

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. F. PEPPIERS TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"Lord, save us, we perish." (Matt. viii, 25) We are sailing, as it were, on the ocean of life, and are perpetually in danger of shipwreck and of falling to secure our salvation. We ought, therefore, as their hour of peril is near, and such fear is beneficial, not injurious to us, whereas false assurance of safety, by making men fancy themselves incapable of falling, often brings about their ruin. If always and everywhere we feel this wholesome fear, and if we distrust our own great weakness, we shall cling with confidence to Him who is able to support us, and we shall ever be mindful of God's holy presence.

Because Jesus was with them, the disciples in their hour of peril cried: "Lord, save us!" We may learn from this short prayer how we too ought frequently to remind ourselves of God's presence. Whenever we are, let us lift up our hearts to God in short but fervent prayers, or ejaculations. This practice is very important, and is in fact inseparable from that of living constantly in the presence of God; for such ejaculatory prayers are glances at Him, and help us to do right and avoid evil. By means of them we are reminded at the moment when we are called upon to practise them. They suggest to us now a heartfelt act of faith, now a resolution to trust implicitly in God, and now a feeling of love. In times of temptation we send up a short prayer to beg for strength from God, and it serves to recall to us His Will, and guard us against suggestions of evil, whilst, when we are hesitating between two courses, it is an admonition not to stray from the path that God would have us follow. If we frequently lift up our hearts to Him thus, our understanding will be enlightened, our perception of what is dangerous and sinful will be quickened, and our will to strip off all earthly weakness and attachments will be strengthened.

Many times in the day we send up to God these little flashes of prayer, we shall really be praying without ceasing, and, as St. John Chrysostom says, we are withdrawing ourselves for a brief space from the company of men, in order to join with the holy angels in praising God. By means of these frequent glances at Him we may to some extent imitate the saints in glory, who always behold Him and praise Him without interruption.

These short prayers have the advantage of being always available. They do not interfere with our work, nor do they check any enjoyment that is pleasing to God; on the contrary, they complete and sanctify everything that we do. They can even take the place of our regular prayers, if for some good reason we cannot devote our usual time to them, and when in case of illness we are too weak to make long prayers, short ejaculations bring comfort and strength. Happy is the soul that at its last hour departs to God with the words: "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit"; it seems to be borne aloft on wings of submission and love. Our Saviour, dying on the Cross, set us the best example how to lift up our hearts in words few indeed, but full of ardent love.

What ought we to take as the subject of these short aspirations to be made frequently throughout the day? A pious man has said with perfect truth that everything heard, seen or perceived supplies us with a subject for such aspirations. If only we were in the habit of referring the things in our daily life to God, any sight, any word heard, any little event would be enough to fill our minds with thoughts of faith, hope, charity, sorrow for our sins, or joy at God's mercy, goodness and wisdom.

A little ejaculation may often consist of some saying that we have heard, or of a text from Holy Scripture or of a quotation from some pious writer, which we constantly call to mind. In speaking of spiritual reading and of meditation, I pointed out how excellent a plan it was to sum up in a few short words the chief points that we have noticed, and to go back upon these words often in the course of the day. By doing this we are lifting up our hearts to God, a most important and beneficial thing, and it is only thus that any lasting good is derived from reading and meditation. We may very likely forget what we have read and thought, and even our good resolutions are apt to vanish, unless they are constantly renewed. A kind of spiritual motto, however, comes back again and again to our minds, and serves to impress the whole subject more deeply upon our memory, and at the same time it increases the grace of God within us by means of the devotion and good will that we show when we repeat it.

It is not difficult to connect such aspirations with particular times, places or things, so that each of the latter inevitably suggests to us one special pious thought or ejaculation. Good prayer-books supply us with many instances of such short prayers. Some may be connected with definite moments in our daily life; thus, on awakening, we may say: "All for love of God" or "Lord Jesus, in Thy Name I will begin this day," or "If this were to be the last day of my life, should I spend it in sin? Give me, therefore, grace to resist all impulses to anger, envy, etc., and all evil thoughts and inclinations."

