

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

Rev. F. P. Hickey, O. S. B. THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

CHRIST, LAWGIVER AND KING

"Keep your minds and hearts in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Phil. iv. 7.) Advent charged us to look first upon sin and judgment, and now to turn our eyes to Him, to Whose coming the world looked for its redemption.

At His coming the old law had to pass away and the Jewish observances to give place to the service of Christ. He came, as Isaiah calls Him, "our Lawgiver and our King." (Isa. xxxiii. 22.)

The Lawgiver—yes, for He came in obedience to Himself, "to do the will of Him that sent Me" (John iv. 34)—His heavenly Father, and His object is to teach us to obey that same Divine will. His laws are the safeguards of our souls in our journey to heaven. His laws are not harsh and tyrannical; they are framed to crush sin, and make our life a misery. From old "thou shalt," as the commandments began, was the rule and condition of man's being, and his happiness and blessedness was in obeying. Woe to us when merely "I will" becomes our rule, and we disregard God's word, "Thou shalt."

Yet our Lawgiver, Jesus Christ, though He has to demand obedience, though He tells us often that all perfection is doing the will of God, endeavors to word His laws very differently from "Thou shalt." He puts before us the reward of obeying, and not the threat of disobedience. "And opening His mouth He taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit . . . Blessed are the meek . . . the merciful . . . the clean of heart . . . the peacemakers, Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 2-10.)

Obedience in following out these blessed words gives security, peace, and repose to our souls. For by obeying, by submission, we make our will and God's will one; and His blessed will must always be accomplished. Keep your minds in Christ Jesus, our Lawgiver, for He has said, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart." (Matt. xi. 29.)

And our hearts we must keep in loyal allegiance to our King. Our Saviour came on earth to become the King of men. Great is the honor conferred upon us in being asked to serve our King, and great the fidelity exacted in that service. He is not as other kings. If it is the height of men's ambition to serve earthly kings, to be honored and rewarded by them, what enthusiasm, what noble pride we should take in dedicating ourselves to the service of the King of Glory, God the Son, become Man for our sakes! His kingdom will never end; the honors He confers for faithful service are eternal.

And the fidelity exacted is such that only a coward could shrink from. He never gives an order without at the same time giving grace and power to fulfill it. He never demands anything from us that He has not previously accomplished Himself. And His eye is always on us, watching to smile approval and encouragement. And all we do for Him is certain of its reward. "I have fought a good fight," says St. Paul; "I have kept the faith. . . . And there I laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me." (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.)

Alas! we are not earnest in the King's service, because we do not know Him, and watch Him, and keep near Him as we should. The Gospel says today, "There hath stood one in the midst of you, Whom you know not." (John i. 26.) Whom we know not? How can that be? We are not unbelievers; we are the children of the Church. We do know Him; faith points Him out. Yes, my dear brethren, we can recognize Him; but are we acquainted with Him? Are His words the guide of our actions? Is His good will the aim of our life? His Spirit the impulse of our hearts? His honour and glory the end of our existence?

Look, examine; and how unlike our King we shall find ourselves to be. His life tallied with His words, and what a contrast are ours! He said, "Blessed are the poor . . . the meek," and He can appeal to His actions to show that He was. "Blessed are the merciful," and His life proved that He was. The miracles that He wrought proving His mercy crowd our memory. And the clean of heart He blesses likewise. Those who are all for God, doing all with a pure intention and earnest zeal, "they shall see God." And selfishness and love of ease and negligence, alas! separate us from the clean of heart.

"Blessed are they who suffer persecution," says the King again. And we dare not meet His eye when He utters those words, for we have played the coward's part many a time, not taking the side of God boldly, whatever it might cost us. No, we have been afraid of a taunt, a sneer; we have temporized; we have truckled to human respect, and tried foolishly to be friends with both sides. Persecution! how few of us have nerved our hearts to suffer that, even for the kingdom of heaven!

You must, then, try to learn of our Blessed Lord. Begin in earnest. Recall Him as the Lawgiver, and practise obedience to His every wish; recall Him as the King, thank Him for the honour of being His

soldiers, and nerve yourselves to fidelity in His service. "Keep your minds and hearts in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Phil. iv. 7.)

TEMPERANCE

WHY BEER IS STUPEFYING

Beer derives from hops a bitter-tasting, sticky, substance which forms the active element of the Oriental narcotic—hashesh. This discovery credited to Professor Reinzier of the Polytechnic at Graz, is declared by other European scientists to account for the "undoubted stupefying effects of beer."

Judge Lang of Zurich says: "Brandy makes a man sick, but beer makes him stupid," and Dr. Delbrueck declares that all civilization must send forth the slogan, "War on Beer."

