

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

"And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger." (Luke II, 12)

LESSONS OF THE CRIB

A happy Christmas to you all, my brethren. This day that "brought glad tidings of great joy" is specially consecrated to happiness; this festival, above all others, kindles in the heart a joy that belongs to it alone. May you all share heartily of its spirit; may you know it as a season of rest and cheer; may every emity yield to peace; may the doors of every heart be thrown wide open to happiness!

But where can real happiness be found? Where can we best spend our thirst for it? Is it found in pleasure, in fame, in wealth? Do we look for its sign? Behold it, then, in the Crib at Bethlehem. "And this shall be a sign to you: you shall find the infant laid in a manger." Before that poor stable all the most illustrious and the most learned all can there learn from the lips of a little Child the secret of happiness; this Divine Infant says to each of us: "Behold I have come to do the will of Him Who sent Me. I have come to be your ransom but I have also come to be your model, and first to be your model in conforming to the will of God."

Hasten, then, to the Crib, to adore your God on this day made man for love of you; go to Him and learn that we can only know real happiness when we can say with a sincere heart, "Thy will be done."

Come to the stable at Bethlehem, you that suffer from poverty, who know that misery in many ways; you who have felt hunger and cold—come to the infant Jesus lying in the manger, and learn there the lesson of patience and resignation to the holy will of God. Let your heart be filled with consolation, for the Son of God has made Himself like to you in poverty. Though the world may look down upon the poor, may despise and condemn them, let them remember that God Himself has honored their state. The Babe of Bethlehem has lifted up the poor and made them His; He has glorified poverty. He has taken away its reproach and its shame. Let the poor crowd around the crib; may they learn from its poverty how to sanctify their own by perfect resignation, how to sanctify all their privations and sufferings by perfect patience; and may they understand and know the blessedness of their reward!

And you who are rich or well-to-do, come to the crib and learn there the lesson of detachment from the goods of this world, go there to learn the value of wealth, the danger of gratifying every desire that money can afford. It is in the poor stable at Bethlehem that the well-to-do can learn why it is that money alone and all it can buy never yet brought them real happiness: it is only there they can learn the way to use money, it is only from the lips of the infant Jesus that they can properly understand the duties and obligations of wealth.

Remember, then, you that are wealthy or well-to-do, remember that you are the trustees, not the owners, of your money. The God Who gave you prosperity can also take it away. And the only real happiness your wealth can bring you is to use it as God wills.

Remember that you hold all you possess in trust for God—and do not forget that the poor are the special friends of God. Do not despise or disregard them. You hold your wealth for the poor—the hand that is stretched out for alms is the hand of Jesus Christ. His hand is stretched out to you to-day for His little ones—the orphans. Be generous to Him. Do not forget these poor little children on this day above all others, when "unto us was born a Saviour."

THE PAULISTS IN TORONTO

MISSIONS TO NON-CATHOLICS

Toronto Globe, Dec. 18.

Several questions concerning persecution having been proposed to the Paulist Fathers at the mission to non-Catholics, Father Gillis last night said that he would answer them all at once, briefly, and he did with them for charges of persecution so easily arouse controversy and pave the way to recrimination, that they might better be "not so much as mentioned."

The truth, it was said, is that, in times past, Catholics and Protestants both persecuted those who disagreed with them. But persecution on both sides was a consequence of an imperfect civilization and of a pitifully inadequate apprehension of the spirit of the Gospel. "Other times other manners. Let none of us throw stones, because we all live in glass houses, and remember the old adage concerning the pot and the kettle. We shall understand one another more quickly if, on both sides, we agree to let bygones be bygones."

Among the questions answered was this: "Is not Communism in one kind of departure from Christ's method?" The answer was presented as follows: So long as the essentials of the Sacrament remain, the incidental mode of administration may vary. The bread, when consecrated, becomes the body of the Lord (I Cor. 10-16). There is no body without the blood; if the body be received, the blood is received necessarily.

