

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THANKSGIVING

"Where are the nine?" (St. Luke xvii, 11.) Of the ten lepers whose cure is related in this day's Gospel, only one returned to give thanks, and he was a Samaritan; the others went their way; they were cured indeed of their dreadful disease, but disgraced by our Lord's sad question, Where are the nine?

Thanksgiving, brethren, should follow after God's mercies to us, not only as a matter of effect, but in order to secure the effect of those mercies themselves. Just as, in our bodily life, in order to get the benefit of fresh air, breathing in must be followed by breathing out, so the giving of thanks must follow the reception of all divine favors. The grace of God is to the soul what the breath is to the body; and the body, to live, must not only draw the air in, but give it forth again to make room for new and fresher air. So in the life of our souls we breathe in God's grace and we breathe out thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is furthermore a matter of justice. The holiest debt we owe to God or man is the debt of thanks. Every honest man gives thanks for favors received from other men, and every upright soul gives thanks to God. It is the most indispensable of all our obligations, because it is the least that we can do. In all our traffic with heaven, gratitude is the only coin we can mint ourselves. Thanksgiving is that part of our sanctification necessarily our own. Well, brethren, if this be really true—and who can deny it?—then a great many of us are insolvent debtors of the worst kind. Now you hear it said sometimes that the man who does not pay his debts is as bad as a thief, and in many cases this is perfectly true. So the difference between an open sinner and a thankless Christian is that between a thief and a man who by his own fault does not pay his debts. Indeed, we sometimes feel as if God ought to thank us for the favor we do Him by confiding to serve Him. Confession and Communion and daily prayer, forgiveness of injuries and resisting temptations so puff us up with conceit that we are apt to blame God because in view of our holiness He does not exempt us from the ordinary ills of life!

As a matter of fact it is with God and us as with a storekeeper and his customer. You know why a man cannot get trust at a store; it is because he was trusted before and didn't pay his debts. Now pretty nearly all the pay that God asks for His favors is that we shall give Him thanks, and if we will not do that much He can hardly think us worthy of His further bounty. If we give thanks He multiplies His favors; for He is determined to keep us in His debt, and as fast as we return thanks so much the faster does He lavish His love upon us.

So when we ask why we suffer this miserable stagnation in our spiritual career, perhaps the true answer would be that we are members of a big multitude of that original thankless nine.

Oh! let us thank God that we have the blessings of the true religion, that He is our Father, Jesus Christ our Redeemer, and the Blessed Virgin Mary our Mother. Let us thank Him for His gracious promise of the everlasting joys of paradise. For these unspeakable favors our thanks should be ceaseless.

Let us give thanks, too, to our fervent morning prayers that we have escaped the dangers of the night, and in our night prayers that we have been saved from the noon day demon. When we rise from our meals let us offer a word of thanks, making at least the sign of the cross, blessing God for the health He gives us and our family. Let us thank Him for our afflictions—yes, even for temptations; for the pains we suffer thereby are the growing pains of the soul. Especially after receiving Holy Communion let us give long and heartfelt thanks for all God's dealing with us; for we have then received the greatest of all His gifts, His only-begotten Son.

TEMPERANCE

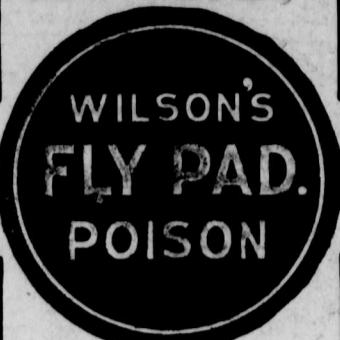
DRINK-CRAVING—HOW CURED

"Unfortunately, in the case of alcohol," says Dr. Victor Horsley, "its withdrawal usually means that a 'craving' follows—a condition to be dreaded unless we are possessed of very strong power of self-control. To 'crave' is easy, to 'control' difficult; therefore, the wiser course is to avoid those things which tend to create a craving—words the truth of which it is difficult to gainsay, and it is quite alarming to think that 'six weeks are sufficient' to form a strong habit or longing for drink."

