

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

THE VIRTUE OF HUMILITY

"Jesus, therefore, when He knew that they would come to take Him by force and make Him king, fled again into the mountains, Himself alone." John vi. 15.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ teaches us less by actions than by words. The duty of the Christian is not only to listen to His words of wisdom, but also to view His wise acts; and to learn lessons of vast importance from both. Christ is the model upon which every Christian must build up his spirituality, and according to which he must pass every day of his earthly life. If he puts himself too far off from this great Archetype, or fails to view Him when endeavoring to make of himself a true man, he will achieve nothing of lasting worth. United to Christ, the Christian becomes a veritable Christ himself; separated from Christ, he can accomplish nothing praiseworthy before his Heavenly Father.

One of the principal lessons Christ inculcated and taught by word and action was that of humility. He was God, and nothing that man could do to Him or for Him would detract one whit from His dignity or essence. Though, if man gave Him the honor due to Him, it would add what generally is called "external glory," but even this, Christ did not search for. When offered to Him, He accepted it—not so much because of His own sake, but for the sake of the Christian to whom it would become meritorious. But He appeared not as God before the world. He came as man; there-by hiding, to a great extent—nay, in a certain sense, totally—His divinity. The reason for all this is evident. He came to save man, and in order to accomplish this work, it was necessary that He should suffer. This suffering was to be voluntary on His own part. He knew it to be the will of His Father, and He freely underwent even torture for the sake of that will, and to conquer accursed sin.

Man is different, though he may profess himself to be a Christian. If God has endowed him with some extraordinary talent, some transcendent quality, some exceptional natural trait, he wishes to shine by these lights before the world. Certainly God gave them to him for a purpose, but evidently He did not intend man to use them for his own interest. It was not the Maker's intention that man should place himself on a plane far above his fellowmen, by means of his gifts; but that he make use of them to serve mankind effectually and God humbly.

The truly great man is he who is blind to his own greatness, but openly awake to the good deeds that he realizes it to be his duty to perform. He may thank God—in the silence and secrecy of his own heart—that he has been blessed by Him in an exceptional manner; but, externally, he must show no sign of it. Nor need he think—if he use his talent well—that it will not, by its own power, illuminate the rest of mankind.

There are too many who attempt to build structures on other foundations than that of true Christian spirituality. As a consequence, by their very actions, they become repulsive to the true Christian. Their deeds shine not before the rest of the world, as lights to lead; but they cast gloom where light finds it difficult to penetrate. They look for honor; they esteem too highly the wavering love of other fellow beings like, or unlike, themselves; they desire their glory to be manifested here; and think little of whether or not a crown will await them in the world to come. Why is this so? Because they have chosen



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ROYAL YEAST CAKES

other models, and, if they have not despised Christ, at least they have neglected Him. Their own pride has been able to sway them, and it has blinded their view of the real lasting things of life and of the eternal glory beyond. They seem to bask in the faint sunshine of the pleasures of this life, content to struggle for a few more earthly things, and willing to die in the clasp of worldliness.

There was never a time more than today—and perhaps never in another country more so than in our own—when humility and its consequent virtues were so vital to the individual. This is an age of efficiency, of education, of quick grasping, with means innumerable of working out one's temporal welfare. All this—while it serves usefully for the body—is liable to become most detrimental to the soul. He who with eyes open and mind unprejudiced casts his gaze over the multitudes around him will not fail to discern quickly that there is a great rush for the temporal and fleeting, and much slothfulness with regard to the spiritual and eternal. Perhaps it is for a time lasting; but undoubtedly there will come a day when the Almighty will strike, as with lightning, the great temple of wealth that is being built.

The work of Christ will not be in vain. His heavenly Father will have it so that, if people will not meekly stand at the foot of His cross and, with sympathetic compassion, kiss the sacred wounds of His feet and feel the influence of the dropping blood, they will experience the sharpness of the sword. For where an example so impelling will not lead, the stinging lash of an angered God must compel.

THE QUALITY OF BULK TEA

The Quality of Bulk Tea is always unreliable for several reasons. In the first place, being unlabelled its origin is unknown and there is no one who has any particular responsibility for its goodness. In the second place, it is exposed to the air and therefore very quickly loses its flavour and freshness. Even if it were as good as "Salada" in the first place, it would rapidly deteriorate and in any case it would be impossible for any dealer to follow consistently the same quality throughout the year. "Salada" always maintains an unvarying high standard, possible through skilful blending.

GENERAL INTENTION FOR APRIL

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PIUS XI.

RULERS AND THEIR GOVERNMENTS

Sometimes people wonder why legislative bodies, as they now exist quite generally, assemble and discuss and deliberate and well, do little else. The explanation is quite simple. If the electorate were of one mind, representatives elected by them would be of one mind; but, since the electorate are divided into opposing camps which differ widely in their views on great public questions, representatives of diverse views are chosen and the conflict is transferred from the hustings to legislative halls. The resulting legislation, if there be any, is the fruit of compromise.