Hashesh is a narcotic made by the natives of India, Turkey and other countries from the leaves, flowers, and stalks of the hemp plant. Long ago it was the custom of Eastern despots, when assigning to servants the duty of assassination, to intoxicate them with hashesh, and from the similar sound we are said to derive our word, "assassin."

The drug has a peculiar, brutalizing effect. It pulls in the nerves from the finger tips to the inner recesses as a cat draws in its claws. The victim is left unperceptive, unresponsive, and in time is degraded to the level of the grunting hog.

Hops is very closely related to hemp. Says Professor Reinzier, "In the female blossom of the Indian plant as in the female blossom of the hops we find glands holding a narcotic, bitter-tasting, sticky substance which forms the active element of the hashesh from Indian hemp. This is used by the various Mohammedan people of South and West Africa, as opium elsewhere for narcotic purposes."—St. Paul Bulletin.

POPULAR PARADOXES ABOUT ALCOHOL

Monkeys are caught by boring a small hole in an empty coconut and placing a lump of sugar inside. The monkey thrusts in his hand, seizes the sugar, and then cannot get his fist out. As long as his fist is clenched he cannot get loose, nor run nor climb. He screams, fights and bites, but holds on to his sugar and is taken alive.

Though alcohol palsies a man's hand, blurs his mind, paralyzes his will, undermines his morals, dictates his religion—in short, reduces him to total slavery, yet he will not surrender his "personal liberty." When a man's personal liberty is preserved in alcohol, it is stone dead.

Alcohol transforms homes into hovels, a wife's happiness into shamed bitterness, children's play into fear, paints neighborhoods with squalid ugliness, fills jails, poor-houses, hospitals and asylums, and passes all this bitter inheritance on to other generations. All these social evils come in the name of the "social glass!" The social glass is social suicide. These things I have not read out of a book, but seen while the roar of a machine shop was in my ears.—A Holmes, Dean of Pennsylvania State College.

A PATHETIC WAR STORY

When the history of the present European conflict is written, no mention may be made of the heroism of the Catholic Sisterhood, but in the hearts of thousands of soldiers will be an appreciation of the valor being shown by the "Angels of Mercy." Neither will the courage of the priests be forgotten.

Risking shot and shell, nuns and priests are bringing comfort to the injured and dying soldiers. Danger is forgotten by these workers of God, even though it is but occasionally that the name of a Sister or a priest is cited in the order of the day.

now die happy." Before he could utter another sound his soul had departed.

A few months later when soldiers were being killed and wounded in large numbers, Father Monsaert was called upon to comfort many. The English colonel looked on with his hat in hand. Father Monsaert was about to depart when the colonel said: "There is another here, Father. This time, a well man. I mean myself. After what I have seen, that is the faith for me. I wish to become a Catholic." And he did—there on the battlefield.

Priests are allowed to remain in the first line trenches only a week at a time, and then are sent to the rear to recuperate. Mass is said every day in the trenches, the soldiers have erected altars under the surface of the earth, and services are well attended. The altars are crude, but beautiful, according to the description of the Jesuit Father. Early in the War, it was a common thing for a priest to be standing up to his knees in water while saying Mass, but later the soldiers procured sand bags, on which the priests now stand while celebrating Mass. The rosary is chanted every night.

When peace is declared it is predicted there will be more Catholics than ever. Thousands of Sisters have volunteered their services, and only one is known to Father Monsaert to have been shot on the battlefield. One Sister was rewarded seven times for bravery by President Poincaré of France, in Paris, before a large multitude. Many priests have also received medals.

FRANK E. LORDB

THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLE

It is a timely and fortunate idea of the Catholic Laymen's Association of Georgia to prepare and send forth widely and gratuitously a neat pamphlet, in stiff cover, treating of the subject "Catholics and the Bible." There is no slander more hackneyed than that contained in the ridiculous old story that Luther "discovered the Bible." This pamphlet appears at a time when the enemies of our holy Church are improving the grand opportunity which the call to arms gives to diffuse broadcast the poison of the half truth which lies at the base of the old story about Luther and his wonderful discovery.

The story was made to appear ridiculous and self-condemnatory when a second one telling about a "chained Bible" came tripping on its heels. This one contained the "half-truth"—for it was founded on the fact that in the Middle Ages, ere multiplication of the Word of God by means of the printing press was known, the vellum volumes were in some churches secured by slender chains attached to pillars for the convenience of learned functionaries who assisted at the ritual service.

