

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

By Rev. N. M. REMOND
TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

THE ABUSES OF SOME WHO POSSESS THE FAITH

"The father, therefore, knew that it was the same hour that Jesus said to him: 'Thy son liveth,' and himself believed, and his whole house." (John IV, 52.)

Innumerable are the ways in which God leads people in whom He finds co-operation to believe. An instance is presented today for our consideration, in which the sickness of a member of his family led a ruler to the blessed feet of the humble Jesus, which happily resulted in the conversion of himself and his whole family. It is not our intention, however, at present, to consider the ways in which well-disposed people are led to divine faith, nor to dwell on the inestimable gift itself. We confine our thoughts to certain abuses of some, who, like the ruler of his family, are in possession of the blessed gift—divine faith.

It is needless to say that faith of itself will not save us. "Though I should have faith," says St. Paul, "so that I could move mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." On the last trying moment—that moment in which the eternal lot of each, as he stands on the threshold of eternity, will be decided—the Sovereign Judge "will render to every man according to his works." A dead faith, such as is without good works, cannot merit a favorable sentence. Of this many unfortunate souls have experienced to their eternal grief. But that our faith may work into charity, and be fruitful in good works, which will merit a favorable sentence, we must have the instruction in it becoming and necessary to true and practical believers.

How deplorable is the culpable ignorance of some regarding the truths of salvation which they are bound to know! How many, alas, live in habitual ignorance of them, and, therefore, in a state of sin! Add to this, that their deficiency in the knowledge of such truths holds them in continual danger of commission of sin by culpable ignorance of their duty. Oh, how often are the sacraments abused in this way by unthinking mortals! If we would find a reason for the deplorable indifference of some, we have but to seek it in a willful ignorance with which they have cursed themselves. To know God and His blessed truths, as it behooves us, is to have for them love and appreciation. Ignorance is a well-known begetter of spiritual sloth, and the latter is destructive of love and appreciation for God and His truths. How painful it is at times to meet instances of persons wanting in the knowledge of the truths of salvation, embracing the change in life, the circumstances of which leave it a matter of grave doubt that they will ever disabuse themselves of their ignorance! Sad examples too, there are of persons who wilfully put themselves in circumstances in life which debar every opportunity of instruction. They seem to say to God: "Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways." But what most of all shocks our religious sensibilities in this matter is, the culpable neglect of some parents in the religious instruction of their children. They will not attend to it themselves, and they will not send them—at least, regularly—to where instruction will be imparted. Some, sad to say, allow them to grow up in almost total ignorance, whilst others esteem their children's religious instruction so lightly as to dispense with it for every trifle. Great God, how many souls are stunted and sacrificed by the cursed negligence of unworthy parents! It should not be forgotten, however, that when the natural parents are delinquent, the obligation devolves upon the god-parents. The duty of god-parents ends with no more ceremony. They are spiritual parents, because they bore witness as such before the Church, and thus contracted that spiritual kinship. Hence when the natural parents, either through inability or culpable neglect, fail to attend to the spiritual wants of the child, an obligation of no mere charity, but one like that of parents to their children, devolves upon them to see that the necessary instruction is imparted. Experience leads to fear that this delicate obligation is not respected. Such delinquency is a matter so serious that it should not be overlooked in the tribunal of penance. Another painfully uncharitable disposition, which not infrequently has come under our notice, and cannot be too strongly condemned, is the stolid indifference of Catholics in authority with regard to how these under them attend to their religion. Such a disposition is certainly not Catholic. They seem to forget that they have a strict obligation to see that those under them practice their religion. Alas, how often are they even actually guilty of detaining them from the fulfillment of their religious duties and from receiving necessary instruction! We are aware that when our neighbor is overtaken with bodily wants, it is our duty, if at all in our power, to render him assistance. Is it not, therefore, clear that when he is overtaken with spiritual needs, a duty as much stronger as the soul is superior to the body, devolves upon us to come to his assistance? But with still stronger reason can it be said in respect to those over whom we are in authority, especially since

our obligation is implied in the Fourth Commandment and stands in the category with that of parents.

