

THE APOSTLE OF LOVE.

SERMON BY REV. M. J. O'RIBDAN, Rector of St. Charles' Church, VIKERVILLE, MD.

St. John soared a foot on the wings of divine love, walked the streets of gold, drank of the river of life from the heavenly Jerusalem and looked into the face of Him Who dwelleth in light inaccessible. As Isaiah in the domain of poetry soared above other sacred writers, (Blair, the rhetorician, says above all profane writers, too) so St. John combined a simplicity of diction and a sublimity of thought unique in prose literature.

Consider the words, "All things were made by Him." Though creation is attributed to the Father, it is attributed to the Son as the exemplar cause. An architect before building has every detail of the plan in his mind. The Almighty Architect understanding himself from all eternity conceives the Eternal Word, at once the adequate expression of Himself, and the exemplar of all things possible.

"In Him was the life and the life was the light of men." As St. Thomas says, created things are perfect in proportion as they partake of the Divine life. They are the inanimate vegetable and the animal worlds and the intellectual life of which God spoke when He said, "Let us make man to our image and likeness." There is yet a higher degree in which man may resemble God. It is the Divine Word manifesting itself to the soul as the splendor of the Father, and the Holy Ghost dwelling therein as the splendor of the Father.

How appropriately then is St. John called the Divine because of the sublime truths which he grasped and conveyed in the simplest language. The elevated mind beholds in one principle and the more elevated the intellect the more simplified the form of knowledge, so that in God knowledge is not by sequence or inference or piecemeal, but one pure act beholding the past, the present, the future and the possible.

St. John's sublimity of thought was equalled only by the tenderness of his love. He was indeed the disciple whom Jesus loved and he absorbed the divine ardor from close contact with His Master. Witness that scene on the last evening of our Saviour's life on earth. To all his disciples He gave His own body and blood, but to John He gave his heart. Behold St. John gazing in silent love at that breaking heart and Jesus lost in ecstatic contemplation. Peter will unlock the gates of heaven to countless souls, but St. John unlocks the Heart of Jesus and enters into the Holy of Holies of His most intimate confidence.

No wall of separation divides St. John from Jesus. Both hearts have been melted into one and earth never witness a holier friendship than that of the disciple and the Master. What wonder then that John is called the Apostle of Love and says, "Love therefore is the fulfilling of the law." What wonder that when he was asked by the faithful at Athens to preach to them he said, "Little children love one another." And when they complained that this was not a sermon, he replied, "I kept this commandment they loved all the law. For what indeed is it that lifts us from the dust and grossness of earth to the purity and serenity of heaven? Not merely intellect nor science, nor genius, for Satan has more intellect than all the sages of antiquity, more knowledge than all the universities of Europe, but love of God and neighbor, the greatest of virtues because the fulfilling of the two greatest commandments.

St. John's love was like his mind, broad and universal. Great in his thoughts and great in his affections, he was originally an illiterate fisherman, but under the influence of his Master, his mind broadened and his heart expanded like the petals of the rose unfolding beneath the influence of the advancing sun. Let me give you an example to show how he was acquiring this breadth of mind and heart to meet the standard of the gospel and to love not only Jew, but every creature on whose countenance God has set His seal. A girl of twelve years has just died; sounds of funeral music issue from the house and the parents of the girl inform our Saviour that it is too late. But the hour of hopelessness is the hour of God. He approaches the bed of the innocent

victim. On one side weeping parents, on the other Jesus, St. John and two other apostles. Amid the awful silence and suspense, that voice in peaceful tones, indicative of Omnipotence, breaks the spell: "She is not dead, but asleep. Young girl, arise!" Here at the bed of death John learned that charity of Jesus whose message from his Father was a message of love. For God is charity, a charity whose object is not the brother Jew, but every man in pain and misery. Hence St. John does not speak of Jew, but of mankind, not of Palestine or Armenia, but of the world, because God is no respecter of persons and Christ died for all men.

The love of Christ discriminates not in favor of Jew or Gentile. Its vision stops not at the accidents of birth or position, of education or environment, but beneath the rag and the robes, in misfortune or success, in poverty or wealth, it sees a human being and brother, an image of God, created by the same Father and destined for the same supernatural end. What a lesson for us in our petty antipathies, our miserable narrowness, our racial, political and personal prejudices.

The ardor of his love was never chilled although put to severe tests. He was literally a martyr of love. The greatest happiness that a saint can have is to die for Jesus. For he purchases eternal happiness at a very low price. Hence the saint welcomes martyrdom. Listen to St. Paul: "Unhappy man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death." Listen to the youthful Paneratus in the broad arena of the Coliseum about to be torn by wild beasts. He prays: "Today, yes, to-day, oh, most blessed Lord, is the appointed day of Thy coming. Tarry no longer." And turning to the enraged and disappointed mob, he exclaims in tones of joyous expectation: "It was a panther that gave my father his crown. Perhaps the same will bestow the crown on me." Witness the martyrdom of St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch. He walks firmly down the arena in presence of eighty thousand people. "Where are the lions," he asks. "The man who fears God fears naught else." He is anxious to obtain his crown of martyrdom and blesses the day of his death and thanks his executioners.

