FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. M. BOSSART

PENTECOST

THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST

On the feast of Pentecost we celebrate the wonderful descent of the Holy Ghost in the form of tongues of fire, resting upon the Apostles and filling them with gifts of grace. We have a right to share in their happiness, for God's Holy Spirit will come down upon us too, if we pray with fervor and humility that He may do so, and He will pour into our hearts His grace, light, consolation and divine blessings. Well will it be for us if the Holy Ghost takes up His abode in our souls, for He bestows—

1. *Light to the understanding.* We see this plainly in the case of the Apostles, whose minds were previously so obscured that they were unaware of their own weakness and frailty, and considered themselves to be strong and upright whereas in reality they were liable to fall into many imperfections. They had a very incomplete knowledge of truths of faith, and much was still hidden from their eyes, although they had gone about with our Saviour, heard His words and witnessed His miracles. We are often told that they understood not what He said, and on the eve of His Passion our divine Lord, in His farewell discourse, remarked: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." As soon, however, as they received the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, their minds were enlightened, and they perceived how often they had wavered in doing right, how weak they were in virtue, how prone to earthly things and how far from perfection. They then understood the truths of faith, and all that their Master had previously said became intelligible. This was the work of the Holy Spirit in the Apostles, and when the same Spirit comes to us also, light will dawn in our minds and we shall see what poor, miserable, weak creatures we are; we shall perceive how many bad habits we have to discard and how much there is in requiring alteration and amendment; we shall realize that parents, priests and superiors are acting for our good, when they point out our faults and instruct or warn us; then we too shall understand better the truths of our holy religion, and God's word will become more intelligible to us.

2. *Zeal in good works* is another result of the coming of the Holy Ghost. Enlightenment of the mind alone is not enough to secure our salvation; we must also do what is right, for, as St. Paul says, "the doers of the law shall be justified." Before receiving the Holy Ghost, the Apostles were apt to waver in the faith and to fail in doing right, but after His coming they went forth fearlessly from Judea into the furthest parts of the earth, eager to endure all trials for the sake of Christ, and so zealous to win souls to Him that they were ready to lay down their lives in preaching the Gospel. All that we admire in them, their courage, zeal and sanctity, resulted from the action of the Holy Ghost.

If this Spirit dwell in our hearts, and we listen to His voice, we shall soon change greatly, for we shall no longer aim at heaping up riches for time, but only for eternity; to know and to do God's holy Will will be our most important business during our life on earth; we shall do our duty faithfully, being careful to waste no opportunity that may occur of doing good; we shall even succeed in acting rightly, in spite of hindrances, and no matter what self-conquest and sacrifice it may cost.

3. *Fidelity even until death* is another glorious result of the coming of the Holy Ghost, whose great work is not finished until man draws his last breath. 'He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Such is the teaching of Holy Scripture, and the Holy Ghost bestowed this grace of fidelity upon the Apostles; previously they were so cowardly and weak that a remark made by a servant was enough to cause one of them to deny his Master, but afterwards their souls were filled with courage, and nothing could make them falter in their fidelity, neither persecution, nor threats, nor dangers by land and by sea, nor imprisonment, nor torture, nor fire, nor sword. And their fidelity lasted until death, for all, with the exception of St. John who alone died a natural death, laid down their lives for their faith.

Shall we, too, be faithful unto death? We cannot tell, and we are warned to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, whilst he that standeth is to take heed lest he fall. But if God's Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts, He will strengthen our resolution to be loyal to our Lord, not in happiness only, but also in misfortune; not in peace alone, but also in time of warfare, even though the whole world should be disloyal and turn from Him. If we co-operate with the graces imparted by the Holy Ghost, we shall certainly continue faithful unto death, when God will send His Angel to summon us away from this life of sorrow to His Paradise above.

"Learn to yield!

"You often gain more by giving in than by holding on. Battles have been won by strategic retreats as well as by vigorous advances."