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On lying down to rest at night: "I lie down not knowing whether I shall ever wake again. Therefore I put myself in Thy Hands, that Thou mayest protect me in body and in soul."

Particular places may be made to suggest short aspirations. For instance, when we see a church, we may offer a little prayer to Jesus in the most Holy Sacrament of the altar. When we go into any house, we may say: "Peace be to this house and to all that dwell in it." Such thoughts as these would often put us on our guard against frivolous and uncharitable conversation, which is so apt to destroy peace.

Particular things seen may remind us to say a few words of prayer. Why are crosses, statues and pictures of saints put up in our houses and streets unless it be that the sight of them may suggest a pious thought to those who are prone to forget such things amidst the business of life? The striking of a clock ought to remind us how quickly time flies, and that it behooves us to make good use of it. The tolling of the passing-bell should make even the most thoughtless reflect: "Thou, too, wilt soon appear before thy Judge."

It is true that at first it is somewhat difficult to form the habit of making ejaculatory prayers, and we are so careless and so much distracted by the work, joys and sorrows of our every day life, that we easily forget them. Yet everything that seems hard at first grows easy by practice, and finally becomes a sort of second nature. I would gladly see you adopt this practice, but you must beware of praying mechanically, merely from force of habit saying certain words on certain occasions, without thinking about them at all, and without deriving fervor, admonition and comfort from their meaning and from all that they contain. They should not simply be repeated, but they should influence you in your actions. Accustom yourselves frequently to lift up your hearts to God in holy aspirations, and then even if you have no friend at hand to counsel you, you will never lack advice; if you no longer hear words of comfort, you will enjoy the sweetest consolation; and even if everything seems dull, mean and commonplace, you will be truly united to God. You will never perish through thoughtlessness, for Jesus will ever be with you, if you only call upon Him saying: "Lord, save us!" He will guide you safely through all the monotony and all the storms of life. Amen.

TEMPERANCE

RUSSIA IMPROVED BY THE WAR

A remarkable decrease in crime and a great increase in industry have already been observed in England and Russia as a result of the recent legislation against treating in the former country and against the sale of vodka in the latter. In Liverpool especially the good results have been so marked that the Government is urged to extend its measure of protection. It is claimed that the general prohibition of treating and the stopping of credit, besides effecting a great national economy, will put an end to a vast amount of poverty, suffering and misery. The abolition of vodka in Russia has been attended with the happiest results. A distinguished physician there who has given the matter close attention, declares that "crime has decreased to a remarkable degree. The saving banks all report great in-

crease in the deposits of the working people. There is beginning to be a greater demand for books and newspapers, and also a demand for more intellectual amusements. Hoolliganism has practically vanished, before the abolition of vodka, not a Sunday passed without there being cases of wounding to be treated in some of the hospitals of people hurt by fighting in a drunken state."

The Great War has opened the eyes of the world as never before to the monstrous evil of intemperance; and it is doubtful if there will ever be a return to the old days of unlimited drinking and treating. The restoration of peace and the impoverishment of so many countries as its price, will demonstrate the necessity of temperance.—The Ave Maria.

"BROKEN DOWN"

Dr. O'Malley holds up the light of truth to the old excuse we hear frequently of the man who is "broken down."