The inveterate and oftentimes irresistible craving which follows repeated acts of intoxication is, in a large proportion of cases, incurable, except by complete abstinence from alcohol for a period of time of which it may be safely said that one year is the minimum that can be relied upon. With many, however, this period is not sufficient, and another probationary year is necessary, during which the patient may be permitted, as a test of his or her power of control, to return periodically for short intervals to the society of relatives or friends.

DESTRUCTION OF MANHOOD

Alcohol not only weakens the powers of the mind, but dulls and deadens the moral feelings and ex-



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tinguishes the noblest instincts of humanity in the human breast. We see parents addicted to drink wholly unmoved by the sufferings of their children, whether it be from pain or cold or hunger. These sufferings make no impression on the brain, sodden and stupefied with alcohol; they arouse no feeling of affection or compassion. Alcohol drowns all consciousness and sense of responsibility; when indulged in, it dehumanizes man.

Nor is any one nation the only sufferer from this dreadful plague. The curse following in the train of alcohol girdles the world. America and England, France and Germany, Italy and Russia, Sweden and Switzerland, Canada and Mexico and Australasia, all feel its disastrous effects. But it is particularly in the wine and beer-drinking countries that its most deplorable consequences are seen. Here is a powerful argument against those who advocate the use of beer and wine for a cure for intemperance. In Germany one-fourth of the inmates of the insane asylums were and are notorious drinkers. In the same country 20 per cent. of the children of drinkers are weak minded idiots or epileptics. "One of the worst evils that has set back the German people," says Professor Munterburg, "has been the wholesale use of beer and wine."

And the saying of the late Von Molke, the celebrated strategist, has become historic: "Beer is a far more dangerous enemy to Germany than all the armies of France." Brandy is the worst poison of all. Next to it come beer, and Germany is pre-eminently the land of beer-drinking.

EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

As a drug alcohol is so extremely dangerous that the most eminent men of science in our day seldom or never prescribe it. Listen to a few of them. Dr. William Collins, M. P., one of the most eminent London surgeons, said: "If alcohol has any place in the treatment of disease, as it certainly has in the production of disease, it is as a drug prescribed cautiously and in strictly defined doses."

Dr. Davis of Chicago, has said that "he never employs in all his practice an intoxicant"—for the simple reason, but convincing one, that there are other remedies that do as well as the other remedies leave no harmful traces behind them. Nay, other drugs are, in some cases at least, better. We have it on the authority of another eminent surgeon, Dr. George Crile, M. A., London, that the results of his experiments proved that in cases of "shock" the state of the sufferer was aggravated by the use of alcohol, and that "hypodermic injection of strychnine and atropine, and the use of other substances, are better calculated to bring the patient out of danger than the alcohol."

The terrible danger of this poison may be estimated from this one fact, that the smallest sip of the weakest wine or other liquor is sufficient to arouse the sleeping demon of the drink-craving which is eating up thousands around us and is hurrying them to their ruin.—St. Paul Bulletin.

HE SHOULD KNOW BETTER

An English writer, named Dell, having said something to the effect that a "man on becoming a Catholic leaves his responsibility at the threshold of the Church, and is converted to be saved the trouble of thinking," G. K. Chesterton, who is not a Catholic, but who cannot keep still when he sees foolish statements like the foregoing proceeds thus: "Mr. Dell must know better. He must know whether men like Newman and Brunetiere left off thinking when they joined the Roman Church. Moreover, because he is a man of lucid and active mind, he must know that the whole phase about being saved the trouble of thinking is a boyish fallacy. Euclid does not save geometrical the trouble of thinking when he insists on absolute definitions and unalterable axioms. On the contrary, he gives them the great trouble of thinking logically. The dogma of the Church limits thought about as much as the dogma of the solar system limits physical science. It is not an arrest of thought, but a fertile basis and constant provocation of thought. But, of course, Mr. Dell really knows this as well as I do.

