

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

By Rev. N. M. Redmond

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

CHRIST'S PROOF THAT HE IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

"I am the Good Shepherd; the good shepherd gives his life for his sheep." (John x 11)

Could proof be stronger than that given by our Blessed Lord to show that He is the Good Shepherd? No. Because: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John xv. 13.) The laying down of His life for all mankind attests His love more than any other, yea, more than all His other favors. Therefore it was that He advanced it as the proof of His love for man. Though great as His other favors undoubtedly are, they seem in a manner eclipsed, and, as it were, to lose their value on entering into comparison with this. No one questions the greatness of the boon of existence, and yet the Church in her preface sings: "What would it have availed us to have been born, had we not also been redeemed?" "Behold how He loved him," said the Jews when they saw our Lord weep as He was about to raise Lazarus to life. They admired our Lord's love for His dead friend. When, therefore, we behold Him weeping tears of blood from every pore of His virgin body, as from so many eyes, when we see Him from head to foot covered with wounds and observe Him spill the last drop of His life-blood for man, have we not a much stronger reason, have we not the strongest possible reason to admire His love and exclaim, "Behold how He loved him!" It should not have been a source of much astonishment to the Jews that our Lord showed signs of love for Lazarus, since in life he had proved himself a true friend to our Lord and His apostles. Had he been our Lord's declared enemy, then, indeed, since love for enemies was unknown to the Jews, they would have great reason to admire His love for Lazarus. But if the tears prompted by His love for an enemy would have furnished the Jews with so great reason to admire His love, what, I ask, should be our admiration of His love for man when we behold Him suffer the most cruel torments, yea, give His very life for the sinner, His declared enemy, to deliver him from eternal death! Should not this be sufficient to command the extreme admiration and eternal gratitude of the people of all generations?

All this He did without obligation or interest on His part, or claim on ours. God's action would have been perfectly just had He dealt with us as He did with the angels, since we were their fellow criminals. He was not in the least constrained to show us mercy. Hence were we in the moment of such a display of love on His part to cease forever to be His enemies and to become His most loving and devoted friends, the extreme love which He manifested should command all the admiration and all the gratitude of the whole human race. But how shall we attempt to admire the mercy and be grateful for the love that made these sacrifices in the clear knowledge that generations of ingrates would arise who would either disown the favor, or refuse to apply its fruits?

Our Blessed Redeemer, in His infinite wisdom, could have, had He so willed it, made choice of an easy and efficient expedient to wrest us from eternal ruin. A simple act of His will, a word, one single tear, or a drop of His blood would have in the strictest justice sufficed to pay the debt that we owed to His eternal Father. But what would have sufficed to satisfy the justice of His Father, could not have met all the demands of His love for man. Our indebtedness to His Father only required of Him to affect our redemption, but His love constrained Him to be likewise our Brother, Master and Guide. Hence in life He has been our model, and in death not only our Redeemer, but also an everlasting source of grace to our souls. Yea, more, in His most Blessed life, and His most intense sufferings and most cruel death He has taught us how dear to Him is the salvation of our souls.

When a friend bestows on us a favor, impelled by the common instincts of our nature, we feel we owe him, at least in the utmost of grateful heart. His labor, his inconvenience, his pain in procuring and bestowing that favor, form a proportion by which it is enhanced in value, and accordingly raises the degrees of our gratitude. But were he willingly to forfeit his very life, to spill the last drop of his life-blood, to procure and bestow that favor, our gratitude should surpass all degrees; nay, we would be monsters, we would deserve to be placed outside the pale of humanity, did our hearts have less than the utmost gratitude, or our lips have aught but benediction for his name. But so far we have only supposed a case in which an equality exists between those favored and the benefactor. How, then, obeying simply the voice of the immortal part of our nature, can we have less than an eternal admiration and gratitude for the benefactor when the one whom he favors at such extreme expense is a poor criminal almost on the verge of execution, and He is not less but infinitely more than a king, yea, the King of Kings? Each one of us, dear people, is the favored criminal, and our Blessed Redeemer is the more than royal Benefactor. Have we not, therefore, acted a monstrous part in the ingratitude of our past

