

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

By Rev. M. FOSSAERT

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

GOOD AND BAD FRUITS

"Every tree that bringeth forth good fruit, shall be cut down and shall be cast into the fire." We read these words of our Saviour's in today's gospel, and they contain condemnation not only of those who have had dispositions, but also of those who show no zeal for good, and fail to do what they can in the service of God.

What is true of individuals is true also of communities. Wherever lukewarmness and religious indifference prevail, wherever private and public worship are neither altogether neglected or performed in a slovenly and irreverent manner, wherever no interest is taken in the word of God and the Sacraments are seldom received, there every kind of ungodly and debauchery will occur.

Here again we find that what is true of individuals is true also of communities. Where a good spirit prevails and gains influence, bad habits and customs tend to vanish. Where true piety and fear of the Lord are increasing, and where people show zeal in attending public worship, in prayer, in frequenting the Sacraments, etc., immorality and vice disappear, and Christian honesty and morality prevail.

Every well-disposed person amongst us no doubt wishes with all his heart that all sins and vices, as well as all bad habits, could be banished from our midst. Let us therefore all make this our aim, and all work together these in authority, parents, as well as young people; let us do our best to promote a good spirit and an interest in whatever raises and benefits our community in the sight of God and men.

"I have sometimes heard it said that the Celt was more Catholic than the Pope. I took the statement to be Celtism. But the other day I came upon a case in which the Irishman was actually a surer test of the faith than all the Supreme Pontiffs. Here is the fact as it happened in one of the Catholic hospitals at St. Louis.

"A poor Greek had been carried all mangled and torn from a mining accident into the hospital. When the chaplain came to his bedside, the following conversation ensued: 'Are you a Catholic?' (in English and Greek.) 'I am (in Greek.) 'Are you a Greek Catholic or a Roman Catholic?' 'I am a Catholic and I am a Greek. This sounded bad to the chaplain. 'Do you believe as the Pope of Rome believes?' 'I believe as all the Popes do. As the Greeks often call their priest Popes, this reply was worse. 'The chaplain was about to retire, not being able just then to think of any other simple test of the faith, when the Greek, seeing him moving away, rose to his elbows and called after him: 'I am a Catholic like an Irishman.' That was conclusive.

INDIGESTION AND CONSTIPATION

Quickly Relieved By "Fruit-a-tives"

"I suffered for many years with terrible Indigestion and Constipation. A neighbor advised me to try 'Fruit-a-tives'. I did so and to the surprise of my doctor, I began to improve and he advised me to go on with 'Fruit-a-tives'."

The glad priest administered all the sacraments, and the Greek's "going off" was full of consolation.

HUGHEY CAMPBELL'S CONVERSION

"A few weeks ago the writer of this reminiscence happened to pass, on a ferry boat, a big, rusty looking steamer crusted over with salt. From the tugboats along side of it, a swarm of young fellows in the uniform of U. S. N. were climbing aboard. At the ferry landing another batch was in ranks awaiting the tender—and the writer thought of old Hughey Campbell.

Hughey was one of the three or four constant attendants at daily Mass in a little town in the north of Ireland. He was around eighty years of age, and this old professor was the little boy who served Mass—a pair of friends, though I was young and Hughey was seventy-two. Hughey was a pensioner; had served twenty-one years in the British Army when a young man. He had a scar on his hand from a wound which he received at the battle of Waterloo.

"He was a Scotchman and served in the 92nd Highlanders. 'Once I asked him, 'Hughey, what made you become a Catholic? Was it Rosy?' 'No indeed, Master James—I'll tell you, and I never told anybody else. I was born and bred a black Presbyterian; an' I hated the Papishes. Well, when the 92nd got orders to embark for the Peninsula we went to Liverpool; an' it was a dark, wet, coull' mornin', when we were standin' on the dock waiting to go on the troop ship. We got four 'baps' apiece. (Bap is Scotch for a small flat loaf.) And the quartermaster said that they would have to do us till we got through the Bay of Biskay.

