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**FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.**

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

VANITY.  
 When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the highest place. (St. Luke xiv. 8.)  
 It is not many Sundays ago that our Lord's words taught us humility by the spectacle of the Pharisee's pride contrasted with the publican's lowliness. Yet holy Church repeats the same lesson to-day by telling us what our Lord thinks of one who is vain enough to take too high a place at the wedding-seat. And indeed, brethren, it takes much teaching for us to learn the corruption of our own hearts. If there is anybody we lack close acquaintance with, it is our own very selves. If there is one book harder for us to read than any other it is the book of our own hearts. Yet in spite of this ignorance of ourselves, either before God or in comparison with our neighbor, we are always tempted to set ourselves up for something far better than we really are, and no less tempted to depreciate our neighbor.

We are too anxious to exercise the same certain judgment about relative merit in spiritual things as we fancy we can do in temporal affairs. You doubtless know the various standards of worldly preference. One person looks around at others and exclaims in his or her secret heart: "With what shocking bad taste do such and such ones dress! They must be very vulgar indeed; surely I cannot be expected to demean myself by going in their company. Another says: "There is a great deal in social standing. Let every one know his place in the world and keep it: as for me, I am certainly quite above the company of such and such persons. Another says: "Brains is the standard; good clothes and social position—what are but miserable vanity and prejudice? But I have brains; and I know it, and can show it; therefore, stand aside for me, for I am entitled to preference.

Now, brethren, what is there in the spiritual life that answers to good clothes? I will tell you: it is certain external practices of devotion. External devotions are indeed necessary for the soul just as clothes are for the body, and if used in the right spirit give one spiritual warmth and adorn the soul with interior virtues. But we must not be vain of them. And what answers in the spiritual life to the consciousness of social position? The remembrance of many years spent in God's service and the various spiritual gifts received from Him. But beware of spiritual pride. And what answers to human talents and ability? Facility in prayer, glibness of speech about spiritual things, knowledge of devotional books and the like. And these may be made a cause of vanity.

So when our Lord looks in among the guests at His spiritual table we may well imagine His saying to one or other of us: "Friend, I perceive that you have been trusting a trifle too much to certain external practices; they are very good in themselves, but should be joined to a deeper and truer contrition for your sins and a more practical use of penance and mortification. I am sorry to make you blush, but really you must step down a few seats lower. To another He says: "Friend, you are in the wrong place; I know that you have received many graces from Me in the past, but I also notice a great want of gratitude on your part; besides this, I see from your present disposition of mind that, if you are left where you are, you are likely to be quite puffed up with vanity. So I will set you down a little lower to a place opposite a good dish of thanksgiving and another of humility. To another He says: "What are you doing there, you who are so fault-finding and over-bearing? Do you trust to your knowledge of spiritual things and your pious talk? Your religion consists of words, words, words; and what I want is deeds. So, down with you to the last place at the table; and if I had any place lower than the last you should certainly have it.

Brethren, let us be glad to sit down anywhere at our Lord's banquet—glad of so much as the crumbs from the table. That is to say, the friendship of God is too precious a thing, and too much all his own to give, that we should presume to glory in it. Humility, detachment from poorly of our own merits—such are the virtues that underlie all true piety.

To rise in the morning with a bad taste in the mouth and no appetite, indicates that the stomach needs strengthening. For this purpose, there is nothing better than an occasional dose of Ayer's Pills taken at bed time.

**Enter This Term.**  
 The fall term of the Peterborough Business College and School of Short-hand, Peterborough, begins on Sept. 4th. For circulars, terms, etc., write to Mr. A. Blanchard, C. A., Principal.

**Out of Sorts.**—Symptoms, headache, loss of appetite, furred tongue, and general indisposition. These symptoms, if neglected, develop into acute disease. It is a trifle easy to get an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and a little attention at this point may save months of sickness and large doctor's bills. For this complaint take from two to three of Parmentier's Vegetable Pills on going to bed, and one or two for three nights in succession, and a cure will be effected.

**Dyspepsia Cured.**  
 GENTLEMEN,—I was troubled with dyspepsia for about four years. I noticed an advertisement of Burdock Blood Bitters, so I started to use it and soon found that there was nothing to equal it. It took just three bottles to effect a perfect cure in my case.  
 Best J. Kinn, Wingham, Ont.

**TRIUMPHANT OPTIMISM.**

Enthusiasm in the Prosecution of Common Interests is the Hope of Catholics.

"The world belongs to the optimist!" Whoever said this was right. And one of the best guarantees of the final reign of the Catholic Church in this country over all hearts is the present spirit of optimism—the glow of unquenchable hope which is felt among our young people. Pessimism leads to hell, optimism to heaven. Who could have been more hopeful than Our Lord Christ? He had great regard for a race for which He was willing to sacrifice His life. Bishop Spalding, in one of the most vital of his discourses, tells us that it is better to live in our century than in the fifteenth, and that it will be better to live in the twentieth than even in the nineteenth. Let us believe that he speaks the truth and try to catch the infection of his optimism.

