

SIX

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

By Rev. N. M. REDMOND
TRINITY SUNDAYWHAT WE ARE TO BELIEVE CONCERNING
THE MYSTERY

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. vii, 28.)

Having celebrated the solemn feast of Pentecost, the Church has completed her yearly solemnization of all the mysteries that pertain to man's redemption. To-day she celebrates the sublimest of the sublime mysteries of our religion, the Trinity. One God in three Divine Persons. This is the great object of the Christian worship; in fact, it is to serve, and adore the Trinity in time, and in eternity, that we exist at all. Our daily life, then, here on earth should be spent in the service of the Trinity, and this we effect whatever may be our legitimate avocation, by a general offering of all our thoughts, words, and actions made to the Trinity in the morning, and a renewal of that offering in a particular way before each principal action. Certainly the Christian would do well in serving the Trinity did he but show the consistency in honoring the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost that those who show, from morning till night, are engaged in doing them dishonor. Every day, every Sunday, especially, the Church consecrates to the sovereign adoration, homage, praise, and glory of the most blessed Trinity, in offering from millions of altars throughout the world the great sacrifice of the new law. But now that the celebration of all the other great mysteries that pertain to our salvation and sanctification is finished, and that her children are fully impressed from meditating on those mysteries, with the great part taken by each of the Divine Persons, the Church celebrates this feast, particularly, in honor of the most blessed Trinity. Thus to-day she affords an opportunity to all her children, to pour out the fervor of their souls in humble gratitude to the three Persons of the most blessed Trinity. Let us then, to-day, in unison with our brethren throughout the world, with hearts abashed at our own littleness in the presence of all greatness, bow down all our powers in adoration of this incomprehensible mystery. Its infinite sublimity, and the grandeur of its incomprehensibility, make it an object the more worthy of our faith, and profoundest veneration. The knowledge of more than the fact of the Trinity, has never, and can never, here below, enter into the heart of man, but we, the children of the Church, accept concerning it the revelation of God, and we believe it, because it is the speech of God.

Following this ineffable source, we are carried back to the creation of the parents of our race, and we hear, as it were, the Trine God say to His three Divine Persons: "Let us make man to our own image and likeness" (Gen. i, 26). Down the divine river we come to hear a little later after address to the following effect: "God said, 'Let Adam be as we, knowing good and evil.' Here the words God said, evidently show the unity of the Godhead, and these other words, as one of us, show as evidently the plurality of the Divine Persons. The same is evidenced in the foregoing divine utterance. Again, we come to where distinct mention is expressly made of the three Persons: 'The Lord hath said to me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee' (Psalm. xli, 6-7), and by the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and all the powers of them by the Spirit of His mouth (Psalm. xxxiii, 6). But though this sublime truth was known to the patriarchs, prophets, and more or less distinctly to the learned, and God-fearing people of the old law, it was reserved to our Divine Saviour to fully reveal and propound it as an essential article of Christian belief.

Clear and unmistakable is the teaching of our Lord on this all-important article of Christian belief: "I will ask the Father, said He to His apostles and disciples, and He will give you another Comforter, the Spirit of truth" (John xiv, 16). Are not the three Divine Persons clearly expressed in this sentence, as distinct from each other? Who is it that speaks? Is it not our Saviour God the Son, the Second Person? Of whom does He promise to ask? Is it not God the Father the First Person? Whom does He promise shall be given? Is it not God the Holy Spirit the Third Person? Again, in perhaps, more clear terms our Lord says: "There are three who bear testimony in Heaven, the Father the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are One" (1 John v, 7). The Trinity of the Persons and the unity of the Godhead cannot be declared in more expressive words than they are in this sentence. But in this connection we should not forget the words of our text, in which the apostles are commanded to baptize, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It certainly cannot be difficult to understand from the words "in the name," and not in the names the unity of the Godhead, and from the words, "of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," that these are three distinct Persons of God. Hence the divine author of Catholic doctrine on this, as well as on every other article of Christian belief, is Jesus Christ, which may be seen by the consideration of the Church's teachings on this sublime and all important mystery of the Christian religion.