A MOST IMPORTANT DECISION

INVOLABILITY OF PRIESTS' KNOWLEDGE IS UPHELD IN CALIFORNIA COURT

The inviolability of communications between clergymen and their clients, even outside of the confessional, has been upheld in the Superior Court of California. A decision just rendered by Judge Wood of that court, sitting in Los Angeles, is one of great importance to Catholics throughout the country. The decision was occasioned by a subpoena issued to Mgr. Hartnett, of Los Angeles as witness in a divorce case. The priest's refusal to answer a question, on the ground that his knowledge was confidential, was upheld by the court.

Some years ago, a young man arrived from the East who was separated from his wife. He became acquainted with Monsignor Hartnett and requested him to write to his wife in the hope of effecting a reconciliation between them. At his request Monsignor wrote to the lady in question requesting her to come to California and assume the marital relations with her husband. A reply was received; the nature of which was communicated to her husband. Years passed and the parties remained apart—his wife evidently refusing to be reconciled. In order to protect his property interests, the husband entered suit for divorce and subpoenaed Monsignor Hartnett to appear as a witness.

PRIEST DECLINES TO ANSWER The case was tried before Judge Wood, who rendered a decision in the case. The question having been propounded as to the nature of the communication received from the estranged wife, Monsignor Hartnett declined to answer the question, stating that the principle involved was of a serious nature and that he did not feel justified in answering the question unless obliged to do so by the court. His relations with the woman referred to were of a confidential nature, such as the relations of Catholic priests with Catholic persons often are in similar circumstances. Mgr. Hartnett maintained that it was to the interest of the community that he be not obliged to answer the question. The statute in the case was read by the judge. J. Wiseman Macdonald, Esq., the lawyer for the Monsignor, maintained that the question should not be answered. He admitted that there was no question of Sacramental Confession, which undoubtedly was safeguarded by law, but strenuously maintained that there was question of another kind of confession which also should be held inviolate. The case was similar to the case of a man in jail, who in order to obtain relief acknowledged his guilt to some private individual in whom he had confidence.

NOT ACTING AS PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL The same statute which refers to confession was evidently the one which safeguarded communications to non Catholic ministers in dealing with their people. The judge, having inquired of Monsignor Hartnett if he, as a private individual, could not have obtained the information from the aforesaid lady, received the reply that as a private individual he would not have written her because he would not have expected a reply to his letter. It having been definitely stated to the court that the Church is opposed to divorce, and that in accordance with her ordinances a priest is supposed to do all in his power to effect a reconciliation between husband and wife when estranged, the judge rendered a decision sustaining Monsignor Hartnett in his contention. He thereby declared that confidential relations between priests and people, even though these relations have no reference to sacramental confession, are nevertheless to be regarded as sacred and inviolate.—St. Paul Bulletin.

THE WAIL OF A GENTLEMAN The Anglican Bishop Weston, of Zanzibar, Africa, complains to the Archbishop of Canterbury of conditions in the Anglican church. The letter is the plaint of a gentleman, the depths of whose character are sounded with sorrow at the awful contradictions in a sect which is vainly attempting to reconcile contradictions. In manner, the letter is that of a nobleman; in mind, it is an awful, though sad avowal, of a conscience whirled by the chaos that rumbles and tumbles and roars outside the "colossal calm" of the Catholic Church. Every word is stamped with solemn regret that the story of the church (?) to which he gave generous allegiance should manifest such wretched force in itself and such crippled agencies in its work. His first period to his superior shows that anger has no part in his course and seals the arraignment, with unmistakable candor. With the poor Bishop of Zanzibar it is a bitter question of principles and, not at all, a dispute with a person. His is the voice of a loyal heart, torn with contending forces, and not the concoction of a rebel. His is more a profound prayer for truth than even a philippic against falsehood or its hypocritical adherents. In hearing his heroic tirade against the illogical character of Anglicanism, we would naturally suppose that he would forthwith enter the haven of Catholicism, but there is a difference between conversion and

"Better late than never" is not so good a maxim as "Better never late."—Anon. A woman of honor should never suspect another of things she would not do herself.—Marguerite de Valois.

