

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. M. BOSSAERT

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE DAY OF RECKONING AND OUR PREPARATION FOR IT

It is quite plain in today's Gospel that the rich man in the parable is a type of God, and the steward is man. Yes, God has appointed us all to be stewards of the goods that He has entrusted to us, but only for a certain time. When that time is over, He will call us to account for the use that we have made of His property. If we are good and prudent stewards, we shall prepare our accounts beforehand, so that at the day of reckoning we may not have to dread God's omniscience and justice. Today's Gospel teaches us all this, reminding us of the last day of reckoning and of our preparation for it. Let us take these truths as the subject of this meditation.

1. God's summons to come and give account of our stewardship will be heard by us all without exception, as soon as our time here is over. He calls us often during our life on earth, by conferring upon us many graces and blessings, by sending us trials and sufferings, by the voice of conscience encouraging us to do right and avoid evil, and finally by the words of His priests. All these are preliminary calls, that should remind us of the last decisive summons awaiting us, and warn us to think of the judgment to come, and of what lies before us. When the last summons is heard, each of us will have to cease doing either good or evil, and be steward no longer, as must appear before His Lord and Judge. Each of us will hear this summons at the hour of death, and at the terrible moment when the angels sound their trumpets and call all mankind to the last judgment. Of the steward in the Gospel we are told that his lord called him and said: "Now thou canst be steward no longer." Of each of us the same words will be said: "God called him, and he laid down his stewardship and died; he has appeared before his Judge." We know that this will happen, but we know not when, for it is written that man knoweth not his end, and our divine Saviour said: "You know neither the day nor the hour when these things shall come to pass."

2. We shall all have to render our last account to God Himself. "Give an account of thy stewardship." Thus will He speak to each of us, when we appear before His judgment seat. Here on earth the great and mighty and those under their protection may perhaps avoid giving an account of their actions, or they may deceive those entitled to call them to do so, but such is not the case with God. He passes over none, and none can rely upon his own power, or bribe or deceive that Judge, before Whom there is no respect of persons. He will call upon all to give account of their stewardship; He will ask the rich and powerful how they have used their wealth and high position; priests, how they have cared for the souls entrusted to their charge; parents, how they have brought up their children; and the children, how they have observed the fourth Commandment. All will have to answer for every thought, word and work; and also for the use made of their senses, for the obedience paid to all God's Commandments, for all advantages of body and soul, for all graces bestowed, for all the Sacraments received, and for everything done and omitted. In accordance with all these things you will be judged and requited each according to his works.

With such a reckoning before us, how ought we to act? We must follow the prudent example of the steward in the parable, who, when summoned by his master, said: "What shall I do? I know what I will do." As Christians we too should know what to do, that we may give a good account of ourselves when we stand before God's judgment seat. It will then be too late to beg, to dig or to labor, for the night will have come, when no man can work. Now we still have time and grace, now we can daily appear as suppliants before the throne of God's mercy, begging for grace to do right; now we can dig, i. e., work in the service of God and for the salvation of our souls, showing ourselves zealous in paying loyal obedience to the Commandments of God and His Church; now we can make friends, i. e., we can love righteousness and lead honest lives; we can show pity to the poor and pass our days in obedience, patience and peaceable behavior. Why should we do all this? In order that the friends thus acquired may receive us into everlasting habitations, that we may not die unprepared but may have no reason to fear God's call, and may find Him a merciful Judge, on the last day, when we appear as faithful stewards before Him.—Amen.

One thing alone I know—that according to our need, so will be our strength. The more the enemy rages against us—the more will the Saints in Heaven plead for us; the more malicious are the devices of men against us, the louder cry of supplication will ascend from the bosom of the whole Church of God for us.—Cardinal Newman.

THE VENERATION OF IMAGES

A proper understanding of the Catholic teaching concerning images will convince the most skeptical that there is nothing in it contrary to the First Commandment of God. If we would take the First Commandment on its appearance we would find that it condemns in the making of any kind of images. Reading the Commandment in the light of common sense it is obvious that the law is comprised in the first and last clauses of the Commandment. The Commandment says: "Thou shalt not have strange Gods before thee. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them." If we take this Commandment in its apparent sense, the people would have been forbidden to make an image of anything at all. This certainly was not the mind of God. It was His intention to forbid them to adore images or to serve them. Those who would invoke the First Commandment of God against the Catholic practice would be forced to an extreme that is obviously ridiculous.