From these few thoughts, it should be clear that it is a matter of very grave importance to make sure that our knowledge of the truths of salvation is safely all that it should be. The fruitful practice of our religion and our eternal well-being call aloud for great vigilance in this matter. As we see, the obligation of many in this important affair refers not only to themselves, but likewise extends to all those Catholics under their authority. Were all fully aware of their obligation, not only to know the truths of salvation, but to feed and refresh their minds, especially on Sunday, by appropriate reading and wholesome instruction, good books and good Catholic papers would not be so scarce in some Catholic homes, and the number would be greatly diminished of those who shrink from the hearing of the Sunday sermon and instruction. The priest's obligation to preach and instruct is well-defined by the best theological authority; the people's obligation to hear sermons and instructions is no less so. How, then, can those who have a safe conscience who studiously avoid hearing sermons and instructions on Sundays? They show by their conduct that they are either ignorant of their obligation in this matter or that by reason of their un-Christian manner of acting, they are devoid of the grace for its fulfillment. In either case it is evident that they are suffering for instruction. An I of their number, is the pertinent question which each should address to himself. If so, all that is dear to him and valuable for his soul appeals for a change.

TEMPERANCE

A GOOD POLICY

The New York Tribune in announcing the going into effect, on April 1, of its new policy of no liquor advertisements makes the following statements of its views concerning alcohol:

"As a matter of business policy, we recognize the fact—emphasized more forcibly as each year passes—that indulgence in alcohol is incompatible with efficiency in any field of effort. In industry, trade and transportation, as well as in artistic and professional pursuits, the man who uses alcohol habitually imposes on himself a serious disability.

"When alcohol is mixed with business, it is alcohol which profits, not business. It is our conviction also that when alcohol is mixed with advertising, it is alcohol which benefits, not advertising.

"The Tribune is setting new standards of quality. It intends to keep its advertising columns select and unimpeachable. It wants to eliminate from them all traces of evil or even suspicious association. We feel that liquor advertisements will not help to attract to us either the readers or the advertisers whose patronage we especially desire. We have therefore decided to drop liquor advertisements altogether."

THE DRUNKARD IN HIS HOME

A father of a family is bound to love and cherish, to support and protect his family, and to make every sacrifice, even that of his life, for their sake. But at home the drunkard is worse than the lion or the tiger. He swears, he curses, ill-treats, strikes his poor wife and children, breaks and destroys things. Often whilst he is spending his earnings to indulge his thirst for liquor, his wife and children, half-clad and shivering with cold, are on the verge of starvation, of being turned out of their miserable shelter for non-payment of rent, or are lying on a miserable bed sick and destitute of all remedies and comforts. And what causes the brutal drunkard, so long as he can enjoy himself in a saloon with his boon companions! Nay, how many drunkards, more cruel than the tiger, not satisfied with disgracing by this misconduct their wives and children, with breaking their hearts and making life a hell to them, even go so far as to murder them! Even a tigress will expose her life to save their young; but there are drunken mothers calling themselves Christians, who ought to love their children more than their very life, who will deprive of food and clothing their children, in order to have the means of gratifying their more than beastly thirst. Some have been known, during a severe winter in a cold climate, to pull off the new clothing and shoes given by charitable persons to their little girls, in order to pawn these articles for liquor!

The drunkard is worthless to society. He respects not those he deals with, edifies not those who see him, does not his promises, follows not good counsels, insults those who try to admonish or try to correct him. The criminal records everywhere prove that the drunkard is the greatest law-breaker. To his family he is a deplorable misfortune, to his friends a cause of shame, to society a scandal and a burden. He is unworthy of trust. His very name is a disgrace.—Sermon Matter."

INTOLERANT CATHOLICS

Attention is called by the Ave Maria to a class of Catholic readers, unfortunately too numerous, who will tolerate almost any insult against their Catholic instincts and faith on the part of the secular press without ever dreaming of canceling their subscription. But in regard to their own press Catholics are often

intolerant to the last degree. "For instance, not a line must ever be published that is in the least unfavorable to the political party to which they adhere, or against a leader to whom they have pinned their faith; above all, nothing that is not altogether favorable to the race from which they sprung." Catholic editors are to be veritable weather vanes, and yet we are to have a virile and progressive Catholic press.

