

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. F. PAPPET
LOW SUNDAY

"Thomas answered and said to him: 'My Lord and my God.'"
(John 20, 28)

In commenting on today's gospel, St. Gregory says very beautifully: "Do you think that it happened accidentally that the Apostle Thomas was first absent, and after he came, heard, and having heard, doubted, and having doubted, touched; and by touching, obtained faith?" No, all this did not happen accidentally, but by the grace of God: for in a very wonderful way God in His mercy allowed the wounds of the Apostle who, because he doubted, touched the actual marks of His Divine Master's wounds. St. Thomas, by his want of faith, did more towards helping us to believe than did the other Apostles by their faith, since he was brought back to faith by touch, and this fact encourages us to cast aside all doubt and strengthen our faith. Therefore, our Lord permitted this disciple to doubt after the Resurrection, but He did not let him continue to do so. He wished Thomas to be a witness to the truth of the Resurrection, because, in consequence of his doubts, he actually touched the marks of our Saviour's wounds.

People might have been inclined to think that the Apostles' credulity led them to deceive themselves, or to be deceived, regarding the Resurrection, had it not been impossible even to suspect St. Thomas of credulity. He said: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." But afterwards, being thoroughly convinced, he threw himself at Christ's feet, exclaiming: "My Lord and my God." Surely only one unwilling to believe could still refuse to admit the truth of the Resurrection! Thomas cried: "My Lord!"—Thou art here Thyself; it is no illusion of my excited imagination, no ghost, no apparition resembling Thee that I behold; Thou art here, with the same body which suffered the torture of the Cross and the agony of death. "My God!"—From the very fact that Thou art Thyself present, I know Thee, Jesus, to be indeed my God. Thus spoke St. Thomas, and thus we, too, should speak with Him.

Through Christ's Resurrection we recognize His divinity. The truth, so often and so plainly proclaimed, that He was God, was confirmed by all His miracles, for God would certainly never give one, who spoke untruths, power to work miracles. It is impossible for God, being all holy, to confirm falsehoods by miracles. Therefore, our Lord's miracles in general are a proof of His Divinity, but His Resurrection is the greatest and most glorious of them all; for Christ rose from the dead by His own power. His was not raised by some higher authority. By rising again He proved the truth of the words: "I have power to lay down my life, and I have the power to take it up again; as the Father hath life in Himself, even so hath He granted to the Son to have life in Himself. I am the Resurrection and the Life." Every creature has life, not of itself, but given to it by its Creator; God alone has life in Himself; consequently Jesus is God. This doctrine of our Lord's Divinity is a fundamental doctrine in Christianity, and denial of it involves a denial of Christianity as a whole. For to deny that Jesus is God involves a denial that He spoke the truth, when He declared Himself to be God indeed, the Son of the Almighty Father. Let us always hold fast to this sacred truth, which is confirmed by the strongest proofs. Everything—all our faith and all our virtue—depends upon our belief in the Divinity of Christ.

Jesus is truly God. Of what avail is the learning of men, profound and attractive as it may appear? Every man, however wise, is not only capable of error, but does actually err in many respects. History teaches us this truth; for we read of great men who have propounded famous theories, universally accepted and believed, and yet in course of time the errors underlying them have revealed themselves, and the theories have gradually been discarded, giving place to others, more recently put forward; until at last the mention of these men and their doctrines is enough to remind us how easy it is to make mistakes. We should indeed be in a sad plight had we to rely exclusively upon human learning. We should have no firm foothold, but only a fear of being compelled to deny to-morrow what to-day appears true, and to curse what to-day seems most sacred. But, as it is, we rely not on the doctrines of men, but on the teaching of Him Who, by His Resurrection, proved Himself to be God. What can make us waver in our faith? Nothing, for what we believe is the word of the eternal, unchanging Truth, and His doctrines are as true now as they were in the past and as they will be forever. Heaven and earth may pass away, but His words can never pass away.

Jesus is truly God. This truth strengthens us to do right. Even if men could teach infallibly what is right and true, their teaching would be of no avail, since the fairer colors in which they depicted virtue, the more painfully should we recognize our inability to attain to it, as they could not impart to us strength to do right. But He Who teaches us is truly God, the Bestower of grace, the support of our souls, the vine of which we are the branches, and the strength of our hearts, without

HIS HEALTH IN A TERRIBLE STATE

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Whom we can do nothing, and with Whom we can do all things. God Himself helps us to accomplish what He would have us do. How consoling and encouraging is this doctrine! Whoever recognizes Christ as truly God, can never cease to strive after perfection, knowing that he will not strive in vain, as, by aid of the grace given by our risen Saviour, it is possible for him to advance daily on the way of salvation.