He has merely fallen back (in that mixture of fatigue and hurry in which all fads are made) upon some journalistic phrases. He can not really think that men joined the most fighting army upon earth merely to find rest. It is on a par with the old Protestant fiction that monks wanted to be ascetic because they decided to be luxurious. I should keep out of a monastery for exactly the same motives that prevent me from going into the mountains to shoot bears. I am not active enough for a monastery.—Sacred Heart Review.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SOME OTHERS

The "Rev. Bromide Smith, D. D.," after having participated in different forms of service, gives his impressions in the Christian Register as follows:

The church which had the largest congregation and in the service of which the people seemed most heartily and sincerely engaged was the Catholic Church, in the whole service of which there was not a single word I could understand. It seemed as if every member of that vast congregation had come there for the one purpose of praying, and pray they did with all the earnestness and apparent zeal that could be desired. Nothing could exceed the knowledge of average human psychology upon which the service was based. The coming and going of lights, the processions, the elevation of the Host, the continual voice of music or of prayer in the distance, the sense of prostration before an infinite mystery all had their part in the wonderful result of a whole worshipping congregation.

My next place of visitation was a large evangelical hall used as a church. Here also there was a huge congregation, but no sign of worship. It was an audience rather than a congregation. Soon a man appeared in front and began to wave his arms and shout. We were to sing. The music of the big organ began tumpety-tump, and soon he had the whole audience swaying and jumping and singing like a country fair. It felt good to something that was in you, of which you were rather ashamed, so to say with the mass of simple folk and shout in unison ragtime music. Then another man appeared and said, "Let us pray," and, closing his eyes, addressed a few remarks to the Deity and preached a short, indirect sermon. Then a lady stood up and sang a song, and at last the preacher arose to preach upon the devil. The part of his sermon that brought down the house and sticks in one's memory was his proof of the existence of the devil. He said that a friend of his had drunk too much and got delirium tremens. In this state he had seen many little red devils. Now it seemed to him (the preacher) that if there were these little devils, the old fellow must be around somewhere. Shortly after this he sunk his voice and told us that all those who were Christians were to sit, and those who wanted to be, were to stand, and he said: "Thank you, sir," over and over again as he looked over the audience. Then he asked those who had stood to meet him in the room behind the platform, and the meeting was over. What struck one, on looking over the audience, was that it was having a good time, but the idea of worship did not seem to enter into the situation at all.

The next church visited was the most famous and fashionable of the liturgical churches in the city. It was fairly well filled by well dressed people. The singing by the boy choir gave one impression as being the real thing for which the people had come, and was listened to devoutly. At the close of the service a preacher, who, although disguised as a man of thirty years old, was evidently from his remarks, a sophomore in the high school, spoke for 5 minutes upon the life of Moses as portrayed in the morning lesson and how it taught us that we should be good. The feeling in this service was that of peace and comfort, and apart from the long stands, left one feeling very rested.

The last church visited was the more liberal school in theology and matters. The quietest time, and the sermon was fine, but there was no atmosphere and no congregation. Why? The devil immediately whispered in my ear that the reason was because good people are few. But do not think we can lay that flattering unction to our souls. I think we Protestant churches have been obsessed by the vaudeville show, the symphony concert and the lecture hall, and different denominations of us have tried to turn our churches respectively into one or other of these. The Catholics, with all their faults, have kept their churches deliberately as places for prayer, and have studied profoundly the psychology of the prayer atmosphere. Are you inclined to pray yourself, my reader, when a man on a platform in front of you gets up and says, "Let us pray," and shuts his eyes? Do you feel more inclined to do so if, when you went into the church, you saw the minister kneeling at the altar saying his own prayers? But we Protestants have put the prayer to one side and run shows like the great evangelical service, with the devil and the room behind the platform as features, or we have arranged concerts, as the newspapers on Easter Saturday show us all to our shame; or we have run a lecture hall where, after the "preliminary services," the preacher lectures on Darwin or Browning.