THE CHILDREN'S PROTECTORS

"Woe to him that is alone." But if the man who by himself is weak and helpless can only secure the protecting friendship of the strong, he need fear no harm. The Evangelist St. Matthew records that, on a certain occasion, just after Our Saviour had expounded His uncompromising doctrine regarding the sin of scandal and particularly the necessity of taking the most drastic measures to avoid scandalizing children, He ended His exhortation with this solemn warning: "See that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." The Prophet Daniel beheld in a vision these throngs of radiant spirits about God's throne: "Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him." Nor is Scripture silent about the wondrous power and beauty of these Guardian Angels who are "sent to minister to them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation. They are constantly passing from heaven to earth on errands of justice and mercy. It was an Angel that led Lot from Sodom and Peter from prison. It was an Angel that protected the avenging Judith and that gave healing power to the Pool of Probatika. It was an Angel that brought the pestilence on David's people and that threw back the stone of Our Saviour's sepulcher. It was an Angel too whose beauty was so dazzling that St. John took him to be God Himself.

This is the month in which the Church especially reminds the Faithful of the existence, nature, and office of these strong, bright spirits in order that we may better realize the worth and dignity of the souls committed to the Angels' care. For of every child of Adam it is written: "He hath given his angels charge over thee; to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." But particularly dear to these heavenly guardians are the souls of little children which they unweariedly strive to keep innocent and pure. When they stand before God's throne they offer Him like fragrant incense the prayers that every mother makes for her little ones, and these watchful spirits also do their utmost to protect their beloved charges from mortal peril and bodily harm. But the Guardian Angels would grieve bitterly, if they could, to see how often all their efforts to protect boys and girls are rendered ineffective by careless Catholics who unconsciously neglect to give their little ones a religious education or who exercise no supervision over their children's companions, reading, amusements, and recreations. Such parents would show a true and solid devotion to the Holy Angels just by giving those watchful guardians a little help in protecting the young.—America.

MIXED MARRIAGE CURSE

Why does the Church oppose mixed marriages? One reason for the opposition may be given in a striking newspaper item that appeared a few days ago relating an occurrence in one of our large cities. A child a year old died. The father was a Protestant and the mother a Catholic. The father insisted that the child be buried in a Protestant cemetery; the mother, that it be buried in consecrated ground. The father finally won, and asked the police detail to see that his plans were not interfered with. The neighbors were treated to the spectacle of half a dozen patrolmen entering the house for the funeral procession and then escorting the procession to the cemetery, where they remained until the child was buried.

Some will be tempted to pour out their sympathy for the bereaved mother, who along with the grief she endured in losing her little one, was compelled to see all her religious feelings violated. But when all is said she merits little sympathy for the burial of her child in a Protestant cemetery. When she married her husband, no doubt she was warned about the troubles she was facing. She was told the reasons why the Church frowned upon the marriage of a Catholic and a non-Catholic.

She was told that there were dangers to her own faith and to the faith of her children. But she was like all the rest who think that the Church is too severe in her regulations. Her case was going to be different. She could trust this man. He was so much in love with her he would do anything she wished. As a proof of it, was he not willing to sign all that was required of him, to promise that he would not interfere with the practice of her own religion and that he would have the children brought up Catholics.

Yes, he signed everything he was asked to sign, all the while knowing that his action was a lie. The result was not unexpected. When his child died, so great was his hatred of everything Catholic that he called in the police to prevent that child even being buried as a Catholic. Perhaps the Catholic mother will become reconciled to the death of her child in the reflection that if it had lived, there would have been no possibility of its being brought up a Catholic.

The story is being repeated every day. Many a Catholic girl refuses to listen to the advice of those who are working for her welfare. She will form associations with non-Catholics and finally be persuaded into a mixed marriage. She knows the things that others have suffered. She knows that the experience of others is all against such marriages. But again her case is going to be so different! He loves her so, he would never think of hurting her feelings by interfering with her religion. And then the time comes. He does interfere. Sometimes she objects, there is wrangling, a Hell is made out of their home that promised to be so happy. Or worse, she does not object. For the sake of peace she gives in; in a short time her faith is gone and it is not long before she tries to forget that she ever was a Catholic. And she still from the man that in order to get her, in order to ease her conscience, swore everything he was asked to swear.

There is no community that has not many of these wreckers of mixed marriages. When will our Catholic girls learn that they have no reason to expect a happy wedded life when they go against all the wisdom of their Church? There is an old saying that marriages are made in heaven; but mixed marriages are not made there.—Boston Pilot.