St. John had loved enough to merit the crown of martyrdom. It seems that he is to obtain it. Alas he must suffer martyrdom, but cannot die. He is on the way to Rome no doubt to pay homage to St. Clement. He stopped outside the wall and on the Appian way almost in sight of the magnificent basilica which bears his name, he is plunged into a caldron of seething oil. Will it be true to its nature and give him the crown. The fiery mass refuses to burn his virginal flesh, and St. John is condemned to live. Condemned to live, will you say? Was not this his greatest consolation? Ah! it might be consolation for you and for me, but for a saint, for one who loved like St. John, it was a most bitter martyrdom. Notwithstanding his disappointment his love grew more ardent as years advanced. Like a majestic column left standing alone to commemorate the glory of bygone ages, he remained the same devoted disciple, preaching and practicing the gospel of love till called to the Heavenly Jerusalem which the glory of God hath enlightened and the lamp whereof is the Lamb.

A DISGUSTED PROTESTANT MINISTER.

The Rev. Charles Wellesley Spicer, of Portsmouth, O., has abandoned in disgust the Protestant Ministry and henceforth intends to devote his attention to the law. In a local paper he candidly sets forth the motives that prompt him to take this step. He frankly states that he is not satisfied with the position taken in recent times by the Protestant Church, which, according to him, is dominated by a spirit of materialism. Here is a synopsis of his reasons for leaving the pulpit, as given by a press dispatch: "In the statement he complains that 'this is an age of materialism,' and that the Church has been caught in the maelstrom of it. The Protestant Church lacks authority and direction, he says, in which respect it differentiates itself from the Catholic Church, which alone maintains the bold, aggressive spirit of the past, and which alone is gaining ground." For these reasons, and the additional one that Church work is unremunerative he has embraced the law. He invites the Church to take warning.

The Church over which the ex Rev. Spicer presided is the Christ Episcopal Church of Portsmouth, O., which we are informed "is the most fashionable and wealthy congregation in the city." It remains to be seen whether or not it will follow the advice of its former pastor and "take warning." That there are some Protestant congregations that are open to the charges made by Mr. Spicer is beyond doubt. The very designation "a wealthy and fashionable congregation" indicates the segregation of the rich and the cultured from the common people, to whom the Founder of Christianity and His disciples preached the Gospel. As we write we have in mind a Protestant Church on Fifth Avenue, of this city, which is essentially a rich man's club, the poor would as soon think of crossing its threshold as they would of forcing their way into the "Millionaire Club," at the entrance to Central Park.

Not far away from this exclusive Protestant Church stands St. Patrick's Cathedral, with its doors open all day long. If you enter you will find the poor as well as the rich kneeling in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. The presence of our Lord utterly annihilates the artificial distinctions that obtrude themselves so offensively in the rich Protestant church a few blocks away. Where these artificial distinctions exist it is not surprising that the spirit of materialism manifests itself, and that the spiritual is gradually relegated to the rear. The ex-Protestant clergyman whom we have quoted above is not the only Protestant that has been impressed by the difference between the temporizing

policy of the Protestant sects and the unbending attitude of the Catholic Church, when the essential truths of Christianity are in question. The difference is easily explained. The Church has received a divine commission. The Protestant sects have not. That is the reason they are constantly minimizing great Christian truths, even to the vanishing point.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

A DOLLAR FOR EACH ORPHAN.

A dollar for every orphan in the city. That was the philanthropic way in which Dr. Raymond Sauvage of New Orleans celebrated the removal of his drug store from one location to another. The money was given to the institutions which care for the orphans, and no discrimination was made, either as to sex, race or color. Each institution was notified of the offer and its officer made a certified statement of the number of children cared for by it. On presentation of this Dr. Sauvage paid a dollar for each child as there are orphans. The total expenditure was no less than \$2,000.

A USURER'S RESTITUTION.

The obligation of restoring ill-gotten goods rests lightly on the average guilty conscience. As the exception only proves the rule, the following instance may be of interest: Cardinal Prisco, Archbishop of Naples, has accepted the task of "restoring to the poor the money taken from them by the rich," imposed on him by the will of the late Filippo Florio, a rich eccentric bachelor, who died recently. He made his fortune of \$1,500,000 at never for the sons of wealthy parents, inclined to be rakes. When he was 50, Filippo thought he had taken enough revenge on the rich, whom he hated as oppressors of the poor and made a testament, naming the Cardinal, a certain notary and a lawyer as executors.

The bulk of the money goes to the Hospital for incurables; the addition of the new wing is provided in which only the poorest of the poor shall be lodged. Over each door the following sentence is to be set in letters of gold: "The money I took from the wealthy, who took it from the poor, shall now return to the poor."

Do not multiply your New Year resolutions. The making of many means the breaking of all. Single out your predominant fault. Struggle with it until you are master, and you will then have mastered the many.