All compromise is the sign of inherent weakness. The well-disposed are not quite strong enough in Parliament and therefore they must sacrifice something for the sake of the rest; or the evil-minded lack a working majority and they, in turn, having to abate their pretensions, lop off a thorn or two from the projected measures. A numerous electorate, therefore, unless imbued with sound principles of patriotic statesmanship, is not always an unalloyed blessing; for, just as seeds of different trees do not produce a grove of uniform timber, difference of climate, soil, industries, and gainful occupations are bound to color the general appreciation of what makes for the good of the body politic.

But the most important factor has yet to be mentioned. Material prosperity by the preservation of public order in its broadest sense is not the only aim, nor the chief aim, of legislation. To create a coterie of political upstarts, or of "captains of industry," or of opulent parvenus, is not its only aim nor its chief aim. True, such men may rise to prominence or protuberance under circumstances most equitable for the citizenry in general; but in such case, they do not owe their being to particular and intensive cultivation by the constituted authorities. Like hummocks on a prairie or cowpits in a meadow, they are simply a part of the landscape.

Though the usefulness of a machine or of a domestic animal may be expressed in terms of current funds, a citizen is neither one nor the other. His value depends on entirely different considerations. He is able to think and to give utterance to his thoughts, and thus, at least in some humble degree, to influence his neighbor; on the other hand, he is capable of receiving and assimilating his neighbor's thoughts and he, in turn, may come under his neighbor's influence. The cure for public ills, therefore, is to be applied in the home of the voter.

The ideal society exists when its constituent elements are actuated by a proper rational impulse to attain a proper end by proper

means rationally understood and applied. How useful soever it may be, a society of musicians does not devote its chief energies to the subject of husbandry, nor are agricultural associations concerned principally with music. The object of government is to protect and foster the legitimate special aspirations of the citizen and thus to aid him in realizing the great object of his existence. The preservation of public order is the first step. This does not mean that a dull and monotonous sameness shall be stamped upon the life of every man and woman as if they were so many pats of butter for the market. Not every man can be a Landseer; not every woman can be a Jane Austen. When children shall have become equal in physical, mental, and esthetic gifts, there will still remain a grand opportunity to spoil the equality by faulty work in developing those children; but such an equality will never exist, short of the destruction of the whole human family, followed by a new creation.

Harmonious development, therefore, along a great variety of lines is the ideal that Governments should aim to foster. Thus will they truly exercise their function and promote their general well-being. This development must take into consideration and cherish as its guide in a matter so beset with difficulties the purpose of the Creator in placing men on earth. Time is not everything; taken at its best, it is all too brief, yet it is our only opportunity to prepare for eternity.

While it is said in strictest propriety that the mind seeks truth and the will seeks good, the mind cannot appropriate all finite truth nor can the will appropriate all finite good, for life is too short; yet every normal mind and every normal will can make its own the truth and the Good that it necessarily requires to reach rest or quiescence in its possession. A truth that is dropped, as the maple sheds its leaves in the autumn, and a good that soon falls, as the languorous odor of the magnolia, have their place in life, but they do not suffice. The truth and the Good that are alike a noble incentive to impulsive youth and a staff to tottering old age are the Truth and the Good that it behoves man to acquire, since they befit his very nature.

It is the duty, therefore, of Governments to come to every man's assistance by warding off what may blind the understanding or corrupt the will of the citizen. This does not mean that adults are to be kept in leading-strings, as if they were infants learning to walk, nor that counsels of high Christian perfection or laws applicable to a state of great culture and material progress are to be imposed indiscriminately and arbitrarily on a large and miscellaneous population.

The tendency to multiply unsuitable and vexatious laws is one of the evils of the day. Are people's rights and liberties to be regulated by clocks or even stall-fed cattle? If a prudent mother takes into consideration the temperamental differences that are found in one household, how much more thought is due to prospective legislation which is to be a rule of action for a multitude?

A time of great public excitement or peril is not the time to look for the expression of a sober and deliberate judgment on the part of either the citizenry or legislative bodies. Take the Titles of Office bill, which was thrown through the British Parliament as if it were a missile hurled by a wicked spirit, as, indeed, might well have been the case. The measure was as productive as an added egg and in quite the same way. Only that and nothing more. The granting, offhand, of full citizenship, with all a citizen's rights and duties, to ex-slaves who had but the traditions of seven generations of bondage as a preparation for them is another case in point. Popular feeling at an exceptionally delicate moment in the national life is not necessarily the fruit of careful thought and patriotism. In the days when autograph-hunting was looked upon as a permissible way of making our neighbor's life miserable, a "hunter" applied to the noted platform orator, Josh Billings, who answered over the convetted signature, "If you want to get there swift, go slow." Sound philosophy, that. It applies very forcibly to law-hatching and law-laying.