WOULD BUY A PRAYER BOOK

Many a strong argument, says the Catholic News, has been made in favor of the Catholic press. Here's one of the best we have come across in quite a while: "If I had to make a choice between giving a young man or a young woman going away from home a Catholic prayer book or a subscription to a Catholic paper, I'd choose the latter," writes one of a contemporary's good friends. "I am sure," he continues, "that the Catholic paper coming to him regularly every week with its message of Catholic life and thought would stir him up to being such a Catholic that he would buy a Catholic prayer book for himself, and he would then have a Catholic paper and a prayer book both."

REAL EDUCATION

Every day witnesses innovations along educational lines. The systems advocated either eliminate entirely or minimize the character-forming principles of education. To secularize learning and impart greater energy than formerly to the building up of the physical man are the fundamentals of these erroneous proposals. Great sums of money have been sought to introduce "modern ideas" into the classroom. The foundations of Carnegie, Sage and Rockefeller might be cited as the most recent attempts at one-sided instruction. The spiritual is entirely eliminated from their programs. This has occasioned spirited comment and violent criticism even from Protestant sects. Though the spiritual never played an essential part in their schools, yet they are loath to capitulate utterly to the obnoxious doctrines indicated, realizing that to surrender their present position would spell ultimate domination by men totally unfitted either by experience or education to enter the fields of intellectual training of the young.

The whole trend is to cast God out of the lives of the children. Character formation is to result from the perusal of books, the application of acquired learning, and the accumulation of the almighty dollar, the beginning and end of all.

There is no one of even blunted intelligence who cannot readily see the fallacy of such stupidity. Remove from the child all notion of God and a moral law, and the child will obey from mere expediency. He will be led to believe that laws sanctioned by the usage of centuries, by God and by nature are purely penal in their character, and that infractions are punishable only when slyness and hypocrisy have not sufficiently asserted themselves. It is materialism pure and simple.

It is the full realization of the materialistic tendencies, false philosophy and sophistry of the world that has prompted the Church to safeguard the religious education of her children. She recognizes the wolf in sheep's clothing and has taken measures to insure to the little ones a true Christian training.

Man is composed of body and soul. While due attention must be paid to health and physical comfort that self-reliance and confidence may be attained, the intellect may be alert and quick of perception yet the soul of man is destined for eternity, and must receive the greater consideration. We have had many examples of men highly educated in the arts and sciences who have shaken society to its very foundations by their immoral conduct and godless principles. They were mentally giants, spiritual dwarfs. It is that our children may leave the portals of the school-

room Christian men and women that the Church has supplied schools, colleges and universities.

That education be worthy of the name, not only mind but heart must receive attention. By carefully implanting in the heart of the child a knowledge of God and His law, by instilling the principles of faith and love, human conduct is sanctified, ambition is tempered, justice is enthroned. In a word, character is formed. The happy combination of learning and character redounds to one's personal good, the good of society and the glory of God. This is the aim and end of all Catholic education. Herein is its excellence.—Boston Pilot.

A BETTER CAUSE TO WORK FOR

The Catholic Sun, Syracuse, N. Y., makes this timely remark: "If the religious field had as many workers in it, for the Lord's glory, as the political field has in it for individual honor, then one would see the knotty places of this world smooth out into fields of peace and plenty."

We know what importance the Catholic Church attaches to the formation of good habits. Reading Catholic papers is one of the best of good habits. See to it that your children have the opportunity of acquiring this good habit.

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First Announcement

We have in preparation a new book under the suggestive title:

"The Facts About Luther"

which will be ready for the market about October 1st, 1916. The work is written by the Rt. Rev. Mons. P. F. O'Hare, LL.D., who is well known as a writer and lecturer on Lutheranism. The object of the volume is to present the life of Luther in its different phases as outlined in the contents.
THE forthcoming celebration to commemorate the 4th centenary of Luther's "revolt" which occurs October, 1917, tend to invest the volume with a special timeliness. But, apart from this consideration, the need has long been felt for a reliable work in English on Luther based on the best authorities and written more particularly with a view to the "man on the street". Monsignor O'Hare admirably fills this want, and the book will be published at so nominal a price that those whom the subject interests may readily procure additional copies for distribution. We also beg to call your attention to the fact that this work will be an excellent addition to the mission table.
The book will have approximately 322 pages and will sell at 25c. per copy. To the clergy and religious a generous discount will be allowed, provided the order is placed before Oct. 1st, 1916.
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