

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUX, D. D.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PREPARING OUR SOULS FOR CHRIST'S COMING

"Brethren, knowing the season, that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we became believers." (Rom. XIII, 2-3)

The Saviour who had been promised by God when Adam and Eve were driven from the garden of Paradise, had been expected daily by the people of the Old Law long before He came. Penitential had sung of Him and prophets had spoken of Him. All this was known to the people; yet they did not understand the real meaning of the coming of Christ, for when He came, they did not believe Him to be the Messiah.

Now, dear friends, during this season just opening, the Church bids us prepare for the coming of the Saviour. It is true that He will not be born again, neither shall we see Him as did those who lived when He became man. But we yet may have Him come to us; we can feel His influence; and we can obtain even greater blessings than could have been obtained by those who had lived before He underwent His cruel passion and death. He will come to us in spirit; and He will become the spiritual nourishment of our souls when we receive His body and blood in Holy Communion.

These blessings we may receive at all times; but there are particular periods, during the ecclesiastical year, when we can receive them in greater abundance,—when, as it were, He will come to us in a special manner and fill us with more spiritual blessings and holy joys. One of these periods is now near at hand. It is Christmas time. Advent is the season the Church sets aside as a time of special preparation for these days of great blessings. She bids us become a little more serious than usual; do a little more penance than we have been accustomed to perform since Easter; and examine our conscience more perfectly, so that we may learn our faults, make a good confession of them, and, by the graces thus received, have our hearts ready for the spiritual coming of Christ at Christmas.

Let us not look upon that holy season as a time for worldly enjoyment only, as do so many people. It is true that we should rejoice more than at any other season of the ecclesiastical year—with the exception of Easter—but our joy should be spiritual as well as human. How are we to bring this about? It can be done fully one way only—that is, by entering into this season as the Church desires and commands; namely, by making it a time of preparation for the reception of spiritual blessings.

We carry corrupt bodies that are continually causing us temptations. We often fall victim to these suggestions and become sinners. Sometimes we sin only by single acts. At other times, these acts are repeated so frequently that we form habits which deprive us of many graces. This is the ordinary tendency of human nature; and, notwithstanding our brave efforts and earnest endeavors to overcome it, we but too often yield to it. The only way to fight it efficaciously is by prayer and mortification.

We all, no doubt, are guilty of some fault or faults, or are slaves to some one or more habits. Christ's grace is approaching. Christ desires at that time to be able to come into our hearts with a great supply of graces and blessings. We know that if we are found in the state in which we now are, He can not bless us as He would wish. Shall we, then, remain thus? Oh, no! There is not one of us who is not eager to do everything possible to have his heart pure, so that Christ will find a worthy dwelling place therein.

Let us all, then, begin this work of purifying our souls, so that we may receive many blessings from God at Christmas. Can we feel really happy when that time will have come, if our souls be stained with sin? Certainly not. And will our joy be pure and full, even though we have surrounded us all that money can buy or friend can offer, if our souls, through our own fault, remain tainted? Our joy will not be entire. Nor will it be real, for true joy comes only to him whose heart is free of guilt. Let us, then, labor to make our hearts the seat of true joy, and not of a feigned worldly joy only. Christ longs for such a heart. It is His delight to enter into it. How earnestly, then, should we strive to prepare our hearts for Him during the holy days of Advent. If we do, we shall become conscious of His presence within us at Christmas, and, like the shepherds who left their flocks and came to adore Him, we shall be totally consumed with love for Him and, with hearts aglow, we shall welcome Him, fall down in adoration before His divine majesty, and shed tears of delight at His presence.

He that stumbles and falls not mends his pace.

AN ANGLICAN BISHOP AND RELIGION

Floyd Keeler in America

The unrest which is so evident throughout the world has manifested itself in almost every conceivable direction. In government and economy, it has brought forth many men with wild theories, and has secured a following for them. In religion it has given an impetus and a respectability to Spiritualism and kindred cults which would have been deemed impossible a few years ago. But just because men have so gone astray it has led the more serious minded to a reconsideration of many things which they had thought settled and to a revising of their estimate of what is really fundamental.