"Why do Catholics pray to the Blessed Virgin?" was another query. "Because," the answer was, "we believe in the Communion of Saints, which means that the prayers of one Christian, whether in this life or in the life beyond the grave, avail for the benefit of all. In accordance with the Christian custom from the beginning, we ask one another's prayers. If I may ask anybody and everybody to pray with me and for me, if I may send my prayers beyond the grave and ask my own departed mother to pray for me, may I not ask the Mother of Christ to pray for me? And since I have abundant reason to believe that Christ's Mother is nearest and dearest to Him, may I not ask her much more than any other to pray for me? That is the sum and substance of Catholic devotion to Mary. Any allegation that we pray to her as to God is a serious mistake or a calumny. We do not."

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I cannot see the use of praying orders like the nuns of the Precious Blood," was a point introduced. "This is one thing," said Father Gillis, "that we find impossible to explain to any but those who have themselves consistently tried to develop a higher kind of prayer than mere petitions, thanksgivings, etc. But more things are wrong in prayer than this world dreams of."

Many other questions were answered briefly. The number submitted is increasing so rapidly that Father Gillis asked the questioners to be content with the necessarily brief public answers, and invited them to apply for fuller information to the inquiry class, held in the basement just before the services.

THE ILLUSTRIOUS BISHOP DOYLE

While a student at the University of Coimbra, Portugal, one of the greatest revolutionary forces that the world has seen broke out. It created the public opinion and largely shaped the public policy of the century. Its spirit was at once critical and constructive; its temper at once narrow to the extreme. On its political side it was filled with hatred towards kings and all the outworn forms of ignorance and oppression. Before its votaries obtained supreme power, hungering and thirsting after justice, it promulgated the rights of man, and thrust alike over peer and peasant the mantle of equality before the law. In its universal charity it would regard the whole human race as one family; it would break down the arbitrary barriers erected long ago by crafty tyrants to keep the people apart.

Until it was enthroned in the high places of political authority, until it ranked as one with the principalities and powers of the world, and wielded a despotic more terrible than the Bourbon emperors ever exercised, and more comprehensive than the Caesars ever claimed; it dreamt of drying up the tears of childhood, and of stilling the querulous murmurs of age; it aimed at bringing to a final close the bitter feud between rich and poor; it aspired to ring out the thousand wars of old, to ring in the thousand years of peace. Of its fidelity to these grand ideals let revolutionary Paris tell. On its religious aspect, it was critical and destructive; a system of cold abstraction and empty, barred negation.

It encouraged the gross materialism that there was no soul—"the brain secretes thought as the stomach secretes chyle"—no immortality; that we were as the beasts that perish, with no life beyond the grave, where loving words can again be spoken and loving

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hearts again can beat. It openly proclaimed scepticism, a habit of cynical doubt that paralyzed all spiritual energy, either by denying absolutely the existence of God, or if it admitted His existence as a possibility, robbed us of the comfort that such a thought can bring, telling us that "our Father who is in heaven" could no more hear or help us in our bitter needs than could the dumb idols to whom the heathens kneel. Its hatred of the Church was intense. It instinctively felt that its progress, not to say its supremacy, was incompatible with the existence of the Church.

For the loving title of "Holy Mother Church," by which every generation of Catholics since the day of Pentecost have known and revered the kingdom of Christ, it substituted an elegant dash of sensuality was an essential element in the composition of every man of letters, no one could hope to become a philosopher without first becoming a libertine.

This infidelity, propagated with marvelous success by the writings of Rousseau and Voltaire, had swept all the continent, and naturally at a great seat of learning like Coimbra the new ideas were much read and discussed. They were in the air of the period, and could no more be excluded from centres where young men congregated than cholera or any other plague that certain unhealthy conditions generate. Notwithstanding all the precautions taken, Coimbra—intellectually, at least—was as dangerous to people as the schools of Carthage to the youthful Augustine. By this storm of Rationalism many of the students were shaken; a very few, but still, sons of Catholic mothers, fell.

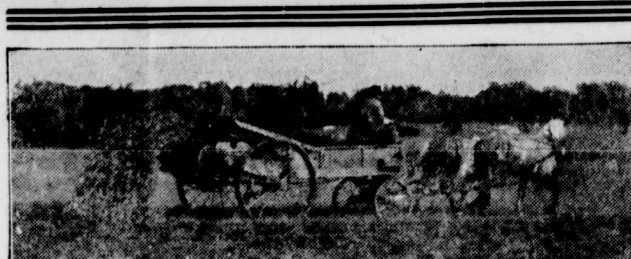
Breathing the infected atmosphere, gifted with a keen and unusually independent mind, Doyle could not hold aloof and remain a more passive spectator of the struggle. Though it was a task fraught with danger, unless undertaken with proper safeguards and from a proper motive, he resolved to analyze and test for himself the arguments urged, with infinite pity and scorn for their blighted opponents, by the flippancy and the shallow logic of Voltaire. As far as his undeveloped ability permitted, he reviewed the whole scheme of Rationalism. He traced its genesis, the historical conditions—intellectual, political, social, and religious—whence it birth; by first principles, necessarily accepted under penalty of intellectual suicide, he estimated its philosophical values, its claim to our assent as a reasonable theory of knowledge.

