

SIX

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

CHRIST'S GIFTS TO US

"And they asked him, and said to him: Why then dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet John answered them, saying: I baptize with water; but there hath come one in the midst of you, whom you know not." John 1, 25, 26.

God created man to His own image and likeness. In other words, He made man to resemble Himself in some respects. Now, in order that any one or any thing resemble another person or another thing, it is necessary that they possess something in common—something that need not be the same in each, but at least approaching the same. God, therefore, gave us something like unto Himself, in order that we be made to His likeness. These gifts from God to man are principally in the soul—the greatest of them being intelligence and will. Had not God given us these faculties or powers, we could never have acquired them. They must come only from God; no other being, however great, can create them or communicate them. They are endowments that only a pure spirit like God Himself can give us. The angels could not impart them to us; they, though they are spirits, have not the power to do so. An infinitely perfect spirit can give them to us, and no other. This pure spirit, infinitely perfect, is God.

But, though we may, for the sake of clearness and by way of explanation, speak of how we came to have these great faculties, our intention is to assert that we have them, in order to use this fact to strengthen an argument we intend to adduce.

Since we possess these great powers, we must admit that God can communicate them. In fact, no one following any rational school of philosophy or theology will deny it. It does not detract from God, for He is infinite. It does not conflict with any dictates of reason, but conforms to all of them. It excites our admiration to think that God has been so generous to us, and by these gifts has elevated us far higher than so many other beings around us. We would rather be what we are than something inferior. Many forget this great blessing or do not heed it, but their attitude does not destroy it nor minimize it.

If God has given us the faculties that make us like unto Himself—nay, almost has seemed to share His spiritual powers with us—we can deny that He can give us even more, or different gifts? There is nothing to limit Him, nothing to prevent Him, if He so desires. And there is no doubt that, if a reason exists, He does this. If some one possesses a gift that appears above the ordinary, nay, is even endowed with a power that seems supernatural, gives a reason for it, and uses it only for right ends, must man necessarily conclude that he is not sincere, or is under the power of Satan? Certainly there is no reason why man should do so. It was the method of the scribes and Pharisees, and Christ showed forth their insincerity and vanity. But even if some one claims to have a gift that does not appear to the human eye to be above any ordinary gift, and does not in its effects manifest anything extraordinary, we should not then deny its existence, if the subject has a reason for it, and is honest and just. The history of the human race, since its inception, shows us how God has endowed some individuals with extraordinary powers in order to carry out a particular work, or to effect something for the good of the whole or of a part of humanity.

We can see an exemplification of all this in today's Gospel. Some Pharisees were sent to St. John the Baptist to ask him who he might be. He, in all his humility, answered their question truthfully. Then, following their usual method, they began to try to ensnare him, asking him, in substance, how he could baptize, if he were only a "voice crying in the wilderness" and not Christ, nor Elias, nor one of the prophets. In reply he practically indicated to them through whose power, or in whose name, he did it. No doubt, they did not believe him, and considered him an impostor. But had they been in good faith, and had they would have understood the reason for St. John's acts. He was the precursor of the Lord; he had been sanctified by Christ even before his birth, and God had given him the power necessary to fulfill his mission.

But has God ceased to do such things? Catholics can answer this question for themselves, for they reap the benefit of His continuance of it every day of their lives. He has given men power to do the greatest of wonders—to sanctify, to enrich, to make of people fit subjects for the kingdom of heaven. Consider the power He has given to bishops and priests—to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, to forgive people their sins, to administer to them the other sacraments through which grace continually flows into their souls. Considering the results that are brought about in the souls of the faithful, it is impossible to enumerate the blessings and powers God gives to man to execute in His name.

The unbelieving Pharisees of old, like the Pharisees of old, to look with scorn upon our cere-

monies. They ridicule us by word and pen, and make a little of our forms of worship, but like St. John the Baptist, we well might answer that we, of ourselves, are nothing, but God worketh in us, or we work through the wonderful power He gives us, for the sake of humanity; or, like St. Paul, we might answer that we live, not we, but Christ liveth in us.