It is flung out as a proof of the obscurantist policy of the Church, in the Middle Ages, that the Council of Toulouse, in France, forbade the laity to read the Bible in the vernacular. In that part of France the vernacular in that age was a mixture called the "langue d'Oc"—the tongue of the Felibres of Provence and the Greek descended population about Marseilles and the Mediterranean littoral of Southern Gaul. The reason why the Council took the step of prohibiting the employment of this melange in the Sacred Scriptures is explained simply enough by the compilers of the pamphlet now being circulated by the Catholic Truth Society. It was because, as the pamphlet writer puts the case: "The Albigenes and Waldenses were trying to revive the pagan philosophy called Manichaeism, and to give some semblance of orthodoxy to their unholy doctrines they deliberately mutilated Scriptural texts rendered in the vernacular. The Church of England once prescribed thirty days' imprisonment for any woman, farmer, journeyman or apprentice who should read the Scriptures to themselves or others, privately or openly." The Jews under thirty years of age were forbidden to read certain books of Scripture. Do these facts prove anything against the Anglicans or the Jews? No. Neither does the decree of Toulouse prove anything against the Church. Besides, this decree was operative only in France; across the line in Flanders an approved vernacular version was freely read. Moreover, it was meant and it proved to be one of only temporary effect in France; an approved French version was soon provided, and that it was widely read is shown by the fact that it ran through forty editions before the close of the sixteenth century.

But there is much more than can be conveyed by a mere "yes" or "no" underlying such wild slanders against God's true Church on earth. The pamphlet, brief as its contents are, presents the meat and the juice of the whole question, as the rigid researchers and analysis of the Fathers and the various Ecumenical Councils have disclosed them. The writer goes on to prove by the highest authority, the Scriptures' very words and mandates, the manner in which the Church treasured the Sacred Scriptures, and by their testimony proved the absolute unity of the Church in its doctrines and ritual. The pamphlet, in concluding says:

"But did not the Council of Trent forbid the Bible to the laity? No, nothing like it. It merely directed that explanatory notes accompany

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difficult texts. Is there anything wrong in that? Does not St. Peter say that "no prophecy of the Scriptures is of private interpretation," that "there are many things in Scripture which the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction? Did not our Lord clearly distinguish the teaching body from the laity when He said to the Apostles: 'To you it is given to know and to understand, but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'" When St. Philip saw the Queen's eunuch reading the Scriptures, he asked him what he read, and the eunuch, a superior scholar, as his office implies, answered: "How can I unless some one show me?" Philip then explained the Scriptures as one to whom "it is given to know and to understand," and the eunuch believed and was baptized. Are not these evidences sufficient at least to acquit the Church of wrongdoing when she provides for her children explanatory notes to involved passages of Scripture?

Is it not a blessed thing that the Church does not allow private interpretation of the Scriptures? For, besides being in a position in strict accord with Scripture, an intelligent person can see that no approach to unity of faith is possible if each reader is to put his own construction on the written word and our Lord's commission to His Church "To teach" would certainly be in vain.

FRENCH SPIRIT STILL LIVES AT RHEIMS

ARCHBISHOP PLANS TO MAKE WRECKED CATHEDRAL SHRINE FOR WORLD TO VISIT

A visit to Rheims, an interview with the cardinal of the historic and wrecked cathedral and an excursion to the first line trenches were crowded into one day by Bert Hope, university of California man, who went to France in the first ambulance unit to depart from Berkeley. Hope describes his day vividly in a letter just received by his father, the Rev. Francis Hope of Heidelberg.

The letter follows in part: Yesterday I had the most interesting trip yet. Wit Wright and I got up at 4 a. m. and started for Rheims, forty-five miles from our camp. After catching a ride on everything from a horse ambulance to a staff officer's limousine, we made Rheims in about four hours. The city is large, containing 150,000 inhabitants, and we were stopped on the outskirts, but our passports and much California politeness got us by. We went straight to the Cathedral. At a distance it looks as if it was intact, but when you get up to it you see the Huns have certainly wrecked it.

Lord! but it's a wonderful edifice; one of the grandest in Europe. The nave is 486 feet long and 160 feet wide, and the incomplete towers rise 60 feet above the transept, which is itself 160 feet high. Its magnificent main entrance is without a peer in the world, as were also the stained glass windows, now no more. Every particle has been demolished. The whole building is covered with stone carvings, statues, gargoyles and fret work. The west facade alone has over 500 images. Pieces have been chipped every where from the exterior, the statuary is mutilated, parts of the roof blown off by shells and even the walls seem to be tottering. The heroic statue of Joan of Arc in front is untouched except the tip of the scabbard of her sword.

