

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOULT, D. D.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

THE WAYS OF GOD

"At that time: Joseph and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were wondering at the things spoken concerning Him." (Luke II, 33)

God's ways are simple. He acts quietly and calmly. Though to Him is due all honor and glory, He does not perform His works, with an open manifestation of His beauty, wisdom, and power.

His life from the cradle to the cross was quiet, reserved, and without ostentation. How often he joined men not even to speak of many miracles He wrought in their favor.

There is one thing, especially, so little observed by men, for which Christ had great regard, and He gave to it a place that it should ever hold: it is the reasoning power of man.

He respected it particularly in this sense, that He expected man to use it, and to treat it as it should be treated. He spoke, He persuaded, He urged, but He never made use of force in His work.

He considered man rational enough to comprehend his mission and the end for which God created him, and how to attain it. He knew that man, upon realizing these truths, should set his will to carry out God's designs, and that God's grace would come to assist him.

He even told man of the penalty awaiting him if he failed. Having done this, He left man, a rational being, to act as a man should act; but He never went so far as to interfere with man's reason, nor with his will, except by persuading him to do what was right.

We are accustomed to say, He did not lose time with them. They were free to listen to Him, to learn the lessons He taught, and to gain the grace He would give His followers; but they refused, and He left them, we may say, in their hardened condition.

Who can blame Him? Salvation is a gift from God, but it must be given to a being who acts rationally; it can not be forced upon one who fails to prepare himself for it.

And there are too many well-disposed souls waiting for the opportunities that would be wasted upon the hard of heart. We must admire Christ for the value He put upon the free will of man, as well as for all His other wise acts.

man failed to hear them, he would be as the heathen and the publican; and in all probability they would shake the dust from their feet, and never enter his province again.

We only need consider our present generation to have an exemplification of this. There are abundant opportunities for people to know God's word and accept it.

Since God's ways are quiet and gentle in the salvation of man, so should ours be. We can set the example and then, combining earnest, fervent prayer with it, do the work of an apostle.

EX ORE INFANTUM Little Jesus wast Thou shy? Once, and just so small as I? And what did it feel like to be Out of Heaven, and just like me?

Didst Thou sometimes think of there, And ask where all the Angels were? I should think that I would cry For my house all made of sky; I would look about the air, And wonder where the Angels were; And at waking 'twould distress me—

Not an Angel there to dress me? Hadst Thou ever any toys, Like us little girls and boys? And didst Thou play in Heaven with all the Angels, that were not too tall, With stars for marbles? did the things Play can you see me? through their wings?

Didst Thou kneel at night to pray, And didst Thou join Thy hands this way? And did they tire sometimes, being young, And make the prayer seem very long, And dost Thou like it best that we Should join our hands to pray to Thee?

I used to think, before I knew, The prayer not said unless we do. And didst Thou Mother at the night Kiss Thee, and fold the clothes in right? And didst Thou feel quite good in bed, Kissed, and sweet, and Thy prayers said?

Thou canst not have forgotten all That it feels like to be small; And Thou know'st I cannot pray To Thee in my father's way— When Thou wast so little say, Couldst Thou talk Thy Father's way?

So, a little child, come down And hear a child's tongue like Thine own; Take me by the hand and walk, And listen to my baby-talk. To Thy Father show my prayer (He will look, Thou art so fair,) And say, "O Father, I, Thy Son, Bring the prayer of a little one."

And He will smile, that children's tongue Has not changed since Thou wast young. —FRANCIS THOMPSON

HANS HERZL'S STORY OF CONVERSION

By George Barnard (London, Eng. Correspondent, N. C. W. C.)

The story of the groping toward Catholicism of Hans Herzl, son of the founder and leader of Zionism, is a religious romance.

The statement by Mr. Herzl which I am able to publish clears up a "news mystery." In the summer it was reported in America that Hans Herzl had joined the Catholic Church in Vienna.

To clear up the mystery of this reported double reversion I saw Mr. Herzl. He has now made it clear that in Vienna, in his desire to enter the Christian Church, he received baptism at the hands of a Baptist minister.

Zionism, which his father, Dr. Theodore Herzl, founded and guided during his lifetime, claims millions of adherents throughout the world, and the conversion of Hans Herzl will bring the claims of the Church to the notice of a widespread public.

HERZL'S OWN STORY OF CONVERSION Hans Herzl's story of his religious wanderings is so graphic that I present it without further comment: "I come from a home," he tells me, "in which though it was not identified with any particular creed, religion was properly respected."

