

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

CHRISTMAS

THE DIVINE SOCIALIST

"Of His fulness we all have received," (John 1, 16.)

Socialism, my dear brethren, can never be satisfied and work out its end till the infinite joins hands with it and helps it—the infinite in means and in power; in means, because division, repeated division of wealth, will soon and anything except the infinite; and in power, that we may be made heirs and lawful possessors of what it grants us. Anything less than the infinite will not do. It would come to an end some time, and misery and want would reassert themselves.

My dear brethren, this is not all fanciful and imaginary, for Christmas tells us of the coming of such a One—One that is infinite in means and in power: "Christ Jesus, Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself, being made in the likeness of men." (Phil. II. 6, 7.)

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us" (John 1, 14), that He might join hands with us and help us in our yearnings and our wants. It is no myth or fable that the Son of God became man, was born of the Virgin Mary for our sakes and for our salvation. Born in Bethlehem one thousand nine hundred years ago. He was reared as a poor man's child at Nazareth, and then went about evangelizing and doing good, curing the sick, casting out evil spirits, and even raising the dead to life.

He had taught us how to live by the example of His own blameless, spotless life, and then He distributed His infinite riches and merits amongst us, giving us all that we need to lead a holy life here in this world, and to secure eternal life in the kingdom of His Father. You know how He did this. Man had lost through his own disobedience all the good that God had given him, and Christ purchased for us far more than we had lost. He purchased for us forgiveness, faith, graces, heaven, at the price of His own most Precious Blood. Infinite in means and power though He had amongst us.

Alas! how many of us have squandered what He gave us! We are poor and destitute, without the friendship and the grace of God, and we cry in our misery for relief. Here is the wonderful part of the infinite. He had distributed all that He had amongst us at the Redemption. Yes, and all men could have as much as they would, and still the infinite would not run short. So our Lord and Saviour renews the distribution whenever we need it. Infinite in power, infinite in riches, there is always plenty for those who pray for it. And to crown His bounty and goodness, He even distributes His own Body and Blood to be the food and nourishment of our souls—free and without cost to all that approach to receive it, as often as we wish, and the oftener we come the more pleased He is. Jesus Christ unites Himself with us. Then, indeed, we share the riches of the Infinite One. From that infinite source we pay the Almighty Father homage and adoration; we pay Him worthy thanks for all His benefits; we pay Him the price of our ransom to free us from our sins; we pay Him full value for all the graces that we need. Thus are the poor and the destitute raised up and enriched by their Saviour. This is the Divine Socialism of Jesus Christ.

Yet, as when He came on earth, He was not recognized—"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not"—(John 1, 11)—so now the greater part of the world know Him not. They have forgotten that there is another world beyond this, another life that will last for ever. They are clamouring for riches and comfort and equality here, but never a thought for the world to come. The kingdom of heaven is offered them; they answer by crying out for so much a year. Far more than they are asking for or dreaming of has been done for them, and they will not see it or receive it: like the Jews, who were always desiring and praying for the Messiah, and when He came they crucified Him.

How much have we to thank God for, my dear brethren, that we have the faith and can recognize the Saviour when He comes! "But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God." (John 1, 12) And at Christmas-time our hearts are glad to give a welcome to our Lord. We know that all that happened at His Birth was for our sakes: the poverty, the homelessness, the distress, and anxiety seeking for a shelter of Joseph and Mary—and she brought forth her first-born Son and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke II. 7) Did not Christ Jesus make Himself one of us, and the poorest of us? We hasten, then, to adore Him, to give Him that homage which is His, as King of kings and Lord of lords. Though He did come so humbly, faith tells us who He is. This is the Infinite One come down from heaven to be one of us, stripped of His outward glory for our sakes, to fulfil all our yearnings, to distribute all His graces and blessings amongst us, to leave us as we are, and to make Himself our daily Bread, so that we cannot help but know and remember whence is our strength, our health, our life.