We have from time to time pointed out certain tendencies among the various non-Catholic bodies, and have shown how earnestly anxious have been their attempts at securing some firm foundation. Nowhere is this tendency more visible than in Anglicanism, and this for two reasons. In the first place, Anglicanism, more than any of the more strictly Protestant bodies, retains a large degree of reverence for antiquity, professes to base her teaching upon those things which have been handed down from the "primitive Church," and realizes that such basis is necessary if one is to speak with any sort of authority in the Name of Christ. In the second place Anglicanism has a very fearless set of thinkers, for Anglicans, accustomed as they are to rather startling revelations in their own system, do not shrink from the results of their investigations nor blind themselves to obvious truth quite so much as those who are committed to other Protestant systems do. Hence the results are often somewhat unlooked for and this perhaps, as much as anything else, accounts for the fact that so many Anglicans, comparatively, "go to Rome." Rome has been the logical end of their thinking and they accept the inevitable because it is inevitable and do not try to squirm out of it.

When St. Paul said: "He that desireth the office of a Bishop, desireth a good work, doubtless the vision of a life of missionary hardship rose up in his mind and this same vision was doubtless also before that youthful Bishop to whom he was writing as he scanned the words. It appealed to them both as an opportunity for bearing witness to their Lord even unto death, of overseeing and comforting the congregations of Christians over whom they were set, of being real leaders in the formation of the spiritual life of the people. The ideal has never changed, but more than once in the history of Christianity the "office of a Bishop" has been conceived of in a very different light. Herein is where a discrepancy appears in that office as it is all too commonly considered in present day Anglicanism. There are some heroic Anglican bishops ministering with a single eye to the high calling, taking their office with apostolic sincerity and earnestness, leading genuinely apostolic lives, but the tendency is against them. In England particularly and in other parts of the British Empire to a considerable extent the Bishop is looked upon rather as a social than a spiritual leader. It was this fact that began to make Bishop Kingman wonder if, after all, he was a genuine apostolic Bishop, and it is this fact that is now driving another Anglican Bishop to resign his see.

This time the storm-center is in Australia. The report comes to us that the Rt. Rev. George Douglas Holford, Bishop of Rockhampton in Queensland, has resigned his diocese in order the more literally to follow Our Lord's counsel of perfection. He says:

"I am about to renounce all that I possess to live the life of poverty for Jesus' sake. This, I have become convinced, is a call from God, which I dare not disobey. I am constrained by the example of the Son of God, who though He was rich yet became poor; though He had all things, yet emptied Himself of all in love and service for man. And, having become one of us in this world, He voluntarily chose the life of poverty; He was born in poverty, He lived in poverty, and died in poverty. He had nothing, He had nowhere to lay His head. And certainly on some of these who would follow Him He makes demands no less. Whosoever does not forsake all that he has, cannot be My disciple. The great message to this generation is, I conceive, the message of the cross of sacrifice. I believe the Son of God who hung upon the Cross is calling me, and I desire to have the marks the Cross branded on me for the rest of my life.

"I confess that I have been strongly moved in this direction in these last years by the willingness of our noblest boys for utter and unreserved sacrifice for a cause they believed to demand their all. And they gave themselves, holding nothing back. From them, and their deaths, or their poor maimed lives, pressure has been ever insistent that I could do no less than give up everything for what I believe in most of all, my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the Kingdom of God. In comparison with theirs the Church's sacrifice seems oft so paltry. I believe that it must show much more of the same spirit of unreserved giving of self to endure anything to make Christ supreme in that future of our civilization for which those boys died."

He makes a statement of passionate devotion to the English Church and speaking in comparison to the "Church of Rome" he further declares:

"Few things hurt more than that it is possible for persons today, as in Macaulay's time to pour scorn upon it by contrast with the Church of Rome, for its lack of the note of sacrifice. And I have to see that by comparison it does not seem to have the power to produce in any or to measure the highest Saints or to move its sons and daughters to give up absolutely everything without reserve for love of Jesus. Oh, how I long with deepest desire that it could sink in the depths of the sea for ever its suspiciousness and paralyzing party spirit, and strive to be known for the possession of the very spirit of Christ, the spirit of self-sacrifice for others, and service for the world. I am jealous for my Church; that various non-Catholic bodies, and have shown how earnestly anxious have been their attempts at securing some firm foundation. Nowhere is this tendency more visible than in Anglicanism, and this for two reasons. In the first place, Anglicanism, more than any of the more strictly Protestant bodies, retains a large degree of reverence for antiquity, professes to base her teaching upon those things which have been handed down from the "primitive Church," and realizes that such basis is necessary if one is to speak with any sort of authority in the Name of Christ. In the second place Anglicanism has a very fearless set of thinkers, for Anglicans, accustomed as they are to rather startling revelations in their own system, do not shrink from the results of their investigations nor blind themselves to obvious truth quite so much as those who are committed to other Protestant systems do. Hence the results are often somewhat unlooked for and this perhaps, as much as anything else, accounts for the fact that so many Anglicans, comparatively, "go to Rome." Rome has been the logical end of their thinking and they accept the inevitable because it is inevitable and do not try to squirm out of it.