It is no argument to say that God alone can forgive sins. Any one using it is manifesting very open ignorance, for what God can do Himself, He can give the power to man to do for Him in His name, or as His agent. It would be limiting the power of God to argue otherwise. Then, also, those who say this are contradicting themselves, for they admit that their sins can be forgiven, and they generally arrive at the conclusion that they certainly are forgiven, but who gives them this knowledge? They will probably answer—"God, through the Scriptures." We need only say, then, that God, also through the Scriptures, gives power to man to forgive sins. But God does not tell them each time that their sins are forgiven them. This would be required in order for them to substantiate their belief.

But we do not let the arguments of the ignorant disturb us. We have faith, a faith that saves, for in following it out we do all that God asks of us. This faith extends to God Himself and His ministers or representatives. And it does not allow us to think of what might have been, but what in reality is. And it is well for us that it is so, for otherwise we would be blown around by every wind of doctrine. Christ said to His apostles that they who hear them hear Him. We have successors; let us hear them and be guided by them, for they will lead us to eternal life.

CATHOLICS IN REALM OF SCIENCE

A REFUTATION OF SOME STUPID FALSEHOODS

By Sir Bertram Windle, F. R. S., Sc. D., M. D., LL. D.

The stupid and belated falsehood that Religion and Science, and more especially the Catholic Religion and Science, are in fundamental and perpetual opposition to one another still lingers and flourishes on literary rubbish-heaps, although really instructed persons have long learned its inaccuracy.

Mr. Tabrum's book on the "Religious Beliefs of Scientists" which, however, only refers to those of the British Isles, and the more recent work in two volumes by Antonin Eymieu, "La Part des Croquants dans les Progres de la Science au XIXe Siecle," which embraces all nations sufficiently, show that materialism and agnosticism, not to say atheism, have been attributed to a minority—not, as is so often boasted by ignorant writers, a majority of scientific workers, even in the heyday, now at vespers, of materialism.

Let us merely name the late Lord Kelvin and Michael Faraday as men of the highest standing in science and convinced Christians though not Catholics. But it is to call attention, and, though it is impossible to mention a tithe of those who deserve it, to have obtained a place on "fame's eternal beed-roll," it may be well to remind our readers of a very few of the eminent men, without whose work science could hardly be said to exist, who were firm adherents of the Household of Faith.

THE TRUTH ABOUT GALILEO

Let us commence with astronomers, since Galileo is the usual stone flung by the ignorant at our religion. Galileo was a great but rather foolish person who, having first denounced, afterwards upheld the views of a much greater man, Copernicus (1473-1553), a priest and a canon and the real hero of the heliocentric controversy, although the first person amongst modern writers who sustained the thesis that the earth revolved around the sun was Cardinal Nicolas de Cusa (1401-1464). As to Galileo (1564-1642), it may be as well to note, having regard to the ignorant falsehoods constantly appearing on the subject, that he died in his own house, not in the prisons of the Inquisition; after receiving the blessing of the reigning Pontiff, and therefore not under sentence of excommunication; and that he was buried in his parish church and not in unconsecrated ground.

Le Verrier (1811-1877) co-discoverer of the planet Neptune with Adams, justly claimed as one of the most astounding feats of science, was a faithful son of the Church. The Bishop of Coutances said in connection with his discoveries: "Now, dear Master, you are elevated to the stars!" to which he replied, "Monseigneur, I hope to rise higher than that—to Heaven." He received the Last Sacraments from his parish priest, saying, "I am a parishioner as well as a Catholic." Schiaparelli (1835-1919), whose name is well known in connection with what some have thought to be the canals of the planet Mars, died, as he had lived, a firm Catholic. Amidst numerous other names we may recall those of the two distinguished Jesuit astronomers of recent times, Secchi (1818-1878) and Perry (1833-1839). Even Laplace, usually accused of

materialism on the strength of a story which is certainly susceptible—as M. Eymieu has shown—of another meaning than that generally attributed to it, died fortified with all the Sacraments of the Church, and few names are greater in the branch of science with which we are concerned than his.