PEACE IN NEED OF REPAIRS

In the early weeks of February, 1918, I was one of those who believed that the signs of the times pointed to such an armistice, and peace to follow, as came nine months later. At the time I wrote a memorandum on the subject for a New York editor, which he found to be rather daringly unorthodox. It represented that the time was best for Germany, because she still held strongly on the West and was master in the East; that it was best for France, because everything pointed to a return of Alsace-Lorraine, probably the most she could hope to gain no matter how long the War lasted; that it was best for England, because she already held all the prizes in Africa and Asia Minor, because Germany had been all but eliminated as a mercantile competitor and been definitely dislodged from the Pacific, and because Germany had dragged down Russia, until very recently an object of apprehensive solicitude by those responsible for the security of India; that it was best for Italy, because she had secured a prescriptive right to Avlona, which was all she was likely to get out of the War except some slight improvement upon the terms Austria had been willing to allow to keep her out of the War on the first place. There was the further deduction that in the state to which Russia had been reduced, the Germans could expect to find there, both in the military sense of increased security and in the material sense of most favorable commercial opportunity, some recompense for the loss of Alsace and Lorraine. Just about that time an associate of Mr. Lloyd George made a speech in which he let it be known that the Government was actually making up its mind to a great decision, and the speaker pleaded that prayers for the guidance of the Prime Minister would be more fitting than fault finding.

However, the decision was against peace, and not until October did the possibility again arise. When the President's first advances were made in that month, I recall, in a company of twenty I was alone in believing that peace was at hand. The most important difference to be seen between February and October was that the German armies were being withdrawn rapidly from French territory. It seemed to me probable that when they had got out of France, and when the English had got back to Mons, the War could finish, as it did. There will always be controversy about what might have happened next in military affairs. There are those who claim that a shattering blow was ready to be struck by the Allies in Lorraine, but on the other hand General Maurice and other capable observers are agreed that the advancing armies had so far outrun their dependable communications as to be in a situation of real danger, less serious than that of von Kluck in September of 1914, but of the same sort. Whatever the prospects were for further War-making, the general position was the same as in February for England, decidedly better for France, and apparently somewhat better for Italy, because obviously worse for Austria.

On the ship going over, in December, a couple of days before we reached Liverpool, I fell into a talk with a distinguished member of the American delegation, and in discussing the probability of Mr. Wilson's ability to obtain European approval of the ideals enunciated in his "Fourteen Points," I gave him an outline of the position as it had presented itself to me in February, and as it still seemed to exist in December. He was a strong supporter of Mr. Wilson's idealism, confessed his ignorance of the significance of Avlona, very much as Mr. Lloyd George afterwards did in the case of Teschen, and we went off to bed on his remark "You say you are going to Paris? Do you really expect to get there?" Afterwards I was witness to his disillusionment. When, at Brindisi, whence he was about to sail for Syria to inquire into the dispositions of the people there, he read the first draft of the League Covenant, he took the first train for Paris and then the first boat for New York. That was in February 1919.

Now, when one has as definite an idea as I had of what the essentials of peace were to be, and as strong a conviction as I entertained that the realities of power were already visible in February, 1918, one does not readily part with the belief that there is a certain unreality, or at least a lack of permanence, about factors which seem to stand in the way of the achievement of the results that might be expected to follow from the existence of conditions so obvious. At least it can be claimed now that the conditions in the Eastern hemisphere tend continuously to assume the elements of definition which seemed to be visible in February, 1918, before the American armies had been thrown into the melee.

France has had her lost Provinces restored, but France has not been allowed to make the Rhine the boundary clear down to the Holland border. Italy has Avlona, but Dalmatia is not to be hers. She has acquired a strategic boundary on the Tyrol, but in gaining it has set up an irridentist aspiration in the breast of one of the hardiest, bravest and most patient peoples in the world. Belgium has been liberated indeed, but once that was accomplished her delegates to the Peace Conference were treated as obnoxious hangers-on. In less than a year we have passed through a cycle which began with English clamor for the Kaiser's head and ended with the affirmation by the head of the counter-revolution that it had England's approval; began with the demand that Germany must pay the whole of what the War cost her enemies and ends with cordial acceptance of Mr. Keynes' reasoned plea that the treaty stipulations on this head must be abandoned in the interest of England's commerce and the world's well-being; began with Mr. Wilson's visit to Buckingham Palace and ended with the letter of Viscount Grey.