Our faith teaches us, that there is but one true and living God, and that He is eternal, incomprehensible, omnipotent, and infinite in all His attributes and perfections. It also teaches us that in this one God there are three distinct persons of the same substance and essence, and perfectly equal in age, in power, in wisdom, and in all perfections; that the Father has no beginning, and proceeds from no one; that the Son proceeds from the Father by one eternal and ineffable generation, as His living Word and Wisdom, the brightness of His glory, and the most perfect image of His power; and that the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son. Our faith further teaches that these three are one by having all three the same Godhead; that is, the same divine nature. The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God, one Lord, one Almighty in three several Persons. This, then, is the true Christian Catholic belief of the mystery of the most Blessed Trinity, essentially necessary for our eternal salvation. It is God's teaching, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. It is above our reason, but not contrary to it. In all mysteries two things must be considered: the first is the fact, that is, that it exists; and the second is, how it exists. The fact is no more above our understanding than any other established event, and this is what we are bound to believe, but the manner of existence we cannot know; because it is beyond our comprehension, and, therefore, it is no object of our belief. But we, the children of the Church, know what we must believe, and we know that it is the teaching of Christ. The question, therefore, which should have had most of our thoughts on this occasion is, how our daily lives harmonize with what we believe. As the sentiment of a pious author has it, little benefit will accrue to us from thinking profoundly, speaking brilliantly, or putting arguments concerning the fact of the Trinity, if our lives be displeasing and dishonoring to the Trinity. What will profit us is a good Christian life that will be glory to the Father, glory to the Son, and glory to the Holy Ghost.

TEMPERANCE

TEMPERANCE AND HUMANITY

On the first Sunday of this year, Father J. Kubacki, pastor of St. Adelbert's Polish Church, South Bend, Ind., appealed to his parishioners to abstain from alcoholic beverages and devote to the sufferers in Poland the money thus saved. Of the 1,680 communicants in the parish, 904 signed the following pledge:

"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost—Whereas, intoxicating drinks, physically, economically and morally, are injurious to me, to my family, to my nation and to the human race, and whereas my brethren in Poland are dying of hunger and misery; therefore I promise God to abstain from all intoxicating drinks during the year 1916, and to place upon the altar of my native country the money saved by such abstinence. Amen."

On the same Sunday the collection for the sufferers in Poland amounted to \$755.10.

GLADSTONE'S MAXIMS

The late William Ewart Gladstone frequently handed out to his neighbors at Hawarden printed slips reading:

Drunkenness expels reason,
Drowns the memory,
Distempers the body,
Defaces beauty,
Diminishes strength,
Inflames the body,
Causes internal, external and incurable wounds.

It's a wickedness to the senses,
A devil to the soul,
A thief to the purse,
A beggar's companion,
A wife's woe and children's sorrow.
It makes man become a beast and self-murderer.

He drinks to others' good health.
And robs himself of his own.

ENGLAND'S DRINK TROUBLES

Cardinal Bourne is following in the footsteps of Cardinal Manning as an advocate of temperance. To the recent meeting of religious leaders in England, the Church was called in the person of Cardinal Bourne. His Eminence advocated that restrictions imposed by war-time on the liquor traffic should be carried on in peace time. The resolution to this effect put by the Cardinal was universally carried by the assembled delegates. His Eminence, however, expressed himself as not at all satisfied with some of the present preventive provisions. He drew a ghastly picture of the drunken scenes which often take place around the big railway stations and public houses by the caused outside public houses by the rule that children may not be admitted. This rule does not, however, prevent the child being left without by neglected parents, exposed to other dangers, nor does it prevent parents from taking their drink outside and administering it in the public thoroughfare to infants in arms. The Cardinal also pleaded for some counter-attraction to public houses. In doing so he did the poor justice, and pointed out that it was the social side of the public house which attracted the men. It was his club, and in order to make use of it he had to drink. Drinking would continue and the effect of drink would not be curtailed until other means of recreation were provided.—Sacred Heart Review.