If He has thus bestowed all that He has, all that He is, upon us, we in return, with all the fervour and generosity of our heart, should offer Him our will and our love. Our will

we offer, so that we may be really one with Him—the same aims, objects, and interests. And we beg of Him to accept our grateful love for all that He has given us—not only for His mercies and graces and care of us, but for His own Blessed Body and Blood that have purified and nourished us so frequently. Oh, poor indeed we should be without Him, of whose "fulness we all have received." "Being rich, He became poor for your sakes; that through His poverty you might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.)

A DESIRE

O, to have dwelt in Bethlehem When the star of the Lord shone bright! To have sheltered the holy wanderers On that blessed Christmas night; To have kissed the tender wayward feet Of the Mother undefiled, And, with reverent wonder and deep delight, To have tendered the Holy Child!

For the sake of the Child divine? Are there no wandering Pilgrims now, To thy heart and thy home to take? And are there no mothers whose weary hearts You can comfort for Mary's sake?

O to have knelt at Jesus' feet, And to have learnt this heavenly lore!

To have listened the gentle lessons He taught On the mountain, and sea, and shore! While the rich and the mighty knew Him not,

To have meekly done His will—Hush! for the worldly reject Him yet,

You can serve and love Him still. Time cannot silence His mighty words, And though ages have fled away, His gentle accents of love divine Speak to your soul today.

O to have soled the weeping one, Who the righteous dared despise! To have tenderly bound up her scattered hair,

And have dried her tearful eyes! Hush! there are broken hearts to soothe, And patient tears to dry,

While Magdalen prays for you and them, From her home in the starry sky.

O to have followed the mournful way Of those faithful few forlorn! And grace, beyond even an angel's hope,

The Cross for our Lord has borne! To have shared in His tender mother's grief,

To have lived at Mary's side, To have loved as a child in her home, and then In her loving care have died?

Hush! and with reverent sorrow still, Mary's great anguish share; And learn, for the sake of her Son divine,

Thy cross, like His, to bear. The sorrows that weigh on thy soul unite With those which thy Lord has borne, And Mary will comfort thy dying hour,

Nor leave thy soul forlorn. O to have seen what we now adore, And, though veiled to faithless sight, To have knelt, in the form that Jesus wore,

The Lord of Life and Light! Hush! for He dwells among us still, And a grace can yet be thine, Which the scoffer and doubter can never know—

The Presence of the Divine. Jesus is with His children yet, For His word can never deceive; Go where His lowly altars rise And worship and believe.

—ADELAIDE A. PROCTER

CHRISTMAS

We earnestly pray God that the peace of Bethlehem may descend upon all, so that the abiding joy which fellowship with Christ alone can produce may be with them like a sweet aroma.

The world, during these last years, has been so greatly distraught by the sickening sight of a war calling for the hecatombs of victims and by the distressing spectacle of the ravages of the influenza epidemic—practically beyond the control of science—that men are eagerly turning in every direction to find props to bolster up their confidence in human nature on the one hand, and on the other to give them assurance of the sufficiency of human science.

But only those who have had the wisdom to look to Christ for courage, confidence and consolation have been able to feel the tranquillity which in times like ours is absolutely necessary. Those who have reposed on the power of earthly princes have found that it was but a fragile support. Those who thought that modern science could perform miracles are sadly disillusioned.

Now, Christ comes to us on Christmas Day bringing peace and healing. Kneeling at the lowly crib, we can almost hear the words of the angelic choirs announcing "peace on earth to men of good-will." Looking upon the Babe "who was to take away our

sins," we feel that He is the great Physician of the world for all ages.

Hence, those whom the war has affected in the most vulnerable spot—the heart—will find consolation, first daughter of peace, in the Child whose words are full of life and promise. Suffering more than any one of us, He teaches us to be brave and resigned—brave, because He faced the hard task set Him by His Father without complaints or whinpering; resigned, because He acted on His knowledge that everything would turn out for the best eventually.

Then, too, those who have felt the sharp lash of the influenza will turn to the Babe for help. He came to save the world from sin, which after all is the only real malady. By taking our infirmities on Himself on that first Christmas morn, He showed us how we can make everything conspire for the good of our soul, which ought to be first, foremost and constant concern of our lives. Christ-mas proves to us that Christ is still living in His Church, "going about doing good" as in His earthly days. But we must throw in our lot with Him if we want His help. He must be our Leader in the things we believe and in the things we do.—Rosary Magazine.