The vice of intemperance, he says, with its integral parts, gluttony, drunkenness and unchastity, is the cause of more sin and misery than any other form of revolt against the law of God. The concupiscence of the flesh is the predominant failing in the vast majority of the human family, and is the source of at least one third of all the pauperism and crime in civilized nations. There is good reason for the opinion that this vice is also the main source of insanity and other diseases, directly or indirectly. Gluttony alone, or over-eating, to use the more polite term, fills a thousand graves, whilst war and pestilence together fill only 10. An amazing number of "martyrs to pain" that pass through life in an immense cloud of sympathy are in reality martyrs to their bellies; and most of those eminent citizens who have "broken down from overwork," and are constrained to take long vacations and distant voyages, are simply broken down from over-exercising with the knife and fork. Over 90 per cent. of Bright's disease, rheumatism, whatever that is—neuritis, neuritis, neuritis for duty, brought to the medical men for cure by merchants, lawyers and physicians, is caused by overloading the stomach with palatable food or by taking alcoholic beverages for the stomach's sake. The theories on whiskey as a panacea for all the ills of middle life, inflicted upon kind doctors by otherwise intelligent gentlemen, are positively innumerable. But it is a stern fact that no person has ever yet taken habitually two or three drinks of whiskey daily, or a pint of claret, or a quart of ale, and escaped chronic alcoholism; and when such a patient comes to a physician and prates about a "breakdown from overwork" or "the will of God," and the like, he is either a hypocrite or a fool.

These two or three "drinks a day" means the month's rent for the man at a moderate wage, or the summer's vacation for the family of the man with twice that much, or better food and larger opportunity for the family of the man with still more. The burden of denial does not always fall on the wife in a way she can measure. It is like an indirect tax, a little here and a little there, scarcely measured at the time, yet making life a succession of worried days and sleepless nights. It is not a world where a man may live unto himself, or where the result falls only on the waster. Whatever lessens a man's efficiency handicaps his wife and children.

It may not be actual money. Perhaps the husband has the price of a drink, or many of them. But he is fighting a losing battle against age. He needs the resilience of his arteries and the elasticity of his thought processes in his battle—not only for himself, but also for the wife whose living he is making. He cannot afford it physically.—St. Paul Bulletin.

"THE COAT OF BLACK AND TAN"

In its October issue, the Ladies' Home Journal continues its policy of catering to Protestant ministers and their wives. The latest offering is an article, by a sectarian clergyman, entitled "The Coat of Black and Tan." It offers suggestions as to the type of youth fit to enter the Protestant ministry.

We Catholics look upon a vocation, a yearning implanted in the heart to serve God in a special manner, as an essential requisite for aspirants to the priesthood. True there are certain qualities which make a man a better leader of his fellowmen, but not necessarily a better priest. Individual piety and a supreme longing to bring souls to closer union with their Creator, are the foundation on which the Catholic priest builds his services.

According to the writer of the article in question, two other things are the essentials of the Protestant minister. They are veritably a "coat of black," symbolical of the clergyman's broadcloth, and a "coat of tan," bearing reference to his health. Aside from these nothing is asked, except such qualities as will place a man in the front rank when human distinctions and leaderships are doled out. As long as physical and mental attributes are the requisites for entering the Protestant ministry, it is much to wonder that Protestantism has lost what spirituality it once possessed and that a Harvard divine has suggested that "salvation" of man from worldly evils be made the only mission of the sects.—Chicago New World.

FREQUENT AND DAILY COMMUNION

The fact that a person may unhappily fall occasionally into mortal sin, is not reason for refusing him the favor of frequent Communion, provided that before approaching the Holy Table, he receives pardon for his sin in a good confession, says the Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament.

Perhaps there was a doubt as to whether one sinned or not. Now what is a doubt? Doubt may be defined as "the suspending of the judgment about something apprehended by the mind." It may be positive or negative. The positive doubt exists where there is an apparent equality of reasons on either side. The negative doubt exists when the mind suspends judgment for want of reasons on one side or on the other. For example, suppose one has been subjected to a very violent temptation which, however, he has resisted. But the violence and the wiliness of the temptation have so impressed him that he feels uneasy and fears to have offended God. As he has really no reason for that, it is a negative doubt.

But should he be troubled by bad thoughts on which he has dwelt for a while, and taken a little pleasure in them, but which he has banished from his mind on realizing the gravity of the sin he would commit by dwelling on them, there may be doubt about the nature of sin committed. There are reasons for fear because the person has dwelt on those thoughts; on the other hand, there are reasons for excusing such a person from mortal sin, since after realizing the gravity of the thought he has banished it. After weighing those reasons, even if the doubt regarding the gravity of the sin he may have committed, perseveres, he may decide in his own favor, and go to Holy Communion. This is called "taking the benefit of the doubt."