VISIT THE BLESSED
SACRAMENT

Visit the Blessed Sacrament often during this month of the Sacred Heart. Even a few minutes every day would be a tribute of respect and love. The late Bishop Maes of Covington, Kentucky, whose devotion to our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist earned for him the title, "Bishop of the Blessed Sacrament," exhorted his people to make this daily offering: When on your way to work at early dawn, (said the Bishop) if you can not carry long enough to enjoy the blessing of assisting at Holy Mass, do not deny yourself the graces and Jesus the consolation of a short morning greeting to Him. Step into the church for a few minutes; tell Him that you love Him; that out of love for Him you are going to do your daily task; that out of love for Him you will avoid every thought, word and act that might displease Him; and ask Him to bless your resolutions and make them efficacious.

And when the day is spent, when in obedience to the decree of God you have "earned your bread by the sweat of your brow," before you go home to enjoy its peaceful life and the well-earned rest, call again at the church and converse a few moments with the God of your heart. You never tire of the company of your loved ones; your true friends become better by frequent meetings. Visit our dear Lord often and He will grow upon you; you will feel His presence; your insensibility to grace will disappear; the love of Jesus Christ will influence you and come home to you; Jesus will become your dearest friend, and the moments you spend at the foot of the altar will be daily glimpses of heavenly light.

To the indifferent, this zealous lover of the Blessed Sacrament addressed words of reproof that many of us may well take to ourselves. "You find time for temporal business," he said, "for useless visits, for calls that are dangerous, for hours of uncharitable conversation; for hours of idle reading; time for theater and amusements; you find time for everything, but you find no time for visiting Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament."

"Have you no heart?" he asks. "Have you no troubles, no difficulties, no trials? And who but Jesus can so efficaciously help you? Hear Him invite you: 'Come to me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.' This invitation is all-embracing, it includes the sinner and the saint; and provides a cure for every ill. Pride of intellect gives way to simple faith before the Blessed Sacrament; the tempted receives strength to resist temptation; the path of duty grows clear; family sorrows and perplexities may be laid at the feet of Jesus."

"New Monics, who you deplore the irreligion of your husband, the bad conduct of your son," urges the Bishop, "come to Jesus. He will hear you."

"Sickness, misfortune follow you through life. Come to Jesus. He will make you understand the mystery of the Cross."

"With what joy you would have followed Jesus when on earth! He is more to you now, more of God in the Holy Eucharist than He was then. Hence visit Him often at Mass, in Holy Communion, in visits to the Blessed Sacrament."—Sacred Heart Review.

THE WOMAN AND HER
SEED

Among the evidences which may be adduced from the study of the Bible in support of the Christian believer's contention that only God Himself can be truly called its author, none seems to us more incontrovertible than the fact that it is a continued story, which begins with Genesis and ends with the Apocalypse, having as much of design and plot as any of our greatest novels and much more dramatic action than all the plays of Shakespeare combined. There is in fact about the Bible a unity of design and a logical consistency which differentiates it from the Koran of Mahomet, the Veda of the Bramins and all the Sacred Books of non-Christian systems of religion. No cathedral in Christendom, no organ temple in the whole world, gives more unmistakable evidence of its being the brain product of some great architect than does the Bible of being the finished work of one Master Composer, even though it be clearly proven that the several books which comprise the whole were the work of human authors. For each of the subordinate parts bears internal evidence of having been composed under the inspiration of the supreme genius, who conceived the design of the entire work and presided over its composition from start to finish.

Since a period of over one thousand and five hundred years elapsed from the time when Moses, the first subordinate author, composed the Book of Genesis until St. John, the Apostle, laid down his pen at the conclusion of the Apocalypse, it is self-evident that no human hand could have designed and brought to a completion the whole volume of the Sacred Scriptures. The longest lived descendant of Adam was Methuselah, and "all his days were nine hundred and sixty-nine years," besides, he expired long before the Bible began to be written. We have no reason to attribute its compilation to any of the angels and nothing, therefore, is left to us but to ascribe its authorship to God.