The Catholic, no less than his non-Catholic or pagan brother, is forbidden by the natural law to give to any creature the honor that is due to God. This same natural law forbids the absurdity of praying or giving any sort of absolute worship to a manufactured image. The teaching of the Catholic Church is contained in a decree of the Second Council of Nice, held in the year 787: "We define with all certainty and care that both the figure of the sacred and life-giving Cross, as also the venerable and holy images, whether made in colors, or mosaic or other materials, are to be placed suitably in the holy churches of God, on sacred vessels and vestments, on walls and pictures, in houses and by roads; that is to say, the image of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, of our Immaculate Lady the holy Mother of God—of the honorable angels and of saints and holy men. For as often as they are seen in their pictorial representations, people who look at them are ardently lifted up to the memory and love of the originals, and induced to give that respect and worshipful honor but not real adoration, which according to our faith is due only to the Divine Nature. So that offerings of incense and lights are to be given to these as to the figure of the sacred and life-giving Cross, to the holy Gospels, books and other sacred objects in order to do them honor, and as was the pious custom of an ancient time. If honor paid to all images passes on to its prototype, he who worships an image worships the reality of him who is painted in it."

The reverence that the Catholic pays to images is marked by outward signs. They mean only what they are understood to mean. From the very earliest days we find the Christian people using images. They adorned their catacombs with paintings to Christ, of the saints and of scenes from the Bible. The Catacombs have been rightly called the cradle of all Christian art. Those that have any notion that the early Christians were prejudiced against images or pictures have received a rude awakening by Christian archaeologists. The pictures and statues which date back to the first centuries of the Christian era indicate that the Christians had little fear of idolatry among their new converts by the use of pictures and images. It may be admitted that there was abuse and notably just before the Iconoclast outbreak. Though we admit all the abuse that is ascribed to those ages, it is impossible to believe that even the most stupid peasant could have thought that an image could hear or answer a prayer. The abuse consisted in the treatment that was accorded to icons. They had multiplied to such an extent that the walls of the church from floor to roof were covered with them. The practice of the worship of icons had gone to such an extent that we read of Saint Theodore writing to congratulate an official of the court for having chosen a holy icon as godfather for his son. The Iconoclast outbreak brought at least one good result, the definition from the Council of Nice. This definition explained the kind of worship that might be lawfully and reasonably given to images and condemned all extravagances.

In the Western churches, and especially in Rome, the worship of images was not carried to the extent that it was in the East. In the Eternal City we find a reasonable and sober explanation of the use of images. Saint Gregory the Great, writing to an iconoclast bishop who had destroyed the images in his diocese, calls them the book of the ignorant. He writes: "Not without reason has antiquity allowed the stories of the saints to be painted in holy places. And we indeed entirely praise thee for not allowing them to be adored, but we blame thee for breaking them. For it is one thing to adore an image, it is quite another to learn from the appearance of a picture what we must adore. What books are to those who can read, that is a picture to the ignorant who look at it; in a picture even the unlearned may see what example they should follow; in a picture they who know no letters may yet

HOW FRANCE RETURNS TO THE VATICAN

Anti clericalism are raising the alarm that when once diplomatic relations are resumed between France and the Vatican, they will tend to grow more and more intimate. Premier Millerand is not at all influenced by this consideration, although it is observable that the officials of the Quai d'Orsay do not relish the new arrangements. The French Republic hopes to strengthen its influence with certain potent factor in the life of Central Europe by sending an envoy to the Pope. In Alsace and Lorraine, again, a concordat has been inherited from the Germans. In the East a variety of arguments and considerations can be urged. France has much to gain from amicable relations with the Pope in Syria and other parts of the former Empire of Turkey. The rights of France in Japan and China need a protection which would be afforded by the new treaty—for that is what the disgruntled Populaire calls it. The colonies in Africa are likewise affected. The idea as far as the old Turkish Empire is concerned is apparently that, with the assistance of the Vatican, France will claim some advantages over other nations as the traditional protector of all Roman Catholics. In noting this, the Manchester Guardian adds that Great Britain may have her say on this point.

THE VATICAN AS WORLD POWER

Only the Vatican has emerged from the War stronger than it was when it went in, or perhaps we should say when it stayed out, to use the phrase of the Tribune. Even Rumania and Japan are effecting their compromises with the new world power. At a time when every Government on the continent of Europe is revealing signs of internal weakness, when Republics totter and Kings live in exile, the Sovereign Pontiff reigns gloriously.