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DRESS A MATTER OF TASTE

The Rev. P. H. Casey, S. J., in the course of a sermon intended primarily for the instruction of Catholic working girls has a word or two on the artifice of dress that inspires or should inspire sober reflection: "Some say," remarks the preacher, "that dress is a matter of taste. Some say it is a matter of custom. The true Catholic girl makes it also a matter of conscience. Indeed, her two safest guides are good taste and a good conscience. Do not be led astray by the example of those who dress as if they had no soul to save or reputation to lose. By dressing foolishly you catch only the foolish. The wise are on their guard. It is not the approbation of the wise that you should be eager to secure, and, above all, the approbation of God and of your own conscience? There is little joy in having gathered a garland of roses when you look upon your hands and find them torn and bleeding. Bleeding hands are nothing to a bleeding heart—a heart left bleeding all through its own folly. "Live up to the dictates of your religion, live up to the dictates of your own good conscience, live up to the counsel given you by father and mother and confessor. You will then walk in the safe, open way. It may not be as broad as other ways, nor at the entrance as smooth, but it is the way that leads to life and not to death, the way that leads to joy and not to pain, the way that leads to the things that are of value when the petals shall have fallen from the roses and the lights grow dim and you go forth alone to the home of your eternity. For 'the silver cord shall be broken and the golden fillet shrink back,' and the mourners shall go about the street, and the dust shall return to the earth whence it came, and the soul to God who gave it."—New World.

THE CATHOLIC FAITH

The Catholic faith gives to the soul that loves it in all simplicity a vision and an inspiration beyond human knowledge and human power. To such a soul it becomes the power of heaven, the song of songs. It transcends not the things of earth; it lifts them up and immortalizes them with a halo of eternal glory. The rationalist descends the steps of mystery, of suffering, of justice, of death to defeat and despair. The believer mounts on the very same steps to a fuller life and an everlasting victory; he conquers in joyful triumph. A Catholic peasant soldier of the present war, who has since been killed in action, wrote home to his wife and children, in answer to a letter from them which told of their tears because of his absence and his danger: "You tell me that your offer your tears to God. Oh; I am sure they are pleasing to Him; but I think He would be more pleased to see you bear the cross of separation for love of Him than to see you dragging it in tears. You know that we must

bear the cross if we are to come to paradise."—Catholic World.

ANGEL OF THE BATTLEFIELD

An International News special announces Sister Rosina of Kempton as a heroine, lately decorated with the Iron and Bavarian military crosses.

In one of the battlefields, near St. Mihiel, this gentle disciple of the gentle Christ carried no less than seven maimed soldiers from the firing line and staunchly the wounds of an officer bleeding to death. "It is the same story as told in every war," says the Catholic News. "The angel of the battlefield shines radiantly amid the dreadful carnage."

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To have seen one you love, going down this road to ruin, and to have heard him try to laugh and joke away your fears, while you watched the drink habit fasten on him; is to have known suffering and to have borne a sorrow to which physical pain is nothing. And when at last he comes to that turn in the road that, sooner or later must come, and wakes to the fact that he is a slave to the drink you think everything will come right. He will fight the habit and you will help him escape it; but he can not do it. Drink has undermined his constitution, inflamed his stomach and nerves until the craving must be satisfied. And after you have hoped and then despaired more times than you can count you realize that he must be helped. The diseased condition of the stomach and nerves must be cured by something that will soothe the inflamed stomach and quiet the shaking nerves, removing all toxic matter which it did for Mrs. G. of Vancouver: "I was so anxious to get my husband cured that I went up to Harrison's Drug Store and got your Kennedy there. I had no trouble giving it without his knowledge. I greatly thank you for all the peace and happiness that it has brought already into my home. The cost was nothing according to what would be paid in hospital. The course of drink was putting me into my grave, but now I feel happy. Since the Lord has helped you and help you in curing the evil, I don't want my name published."

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