He examined its substitute for the consolations which the Church promises and bestows, and saw how far they could minister to minds diseased; how far they could satisfy the permanent needs of the nature of man. This Rationalist movement seemed a great relief to the weary and oppressed soul of Doyle, but he was not to be deceived. He saw that the philosophy of the philosophers, who hoped to make something handsome out of the ruins of the old world, would entail, as he saw with his fellow students, hungry and ignorant, of a terribly unjust feudal system, as well as to those whose generous sympathy clouds their foresight, the perils of their judgment.

Now, in these days Doyle's favorite study was law—a study, which by and by, he will find very useful, both in leading Irish agitation and in checkmating the grave and reverend seigniors of British parliament. By the principles of law, which is nothing more than reason regulating human conduct, he saw that the new theory was utterly untenable; he learned from Montesquieu and from Justinian code that the state of nature never existed and that the social contract was a chimera. From jurisprudence he passed to history. "Looking into the past," he said, "I found religion worshipped by Moses, and not only by Moses, but that Numa and Plato, though in darkness and error, were amongst the most ardent of her devotees. In the fierce light of speculation he saw the incurable defects of the new movement; how miserable and mean a thing it was; how inconsistent in its details; how inadequate and absurd in its explanations.

We can imagine, for even then in incisive logic, in the fierce and quart of death of God, the nature of man, how he brushed aside the absurd sophisms of the young freethinkers whose freethinking mainly consisted in bellowing conclusions drawn by processes of the soul, from premises they never understood. He might ask them—as John Morley, who certainly is above suspicion of oversteering the Catholic case, asks them—is it thus they will sweeten the lives of suffering men and take its heaviness from that drooping chronicle of wrong and cruelty and despair which everlastingly saddens the compassionate ear like the moaning of a midnight sea? It was not by cold, cheerless, radically depraved, scepticism like these that the Church became the refuge of humanity in the dark days of old, but by the representation to men sitting in bondage and the shadow of death of God's nature moving amongst time in the most eternally touching of human relations—a tender Mother ever interceding for them, and an Elder Brother laying down His life for theirs. He had come from a land where oppression and illiteracy indeed were rife, but where they were the direct outcome of the intolerant spirit of protestantism, of that very spirit of which Rationalism was merely a further development. He had come from a land where the Church was the sole refuge against oppression, and the chief agent in distributing whatever little knowledge was to be had.

He knew that through grief and through danger her smile had cheered the pitiable way of the Irish people. Seeing that calamity served only to evoke greater love and sacrifice, he knew that they slandered her who said her vows were frail. Alike from reason



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and experience he knew that the regen-

eration of Ireland, as well as of society in general would be effected only by the spirit of the Church, which even by her own children is too little known and too little loved. And yet, despite all his opposition to "French principles," though he would have repudiated the thought that they in any degree affected the glory of the theories which, in the rashness of youth he had undertaken the perilous enterprise of independent examination; that he had gone to consult the oracles which had set the world on flame; that he was not insensible to the glamour of the theories which all illusive as they were, had cast a spell over familiarity with all, that was best in this school of thought quickened his naturally strong sense of justice, and stimulated his misanthropic struggles for individual liberty, religious equality, and the creation of a united Ireland, in which "every my love race and every creed might be combined."

Another element in the formation of his appreciation of the marked contrast between the position of the Church in the Peninsula and its position at the glimmer of the theories which, clothed with dignity and authority, it was served and courted by nobles and by kings. The ritual of the Church was carried out in stately cathedrals, rich in glorious historic associations, with all the solemnity and splendor of an elaborate ceremonial. Princes felt themselves honored in being permitted to bear the canopy over the Blessed Sacrament in the procession of Corpus Christi. At the Pontifical Mass, it was emphatically the religion of the poor, the ignorant, and the weak things of this world. The Irish Catholics in his own country walked with bated breath.