LESSONS OF THE INFLUENZA

The Spanish influenza, which took such a large toll of victims not only in our land but in practically every country of the world, was certainly permitted by Almighty God for some very definite purpose. Of course, lacking divine revelation, we can never hope to know what this purpose was precisely, but we are permitted to try to learn from the things around us what it may have been.

Some would tell us that it was a scourge sent by God to punish a people that had turned from Him to follow their own desires. Like Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus, we had to be struck down in order to see the workings of God about us. All punishments of God are medicinal—intended to cure us of spiritual maladies, and able, if rightly accepted to restore health to the soul. Undoubtedly, then, this epidemic, just as the war, has brought many a soul back to God from the unhealthy abodes in which it was content to live.

But there may be a deeper reason for this visitation. We all know with what assurance and self-sufficiency a great part of the medical profession has been insisting on the finality of science. These scientists assure us that there is nothing whatever within their own domain which can escape their microscopes and stethoscopes. They deny the existence of the immortal soul because in their surgical operations they have never come across it. If God is everywhere, especially in the hearts of believers, why is it, they ask, that they have never found any traces of His existence and abiding Presence? No, no, religion is impossible—afarce, an imposition on our intellect. It may be good enough for the ignorant, but its postulates can never be accepted by the learned scientific world.

Whilst such blasphemous talk was being indulged in freely by the medical profession, every honest doctor was compelled to admit that he knew nothing about it—that no two cases were just the same. Every kind of experiment was tried, many new serums were invented—but the influenza took its own course! The results have been that many doctors have had their eyes opened to the fact that there is at least one thing about which they know nothing. They may even begin to suspect that there may be a great many more.—Rosary Magazine.

POWER OF GOOD EXAMPLE

LAW AND ORDER LEAGUE HEAD ON ARCHBISHOP IRELAND'S WORK FOR TEMPERANCE

"I started traveling for a wholesale house in Chicago selling goods on the road in 1871. It was customary at that time for salesmen to treat their customers to intoxicating liquor and I did that myself in a small degree.

In 1873 I attended a meeting held in Appleton, Wis., under the auspices of the W. G. T. U., and signed the pledge. These women put in their pledge card, and I have not taken a glass of cider since 1873. I have sold a great many different nationalities' goods, both in Chicago and on the road; have had to do with men who drank, but I have never found it necessary since I signed the pledge to offer a man intoxicating liquor or to take it myself, and I know that it is possible to be a successful salesman on the road and not treat or drink intoxicating liquor.

I also know, to some extent, what Archbishop Ireland had to go through in the early days when he advocated total abstinence, and it was by such work as that of the Archbishop that public sentiment in this country has changed and is today more strongly opposed to intoxicating liquor as a beverage than ever in the history of this country.

The good done by Archbishop Ireland will never be known in this world, eternity alone will tell the story; but I think the older we grow the more we recognize what it means to be of service to the person—ones

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boy or one girl, one man or one woman—and when a man lives as Archbishop Ireland did and takes the position that he did on this great question is not only of the greatest service to the Catholics but to the Protestants and to members of all religious denominations. His was a national character and he was big enough and broad enough to have great influence in the nation. Thank God for such men as Archbishop Ireland.

"Because a man has gone to a better world is no reason why his influence does not remain and, if anything, as the years go by become stronger and a greater force in the history of his people and of the whole nation, and a man cannot think of such men as Archbishop Ireland without recognizing the great influence for the future that such lives exert."

Yours very truly,

"ARTHUR BURRAGE FARWELL, President, Chicago Law and Order League."

ST. PAUL A CATHOLIC

It has ever been a subject of dispute between Catholics and Protestants whether the sacraments of the New Testament are to be considered as instruments or merely as symbols of grace. Catholics maintain that they are real instruments of grace as actions of Christ. In all the sacraments, Christ, according to Catholic conception, is the chief operator, continuing through them the redemption of the world. When a priest baptizes, for instance, it is Christ Who baptizes through a visible representative; it is Christ who through the washing of the body produces the cleansing and regeneration of the soul. According to Protestant notions the sacraments are mere symbols or ceremonies of initiation without any grace—producing no efficacy whatsoever.