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cause he feels that in his position he cannot be a true disciple of the Master who had not "where to lay His head," and in the meantime Bishop Hensley Henson, notorious for his unbelief, is promoted to the see of Durham, one of the most important and influential in England. Does it not appear that self sacrifice is regarded as madness whilst a complete rationalism is in sufficiently high favor to give one the bishopric of St. Outhbert?

In our own country Bishop Kingman had these difficulties to face and he found the true solution of them, and has exhibited a literal giving up of all to follow Christ which may give food for thought to his evidently sincere Australian brother. Certainly all Catholics will pray that Bishop Holford's religious vocation may lead him into the True Fold where alone the literal taking of the Cross is practised, and where alone the souls who seek to be united to Jesus in the councils of perfection may find that peace which He promised and which is "not as the world giveth" but is a foretaste of the calm of Paradise's bliss.

CHURCH MENACE IN ROUMANIA

ORTHODOX SEEK TO GAIN ADVANTAGE BY SPREADING FALSE REPORTS

(By N. C. W. C. News Service) Bucharest.—Since the overthrow of the political power of the former Russian State Church, there have not been wanting signs that the Orthodox in countries outside of Russia are aiming at securing some of the prestige and influence that formerly belonged to the Russian Orthodox. In Jugo-Slavia one sign of this movement is the recent restoration of the old Serbian Patriarchate, under the encouragement of the Government. In Rumania, in which, although it has a Catholic Archbishop and a Bishop, the Orthodox religion predominates, there are also signs that the Orthodox are getting ready to assert themselves against the Catholic.

The Catholic position in Rumania has altered somewhat since the signing of the Versailles Peace Treaty. Vast territories, containing some millions of souls, that were formerly incorporated in dioceses under the secular jurisdiction of the Hungarian Crown are now under the Rumanian Sovereign and some special provision has to be made for dealing with these large Catholic provinces. INSIDIOUS ANTI-CATHOLIC MOVE The Concordat between Rumania and the Holy See has been much

discussed in the press of Rumania, and it seems fairly clear that much of this discussion is aimed at creating a spirit of dissatisfaction among the Catholics regarding their treatment by the Holy See. For example, some of the newspapers assert with a great show of confidence that the Holy See is prepared to hand over to the Orthodox King of Rumania certain privileges that were enjoyed by the Catholic King of Hungary. These privileges, which were personal to the Hungarian King, and not a vested right of the Government in power, permitted the Hungarian Sovereign to recommend certain persons as candidates for vacant bishoprics and canonries, and also to have a certain say in the administration and supervision of Catholic benefices and ecclesiastical funds. These privileges were not rights pertaining to the Hungarian Crown, but merely concessions allowed to a Catholic ruler personally by the Holy See. As a matter of fact, they no longer exist, since there is no longer a Hungarian Sovereign.

But the idea that the Holy See will transfer these privileges to the King of Rumania, who is not a Catholic, is repugnant to the mass of the Catholics who now find themselves subjects of the Rumanian Crown. In like manner, the same press asserts impudently that the Holy See is considering the step of authorizing the Rumanian Government to bring to an end the religious independence of the See of Transylvania, and to secularize the Church property in that province. In proof of this, statements have been circulated that the State is to pay the Bishops and clergy salaries in compensation for the confiscation of Church property. These salaries, so it has been stated, have even been regularized; a Bishop is to receive 60,000 Rumanian lei yearly; the Canons of cathedrals 12,000 lei, and the lower clergy in proportion.

