodshot eyes and the general repulsiveness and disorder of his person. He saw, also, deep into his loathsome appetite; and he realized, as never before, perhaps, the vileness of the habit which appetite indulged, has fastened upon him. The fact came to him strongly, I have not a doubt, that he was a sick man—for indulgence of appetite is sickness—and that he must set to work to find for himself a cure.

But even deeper and clearer still, I can imagine that just as a drowning man is said to review on an instant the whole of his life, right back to infancy, this man, looking into that mirror at the outward semblance of himself, saw back, back to days of innocence and joy, and to a face how different.

And thus seeing, is it not likely that a trembling horror would sweep over him for the thing he had become?

Listen, now, to what Whitman says of just such a looking:

"Hold it up sternly! See this it sends back! (Who is it? Is it you?) Outside fair costume—within ashes and filth,

No more a flashing eye; no more a sonorous voice or sprightly step; Now some slave's eye, voice, hands, step.

A drunkard's breath, unwholesome eater's face, venerable's flesh. Lungs rotting away piecemeal, stomach sour and cankerous. Joints rheumatic, bowel clogged with abomination. Blood circulating dark and poisonous streams. Words babble, hearing and touch callous. No brain, no heart left—no magnetism of sex. Such, from one look in this looking-glass are you hence, Such a result so soon—and from such a beginning!

And Judge Hopkins said, further, to the baillif: "Hang that mirror to the wall back of the radiator and let it stay there. I want every man like this to be compelled to look at himself when he is brought to the bar of this court."

A Daniel came to judgment!—Fam-fan in London Free Press.

## NOT "BEYOND," BUT THE LIMIT!

The last issue of the "Yale Review" contains an article by Katherine Fullerton Gould: "The British Novelists, Ltd.," which repeatedly refers to the English writer, Galsworthy. What it says of him is not at all laudatory. "There always are long descriptions of nature in Mr. Galsworthy's novels," runs one paragraph, "and if they are delicately confused with mating animals and human sex impulses, and all the cantations of stirring sap and swelling buds and the like, that will certainly not make them any less popular." He is accused of not knowing "what he thinks about life," "as far as one can make out, he thinks that most people are sensual, that every body ought to be kind, and that there is a sustaining sanction for sex emotion in the fauna and flora of England." Mr. Galsworthy's style is compared to a purely vegetarian meal. "Only the graminivorous should read the later Galsworthy," continues the critic. "And he will not rid himself of that fault (vagueness of style) by being increasingly explicit about sexual emotions."

And all this was written before that author's latest novel "Beyond" had been read by the "Yale Review," contributor! What would she have said of this book? A story of illegitimate love, of sensuality and altruism mixed in great fashion throughout!

The Saturday Review, a London publication, published a most scathing review of "Beyond," which elicited a number of commentary communications from among the readers of that journal. Thus one parent wrote:

"I feel I speak for thousands of your readers throughout the country in asking you to accept grateful thanks. I don't know if you are aware that, unfortunately, before it could be criticised on its appearance as a 6s. novel, this indecent stuff had already accomplished its evil work by being scattered broadcast over our poor country in one of the cheap magazines—a truly a notice of the war work to a one-minded (?) philanthropist wherever to help to train the growing youth of the country at this time!—when all our noblest and best are pouring out their blood in France to preserve our sanctity of home and our very existence as a nation. Every decent man and woman will heartily endorse every word you say, for it is just what has been thought and felt for months about these disgusting stories."

In spite of such criticism an American publisher has seen fit to foist Galsworthy's "Beyond" on an unsuspecting public. It will therefore put in its appearance in bookstores and on the open shelves of our Public Libraries, unless the public, especially parents, take steps to prevent its circulation. We do not wish to go to the length of the Englishman who, writing to the Saturday Review says: "What we parents want is to see all such literature ruthlessly confiscated as literature of a vulgar and indecent character. But we do hope that influence may be brought to bear upon librarians so that they will not permit this book and others of the same nature to be circulated."—C. B. of C. V.

## "PLEASE, HOLY FATHER, FIND MY HUSBAND"

A PATHETIC NOTE PENNED TO POPE BENEDICT BY ANXIOUS SPOUSE

If things follow the course which seems to be marked out for them, the Bureau for Missing Soldiers, established in the Vatican by Pope Benedict XV., will doubtless find more room for its capacity. Fathers and mothers will want to know the whereabouts of sons at the conclusion of battles fought "Somewhere in Europe." In this circumstance their letters may be addressed to the Papal Secretary of State, or to the Director of the Bureau, who, by the way, is an American ecclesiastic of note. Care will be taken to write on the envelope the words: "Bureau for Missing Soldiers," or "Missing Soldiers' Department."

It matters little to which of these three persons the letter is addressed, because those addressed to His Holiness, after being read by him, are sent directly to the office fitted up in the Vatican for the energetic American. The same may be said of those addressed to the Cardinal Secretary of State. If persons wish to send their applications to individuals of their acquaintance in Rome and request them to use their good offices in interesting the Vatican Bureau to discover the whereabouts of missing relatives, they will find this method equally effectual. Their applications in this case will be placed in the proper quarter by those who receive them.