TORTURED BY CONSTIPATION

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MAGLOIRE PAQUIN

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So my net results are these: People would rather have a show or a good chorus concert than a lecture with two pieces by a quartette thrown in. But the most popular place of all for them to go would be a place where they would find themselves mysteriously in a spiritual atmosphere, and out of which they could come ennobled and strengthened by contact through all their being with an infinite power.

MY UNKNOWN CHUM

Browsing around a friend's library, a few days ago, we ran across a modest looking little book with the title, "My Unknown Chum"—"Ague-cheek." Much praise we had read of this book—here, there and everywhere—said to contain much that was wise as well as otherwise. We asked our friend—had he read it? Reply came yes; have you not? When told not yet, he said: "Take it along, treat it well and I will wager that it is a good while since you have read anything half so interesting." Well, we read it, and our friend's words are true. The book is delightful, full of sound sense, homely philosophy and a perfect mosaic of varied colored subjects. The author is unknown and an admirer recently republished it. Every one who reads it will want no happier joy to come to a friend—than to read it also. To quote from it seems like stealing, but just a few sentences many not be amiss, some marked by my friend, others noted as we jogged along through its happy pages.

Writing of the galleries of art in Florence, he says, "I ask no more convincing proof of the immortality of the soul, than the fact that those forms of beauty were conceived and executed by a mortal." Treating of "The Philosophy of Suffering," the author tells this story of Daniel Webster. Webster was holding a reception in the days of his popularity in a Western city. It took place in one of the parlors of a hotel, the crowd filling in at one door, being introduced by the mayor, and making their exit by another. In the course of the proceedings, a little man, with a lustrous heaver in one hand and a gold headed cane in the other and whose personal apparel appeared to have been got up (as old Pelby would have said) without the slightest regard to expense, and on a scale of unparalleled splendor walked forward and was presented by the mayor as: "Mr. Smith, one of our most eminent steamboat builders and leading citizens." Mr. Webster's large, thoughtful, serene eyes seemed to be completely filled by the result of the combined efforts of the linen draper, tailor and jeweller, that confronted him, and in his deep voice he answered: "Mr. Smith, I am happy to hope you. I hope you are well, sir." "Thank you, this," said the leading citizen. "I am not very well. I with the unfortunate art to take cold yesterday by thitting in a draught. Very unpleasant, Mr. Webster, to have a cold! But, Mrs. Smith says that the thinks that if I put my feet in thome warm water to night and take thome thing warm to drink on going to bed, that I may get over it. I thertainly hope thso, for it really givth me the headache and I can't thmell at all."



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The author draws this conclusion from this story: "A cold in the head will awaken more feelings in its victim than the recital of all the horrors of the hospital at Scutari." This little anecdote may be duly appreciated, and perhaps attempt made to recite it aloud by the victims of that genial and close friend, hay fever, who at this time of the year is making strenuous efforts to prove that neither science nor patent medicine has as yet been able to make him lose his nasal power over the proboscis of man.

THE PROTESTANT CONFSSIONAL

The humor of "My Unknown Chum" is so delightful that readers will bear with just one more quotation. In his chapter on "Mrs. Grundy," he thus philosophizes: "The sewing circle was Mrs. Grundy's confessional. Do not misapprehend me; I would not asperse her character by accusing her of what are known at the present day as 'Romanizing tendencies,' for she lived long before the 'scarlet fever' invaded Oxford and carried off its victims by hundreds; and nobody ever suspected her of any desire to tell her own offenses in the ear of any human being. No, she detested the Roman confessional in a becoming manner; but she upheld by word and example, the most scriptural institution, the sewing circle—the Protestant confessional, where each one confesses, not her own sins, but the sins of her neighbors." One can heartily recommend this book—it is a veritable treasure house of learning, humor and the true philosophy of life.—R. C. Gleaner in Catholic Columbian.