We have already said that the Bible is a continued story, and so indeed it is, and with this little introduction we now proceed to say that it might be very fittingly entitled, after the manner of an historical romance, "The Woman and Her Seed, Being the Story of the Creation of Man, His Fall and Redemption through Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary."

It is a religious story from commencement to completion. "In the beginning God created the heaven and earth," is the opening sentence and the Almighty holds the sovereign place in the drama throughout. Man's evil genius, who plots his ruin and dogs his footsteps like a bloodhound from generation to generation, is first introduced in the third chapter, man's pleasure as a thief in the night, seducing our Mother Eve by his living subtlety and drawing down upon her and Adam, her husband, the swift judgment of their Creator. Addressing Himself to Satan, whom Eve charged with having tempted her, God said: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Gen. 3, 15). Thus is the great romance of the woman and her seed introduced, a romance which is not to be unfolded, elaborated and concluded within the compass of a single generation, or in fact of many generations, but it is to cover the entire course of human history. Four thousand years are to elapse before the actual woman referred to in Genesis is to appear in the world, the masterpiece of God's creative power, a virgin conceived without sin and flawless beyond all comparison, who in the fullness of time brings forth her babe in a stable at Bethlehem and lays Him in a manger, Whom she had conceived by the Holy Ghost and Who was the "Seed" first mentioned by God in the garden and repeatedly foretold by the succession of the holy prophets raised up from age to age to keep alive the hope of the elect and the expectation of the Israel of God.

In the Holy Gospels the drama of the world's redemption is enacted on the narrow stage of Judea and Galilee and the three central characters are Jesus, Mary and Satan, and three concluding scenes are the Crucifixion on Mount Calvary, the Easter Resurrection and the empty tomb with the stone rolled away, and the Ascension of the Risen Christ into Heaven from the summit of Mount Olivet.

The next chapter in the Sacred Narrative describes the descent of the Holy Ghost to direct the Apostles of Christ in extending the empire of the Cross throughout the world and to give fecundity to the Catholic Church which is the mystical body of Christ and to multiply those children with which Jesus had endowed Our Lady of the Atonement, when He said from the Cross, "Woman, behold thy Son, Son, behold thy Mother."

Finally to conclude the book in time, although the romance in fact is destined to go on through eternity, a vision of the future was given to the beloved Apostle St. John, which under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost he wrote down and bequeathed to the Church. Until the very end it is the story of the woman and her seed with the old dragon plotting, and persecuting, and lifting himself up against the Madonna and Child with increasing fury until he is finally chained down in the abyssal depths of hell, nevermore to disturb the peace of God's elect, who as the children of the New Adam and the New Eve, ministered to by angels, possess the celestial Paradise of unalloyed pleasure and reign forever and ever.

In the beautiful month of May we do well to honor our Mother, the Queen of Heaven, recalling to mind "the great sign which appeared" to St. John in Heaven. A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and being with child, she cried travailling in birth, and was in pain to be delivered" (Apocalypse 12, 1-2). This is none other than Our Lady of the Atonement travelling in spirit over us, her poor, sinful children, on the earth and fondly lifting our eyes towards her throne on high we will not cease to call upon her, saying, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us now and at the hour of our death." And by faith we hear her answer in the words with which the Sacred Volume closes: "The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."—The Lamp.

HOW THE CHRISTIAN IS TESTED

"Tests or trials are essential to prove fidelity and worth," says the Catholic Universe. "All are subject to tests or temptations, and these are essential to the Christian perfection as the fire is necessary to separate the dross from the gold. Who has not felt at times as though one-half of his being was at war against the other half? St. Paul refers to these conflicting forces in the warfare for heaven. One of these urges to courage, to fidelity and to uprightness; the other to cowardice, betrayal and baseness. The spirit and the flesh have a continuous battle for the mastery. Our Lord says to His child, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' Is this battle a misery or a mercy? Some look upon it as a misfortune, but since the Lord has willed it, it is a mercy and will prove a crown. If there were no battle, there would be no victory and

so no crown. 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and only the violent bear it away.' Crosses, temptations and trials lead to perfection."