"My sisters and I were only taught two or three simple and short prayers (morning and night, as well as grace before dinner), which we said in German. We also received tuition in Hebrew, which was a compulsory subject for Jews, at school.

"Our resident governesses were Christians—Protestants in all cases that I can remember. "Our father inculcated in us a sense of pride in being Jews; but after his death (which took place when I was thirteen) I remember our mother telling me that when we were small children our father had at times considered having us baptized into the Christian Church.

"That standpoint must date back to a period before the inception of the Zionist movement; but while I cannot remember ever having heard him express such views, there is a passage at the beginning of his diaries which tends to support my mother's statement. Certainly there is no explicit condemnation of baptism, in so far as Jews are concerned, in any of his published writings, whatever views he may have privately come to hold.

A FUTILE EXISTENCE "Soon after his death the guardians to whose care we had been entrusted, brought me to England, the intention being that I should conform to Jewish religious practice, follow an accepted course of study and embrace a recognized career. My family did not migrate with me, and I lost my mother soon after, when I was seventeen.

"My removal to England I hold to have been unwise. It definitely put an end to our home life, and I very much fear it broke my mother's heart. For having disregarded her wishes I am much to blame, and I was punished with great unhappiness. One half of my nature was ever harking back to the world of my childhood, the other half was trying to conform to the way and aspirations of my new environment.

"For several years I outwardly observed the principal Jewish customs, while I lost whatever inward religion I possessed. I do not wish to speak of my subsequent years, at an English Public school and University, up to the outbreak of the War. It was in the main a futile existence.

was not mainly for a Jew to leave his people. "In Vienna, where I held an appointment for several months last year, as English correspondent to a bank, I came into touch with one or two Jewish converts to Christianity. I was surprised at finding them imbued with a strong "Jewishness," combined with loyalty and reverence for Christianity.

"About that time I had been told of a small sect of good, fervent Christians, the Baptist community of Vienna, whose lives were ruled and inspired by the Gospels. I came to frequent their simple and beautiful services. Above all, their preacher, Pastor George Saare, a native of Estonia, made a deep impression on me. My need just then was for the word of the Gospels. The Baptists gave it to me.

"True, I had meanwhile made the acquaintance of two Catholic priests. But I had not yet realized that the Church, as the custodian of the Christian Faith, must be accepted along with that Faith.

SEERS CATHOLIC INSTRUCTION "My desire for holy baptism was imperious, and accordingly I was baptized by Pastor Saare, on July 20. My own intention, expressed to them, had been to enter, through baptism, into the larger community of Christians. This, I already felt, I could not unequivocally do save by becoming a Catholic.

"I returned to England and told a kinsman and friend of what had happened to me in Vienna. Though not a Catholic himself, he thought that everything pointed to the necessity of my becoming one. It was he who put me into touch with Father Day, S. J., and after that all was plain sailing. To Father Day, and to her whom I regard as my second mother, I owe more than I can say.

"In the Chapel of Our Lady of Zion, Bayswater, London, I was received by the priest who had instructed me into the Church, a good number of prominent Jewish converts being present, who welcomed me as a new-found brother. It was on the feast of the Archangel Raphael, in the same chapel, that I received my First Communion. May the Archangel who restored sight to Tobias enlighten me, too, and guide me safely on my journey!"

GATES AND DOORS A BALLAD OF CHRISTMAS EVE There was a gentle hostler, (And blessed be his name!) He opened up the stable The night Our Lady came. Our Lady and St. Joseph, He gave them food and bed; And Jesus Christ has given him A glory 'round the head.

So let the gate swing open, However poor the yard, Lest weary people visit you And find their passage barred. Unlatch the door at midnight, And let your lantern's glow Shine out to guide the traveler's feet.

There was a courteous hostler, (He is in heaven tonight,) He held Our Lady's bride And helped her to alight; He spread clean straw before her Whereon she might lie down, And Jesus Christ has given him An everlasting crown.

Unlock the door this evening And let your gate swing wide; Let all who ask for shelter Come speedily inside. What if your yard be narrow? What if your house be small? There is a Guest whose coming Will glorify it all.

There was a joyous hostler, Who knelt on Christmas morn Beside the radiant manger Wherein his Lord was born. His heart was full of laughter, His soul was full of bliss; When Jesus on his Mother's lap, Gave him His hand to kiss.

Unbar your heart this evening, And keep no stranger out; Take from your soul's great portal The barrier of doubt. To humble folk and weary Give hearty welcoming, Your breast shall be tomorrow The cradle of a King. —JOYCE KILMER

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