PAPACY'S GROWING POWER

CATHOLIC CHURCH MOST INFLUENTIAL FORCE IN WORLD

In the present issue of Current Opinion is an interesting article on the growing power of the Papacy and the achievements of Pope Benedict XV. The writer produces evidence that the Vatican is the only world power that has come out of the War stronger and more influential than when the conflict started. The article, entitled "Triumphs of the Diplomacy of Benedict XV," is as follows:

Displays of feeling by radicals and Socialists attend the passage through the Chamber of Deputies at Paris of the measure for the restoration of diplomatic relations between the French Republic and the Holy See. The exchange of felicitations between Pope Benedict and President Deschanel recently was very formal, but it seemed to the Temps a preliminary to those closer relations that impend. "It is the general sense of the European press that the return of the eldest daughter of the Church to the maternal bosom, although not complete—for a theoretical separation of Church and State is to prevail—constitutes the supreme triumph of the diplomacy of the present Pope. The Debate says so, and the great French daily's view is confirmed by the comment of the Giornale d'Italia of Rome. Pope Benedict may not have the picturesque personality of Pius X., observes the Action, but he gives evidence daily that, as an ecclesiastical statesman, he is not inferior to the late Leo XIII.

GROWING POWER OF THE VATICAN

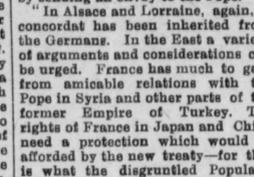
"The impending despatch of a Papal nuncio to Paris is a culminating point, the highest diplomatic achievement of a Pontificate that has been one series of victories in this field. The Italian daily observes that, with few exceptions, all the nations that have come out of the World War in any recognizable form hasten to establish relations of a diplomatic kind with the Vatican. England herself is displaying no haste in recalling the mission she established there when the struggle began. The great South American Republic of Brazil has just sent one of its most eminent men as an envoy to the Pope. Even Portugal is to receive a nuncio once again.

In the event of the substantial establishment of the League of Nations, the representative of the Pope will be given a seat ultimately in the council. This assertion, repeated in the Italian press after the denial of a presumably official kind in the Anglo-Saxon countries, causes some perplexity. The fact is, as the Roman newspaper already quoted observes, the League would be made up for the most part of nations which have diplomatic relations with the Vatican already.

"The only Government entitled to object to the representation of the Pope in the League would be Italy. The relations between the Pope and the Italian Government, outside of the Parliament, are so cordial that a tacit arrangement on this subject has been entered into. The Italian Government will object for form's sake to the appearance of the Pope by proxy on the council of the League. The objection will be sustained, especially as the covenant of the League could not be construed in any other sense. The Pope will be represented in the assembly in accordance with an interpretation yet to be made public. This point will have to be decided by a vote from which it is certain, the Roman journal says, the Vatican will emerge with yet one more triumph.

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The fact makes its due impression, admits her contemporary. The court of Benedict XV. is now the most influential in Europe. Its diplomatic receptions throw the house of Savoy into the shade. The journalists repair to the Vatican and not to the Quirinal for the great news of the day. Sometimes it has to do with a special mission from Bohemia, where the intervention of the Pope seems alone competent to handle the domestic crisis. Again it will be an envoy from Hungary, where the Vatican is supreme. Again it may be a receipt concerning the Ukraine. Whenever one turns, the evidence of the validity and triumph of Vatican diplomacy greet the eye, and Benedict XV. reigns with undisputed sway from Bolivia, which has recently sent him an envoy, to Japan, the latest Government to make application for the recognition that has so graciously been accorded to the French Republic."

THE DIGNITY OF LABOR

Conditions in the world today converge toward the evil deplored by Pope Leo XIII. in his famous encyclical on "The Condition of the Working Classes," the strife between classes. This is essentially a Socialist doctrine growing out of the false theory of the materialistic evolution of society. The two parties to our industrial system are mutually dependent and harmonious, not independent and antagonistic. To regard them as conflicting elements is to destroy ultimately the whole structure of civilized society. Labor depends upon capital, and capital depends upon labor. Both have their rights, and both have their obligations to each other.

The rise of Bolshevistic tendencies in the modern world has given rise to the fallacy that only with the overthrow of capital can the workingman come into his own. Revolt and success evolution in the philosophy of the radical. There is no denying the fact that the greed and selfishness of many capitalists have contributed much to the rebirth of this idea. Yet we must not forget that another contributory factor to industrial unrest is a lack of appreciation of the dignity of labor. What the world needs today is production, construction, and co-operation.