LIFE AND DEATH

From time to time magazines and newspapers narrate the case of some unfortunate victim of disease or injury whose recovery is apparently out of the question and who is doomed to weeks or months of suffering while awaiting the slow progress of the disease and the seemingly inevitable outcome. Either the sufferer or some sympathetic friend, affected beyond endurance by the spectacle of prolonged and useless agony, appeals to the medical profession and to public opinion for a speedy and painless death. These cases are often discussed editorially, in the newspapers and the question is raised whether physicians should not be given the right and power to terminate an apparently hopeless illness and thus spare the victim a long period of pain, and the friends and relatives needless anguish through the witnessing of unavoidable suffering.

Of course, Catholics are not misled by such sentimental appeals. "Thou shalt not kill" has some meaning for Catholics, and no amount of sentimentalizing can affect it. But entirely aside from the moral objections, physicians, better than any other class know that apparently hopeless cases sometimes terminate in recovery and that the predictions of the most skilled and competent physicians are sometimes not fulfilled. The responsibility of deciding whether a given case is one which justifies the use of extreme measures to shorten the period of suffering would be too great for any one person to assume; neither would it be safe for society to permit such responsibility to be lodged in the hands of any profession or class. A recent newspaper dispatch strikingly illustrates the dangers of such a plan. According to a report, several years ago, the wife of a Protestant minister, suffering from a severe and apparently hopeless malady, begged in a letter published throughout the country for "scientific kindness" on the part of her attending physicians, which would terminate her sufferings and give her a painless death. She received many replies endorsing her argument that physicians should be permitted to put her and other similarly unfortunate patients out of their misery. Apparently, however, the lady is to-day very glad that her pleas did not prevail, as The Journal of the American Medical Association states that she is reported to have been completely restored to health by a surgical operation, and to be perfectly well.

There are some things that it is well to leave in the hands of God. The question of life and death is one of them.—Sacred Heart Review.

GENERAL GIBSON

WHAT HE SAW OF CHURCH WORK ON BATTLEFIELD

When I was a young man, before the great struggle between the North and South," said General Gibson, many years ago, "I must say that I was somewhat prejudiced against the Catholic Church. I used to picture to myself heaven. I imagined that it was a grand place, grand beyond description, because it was the dwelling place of the King of kings, the Lord of lords, as well as of all good Protestants. Of course, I couldn't see any reserved seats for Catholics. They in my opinion had no business there.

"Well the cry 'To arms!' came. I had the honor of commanding a regiment, the Forty-ninth Ohio Volunteers. After a day's engagement with the enemy, in which my regiment took an active part, and after our forces had been badly beaten, I looked out from headquarters, which were located on an eminence upon the scene of conflict, and through my field glass I could see black-robed figures going around the wounded and dying soldiers. I immediately

ordered my side de-camp to go down and see who those black-robed figures were and report as soon as possible to me. He soon returned all most breathless and exclaimed, 'O, General, it was a most heart-rending sight. The figures are those of Sisters of Charity, who are going around ministering to the wounded and dying soldiers. The self-sacrifice of these noble bands of women would bring tears to a heart of stone.' I was amazed and concluded to make a personal investigation. I went down to the scene of the great conflict, accompanied by some of my staff officers. I didn't have far to go before coming across a black-robed figure that was cold in death. The heroine of heroines died at her post. She was not regularly mustered into the service; she received no pecuniary compensation; what reward may be hers?

"This noble woman was called to her eternal reward. Her companions were still engaged in succoring the wounded and dying." When I saw this with my own eyes on that eventful day I returned thanks on my bended knees to the omnipotent God for opening my eyes to the sublime grandeur of the Roman Catholic Church. Those grand women did not ask the suffering soldier to what Church he belonged, or whether he belonged to any; neither did they stop to inquire the side to which he belonged. They were performing their God-given mission. They aided those who wore the blue and gray alike. The black and white

were all treated alike by them. I had the great pleasure of witnessing some members of this order subsequently in our hospitals, nursing with their tender hands the suffering soldiers. They braved all dangers and had no fear of contagious diseases. Oh, how often have I prayed since that God may forgive me for my first impressions of the Catholic Church. I saw that Church in its true light that day on the battlefield.—True Voice.

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