Hope, like faith, without works is dead. We, who have such responsibilities, cannot afford to be idle. On our young women and men of to-day is dependent the future of Christianity in the United States. But they can do little without enthusiasm. All these things are truisms; they have been said a hundred times before, but not always to ears that hear.

Enthusiasm should quell that tendency to censoriousness which seems to be a quality too much developed among us. We are so sure of our firm adhesion to dogma that we give ourselves all sorts of liberties in the non-essentials. The sneer—which ought to have died with Voltaire—is not unknown among us. We see defects among our own brethren more easily than virtues. We look out for defects. But we are beginning to have *esprit de corps*, and that is one of the signs of our optimism.

Now the *esprit de corps* we need is that spirit of brotherhood which will help us to charity and enthusiasm. The Methodist Bishop Vincent and the other gentlemen who still hold opinions of the Church which represent the opinions of remote Scotch villages, where John Knox wears the halo of a saint, fancy that Catholics are a solid phalanx. Some day, Bishop Vincent believes, the Pope may call out from the Vatican: "Tear down the American flag!" Leo XIII. may not do this, THESE ADHERENTS OF DARKEST METHUENISM think because he has a shrewd regard for public opinion. But the "Black Pope" will; and—as Bishop Vincent has learned from Alexandre Dumas' novels—the Black Pope, that is, the general of the Jesuits, is the motor that "runs" us all! We all know how absurd this is. It would be ridiculous, if it were not so dangerous—for, to the patriot, it means poison in the social body; it means malice and hatred and uncharitableness. It means the exciting of all un-Christian feeling.

IT MEANS CIVIL WAR IN VILLAGES AND TOWNS and in quiet country places; it means that the hands of the Americans shall be against Americans. It means that the ignorance of Bishop Vincent and his group is undoing, to the extent of their power, the best work of 76. We Catholics might meet it with prayer and humility; as American citizens we are forced to resent it by every argument in our power—even by the ballot, if necessary.

As Catholics, we must be averse to having any political solidarity of our own. That *esprit de corps* which would lead to the formation of what is called a Catholic party is discouraged by all thoughtful men. Any movement which would throw Catholics in a mass into one of the two great parties would be a serious mistake. As Catholics, we have no opinions on the tariff. As American citizens, we have. When the principles of the Constitution are attacked in us, by any attempt to limit the free exercise of our religion or our right to instruct our children, we resent it—not alone as Catholics, but as Americans.

This, it seems, disposes of the "solid phalanx" business, which exists only in the eye of some of our neighbors, who have gone blind, so far as the Church is concerned, in the other eye. As Catholics, our best means for the conversion of our neighbors are prayer, example, enthusiasm, the getting rid of censoriousness among ourselves, and cultivating optimism. What we hope long enough for always comes.

What young man, enthusiastically Catholic, who makes the most of himself, shall fall of success? What young woman, permeated by the spirit of the "Magnificat," can fall of contentment and joy, if she hopes, and puts this constant hope and enthusiasm into her life?

Pessimism asks, with tears in its eyes—"What's the use?" There are Catholics among us whose mission, self-appointed, is to tear down. They are the sort of people that make religion gloomy—to those who turn the kindly dew to frost—who love the forms, and do not understand the spirit, of the Church. They would knock down a Protestant with a cross and lose him with a rosary; drive him into the fold by the hair of his head, then tell him frequently that all his relatives are in hell, and that if he escapes, even in the fold, it will be unusual. Optimism has given us THIS SUMMER SCHOOL, the reading circle—and all these new intellectual movements which ten years ago the pessimist decried.

To look backward is a sign of old age; forward, of youth. The world, then, in the sunlight of this glorious nineteenth century belongs to us.

"Ah," one hears dear Bishop Vincent say, "hear the Papists talking—the world is theirs!"

But what is there that Bishop Vincent would not misinterpret? He and his school have a genius for misunderstanding. St. Francis d'Assisi, the legend says, converted the ruthless sultan; he would look on the Seraphic One as an hysterical emissary of the Black Pope. All the same, the world is ours; but not in the way Bishop Vincent means.

When we become prouder of the number of political offices we fill—of the number of torch-lights we show in a political procession—than of the spiritual and intellectual growth of our people, then we are persons—not the Church—will give color to Bishop Vincent's reproaches. When we begin to count the "Catholic vote," which—thank heaven!—does not exist, we shall be rushing on the downward slope to the death of all that is best in us; and then the pessimist may croak.

Our need is that we should make the most of ourselves and of our brethren. It is not only a question of bricks and mortar; it is a matter of spiritual and intellectual development—not a matter of votes, but of that power which comes of greater charity

AND GREATER CULTURE.  
*Esprit de corps*—this spirit of brotherhood—does not mean that young men are to join literary societies and circles in order to sell more hats, or coats or groceries. It does not mean that the spirit of trade is to be dominant, and the mind of religion to be ruled by the matter of trade.

Above all, it does not mean that an Irish name or a German name is to decide whether a man is worthy of our love and regard. There are two opinions on Cahensylism. There is only one among Christians on the nefariousness of bringing national prejudices into the kingdom of Christ.