"Above his head a ruined shell, No tenure but a tyrant's will, Forbade to read, forbade to plead, Disarmed, disfranchised, imbecile."

Bishop Doyle himself had made his religious profession in a thatched cabin that served as a Church. As the young student meditated on this contrast, into his mind came the thought and the determination to change all that; to strike the plans of servitude from the limbs of his co-religionists, to bring about religious equality and restore the Church to her rightful position, a city of perfect beauty built on the hillside giving the law of Christ to loving and obedient nations. However, his preparations for the great task to which he had set himself was interrupted in 1808 by the French invasion of Portugal.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

A True Picture

Here is the way G. K. Chesterton satirizes the present day trend toward that cheap philanthropy and that officious officialism which are some of the results of our increased knowledge of how to live: "Officials come round and leave little cards about the hygienic way in which to evoke greater love and sacrifice. They leave the cards; they do not leave the food. Lady scientists come around with

bright little essays about milk; they do not come round with the milk. Poor children are told in laundry dishes to pass a garment through three waters, but nobody gives them so much as one water. Children are told in cookery classes to pass the viand from a saucpan to a stewpan; but nobody offers to lend even the saucpan."—Sacred Heart Review.

An Invocation

By Robert Cox Stump

Light, rose-dusting all the midnight heavens, Strange new light above the dark horizon, Light that lit the path of eager shepherds, Guide me feet!

Star which shone abroad to wondering Magi, Kings of the East, and, moving, bade them follow On, through deserts, unto David's City, Shine for me!

Light of Love, conduct me to the manger, Risen Star of Hope, illumine my darkness; Lead ye where, a Babe on Mary's bosom, Waits my God!

A LIMP ACCORDEON

In an interview in the press after his return to England from America Father Bernard Vaughan, talking about Protestantism and Catholicism in the United States, said that if Protestantism, according to its proud boast, were the religion of the nation, to judge from its 70,000 divorces per year, its steadily decreasing birth-rate, and its ever-increasing neglect of religious education, the country did not seem to find much use for the religion of its birth.

"I am inclined to say of Protestantism," remarked Father Vaughan, "as expressed in terms of divorce and racial suicide, What does it profit a man? In the year there were 68,000 divorces. Think what ruin that spells in the States. In Canada, in 1901, there were only nineteen divorces."

Describing Protestantism as at best fragmentary Christianity, Father Vaughan added that it was a religion which said its rule of faith was the Bible, but that Book was used, not like a fixed rule, but like a limp accordion. You drew it up and it was high, you pressed it down and it was low, you stretched it out and it was broad. It was the limpest, and most pliant, and the most comprehensive rule of faith one could well imagine. Whatever tune you played on it was wrong. It eluded definition; it scorned authority; it defied you to interpret its character in terms of speech."

Is there any answer to Father Vaughan's question: What does it profit a man? What profit is Protestantism to the United States?—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

NEWS FAKERS HERE AND THERE

The accounts of the revolutionary movement in Mexico to reach this country were, it appears, colored somewhat highly. Commenting on the untrustworthiness of the despatches sent hither from the Mexican border, the Springfield Republican remarks:

Here is an old lesson again set for our instruction. The American people are learning once more that news telegraphed from places on this side and near to the Mexican line regarding conditions in Mexico is little to be relied upon. As a matter of

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fact it is always to be heavily discounted. There are more unscrupulous newspaper makers in that region than in any other locality on the face of the globe. This has been demonstrated time out of mind, yet the sensation newspapers and too often the Associated Press take all these fellows choose to feed them of baseless sensations.

All the unconscionable news fakers are not in or near Mexico, esteemed contemporary. A goodly number of them are at the other end of the Atlantic cable. Lisbon held more than a few of them during the recent revolution in Portugal, as witness the "discovery" of underground passages in Catholic religious houses, and the descriptions of Jesuits throwing bombs from their fortress convents upon harmless multitudes in the streets. These things were fakes pure and simple, but they were not questioned, so far as we know, by the Republican or any other paper. This "news," absurd on the face of it, was solemnly printed as if it were a sober fact.—S. H. Review.

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