Now it had been a common persuasion among Protestants that this their view had the endorsement of St. Paul. St. Paul was celebrated by them as the champion of Protestantism. Yes, this was, a fond notion of our separated brethren. But as so many other fond notions are undergoing a change in this remarkable time, so also the Protestant opinion about St. Paul's Protestantism.

For a corroboration of this statement we quote some Protestant authorities from an article in the Fortnightly Review of November 1917. It is pasted over the testimonies of German Lutherans because at this time they are not likely to have much weight with American readers, we select the following quotations from English scholars: Dr. Kiersepp Lake says in his work 'The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul' (p. 385): "Baptism is for St. Paul and his readers universally and unquestionably accepted as a 'sacrament' or sacrament which works ex opere operato (through inherent efficacy); and from the unhesitating manner in which St. Paul uses this fact as a basis for argument, as if it were a point on which Christian opinion did not vary, it would seem as though his sacramental teaching is central in primitive Christianity to which the Roman Empire began to be converted." Of the Eucharistic teaching in I Cor. 10:11 Dr. Lake says: "It is impossible to pretend to ignore that much of controversy between Catholic and Protestant theologians has found its centre in the doctrine of the Eucharist, and the latter have appealed to primitive Christianity to support their views. From their point of view the appeal fails, the Catholic doctrine is much more nearly primitive than the Protestant."

Here is another testimony from Prof. H. T. Andrews, in the Exposition (November 1916): "To St. Paul the bread and wine of the Eucharist are not merely emblems of the sacrifice that was once offered for the sins of the world; they are the vehicles by means of which the virtues of the sacrifice are appropriated by the participants." And again: "The sacramental interpretation of St. Paul has won a decisive victory, and the Symbolic school has been driven off the field." To which Maurice Jones, in Exposition (July, 1918) assents and therefrom draws a conclusion: "It is now becoming very generally recognized that St. Paul was a thorough-going Sacramentalist."

Whether this is a matter for gratification or not depends

whether we believe, with the advanced critic that St. Paul's Sacramentalism was due to the influence of Mystery Religion upon him, or whether we hold to the view that it was inherent in the religion of Christ and the Apostles." In other words: for those who accept the whole New Testament as the word of God the Catholic belief concerning the Sacraments is the only tenable one.

One more witness. Dr. McClune says: "Thinking men must choose between the rational critic and the Church. Protestant compromise is growing increasingly difficult. As regards the Sacraments and the New Testament, men may take both or neither, but not one. As regards our Lord, they may either accept Him or reject him. But if they accept Him they must submit to the Church He founded, believe her doctrine and live her life. And that doctrine and that life are now, as always, sacramental."—The Guardian.

sufficient volume to accomplish such a result, even if the hero of the hour in that country be a willing candidate. Should such an event come to pass, and the destinies of the French nation be given the same phenomenal guidance that the Allied troops have enjoyed, there will be cause for the French people to chant a lasting Te Deum, a hymn of perennial and grateful thanksgiving.—Catholic Transcript.

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SITUATION

The story of how Jerusalem was given over by the Arabs, not to General Allenby, but to two regimental cooks was told by Major Allen Bourgoyne at a recent gathering of the Royal Photographic Society. It appears that the two men had been sent out to get salad for officers of their company, and that to these two British Tommies the Arabs came and, with wild gesticulations, handed them the keys of Jerusalem. The astonishment of the men add to the comedy of a situation worthy of Gilbert and Sullivan. One of the cooks asked what he was supposed to do with the "blinkin' city."

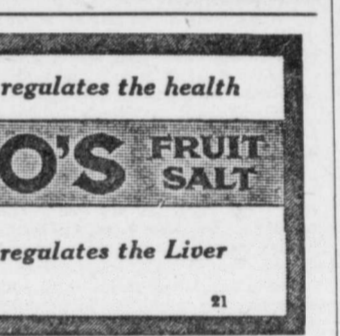
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