AN INFIDEL AND THE
CATECHISM

Geoffrey, one of the representatives of infidel philosophy, could not but admire the catechism. These are the words he made use of when addressing a numerous audience of the Sorbonne on the resume of Catholic doctrine contained in the catechism: "There is a little book which children are taught and about which they are questioned in Church and school: read this little book which is the catechism, and you will find therein the solution of all the questions that I have treated, of all without exception. Ask the Christian whence comes the human race, he knows; whether it goes, he knows; how it goes, he knows. Ask this little child why it is here below, what will give you to it after death, he will give you a truly sublime answer which he does not fully understand, but which is none the less admirable. Ask him how the world has been created and for what purpose; why God has placed animals and plants thereon; how the earth has been peopled, whether by one family or by many; why people speak in divers tongues, why they suffer, why they struggle and how will all this end—he knows the answer. The origin of the world, the origin of the species, questions of race, man's destiny in this life and in the next, man's relations to God, man's duty to his fellow men, men's rights over creation—he is ignorant of none of these things, and when he grows older he will not hesitate about natural law or political law or international law, for all that flows with clearness and of itself from Christianity. This is what I call a grand religion. I recognize it by this sign that it does not leave unanswered any of the questions that interest humanity."—St. Paul Bulletin.

MEDIEVAL PEACE
MOVEMENTS

A lecture entitled "Some Medieval Peace Movements and Organizations" and given on March 1st at the University of Pennsylvania, by Rev. Dr. Paschal Robinson, O. F. M., Professor of Medieval History at the Catholic University, has a timely interest on account of the recent efforts of the Holy See to lessen the horrors of the present war in Europe.

The medieval period in history was, the speaker said, probably the greatest era of war the civilized world has ever seen. Between the death of Charlemagne and the close of the Crusades, war rather than peace was the normal condition of society.

Medieval warfare, however, was not war as we understand it now-days, where, with some large private view, one great cohesive state directs its entire military powers against another state, but rather private war of an essentially local character. The reason for this lay in the fact that under the feudal system the universal and common had very little power and that political expediency and national expansion were as yet unknown doctrines, so that almost every war of medieval times was based on some local or private claim. Upon the slightest pretext, often without any excuse at all, the feudal lord would sally forth from his castle to carry sword and sword in the neighboring territory.

This lawless custom of waging private war without legitimate cause was the chief cause of the instability of life in medieval times. The wretched peasantry were, Dr. Robinson pointed out, the chief sufferers. Their villages were burned and their crops destroyed and not infrequently famine and pestilence completed the work of destruction. In the midst of this deplorable condition of affairs the Church intervened and sought to protect the oppressed by imposing measures calculated to enforce respect for the public peace. These measures were at first local and took the form of the institution known as the "Peace of God." Dr. Robinson traced the history of this institution from its first appearance in the south of France in 989.

Its object was to exempt certain classes of persons whose condition or profession forbade them to carry arms and to mark off, as it were, a sphere of peace around non-combatants from the surrounding sphere of feud. So humane and beneficial an institution was received with great favor and in the eleventh century a movement developed in France which aimed at bringing about a general cessation of all warfare among Christians. But this movement ended in failure as the times were not yet ripe for the inauguration of an era of universal peace.

The ecclesiastical authorities had recognized this fact, and consequently instead of advocating universal peace, they sought rather to mitigate the ravages of private war by restricting the number of days on which it might be carried on. Thus the "Truce of God," another celebrated peace institution of the Middle Ages, which imposed a temporary cessation of hostilities on all parties. This "Truce of God" originally extended only from noon on

Saturday until daybreak on Monday of each week, but it was gradually extended by successive Church councils so as to leave not more than eighty days in the year available for private warfare. It was finally adopted by the Lateran Councils of 1199 and 1179, and was thus made a definite article of Canon Law.