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conviction, the one a gift of God, the latter a gift of self. Seven Oxford men, a few years ago, gave to the Anglican church a work which was duly and gratefully received by Canterbury and its subordinates. The work is called "Foundations" and attempts to create harmony between principles of the English church and modern thought. The seven wise-aces, of course, agreed to differ, and so the book is a mosaic constituted of the diverging and discordant minds that did its fashioning. At this latest expression of Canterbury, the troubled soul of Zanzibar's Protestant Bishop directs its arguments. "The Foundations" says substantially that the Old Testament is not a history of what God did but what religious men thought He did. If this execrable fancy should stand, away with the Bible as an uninspired work, touching Heaven at no point and the human at every angle. Such a canon of criticism is a whole battery to devastate the inspired character of Holy Writ. How, in the name of all things sacred, could there be, after these words, even a fanciful reason for the existence of the Church of England? From turret to foundation stone, it was supposed to be constructed from Sacred Scripture, and here, with one fell blow, the heavenly text is destroyed as a merely human record that is not good history and even poor fiction. There would be no need to go farther and review in detail the sequence of such a judgment upon the merely earthly character of the Old Testament, as it would make ancient history in a day of the parading pomp of the English Church. Yet the seven wise men continue their work of destruction in declaring that at His baptism "Christ suddenly realized a vocation to be the last of the Jewish prophets." Here is Christ's Divinity eschewed! Here is a blasphemous evolution! A spasm of spirit is announced, instead of the Divine consistency and presence of the unchanged and unchangeable God, knowing His mind from the beginning and gloriously conserving it to the end of the ages, after and forevermore. The Catechism of the seven furthermore declares that Christ did not come into the world to die for us, but His death was the result of unavoidable circumstances—our dear Lord in direct speech to the contrary saying, "I lay down My life as I please, and I take it up as I please." Here the Anglicans, in one word, declare the redemption accidental and not from the Divine design of Love Eternal. The Church of England would have us thank Christ's murderers and not our Lord Himself, the willing Victim of Calvary. In continuation, hear this horrible thing from seven blasphemers: "Christ was mistaken in what He thought about His second advent, thinking that the world would not outlast St. John." As a consequence of all this, the seven held that Christ did not found a Church, nor ordain Sacraments, and that His sacred body was returned to corruption. Now, if all these diabolical tenets of this respectable English Church were so, whence may we ask, in simple truth, did His Grace of Canterbury get his authority, obtain the sacraments he offers to his dupes or receive power to preach a Christ that was but is not? O inconsistent humbugs of the brain coinage of a faithless tyrant—Henry the VIII—Catholic Columbian.

THE APOSTOLIC DELEGATE AT HOME "A man of simple and direct nature Monsignor Bonzano is the friend of all about him and delights in visiting and exchanging opinions with the laymen," observes Estension. "With a kindness of soul which is almost incredible in so busy a man, he has often answered sick calls when no one else was available; no one in his vicinity is in sorrow or distress without receiving an expression of sympathy. He believes in doing a little parochial work every day to keep the heart tender, and he encourages his auditors and secretary to take over a chaplaincy, or something involving active care of souls, as an antidote against the formalism which follows too much study and living in theology and canon law."—Sacred Heart Review.

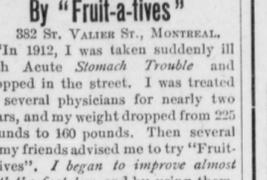
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