Much water has passed under the bridge since a British Parliament was informed that the monarch would "take counsel," for the Parliament, by a more or less pious fiction, is supposed to voice the collective wisdom of the whole country; and much more has passed since a Parliament was told to enact a certain law or make timely arrangements with a mortician. Yet, the influence of those actually at the head of governmental administration is still so considerable that their attitude must have a telling effect on the exercise of purely legislative powers. Moreover, in virtue of their pardoning and commuting prerogatives, they can correct certain failures or excesses of what was supposed to be justice; and in like manner, they can shield and save the guilty by gathering them under the same ample mantle. Rulers are but human and subject to human passion and weakness.

The time has gone by, perhaps, when little Catholic boys, carried away by their eagerness to see a real, live Protestant, would risk the painful consequences of playing

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truant from school; yet men there be, who are now of grave and reverend men, who actually risked the integrity of their integument for the sake of seeing such a curiosity. We live on neighborly, or even friendly, terms with all classes of believers, misbelievers, and unbelievers. While it is not our business to criticize them or their beliefs or practices, much less to sink to the vulgarity of making sport of them, since this would be against even elementary charity for the erring, we are by no means constrained to sacrifice conscience for the sake of appearing sociable. The Government protects them as it protects us. It must provide for their social well-being as it provides for ours. Yet, at this point, very delicate conditions may declare themselves when heavenly prudence is requisite to show such due regard for them that it may not be disregarded for ourselves; for there is an unworthy broad-mindedness, so called, which, if cultivated, would spread mental confusion and moral disorder, to the discredit of religion and godly conduct. This is not one of the aims of government.

Consider, for example, the subject of marriage. Perverted views of that holy state run the whole gamut of human folly, from a miscellaneousness which rejects all ceremony and falls back on "common law" unions, to another which, by commencing with so-called "plural marriages," or by lowering the bars in the divorce court to every foolish whim or fancy, opens the way to a second miscellaneousness not outdone by the first. How firm the hand, yet how delicate the touch, must be that of rulers and governments in a matter so wrapped up in the welfare of the body politic!

In some of the United States, it is unlawful to read the Bible, Catholic or Protestant, in the Public schools; in others, the daily reading of a selection from the Protestant Bible is obligatory; and in still other States, the law is thus far silent on the subject. Religious instruction during school hours is banded about in a similar way. Yet man's descent from some mythical monkey, thus barely and baldly stated, affirmed in some Public schools with no protest from the lawmakers. We have marshalled an array of cases in which rulers and Governments may fail or do fail. It is plain, consequently, that they are truly necessitous objects of prayer. But, in our opinion, the true cure of real evils and the avoidance of others equally grave is to be found, as we venture to repeat, in the home of the individual voter, whose influence over rulers and Governments will make itself felt. A cure effected close to the actual exercise of power would be so difficult as to verge on the miraculous.

HENRY J. SWIFT, S. J.

In our life we should do three things. To gain the victory over our passions,—"Live soberly;" to respect the claims of our neighbors,—"Live righteously;" to derive our motives from the highest source,—"Live godly."—Reynolds. The world sees devout people pray often, suffer injuries, serve the sick, give to the poor, watch, moderate their hunger, restrain their passions, deprive themselves of sensual pleasures, and such other acts as are in themselves severe and rigorous but the world does not see the inward cordial devotion which renders all these actions agreeable, pleasant and easy. Consider the bees upon the thyme: they find there very bitter juice, yet in sucking it they turn it into honey. Oh, worldlings! it is true devout souls find much bitterness in these exercises of mortification, but in performing them they convert them into sweetness and delight.—St. Francis de Sales.

Music is pre-eminently the science of the soul.—Father Borke.

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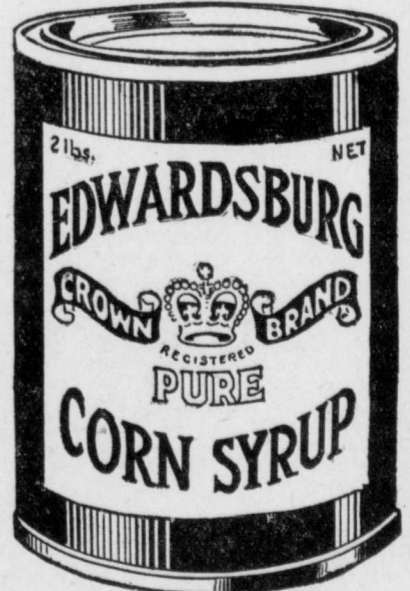
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