It is a favorite pastime of thinkers and writers to call such conditions psychological. They mean that such phenomena are the result of false ideas, known in common parlance as "ideals."

The old fashioned ideal that work is a blessing has disappeared in great measure from modern life. Yet this ideal has been consecrated by centuries of productive effort. The great achievements of history have been produced by men who considered work as the greatest blessing in the world. They were inspired by the ideals of the great architect of civilization who followed the trade of a carpenter and toiled for thirty years of His mortal life.

The War has wrought havoc with the production of the world. The arts of destruction were promoted during the cataclysm that followed a denial of Christian teaching. Now the sword has been sheathed and we must lay our hand to the ploughshare.

This means construction. It means that the world must get back to its work of rehabilitation and promote the arts of peace. The greatest inspiration to production is a recognition of the dignity of labor. Whatever we have that is good is the result of co-operative effort. Each man doing his best in the great cycle of industry will produce a satisfied as well as a dignified generation. The time is here when honest toil spells the salvation of the nations, and America, the fairest Republic, may well give the example which will thrill and encourage men throughout the world.—The Pilot.

Eastern Canada Extends Hearty Welcome to Visiting Members of United States National Editorial Association.

Toronto, June 21st, 1920.—With the annual convention concluded in Boston this year, some 130 members of the National Editorial Association commenced at Yarmouth, N.S., a tour of Eastern Canada via the Canadian National-Grand Trunk Railways.

They have visited the Land of Evangeline, Halifax, the mines and steel works at the Sydneys, the Bras d'Or Lakes in Cape Breton, the industrial centres of New Glasgow and Stellarton, Truro, Amherst, Sackville, Prince Edward Island (the million-acre farm), historic Quebec, and Ste. Anne de Beaupre, the big power plants and industries at Grand Mere and Shawinigan, and are to-day in Montreal.

This week they will conclude their 1920 tour by visiting Ottawa, the Silver Camps at Cobalt and Gold Mines at Porcupine, the pulp and paper industries at Iroquois Falls, the Lake of Bays District in the Highlands of Ontario, Toronto, Niagara Falls, Hamilton, winding up the trip at Windsor. Altogether, some 3,000 miles will have been travelled in what has been termed "The Million Dollar Special," one of the finest all-steel car trains that has ever been assembled on this continent, consisting of six standard sleeping cars, two dining cars, tourist and baggage car. The new steel sleepers are of the very latest type and construction, with all modern devices that make for pleasure and comfort in travel. The dining cars are manned by a specially-selected staff, and the excellence of the cuisine has been frequently commented upon by the American newspaper writers. Every possible arrangement for the safety and comfort of the editors while en route is being carried out by an efficient staff of the Canadian National Railways which has been specially assigned to the various duties.

As one of the party has expressed it, "We are travelling in a palace, through a country of marvelous scenic beauty, a land of fertility blessed with a wealth of

resources which cannot help but impress us profoundly. We shall leave Canada with the happiest recollections of her progressive spirit and hospitable people."

The party, which represents some 34 States of the Union, have been officially welcomed by the Lieutenant-Governors of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Quebec, and have been the guests of each of the cities visited; while numerous special social functions have been arranged for their entertainment. While in Toronto, His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor will hold a reception at Government House.

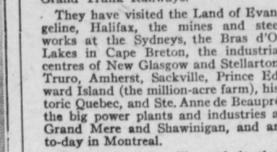
When, at the suggestion of Mr. D. B. Hanna, the President of the Canadian National Railways, Mr. C. A. Hayes, vice-president, went to the Maritime Provinces last winter to arrange a programme of entertainment for the American Editorial Association during their visit of these editors as of very considerable importance to the country—important commercially and also politically—and I should like to feel that everything were done that could be done to give them a favorable impression of the country and of us. Last year the same party of people toured the Canadian Northwest, and the articles they afterwards contributed to their papers proved a great commercial advantage to the section of the country which they covered, and perhaps what is still more important, they expressed impressions of the Canadian character which were all to our advantage." That Mr. Hayes was sincerely convinced of what he said is demonstrated by the fact that he, in company with Mr. H. H. Melanson, Passenger Traffic Manager, made the "preparations" tour of the provinces himself.

Altogether, the tour has been of exceptional educational value, and should be one more step in fostering the spirit of amity between the two adjoining countries where peace has reigned for the last hundred years.

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