TEMPERANCE

ALCOHOL'S INHERITED EFFECTS

The influence of alcohol as a detrimental factor in inheritance is one which has not readily lent itself to convincing experimental proof in the past. During the last four years, Prof. Stockard of the Cornell University Medical School in New York City has been engaged in a study of the effects of alcohol in heredity. He has demonstrated conclusively that the germ cells of male guinea pigs can be so injured by allowing the individuals to inhale the fumes of alcohol, that they give rise to defective offspring, although mated with vigorous females.

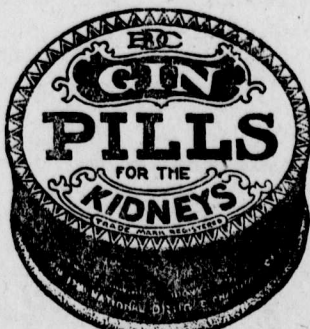
The extension of these unique investigations, in which the offspring of the treated animals which reach maturity are usually nervous and slightly crazed, have further shown that the effect of the injury of the germ cell is not only exhibited by the immediate offspring of alcoholized animals, but is conveyed through their descendants for at least three generations. There are many instances of matings followed by negative results of early abortions, stillborn young or defectives.

An instructive illustration was afforded in a case in which two of the four young animals were completely eyeless, the eyeballs, optic nerves and chiasma being absent. Such defects result, according to Stockard, from the injury originally inflicted on the germ cells by the experimental treatment. Yet this injury may have been received by earlier generations only. Thus the parents of guinea pigs mentioned were untreated, their four grandparents were also untreated, but their great-grandfathers were all alcoholized, and their great-grandmothers all were normal animals.

The defective eyes of descendants are due to impaired development, not to the direct action of alcohol. Plainly the germ cell actually is weakened, it is not disabled, by the alcohol treatment, and all individuals arising from combinations involving such a germ cell are likely to be below normal. There is food for reflection in these facts.—American Medical Association Journal.

A PROBLEM EVERY NATION HAS TO DEAL WITH

Prohibition has a special sanction as a war measure which is lacking in time of peace, and the motive may vary according to conditions.



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Russia forbids vodka in the interest of sobriety; what course it is to take in regard to milder beverages is not yet clear. Germany, on the other hand, limits the making of beer, not as a temperance measure, for beer has a well established place in the national life, but to save grain for food, and in case of shortage this tendency would increase. France has not the same motive because foodstuffs can be imported from abroad and paid for with the products of the vineyards, and the primary concern of the government is to encourage the replacement of deleterious strong drinks with the mild wine on which the country long flourished. This no doubt explains the action of the Senate in agreeing to the compromise by which licenses are to be made unnecessary for the sale of so-called "hygienic drinks," which in France includes not only soda water, milk and cocoa, but cider, wine and beer. The new law, which went into effect January 1, retains the high tax on distilled liquors, the effect of which upon the nation has been by general consent harmful. Every country has to deal with the problem in its own way.—Springfield Republican.

WHY?
"Some years ago I was working for a large wholesale liquor house in Chicago," said a business man recently. "Among their employees was a number of salesmen who drummed up orders around the country. If the liquor firm found that any one of these was indulging in the drink habit," he continued, "he was immediately discharged."

Why was this? Who has ever heard of a salesman being dropped from the payroll of a company because he ate the flour sold by his firm. Who has ever heard of one being discharged because he drank the grape juice kept for sale by his employer. Why should this liquor company so arbitrarily demand total abstinence from indulgence in the products of its own business? There is a reason. And the reason is just as strong a one for all others as for the salesman of the liquor firm.

Those who drink intoxicating liquor are in danger of becoming unfitted to perform the duties devolving upon men and women. The drink habit robs human beings of the greatest treasure they possess—a clear mind. Why not be as wise as the liquor seller, and avoid the danger of falling a victim to its insidious snare?—St. Paul Bulletin.

LIKE A CITY ON A HILL

Following is a portion of a notable discourse delivered by the Right Rev. Michael J. Curley, D. D., of the Diocese of St. Augustine, one of the world's youngest Bishops, on the occasion of the dedication of the Church of the Assumption, South Jacksonville, Fla.

"That the Blessed Redeemer gave a doctrine to the world calls for no proof. It is a fact shining out from every page of the history of twenty centuries, reflected in the ages' life. To perpetuate that teaching, to carry it down the corridors of time, to bring it home to us in the twentieth century as well as to those who lived in the second century, He established a Church, an organization to which He gave His own authority and power, and sent it forth to carry on His mission among men, to guide them and direct them, to point them heavenward, to furnish them means of salvation. The history of that foundation is to be found in the Gospel pages, where too we find its mode described."