Dr. Robinson next dealt with the means employed for the enforcement of this Truce. These were (1) spiritual penalties, such as excommunication and deprivation of Christian burial; (2) the organization of special peace tribunals and parochial militia to punish violators of the Truce; and (3) assistance from the civil authorities. These latter were for the most part powerless, however, up to the fourteenth century, owing to the dominance of feudalism, and the task of imposing and enforcing respect for the public peace devolved mainly, therefore, upon the Bishops and local clergy.

Nothing redounds more to the credit of the medieval ecclesiastics, said Dr. Robinson, than their unwearied striving during the turbulent medieval period to protect the poor and defenceless and to lessen the violence, opposition and outrage which marked the progress of feudal warfare. It was only by degrees and in proportion as the temporal rulers were able to follow the lead taken by the Church and to enact the *Landesfriede*, the *Quarantaine-le-roi*, and other royal peace laws, that war came to be confined to international conflict.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

CHEERFULNESS

There is no quality so beneficial both in our relations with our fellow-men and in all our daily activities, as cheerfulness. It is not as difficult to acquire as some of us imagine. Indeed there is no possession so valuable which can be secured at so little cost. We can all be cheerfully good natured if we try; it is only necessary to train our habitual thoughts and actions.

A loving Heavenly Father has created us and cheerfulness is our normal disposition in harmony with Him; but we often make ourselves over again, and the dark, gloomy disposition we acquire is certainly not in harmony with or pleasing to God. No one is inclined to think of a loving, tender father after looking at a self-created dark and gloomy face.

To be cheerful means to give little thought to the hardships, difficulties and trials we encounter daily; to look on the brighter side of our surroundings, to dwell both in memory and speech on pleasant and encouraging happenings and on the amiable characteristics of every acquaintance. Difficulty and trials cause no despair to the cheerful person, for they are encountered with hope and the mind acquires that happy disposition to improve opportunities which rarely fail of success. The cheerful spirit is always a healthy and happy one, imparting and stimulating cheerfulness to and in others.

In life the cheerful person is as a ray of sunshine, yea golden sunshine of God. How pleasant it is to meet such a one in the daily walks of life. They are good to look upon, they make us forget life's burdens, and we go on our way better for having met them. They inspire us with confidence and are truly benefactors of the human race.—Scrapbook Home Journal.

CHURCH INFLUENCE IN
LATIN AMERICA

The zealous ultra-Protestant evangelists of this country, whose hearts are yearning for the conversion—save the mark!—of the poor benighted Catholics of Latin America, must be just a little disheartened by the cumulative testimony of representative men of their own faith, or faiths—all certifying to the utter uselessness and futility of such attempted converting. Here, for instance, is the declaration of a Protestant minister, writing from a South American city to the Living Church:

The most silly method to obtain the support of men and money from Great Britain and the United States is to proclaim that Latin America is without religion, without faith, and relapsing into a condition of paganism. The people of Latin America are happy, affable, and full of aspirations; their cities are clean and well governed; wealth is rapidly increasing; schools, universities, and modern engineering industries are constantly expanding. Their churches are attractive and full of activity. There are 4,000 priests and students. I have heard splendid sermons, have been inspired with the magnificent influence of the Catholic Church upon the people, and have prayed to God to provide a movement as effective in Boston, Washington or Milwaukee; in fact, I have never really known what the Church meant until I took up my final residence here. These people neither desire nor would understand any of the forms of speculative Protestantism with which I am acquainted.

Such of the ambitious evangelists as are really sincere in their hope of making Protestants out of Latin Americans are clearly ignorant of the people and their condition; the others are chiefly interested in keeping the good folk of this country equally ignorant of real conditions in the republics to the south of us, while collecting in the meanwhile as many shekels as they possibly can.—Intermountain Catholic.

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