LIKE THE BIG TREES

The venerable pile is certainly a good old scout, and made me think of one of our own big trees. So vast, so old, so immortal. What historic pageants and coronation scenes of splendor has it looked down on. What memories of Clovis, Philip Augustus, Joan and the dauphin. It symbolizes the very life and romance of France. As we were trying to adjust our minds to these historic visions we were suddenly brought back to present-day realities by the loud reports of anti-aircraft guns. Looking up we saw directly over us a big German biplane. He was so low you could see the black iron cross on each wing. Dozens of shells were bursting all round him, the high explosives showing black puffs, the 75s, white.

He flew directly over the cathedral and hence over us.

HUN HOVERS ABOVE

We were standing with our mouths open, lost in admiration at his nerve and in curiosity as to what he was going to do, when a civilian hailed us and cried: "Come here quickly, the éclat (fragments of shells) will be dropping there." We started slowly but quickened our pace as the pieces of metal began to whistle down and crash all around us.

Our protector took us into his kitchen, which opened into a large "non est," having been blown into atmosphere. After talking awhile, it developed that the next house of the court was the present home of the cardinal, the archbishop of Rheims. Wit (his companion) and I at once became interested and asked for an audience, and after much dickered and more politeness, we were shown into his reception room.

IS HEROIC FIGURE?

Here we began to realize that we were in a fix, not knowing the formalities of greeting one of his position, and as we were wondering if our brand of politeness would stand this new test—he entered. A fine, spiritual looking old gentleman of about sixty five years, with silver hair, wearing a red silk skull cap, a red silk gown, covered by a black cloak. I could not help but think of the venerable cardinal in the "Jackdaw of Rheims." We sprang to attention and saluted and shook hands and he motioned us to seats.

We talked for nearly an hour, he in classical French, I in my best. He seemed very much interested in California, but was absorbed above everything else in his beloved cathedral. Among other things he assured us that no armed soldiers, batteries, guns or anything of a warlike nature had ever been stored in the Cathedral, as stated by the Germans as an excuse for so often shelling it, and that he was going to stay with it and see it brought to its own again and made a pilgrimage spot for all the world.

We pulled a bone by making a motion to go, but he made us sit down again and blessed us. "Wit," thinking he was still talking about the Germans, was in anything but a pious or receptive position, and it took me about fifteen seconds to figure out his unusual French that we were getting a benediction. I shall always think of Cardinal Saus as one of the great characters of the war and ever remember him with admiration.

Going out to eat we met a stray poilu, who was returning to the first line of trenches after being a month in the hospital. We joined him and went out with him to the trenches outside the city. We knew the German observation balloons were watching us and it gave us an odd sensation as to what was coming next. After going through miles of "bayous" or communication trenches, we finally arrived at the first line. It was the quietest place I've been in yet.

With the exception of a few sentries all the men were fast asleep, tired out, as night is the live time. Looking over the sand bags I saw the first German line about 100 yards away and behind them a small village and there and among the trees were the big gun batteries. Overhead was the shrieking of the big shells as they crossed from the French to the Germans and vice versa, but in the trench all was as still as death and very hot. We saw many interesting things about which I must not write, but would not have missed for anything, even though we were without gas masks and helmets.

We got back to Rheims about 4 p. m. and started for home. Rode half the way with some charming French officers in their cart and then had to hoof it the rest of the way, about sixteen miles. We arrived in camp at 2 a. m., worn out, but contented with having had some day, and so to bed, as our old friend Peppy says in his diary.—Intermountain Catholic.

BE KIND

Take every chance you can possibly get to be kind, because some day there may be no more chances. But just kindness seems such a small and unimportant thing! If we were bidden to die for the people we love, how gladly we would offer up our lives! But we are not asked to die for them, only to live for them; only to do the hundred small things that every day offers us; only to be ready with truth, and courage, and tenderness, and service. There can be no doubt about it—anyone who has stood by an open grave will say—there can be no possible doubt, that only memories of opportunities embraced, of duties done, or, rather, of privileges accepted, only such memories will comfort us when that hour comes. To have to look back upon quarrelling, or selfishness, or even upon the more negative pain of mere leaving undone that which we might have done, is enough to poison life. No wonder that those who are acquainted with grief cry out to us, "Oh, be kind, be kind, be kind!"

"I do not like those who change their religion," said a German Protestant prince to the late illustrious convert, the Count Von Stolberg, shortly after that good man's conversion. "Nor do I," replied Stolberg. "For if my ancestors had not changed I should not have been obliged to return to Catholicity."

By work one acoustoms one's self to a severe and active life, and the character gains as much by it as the mind.—Ozanam.

Human nature, finding it impossible to prevent death, misery and ignorance, would fain endeavor to be happy in oblivion of them.—Pascal.

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