"Then a poor Irish woman came along with four children, and says she, 'For the love of God give me some bread for these starvin' wenas.' I pulled round my knapsack, and gave her two baps. Jock laughed at me and said: 'Mind, you needn't ask any o' mine, when you run short.' And the woman fell on her knees in the gutter and said, 'May the Mother of God bring you safe home.' 'Well, Master James, every time we were in battle, I could hear through all the firin' the words, 'May the Mother of God bring you safe home.' And she did, an' that's what made me turn Catholic."

"For many years, in the little churchyard, where he used to sit on a tombstone waiting for Father Slane to appear for 'Mass', the grass has been growing green over all that was mortal of Hughey; and there is no presumption in feeling assured that the Mother of God has brought him safe home."—R. C. Gleener in Catholic Columbian.

CONVERTED BY "ACCIDENT"

GOD'S GRACE WORKS IN PECULIAR WAY

One of the most unusual conversions that has ever happened in Denver brought a man into the Catholic Church recently. If anybody asked him how he happened to turn Catholic, he would be compelled to answer: "By accident." But the case shows that many persons can be won by getting over our timidity in talking about religion. Father Joseph J. Gunn, C.S.S.R., the missionary, was called to a hospital to hear the confession of a Catholic who had not received the sacrament in years. The clergyman misunderstood the directions and got to the wrong bed side. He sat down and began to talk earnestly to a man about the necessity of repentance.

"It is ten or fifteen years since you have been to confession, isn't it?" he asked. "Longer than that," said the patient. "Perhaps twenty-five or thirty years?" "Longer than that." "Maybe you have never been to confession?" "No, I haven't."

Then the priest realized that he had made a mistake; that the man was not a Catholic who had sinned for him. "Are you baptized?" said the priest.

"No I'm not," said the patient. The priest apologized, told of the mistake that had been made and went to find the man who had sent for him.

Two weeks later, the non-Catholic sent for the priest. "I have been doing a good deal of thinking as a result of what you said to me," declared the patient. "I would like to look into what your Church teaches."

The priest, surprised and delighted furnished the man with several good popular treatises on Catholicity, including Cardinal Gibbons' "Faith of Our Fathers" and a catechism. A week later, he returned to see the man. The patient had learned the catechism from cover to cover. The priest could not puzzle him in any question. The man was convinced that Catholicity is the only true religion of Jesus Christ and was brought into the Church.

A rather odd thing about the conversion is what most forcibly appealed to the man as a mark of genuine truth in Catholicity. It was not infallibility, the Real Presence, confession or one of the other deeper truths that so often swing people into the Church, but the fact that Catholics adhere to the doctrine of St. Paul that women cannot occupy our pulpits.

Infrequently, however, as this doctrine is brought up to day as one of the outstanding differences between Catholicity and Protestantism, it is a fact of Catholic history that the Fathers of the Church often used it in showing that certain heresies of the early Church were heresies. Apostolic Christianity, the Fathers proved, had no women preachers or priests.—Denver Register.

THE BIBLE AND ITS AUTHOR

In a recent talk on "The Bible and its Author," Rev. Walter Drum, S. J., said in part:

"We have shown that the Protestant accepts the Bible, when he accepts it, by a mere emotional act of faith. His reason does not enter into this act of faith. If it did, he would realize how hopelessly unreasonable is the Protestant position in regard to the Bible as God's own word. Who tells the Protestant that the Bible is God's own word? No one. No one, unless the Catholic Church or Martin Luther. If the Protestant reasons about the thing at all, he has to come to one of those two conclusions. He believes in the inspiration of Scripture either because the Catholic Church had this belief before Protestantism began, and Protestantism borrowed the belief from the Church; or because Martin Luther said that the Bible was God's word, and all Protestants accepted the infallibility of Martin Luther in preference to the infallibility of the teaching body established by Christ."