A THIRD ORDER SCIENTIST

In Physics there are many names which may be recalled. Let us consider the greatest only. Galvani (1737-1798, from whom we get the terms "galvanism," "galvanized iron," etc.) was a member of the Third Order of St. Francis. Volta (1745-1827), from whose name we get the "voltaic battery" and the "volt," a term which meets our eye every day, left a very full and touching confession of faith behind him, in which he says that he was born in the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church, and has always remained faithful to it both externally and internally. Ampere (1775-1836), whose name is associated with another measure of electricity, was a most devout man and a bosom friend of Ozanam, and Coulomb (1736-1806), a third man honored by the selection of his name for attachment to an electric unit was also a lifelong Catholic.

Of modern Chemistry Lavoisier is commonly considered to be the father. Born in 1743, he was guillotined under the Terror in 1794: "Nous n'avons plus besoin de chimistes."

"We no longer have need of chemists," said the free-thinkers of the day, concerning one who was not only one of the greatest lights of science, but also a faithful Catholic to the end. Perhaps it is here that one should include the name of Pasteur (1822-1895), though his discoveries range over so wide a field that it is difficult to know whether one should speak of him as chemist, physicist, biologist, or physician, for all of these he was. Perhaps greatest of all his great discoveries was the cure of hydrophobia; but indeed the whole science of aseptic surgery and the entire development of the great canning industry depend upon facts first definitely laid down by this greatest of modern men of science. Attempts have been made recently to detract from his position as a Catholic, with the result of affirming it more definitely, for no more fervent son of the Church ever lived. *Fax est ab hoste doceri*: M. Le Dantec, leader of the materialist army in France, can only console himself by exclaiming: *Il est croyant avant d'être Pasteur et il l'est resté quoiqu'il soit Pasteur*. ("He was a believer before he was Pasteur and he remains one although he is Pasteur.")

The Father of Crystallography was the Abbe Haüy (1743-1822), who built his edifice so well that all the work which has since been done has added to it, but in no way altered it. The Father of Modern Geology, thus acclaimed some two hundred years after his death by an International Congress of Geologists, was Nicolaus Stensen (1638-1687), who, in his earlier years, was an anatomist whose name is still connected with important discoveries in that science. Born a Lutheran, he became a Catholic, took Holy Orders, and died a Bishop.

THE FATHER OF ANATOMY

As Anatomy has just been mentioned, it may be as well to state that a whole string of names of prime importance in that science might here be enumerated, whose possessors were papal physicians and surgeons. Let us content ourselves with naming Andreas Vesalius, universally acknowledged to be the Father of Modern Anatomy, who was born 1514 and drowned in a shipwreck 1564, as he was returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Space does not permit of a discussion as to the cause of this pilgrimage, which has been much misinterpreted by some Protestant writers, but no one doubts that Vesalius was a firm and consistent believer in the doctrines of the Church.

It is time to turn to a few luminaries of the Natural Sciences. Mendel (1822-1884), whose discoveries have had a more potent influence over biologists than any other writer with the exception perhaps of Darwin, to whose cherished theory of Natural Selection some say that Mendel has given the coup de grace, was the Abbot of an Augustinian Abbey at Brunn, Schwann (1810-1882) was with Schleiden, the discoverer of the Cellular Theory, one of the most far-reaching generalizations ever reached in biology, and he was a fervent Catholic all his life. So were Van Gehuchten, who, born 1861, died of grief from the wanton destruction of all his specimens and notes by the Germans at Louvain, in 1914, and Van Beneden, another distinguished Louvain professor, great both as a zoologist and a palaeontologist.