FORECASTS WITHOUT FOUNDATION

Needless to say, in the best informed Catholic circles it is said there is no foundation whatever for these forecasts. The greater part of the Catholics who have been incorporated in Rumanian territory are not Rumanians at all. They are devoutly attached to the Roman See and the suggestion that the authorities of the Church in Rome will sacrifice the loyal Catholics in order to secure the good will and favor of the Rumanian Government is, so it is said here, nothing more than a kite sent up by the opponents of Rome to create dissatisfaction among the Catholic people.

CLARA BARTON'S "SPOOK"

The Red Cross Society has done great work in recent years and Miss Clara Barton was a great figure in the days of its early history. A Dr. Hubbard was her secretary. She is now dead, but according to a Mrs. Hiron, her spirit appeared to Mrs. H. and directed her to tell the Doctor, who had at one time been chief of the medical staff of the Red Cross, to turn over to Mrs. H. all his money for use in building a memorial to Miss Barton. This happened in 1914, and the Doctor very obediently obeyed and gave up something like \$60,000 in cash and bonds. The Doctor now goes into court and asks for his property, contending that the memorial to Miss Barton has been abandoned. Briefly this is the case. It is mentioned as a sample of the delusion that can take hold of even a member of the medical profession that he would let go of the nest little sum of \$60,000. Who can blame him if he wants it back? Miss Barton is dead, the Doctor was her confidential adviser, etc., and still she appears in spirit to a third person and informs her what she wants her friend to do with his money. It is a wonder that the Doctor should not have objected and

insisted upon Miss B. giving him the message directly. But perhaps the Doctor was not a good medium and was averse to being associated with spirits of the dead. The wonder is that a man of Dr. Hubbard's standing and former positions in public service should allow himself to be so easily deceived, but the message from the beyond tickles the vanity now and then and humanity plays a strange prank in giving credence to such messages. Perhaps this good Doctor was kin to the famous character in Gulliver's travels, who for eight years worked upon a scheme to extract sunbeams from cucumbers, which were to be put up in bottles hermetically sealed and let out to warm the air in raw weather. What a boon that would be if from an acre of cucumbers, we could extract enough heat for the winter days and thus bid defiance to natural gas companies and coal barons?—Catholic Columbian.

ARCHBISHOP HANNA

SPEAKS ON WORLD CONDITIONS

In a sermon preached at the New Cathedral St. Louis, Archbishop Hanna dealt with "The New Democracy and the New Era," and urged the impress of "the mind and the heart of Christ" upon public opinion and affairs. The Archbishop took the text, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new man, in justice and holiness and truth."

Picturing the World War and the promises made for the world's peace and brotherhood, the Archbishop spoke of the people's disappointment that ideals had not been realized. "It was the same thing over again—powerful nations reaching out for spoils. Two years have run out, and the promised peace is not here, and the poor human beings for whose rights our children laid down their lives are probably in worse condition than in the days of the awful War. There seems to be no leader able

to rise and lead men into the realization of the high hopes of the new era and new civilization.

"The world needs the spirit which is in Christ Jesus. After all, what is our dream? We dream of men free, but freedom under law. The rule of the people depends upon the estimate that we put upon man and human nature. It depends upon man's willingness to sacrifice self for the good of the larger group. It depends upon the power man has to bring about a real brotherhood because of the respect and the consideration that man has for his fellow man. It depends in a word upon a princely spirit which comes from the inspiration which Christ gave by His life and His service.

"The world, if it is to come back to the things for which our children fought and died, must come back to Jesus Christ. Each one of us must put on Jesus Christ. It is not enough for us to be good ourselves, to show Christ in our own lives, but wherever we go we must assert this Christian philosophy, so as to arrest the mind of the men of this world. We live in a democracy, where every man, and every woman, too, has a voice in the forming of our laws and our public opinion.

"Does it not seem strange, that after all our years of Catholic training in this land of ours, that our teachings have made so little impression upon the public mind of this nation? You may say we were poor. So we were, we were only a handful at first, but that day has passed. We are millions today, but what are we doing, you Catholic men? What are you doing, you Catholic women, to impress the mind of this generation, and bring it to the realization that only as Christ gets into it, is there hope for our lives? Let every one put on Jesus Christ. Only in Him, in His wisdom and His love, can we have a perfect democracy and perfect brotherhood."

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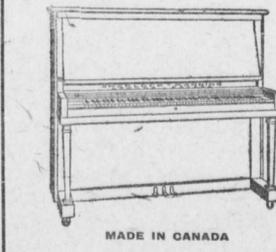
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