DIOCESE OF HAMILTON.

ST. JOHN'S CLUB, A NEW ORGANIZATION IN CONNECTION WITH THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY.

Completely equipped and elegantly furnished are the rooms of the St. John's Club, located on the second floor of the Coffee Block, Upper Wyndham street. All the modern conveniences essential to wholesome, attractive recreation are there. On the left of the entrance to the club is the large assembly hall, which has been divided into three apartments. The first is the smoking room, which is furnished with easy chairs. The second apartment will be devoted to games, and the necessary tables and chairs have been purchased. The vest end of the room is set apart for billiards and pool, and very fine tables have been provided. Above the billiard room are located private rooms for the chaplain and secretary, and also a well equipped billiard room. On the right side of the hall is the reading room which is supplied with a good line of books, magazines, newspapers, and a piano. Next is the reception and music room, and here it is that the beautiful Bill piano purchased by the club is to be seen. At the end of the hall is the gymnasium, which is equipped with various appliances for physical culture. The club is the result of the efforts of the club in the course of a short time the services of a physical director can be secured. The rooms on the north side of the hall are finished with terra cotta painted walls, light green ceiling and dark green woodwork. On the south side of the hall is a large room, finished in a dark green inlaid paper, with a large red flower and beige board of red brick.

The furnishing of the rooms has been most carefully and completely planned, and all appointments are of the highest quality. The appearance at once of comfort and durability. The entire suite of rooms present a neat and attractive appearance, and are well adapted for the work of improvement and to be congenial to the work of the club. It is the intention to have a literary society in connection with the club. The officers are: Chaplain, Rev. J. C. Coffey, S. J.; President, Dr. F. T. Coghlan; Vice-President, Frank H. Hynes; Secretary, E. C. O'Brien; Treasurer, W. H. Bedford; Librarian, J. Sheridan; Steward, W. W. Arnold; House Committee, Mr. W. W. Arnold; Convener, J. A. Sullivan, Fred Gibson; Trustees, J. A. Sullivan, Fred Gibson; Secretary, Frank H. Hynes.

The opening of the club rooms on Tuesday evening was a most successful affair. A large number of the club's friends crowded the large assembly room. The President, Dr. F. T. Coghlan, presided at the meeting, and in his address of honor wore R. V. Father Connelly, S. J., pastor of the church of Our Lady, Rev. Fathers J. C. Coffey, S. J., and J. P. Theobald, S. J., the latter of the club, Rev. John C. Coffey, S. J., assisted the officers in receiving their guests. The club was opened by the Rev. Father Coghlan, who welcomed the large audience to the opening of St. John's Club. It remains to be seen whether or not it will follow the advice of its former pastor and "take warning." That there are some Protestant congregations that are open to the charges made by Mr. Spicer is beyond doubt. The very designation "a wealthy and fashionable congregation" indicates the segregation of the rich and the cultured from the common people, to whom the Founder of Christianity and His disciples preached the Gospel. As we write we have in mind a Protestant Church on Fifth Avenue, of this city, which is essentially a rich man's club, the poor would as soon think of crossing its threshold as they would of forcing their way into the "Millionaire Club," at the entrance to Central Park.

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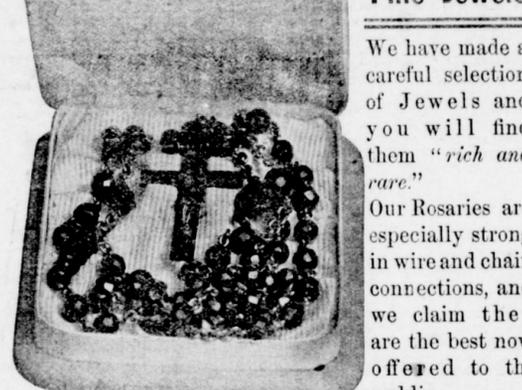


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DIED. O'MAHONEY—On Jan. 9th, of pneumonia, Daniel O'Mahoney, of the township of Townsend, Norfolk Co., farmer, aged sixty nine years. May his soul rest in peace!

STAFFORD—In Chicago, on Jan. 23d Mrs. John W. Stafford (Lalish Cole) second daughter of Mr. Frank H. Coles, of Hamilton, Ontario, died. May her soul rest in peace!

BARRETT—At Ottawa, on 21st inst., of kidney trouble, Mr. W. H. Barrett, barrister. May his soul rest in peace!

McDONNELL—At Killbuck, Ont., on Jan. 17th, 1906, Mr. Wm. McDonnell, aged eighty six years, a native of Kentville, Nova Scotia. May his soul rest in peace!

TOOHEY—At London, Ont., on Sunday Jan. 21, 1906, Miss Kate Toohey, daughter of the late John Toohey. May she rest in peace!

CASSIDY—At New Liskeard, Ont., on Jan. 21st, Margaret Mary Anthony, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Cassidy. May her soul rest in peace!

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