No special form of application is needed. Just a plain letter containing details connected with the person you ask the Vatican Bureau to find—regiment, age, full name, and if possible, a photograph. At first sight it seems incredible that many applications received at the Vatican bore neither name nor date, not even the name of the person whom the Vatican was asked to trace. And yet when you come to consider the agony of mind which relatives suffer at not hearing for a year or so any news of their loved ones you can well realize why such a note as "Please Holy Father, find my husband" was penned.

The following point is a consoling one for relatives at home. Given that your mission friend's death, you may feel certain he is still in the land of the living. Around the neck of each soldier hangs the tag bearing his name, regiment, religion, etc., written on it; and this in case of death or wounds furnishes the official record with information for the list of casualties published from time to time.

In Italy this list is not published in the newspapers, and so much the better that it is not. Anxious relatives need not hurry downstairs every morning to bury their faces in the morning paper to learn "whether he is killed." In Italy they do things more humanely by sending a peace officer round to the nearest relatives of the fallen to acquaint them with the sad news and offer them an expression of official condolence. Brutal, indeed, seems the publication of that ghastly list of names which are read from time to time in English newspapers.

If, then, as I mentioned above, no news of a missionary soldier's death reaches you, it can be taken for granted he is a prisoner and that, sooner or later, the Vatican Bureau

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can put him in direct communication with you. It may not be able to do this for a month or six months or even a year—for the search is necessarily slow.—Providence Visitor.

## THE DUTY OF FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

By the second precept of the Church, the faithful are commanded "to fast and abstain on the days appointed." The purpose of the precept, and of the various regulations which the Church has given forth in connection with it, is to direct us concerning the measure and the method in which we are to perform the duty of fasting, a duty, which God, by His general laws, has imposed on all His creatures. By this "duty of fasting," the word being used in its wide sense—we understand the depriving ourselves of our usual food, either as regards its quality, or its quantity. When we limit its quality, or only take certain kinds of bodily sustenance, we are said to "abstain." If we take less than the usual amount of our food, we are said to "fast." The latter term, however, is generally understood to include the former as well.

A DUTY OF RELIGION  
The obligation of fasting is one of the fundamental principles of religion. When in the very beginning of time, Almighty God wishes to indicate the head of the human race the necessary dependence of the creature upon his Creator, He commanded him to observe certain self-denial; in fact, the only commandment imposed on man in his state of innocence was one of abstinence; that he should abstain from eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Following the original sin against this commandment, there arose an even greater obligation of appeasing God's justice, and in proportion as men became more and more estranged from their Maker, the greater became their need of penance. From the very earliest times, positive laws were given forth, determining the ways and means whereby this work of penance could best be effected, and we have the chief results of this determination in the statutes which prescribe when and how we, as children of the Church must fast and abstain.

IN THE OLD LAW  
We need only consult the pages of sacred history to learn of the insistence with which God has required His creatures to practice this self-abnegation. The Old Testament has innumerable instances wherein the divine will was manifested. The Book of Genesis tells us that when Noah came out of the Ark, God permitted him to eat animal food, but forbade him to partake of "flesh with blood." After their deliverance from Egypt, the chosen people were strictly forbidden to taste leavened bread or keep it in their homes during the seven days of Passover; whoever tasted anything leavened was threatened with death. Priests and their sons were ordered, under pain of death, to abstain from wine, when serving in the tabernacle. On all the people of the Old Law was laid a perpetual command to refrain from eating certain kinds of food: they were to look upon these forbidden creatures as unclean, and an abomination; the eating of them would render their souls defiled and unclean as well. And we know that even to our own day, those of the Jews who are faithful to the tenets of their ancient religion, scrupulously observe these same laws in all their integrity.

THE END IN VIEW  
Just as in our day there are added, in favor of fasting and abstinence, reasons which look to the physical well-being of those who observe such abnegation, so in the Old Law was this motive one of the purposes of the strict laws enforced. But it was only one, and a secondary one, of the reasons. Commentators of Holy Writ point out that the prohibition of so many kinds of beasts, birds and fishes was ordered to exercise the people in obedience and temperance, to restrain them from the vices of which those animals were the symbols, and in order that the children of God, being obliged to abstain from partaking in food of animals which were corporally unclean, might be trained up to seek after a

## spiritual cleanness.

## FIDELITY TO THE LAW

Side by side with the record of these strict injunctions, the sacred writings afford us ample evidence of the exactitude with which the law was observed. In our age, when the precept of the Church in regard to fasting and abstinence is so generally and so freely violated, there is edification in recalling certain instances where the faithful of the old law preferred to suffer death rather than transgress the divine law. Eleazar, one of the chief scribes, and venerable among his people, commanded by a heathen king to partake of swine's flesh, chose instead to endure severe torments, ending in his death. And his final prayer is recorded in the Book of Maccabees: "O Lord, who hast the holy knowledge, thou knowest manifestly that whereas I might be delivered from death, I suffer grievous pains in body; but in soul am well content to suffer these things because I fear thee." In like manner, seven brothers and their mother cheerfully went to death for the same cause, as the Book of Maccabees similarly relates, affording "an example of virtue and fortitude."