Under cover of the discussion about the Kaiser's head, the reparations, the Rhine bridgeheads and the League of Nations, which engaged the attention of the multitude, the real business of re-supporting the land spaces of the world and the other spoils of War has steadily proceeded, still steadily proceeds. What England seemed to have acquired in February, 1918, has now almost wholly passed to her under various forms of title. She wanted the German colonies and the Southern Pacific islands outright, and has been content to take them under what is called a "mandate." Her title to Egypt takes the form of a "protectorate," rightly defined by the statement of a London paper that the Egyptians must be taught "We are here as masters, not as servants." Her title to Arabia is in the form of an "independent" kingdom, brought into existence by her agents and maintained by her money. Her title to Persia is denominated an "alliance" with a venal sovereign, an alliance growing out of the elimination of Russia by German arms, an alliance which places Persian finance, trade, transportation and natural resources as completely at England's command as those of India, and reduces Persia to as low a rank as Egypt. Her title to Syria, including Palestine, Damascus and Mesopotamia, is being registered at this time of writing in the coronation as King, of Emin Feisal who was admitted to the plenary assemblies of the Peace Conference while on England's monthly payroll, and who by his present action, taken at the moment when France was rushing fresh armies to the Rhine in fear of a return of the Hohenzollerns, is ousting France from territories in the Levant in which her will has been law since the days of Louis XIV., of Francis I., even of the Crusades. Her title to the oil fields of the Caucasus and the Caspian is derived through little Georgian republics, those of Rumania through private bargainings that held up the delimitation of boundaries in the Balkans. She has made with Turkey, without consulting her Allies, as once before in 1879, agreements designed to placate her Mussulman population in India, and in elaborating as best she can a regime on the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles which will be amenable to her will, taking full advantage of the present helplessness of her two ancient and unrelenting rivals, in that quarter, Austria and Russia.

She has seen Hamburg cleared of German shipping, Germany's dreadnoughts scuttled in Scapa Flow. She has obtained a relatively increased preponderance in sea power, and by her mere veto averts even the discussion of the rights of other nations in the freedom of the seas. She has utilized the League of Nations as an instrument of her statecraft and has taken possession of it as a department of her administration. Her balance sheet, now almost ready for certification by the international auditors, contains in the statement of assets all the properties listed as hers as early as February, 1918. And having arrived at that position, she is ready to contemplate the re-opening of business on pre-war specifications, and therefore is prepared to re-open the question of the payments to be exacted from Germany which can be shown now, when people will listen, as they were shown by Herr Brockdorf-Rantzau, a year ago, when it was not permissible to listen, to constitute an effective barrier to the resumption of profitable trade not only in Germany but in all Europe, east of the Rhine. Mr. Balfour was profoundly right when he said, in March, 1919, that to make peace with Germany was a very simple matter. It was so simple, in the light of what he and those who took instructions from him succeeded in obtaining, that we can quite see what a nuisance it was to have a Persian delegation or an Egyptian delegation or a Chinese delegation or a Russian delegation moping about in Paris importuning for hearings they were never accorded, to the great scandal of Dr. Dillon.

For their advice was not needed. The decisions had already been taken regarding the matters in which they were interested and concerning which they mistakenly believed they ought to be consulted. The inexorable logic of fact, of fact established, as M. Clemenceau so neatly phrased it, by the logic of twenty million victorious soldiers, was against them, as it was also against Mr. Wilson who was when all is said, the only friend any of them had, but who was unable to make good his friendship against the combination of those whose plans had been perfected already in February, 1918, and brought to perfect fruition in November of the same year France's desire for a free hand in Morocco, for the coal treasures of the Saar, and for the emasculation of Germany, Italy's desire for the mastery of the Adriatic and for a jumping-off place from which one day to leap into a blood bath of Roman imperialism, Japan's cold adherence to her Asiastic policy and to her bargain in North-Pacific Islands; Belgium's necessity for restoration and her willingness to be pacified with a slice of East Africa, Greece's determination to have restored to her the dominions of the Byzantine Emperors who were driven out by the Osmanli, England's tenacious adherence to long laid plans for consolidating an African empire and joining it by a land nexus with India, combined to constitute an alliance based upon mutual advantage that was too strong to be overborne, in any crisis, by the new idealism with which Mr. Wilson hoped, when he sailed for Paris, to dominate the Conference.

Even the chaos in Russia contributed to the strength of the alliance, for France had to give hostages to the others in order to get from them the assurance of a new Eastern counterpoise against Germany, in a Poland strong enough to bear the strain and live.