"This is the opinion of that loyal Presbyterian, Dr. Dods, Professor of New College, Edinburgh, in his Dross Lectures, delivered at Lake Forest College, the stronghold of Presbyterianism in the Middle West. Dr. Dods says 'If you ask a Protestant why he believes that just these books bound up together in his Bible are canonical, and neither more nor fewer, I fear that 99 Protestants out of 100 could give no answer that would satisfy a reasonable man. The Protestant scorns the 'Romanist,' because he relies on the authority of the Church, but he cannot tell you on what authority he himself relies. The Protestant watchword is the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible; but how many Protestants are there who could make it quite clear that within the boards of their Bible they have the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible? This is plain, honest speech from a Protestant leader. He admits that Protestants cannot give a reason for the faith that is in them. There is no reason for that faith. That faith is not of the reason at all; it is entirely an emotional acceptance of that which reason makes no attempt to establish. At best, it is reasoning as one of the Two Gentlemen of Verona is made by Shakespeare's discursive-ly to dub of the feminine gender: I have no other but a woman's reason: I think it so, because I think it so."

"And how does Professor Dods, the great Scripture scholar satisfy his reason as to the nature and content of the Bible? By Calvin's test. God reveals to the reader of the Bible that this is the Bible: 'The Protestant accepts the Scripture as the Word of God, because God tells him so.' The Protestant believes it to be the Word of God, because through it God has spoken to him in such sort as to convince him that it is God who here speaks."

"Out upon such an assumption! It has led to the blasphemous of Protestant professors in our great universities. Take Yale as an instance. It has its school for Biblical surgery. In the clinical department of that school is one Dr. Torrey, a Baptist. He is Yale's Professor of Evangelicalism or the Evisceration of the Gospels. At first he was satisfied to vilify the Gospels. Now he has taken up Acts. Harvard publishes his laboratory musings. He thinks he has discovered just where Luke erred in Acts. The original of the first part of Acts, thinks this wisacre, was a Palestinian Aramaic. Luke did not know Palestinian Aramaic; he had not studied at Yale; he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and not by the infallible Torrey. So Luke mistranslated his document. And for some nineteen hundred years the Church has never been aware of this ignorance of Luke, and of this slipshod work that Yale's blasphemous Baptist assigns to the Holy Spirit. At last the world is led true. Torrey has got back to the original Aramaic of St. Luke's source. He has translated that Aramaic into Greek. And now, if we prostitute our reasons down to the low grade of Yale's School for the Dissection of the Gospel, we may sit back in a Morris chair, and blow out rings of smoke in dainty pursuit of each other, the while we congratulate ourselves in knowing what Luke should have written in Acts if he had not been misled by God, the Author of Sacred Scripture."

"In all the Protestant sects the leaders of thought have gone the same way of reading all manner of stupidities into the Bible. Dr. Sunday, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford, Anglican Canon of Christ Church, says that 'The Song of Songs is just an idyll of faithful human love, and nothing more. . . . What are we to say of such a book? There can be no question of inspiration.' He admits the beautiful Canticles into the canon of Scripture merely to show that nothing human is foreign to the Bible. He throws out Judith and Tobias and Esther as pure romance. And yet he is doing just what Dr. Dods allows any Protestant to do with the Bible.—St. Paul Bulletin.

"Empires and kings went to dust in the recent War which devastated Europe, yet a malignant class of people in the newly liberated countries instead of turning to democracy have turned to revolution and a denial of order. Whether can we turn to save civilization from burning bombs thrown by hands we cannot identify? There is one force and only one force that can save civilization—that is the Church. Revolution seems imminent in this country, but the revolution of today is a new kind. It is a revolution against property. Only the Church, by teaching the workers of various industries to co-operate, can prevent it."—Eureka Cookran at Silver Jubilee Celebration of Rev. Patrick Cherry, Brooklyn, N. Y.

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