

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE CAUSE OF APOSTASY

"At that time, when Jesus went into the house of the chief of the Pharisees, on the Sabbath day to eat bread, they watched Him." (Luke xiv. 1.)

God has infinite intelligence. He needs neither time nor study to comprehend the most intricate matter. Everything is open to His mind. No other being is possessed of such intelligence. The angels have far more intelligence than has man, but even their wonderful faculties are not to be compared to the all-embracing and infinite powers of the mind of God. Man's intelligence is indeed very limited, though he alone of earthly beings possesses intelligence. All other living creatures upon earth follow certain instincts, and can not make any choice in their actions.

Man being thus constituted in his mental part, it is evident that he can not understand everything that God's infinite intelligence comprehends. Experience itself teaches this fact. It is only after laborious and continuous study that we understand the few things which constitute our education. But how many things we must leave untouched! We may excel in one branch of science, but we always will remain ignorant of many others. We understand, for instance, but very little about the many things we meet in our daily life. The earth we walk upon, the grass we tread underfoot, the beautiful heavens that spread themselves overhead, and the great luminaries that meet our gaze by day and by night, are, in many respects, mysteries to most of us. They are familiar to us, but they are not comprehended fully, or even in a great part, by us. God, however, who made them all, understands them perfectly. How much less, then, do we comprehend of God and the supernatural order, all of which is hidden from us, if we do not understand the things of the order in which we live, which are part of God's creation. Were it not for the revelations with which God has favored us, we could learn but little of Him beyond the mere fact of His existence.

Yet, in the face of the evidence of these facts, men will come to conclusions about God and His methods that are absolutely at variance with it. The words cited from the Gospel of this Sunday show how searching men—especially those who are enemies of God, because their sin—will look upon their Maker and endeavor to find fault with Him, or with the methods by which He rules the world. If all men admitted the existence of God and the truth of the revelations regarding His nature, they would not be able to come to any conclusion except such as would be favorable to Him.

Men will admit that the judgment of the more learned in the world is safer to follow in everything regarding human affairs than that of the ignorant or less learned. And this is as it should be, for the educated are more fit to direct us than are the ignorant. Again, a method may appear faulty to one not capable of judging of its merits; or perhaps he will admit that those better acquainted with it will be able to show him its advantages. Generally men act thus in regard to human methods. They know, however, that they are submitting to the judgment of finite minds, and hence minds that are fallible. Why will they refuse to recognize the order of God, or doubt its righteousness? They should admit that God is infinitely wise and just. Why should they hesitate about accepting whatever truth He has revealed, or in considering His methods and acts infinitely wise and just? It is true that we cannot see the reasons for certain actions of the Almighty or the wisdom of some of His ways as clearly as we see that two and two make four; but why should we put our intellect, limited as it is, against the infinite intelligence of God? As He is infinitely just, wise, and good, all the truths He reveals, all the means He employs in dealing with men and the universe, all the methods He adopts in connection with humanity, must be fraught with wisdom, justice, and goodness. The fact that we can not clearly detect these qualities in some of the ways of God is no sign that they do not really possess them. The intellectual haughtiness of many men is enough in itself to deprive them of any clear knowledge of God. And very often, for the same reason, faith is denied such people by God. This Pharisaical doubt seems to exist in the minds of many who have left the Catholic religion. Priests know from observation that if the apostate does not ascribe the reasons for his perversion to what he looks upon as defects in the Church, he will say it is due to the injustice he claims he sees in the way God acts with man. As a general rule, we know that neither of these reasons is the real one; but that sin is the cause of this loss or abandonment of faith. However, it shows how our renegade Catholics will grasp an opinion prevalent among non-believers, and use it as a pretext for adopting the creed of a sect, or even advance it as a reason for entering the field of unbelief. It is difficult, in fact, practically impossible, for a man to wander from the truth without

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committing sin. The truth of reason or faith, once possessed, is never lost—barring ignorance or extreme weakness of intellect—except by sin. The mind can not substitute one truth for another; it only can add truth to truth. Apostasy is due to sin, either committed immediately before the act of apostasy itself, or continuing over a long period.

The Catholic who continually tries to see, by means of his unassisted reason, the absolute justice of God in all His actions, will sooner or later sin. Of course, there are theological explanations for many of the truths of God; in fact, theology treats of these truths, but even theology is unable to fathom all of them. There are many things that we must believe, asking God at the same time to help us and make us constant in our belief. What a poor place heaven would be if it were capable of being grasped by our feeble intellect! Perhaps we could imagine a heaven that would satisfy us, but to imagine is not to create.

Let us not be as doubting Thomases nor searching Pharisees who sin, but rather let us accept everything that our Church teaches us, saying with St. Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go," if we doubt; "Thou hast the words of eternal life." These words are true now of His Church. Let us, then, ever hear her voice and willingly obey her commands.

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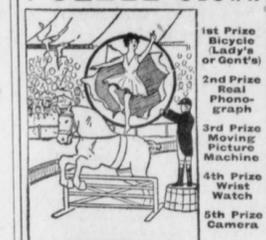
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The surrendered bonds will be forwarded by banks to the Minister of Finance at Ottawa, where they will be exchanged for bonds of the new issue, in fully registered, or coupon registered or coupon bearer form carrying interest payable 1st May and 1st November of each year of the duration of the loan, the first interest payment accruing and payable 1st May, 1923. Bonds of the new issue will be sent to the banks for delivery immediately after the receipt of the surrendered bonds.

The bonds of the maturing issue which are not converted under this proposal will be paid off in cash on the 1st December, 1922.

W. S. FIELDING, Minister of Finance.

Dated at Ottawa, 8th August, 1922.