The most blighting hurt that falls on the best efforts of Catholics is that narrow criticism with which their brethren meet them. Envy is not a Catholic vice; there are no Catholic virtues. Is it envy, or is it lack of culture, or is it mere habit that produces this pessimistic desire to pull down? Perhaps it is conservatism. Whatever it is, it ought to go—it must go, if the light of Faith in America is to shine before men.

THANKS TO THE CONFESSIONAL, we Catholics as a body have an unbounded respect for the Sixth Commandment. St. Alphonsus Liguori, following the spirit of the Church, saw to it that in modern times. But for the Eighth Commandment have we so much practical respect? Sometimes it alludes to the most serious of sins, but for the good of Lubricity, we had filled her niche with several other goddesses in miniature; very little ones, of course. Our prints are filled with announcements of our superior virtue. We—the present writer has done it, too, when he was in Arcadia—save up all the printed stunts we can find on the virtues of Protestants. A car conductor, for instance, fails to punch his card, and secures some of his employer's money. "Look," we say, in a neat paragraph, "at the effects of Baptist Sunday schools." This is neither charitable nor true. Baptist Sunday schools are better than none; and their most deplorable defect is the defect of all sects—that they have little effect. Certainly they teach the Commandments; but they have no sacraments to enforce the keeping of them. A minister elopes to Canada, under compromising circumstances. And then, dear brethren, how worthy we become, and how charitable!

The brotherly feeling among ourselves—the enthusiasm of optimism which raises us in Christ, above petty things—ought to teach charity to those who cannot have our means of grace. When we have become a "solid phalanx," imbued with the charity of St. Francis d'Assisi, the cheerfulness of St. Philip de Neri, and with the joy and the hope of the Church, we shall indeed conquer that kingdom which is not of this earth, but which is on this earth.—Maurice Francis Egan, in Providence Visitor.

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**THE SEAL OF THE CONFESSIONAL.**

Bishop Keane Says the English Decision Cannot Stand.

Legal circles still continue to discuss the decision of Chief Justice Sir Frederick Jeune, of London Court of Probate and Divorce, that a clergyman can be compelled to reveal on the witness stand, confessions made to him in confidence by his parishioners. The agitation is not confined to members of the legal profession, but considerable comment has been made in Church circles. Bishop Keane, of the Catholic University, was interviewed on the subject, and said:

"I have read the announcement of Justice Jeune's decision, and, if it has been correctly reported, it is certainly contrary not only to common usage, but to all similar decisions of which I have ever heard in courts of law. With the growth of civilization there have grown up certain customs which have by common consent been considered sacred. The custom in question is one of these. Civilization has declared that the confidences of the confessional are sacred, and when a court of law lifts its hand and says this shall not be so, it says that the civilization of the age cannot make any regulation which the law is bound to respect. Civilization and the law ought to go hand in hand; but they have not done so in this case, and I should say that the decision of Justice Jeune, if we have it reported correctly, certainly cannot stand.

"I know this question has been raised in the United States once in certain knowledge, and I think twice—both times in the State of New York. The matter was carried to the Supreme Court of the State, where the decision was that a priest could not be compelled to divulge the secrets confided to him in the sacred confidence of the confessional. If this had not been so, there must have ceased to be any such thing as a sacred confidence in civilization. It is my opinion that a decision so directly contrary to all precedent and to common sense cannot stand.

The Rev. J. Havers Richards, President of Georgetown University, when asked concerning the decision, said: "I have seen the account of the matter published in the papers, but know nothing further about it. It is the first time to my knowledge that the question of confidential testimony has ever been raised in the case of a Protestant minister, although it has been

several times decided in this country that a priest was exempt from the necessity of testifying concerning confidences gained through the confessional. I remember one such case in Pennsylvania, another in Virginia, and another in New York. In each of these the priest was imprisoned for a short time, but the decision of the lower court was reversed by the Supreme Court of the State.

"In the present case, the only thing that surprises me is the statement by the papers that the minister yielded to coercion and furnished the information sought of him. This leads me to think that the story may be incorrect. So far as I am aware, it has always been the custom for the courts to respect the confidences reposed in professional men in their professional capacity. This is necessary for the well-being of society itself, and it seems to me that any professional man, be he a minister or not, would suffer any penalty rather than violate a confidence so placed.

"What would be the result if the Jeune decision should be taken as a precedent, and an attempt made to compel priests to testify? "The priests would go to prison. No penalty, however severe, would induce a priest to violate the confidence thus reposed in him. I recall one case where the stand taken was even broader than this. It was during the Irish land troubles, and a priest—Father Kehler, I think, was the name—was called to testify concerning some information that had been confided in him though not through the medium of the confessional. He refused on the grounds that the information was given him in his professional capacity, as he had been made a confidant only because of his position. The opposing counsel admitted this, and the whole fight in the case was made on this ground. The court held, and justly, as every one knew, that the information was not given to Father Kehler in a professional capacity, and he went to jail for a term, but he served his sentence and was given an ovation on his release.

"No, I do not think that there is any significance in the decision of the probate court at all. The same thing has happened before in the lower courts. I speak with certainty only in the case of priests, and the decision of the lower court has always been reversed by the court above.

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