"Behold the infant Church in its swaddling clothes! Christ is its head, its foundation. In it, through it and with it He works. The Holy Ghost enlightens it and will teach it all things."

"The Saviour's representative amongst men was Peter, the rock; Peter to whom Christ confided the care of lambs and sheep. How it grew with a growth divine—that little Church! I am not called upon to sketch its growth. Its history is the history of the world. Its progress is the progress of nations."

HELL'S GATES COULD NOT PREVAIL
"These fishermen and their followers, who conquered the paganism of Rome, and Greece. They met and refuted the great lights of the intellectual world, they sowed the seeds of the new faith in imperial palaces and humble huts. They gave it to Roman Senators and lowly slaves. Bishops and priests multiplied; the Christian faith soon became known throughout the world, and then persecution in its fiercest form broke out against them. The Roman Eagle, the standard that rarely knew defeat, was carried against the followers of the Nazarene. They were driven to burrow rabbitlike into the very bowels of the earth, their bodies were lighted as fagots in the city streets, they were thrown to the lions in the Coliseum to make a Roman holiday. Emperors issued edicts against them, blood was shed, Christians died in torrents, but that blood was but the seed sown. Rich and plenteous was the harvest; no, no Roman emperors, not imperial armies, not fire or sword, not lions or tigers, could overcome this youthful Catholic Church. Hell's gates could not prevail."

OUT OF THE CATACOMBS

"She came forth bearing on her brow the laurel of victory, young and strong, and when given an era of peace, a chance to do God's work, she went out, occupied for Christian worship paganism's proudest temple and raised aloft the cross throughout the length and breadth of nations. Her history has repeated itself down the ages. Her life has been a replica of the life of Christ. She is His projection down the long lane of time, speaking with authority, teaching humbly, purity, obedience, other-worldliness; she has ever had meted out to her the very same treatment as was given to Him Who, though God of all, died a reputed malefactor on Calvary's Cross. She stands out in history's page-to-day as the mother of the world's best civilization. She freed the captive; she elevated womanhood; she dotted the earth with homes of learning where the heart of the scholar was softened and strengthened by the teaching of Jesus Christ. She cared for the weak and down-trodden of humanity; she staunchly the every wound; her consecrated children fear not the deadly breath of pestilence and stench nor where death stalked claiming thousands in battle's array. She changed the face of pagan nations, and gave them Christ as God to be adored instead of some idol of stick or stone. His kindly generous hand was stretched out to shield the orphan and the homeless; she smoothed the pillow of the lonely dying; she took to her chastened bosom the Magdalene of the city street."

clear, sweet, certain voice of Jesus Christ down the centuries."—Philadelphia Standard and Times.

Short is the little that remains to these of life. Live as on a mountain, for it makes no difference whether a man lives there or here. Be like the promontory against which the waves continually break, but it stands firm and tames the fury of the water round it.—Marcus Aurelius.

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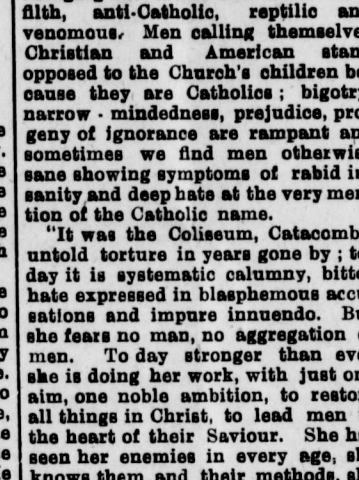
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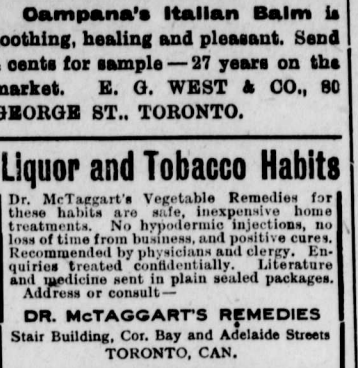
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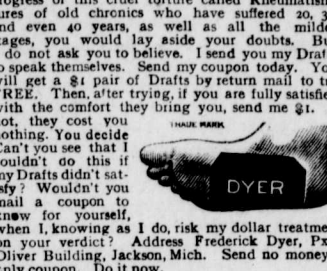
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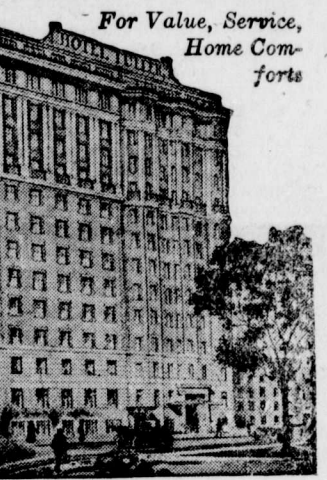


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