## IN CONJUNCTION WITH PRAYER

Both the Old and the New Testament convince us of the value which has always attached to fasting, when joined to prayer. We have the confession of the Royal Prophet that "his knees were weak with fasting, and that he mingled ashes with his bread, and tears with his drink." Daniel prayed to God "in fasting, sackcloth and ashes." Anna the prophetess, according to the Gospel read on last Sunday, "served God night and day in fasting and prayer." St. Paul writes of himself that his life was passed "in hunger and thirst, and often fasting," and of him, as of the other apostles, we learn that they "ministered to the Lord and fasted," and "when they had ordained priests in every church, they prayed with fasting." Our Lord Himself gave them evidence of its efficacy when He ascribed the power of casting out certain kinds of evil spirits only to the divine strength imparted in consequence of "prayer and fasting." And the arguments of all the sacred scriptures find their chief confirmation in the example of Christ Himself, who fasted forty days and forty nights in the desert, taking neither food nor drink.

In His plans for their eternal salvation, Almighty God has seen fit therefore to lay stress, both by the written laws He has promulgated, and the innumerable examples He has provided, on the duty of fasting and abstinence. It is true, He has not continued, for our observance, the precise and rigid laws of the old revelation, nor determined Himself the time and manner in which we shall fulfill this duty. The circumstances of time and place, and the many other considerations which affect such a matter are so varied that He has reposed in His Church the full power and authority of making particular laws which will respect the conduct of the Christian people. And for whatever regulations the Church makes, we are to have the same regard as for the directly revealed command of God. "Who hears you; hears Me," is God's sanction of the laws of His Church. If we transgress her ordinances, we resist the command of God, and St. Paul asserts that: "He that resists, purchases to himself damnation." We shall now look into the regulations which the Church has seen fit to establish for our observance, in this matter of fasting and abstinence.—Catholic Transcript.

## A LITTLE BIT OF BELGIUM

## TRANSPORTED TO LOURDES

HOSPITAL TRAINS ARE RUNNING REGULARLY TO THE FAMOUS SHRINE IN SOUTHERN FRANCE

There is a little bit of Belgium down at Lourdes. It is due to the spiritual energy of Monsignor Deplouie, of Louvain University, who has been doing good things in various parts of Europe during the time of waiting to return home, and who is now in Rome, and has told in a few words of what Lourdes means to many soldiers. In the old days he used to conduct pilgrimages there from Belgium, several special trains of them at a time, and one hospital train of sick. This latter train is now running regularly with convoys of wounded from the French front to the sunny south. Lourdes itself is becoming the rendezvous for Belgian soldiers on leave. The British troops can get to England, French to Paris or their homes elsewhere in France; Belgians have no home to return to as yet. Moreover, to many of them the Grotto is well known, to many more it is a place not only of pilgrimage but of a vow to Our Lady. It is a sort of home. Some go to Paris on their leave; more go to Lourdes.

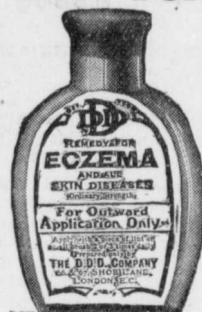
Places of pilgrimage are dear to the heart of the rector of the Institute of Philosophy at Louvain. It was he who organized that to Paray-Monial when the allied flags were laid on the altar and Cardinal Bourne, who carried the British ensign, delivered a notable address on the Christian ideals for which the Allies are fighting. So Monsignor Deplouie has worked that his fellow countrymen shall not only be able to

spend their few days of rest in the holy happy atmosphere by the grotto, but shall have real rest and comfort there. He has organized a "circle belge" reading and writing rooms, a big conference room and all the simple requisites of a club, with, of course, a chaplain always there. It has been a great success; so much so that others besides Belgians are going to Lourdes and the Belgian prelate is now arranging for them the same comforts that his own people have. For naturally all want their own "circle." And he has been able to secure from the British military authorities the presence of a chaplain for English speaking Catholics. If English soldiers can easily slip across the Channel home, England is not quite the same home for the Canadians and Australians, and these are coming to appreciate and love their rest in Lourdes. And now they will find their club, simple but comfortable and restful, and their chaplain. So, too, will the American Catholics in the days to come. Father Duggan will be there, or, if he has got strong enough to go back to hard work at the front, another chaplain in need of rest; till, maybe, American Catholics have their own "Foyer" as the first established club was called, and their own chaplain, too.—The Tablet.

## POWER OF HAIL MARY

Whenever I salute our Blessed Lady in the words of an angel, "Hail Mary, full of grace!" heaven rejoices, the earth wonders, the devil shudders, hell trembles, sadness disappears, joy returns, the heart smiles in charity and is penetrated with a holy fervor, compunction is awakened, hope is revived. Indeed, so profound is my happiness that I cannot find words to describe it.—Thomas à Kempis.

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