SOME FAMOUS ENTOMOLOGISTS

Fabre (1823-1915), the "incomparable observer," as Darwin called him, and Latreille (1762-1833), called him, and Latreille (1762-1833), called him, the "Prince of French entomology," the "Prince of insects," are names which rise to the mind the moment that one begins to think of studies on insects, and to them may be added that of the distinguished Jesuit Wasmann, still alive and recognized as the greatest authority of all time on ants and their inclinations. Claude Bernard (1813-1878), one of the greatest of physiologists, although no very convincing specimen of a Catholic during his life,

died after receiving the Sacraments, and with his may be linked the name of Johannes Miller (1801-1868), of whom Huxley wrote as "the greatest anatomist and physiologist of my contemporaries," originally minded to become a priest, and always a steady-going Catholic.

Many scores of others could be added to the above, but space forbids, and these, at least, will prove the thesis outlined that Catholicity and love for science can flourish with equal luxuriance in the same personality.

CATHOLIC CENSUS OF GERMANY CITIES

Munich, Nov. 11.—Munich has the largest number of Catholics of any large city in Germany, although in proportion to its population Cologne takes the lead.

In Munich there are 595,000 Catholics and 116,000 non-Catholics. Cologne has 515,000 Catholics and 45,000 non-Catholics.

Berlin, which has claimed, during a recent celebration held there, to have the largest number of Catholics has 450,000. Berlin's non-Catholic population is 3,350,000. Next in line comes Essen with 294,000 Catholics and Duesseldorf, with 278,000.

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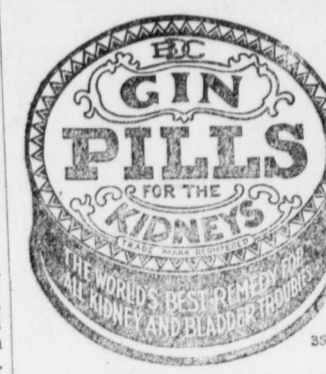
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Is it any wonder that men's nerves are giving out?

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You do not sleep well.

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Your daily task is more than you can stand.

There is, perhaps, no organic disease.

But you find your energy and ambition petering out.

Your doctor tells you to take a rest for a few months.

But you do not want to be put up on the shelf.

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But you can take things easier. And you can profit by the experience of others and build up your exhausted nervous system by using Dr. Chase's Nerve Food.

This is the most rational treatment available, and is endorsed by more common-sense, reliable people than any medicine recommended for the restoration of the nervous system.

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Mr. D. F. Armstrong, R. R. No. 3, Mallorytown, Ont., writes:—"Through overwork and an extra amount of mental strain, I became very nervous and rundown. I began using Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, and it certainly touched the right spot. It almost seemed for a time as though I fairly lived on it, and I can recommend this treatment to anyone requiring a medicine of this kind."

(Sworn before me at Mallorytown, this 7th day of March, 1921.—D. S. Clow, J.P.)

Sleeplessness

Mr. W. J. Van Dusen, Centre St., Napanee, Ont., writes:—"For some time I suffered from sleeplessness and all the weakness and tired feelings that follow continual loss of sleep. Gas would accumulate in my stomach, and this also caused a great deal of trouble. Upon the advice of a friend I began a treatment of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, and soon found it to be just what I required. By the time I had completed the treatment my system was in splendid condition and I felt much stronger."

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Rheumatism

Mr. Charles R. Tait, Newtown, Kings Co., N.B., writes:—"I suffered with rheumatism and my stomach was in a very weak state. I could eat no fruit of any kind and suffered nearly all the time. I tried several doctors, but got no relief from any of them. I was in a drug store one day and overheard two men talking—one was telling the other about Dr. Chase's Nerve Food completely relieving him of rheumatism. I bought a box, thinking it would be like all the rest of them, but, after taking this one box, I felt so much better that I continued the treatment, and now I can eat anything and do not suffer any more with the rheumatism."

("This is to certify that I am personally acquainted with Mr. Charles R. Tait, and believe his statement is true and to my knowledge, correct.")—(Signed) A. S. Mace, J.P.)

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(Signed) Miss Cora Lim, R. F. D. 1, Blackfoot, Idaho, Feb. 23, 1920.

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