Making peace was indeed a simple, even if a vexatious, affair. The books that are now coming out are so many recitals of the vexations, Mr. Baker, who saw Mr. Wilson oftener than anyone else did, reveals what the President's trials were, and ends by marveling that he saved anything out of the shipwreck of his hopes. Dr. Dillon's book is a recital of the anxieties, even the agonies, of the lesser peoples, beginning with Italy, Belgium and Russia and ending with Egypt, Persia and China. Mr. Keynes, the awaited hour having struck, concentrates upon the miseries to which it was agreed to subject the Germans. But he looks forward, rather than back. If he places the bulk of blame upon the much-burdened shoulders of President Wilson, whose defect, it seems, was to be cursed with a theological mind rather than blessed with a political or an intellectual mind, it is only because he feels that now, with all the major positions consolidated on the Allies side, it is safe, nay, essential to reconstitute Germany, to the end that the newly established imperial systems may be perserved and perpetuated by the flow of those beneficent currents that are set going by prosperous trade. Bankrupts, he feels, even bankrupt empires, cannot remain insolvent and thrive. And just as he blames Mr. Wilson's theological mind for the year's expensive delay, so he artfully proposes that the United States, by a single act of generosity, involving a gift of some ten thousand million dollars and interest, shall repair the injuries caused to the world both by the War and by the peace. Just why, and how, will warrant separate telling.—J. C. Walsh in America.

CONTENTMENT

CONVERTS FIND PROBLEMS SOLVED IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

One unfounded non Catholic notion as to the reason why a Protestant is converted to Catholicism is answered by Floyd Keeler in an article in America in which he points out misunderstandings on the part of non Catholics with regard to motives for conversion.

In commenting on the recent submission of Bishop Kinsman of the Protestant Episcopal Church to Catholicism, the editor of the Living Church remarked that the quest for a Church triumphant here on earth by men and women who tire of the problems of the Church Militant will doubtless continue, and the succession of occasional stragglers from the known problems of the Anglo Saxon to the unknown problems of the Latin will as certainly be unbroken.

Mr. Keeler points out that converts do not enter the Catholic Church expecting to find it a paradise of angels and saints without problems. He declares that the position of the convert in Catholicism is more desirable as far as problems are concerned, and is such as to make them find the Catholic Church the only sure leaven of Christians.

It is difficult to understand, he says, that solution of the problem of the Eucharist which makes it possible to hold that Christ is really present there, and at the same time to hold that there is no change whatever in the consecrated species. Yet in representative gatherings of Episcopalians may be found men holding each of these diverging views and acting accordingly.

It is difficult, also, he points out, to understand the answer to the question "What think ye of Christ?" which permits one to say that Christ is God, with all that involves, and allows another to teach that He was merely a great teacher, born of human parents in the ordinary course of nature, and in no wise different, except in degree of humiliation, from many another before and since.

If a convert will compare the "saints" of the two churches, it will do much to solve his difficulties, the writer suggests. For he will see that there is something in the holiness of the true Church which gives a power to its members, and which is, for the most part, sadly lacking in his old surroundings.

Summing up the "problems" of the "Anglo-Saxon," he says that the things which confront the "Catholic-minded" in Anglicanism are an attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable, to harmonize the contradictory, to make black to be not only white, but both black and white at the same time, both Catholic and Protestant at once. It is this that makes the Living Church remark that until the whole Anglican communion is permeated by the Catholic perspective "we shall lose to Rome more than we gain from her. Ultra Protestantism constantly makes converts for Rome."

But Mr. Keeler suggests that when Anglicanism becomes such, she will have entered the fold of Rome herself.—The Pilot.

ITS MEANING IS SIGNIFICANT

A letter which has come to the editor of the American Legion, and which one of our contemporaries quotes for his readers, throws an interesting light on the term "Buddy," a word which means perhaps little to the average civilian, but must have had unusual significance for the men in service amongst whom it was so commonly used. A small detachment of soldiers were sent out on a raiding party to gather information and possibly to capture some prisoners for the intelligence section, says the letter. A flare caught them, and in the withering machine gun fire following, only three of the party got back to the American trenches, the rest being killed or wounded. One soldier of the three noticed that his Buddy had been left behind and asked the officer in charge of his outfit if he might go out and bring his Buddy, Jim, in. The officer replied: "It is certain death to go back there after him now. You may try, but, I tell you, you will be killed." The soldier started out through a hot fire and reached his pal, got him back and was carrying him over the edge of his own trench when a shell exploded, mortally wounding him and killing his Buddy. The officer lifted the soldier's head in his arms and with tears in his eyes admonished him: "See, I told you that you would be hurt, and your Buddy is dead. Was it worth it!" "Yes sir," said the soldier. "When I picked Jim up out there, he smiled and said, "Buddy, I knew you'd come."—Catholic Transcript.

RECONSTRUCTION IN LITHUANIA

Judging from appearances in Lithuania, it would seem to be the main object of military invaders to destroy the most important edifices of the towns through which they pass. Everywhere the bombardments resulted in the destruction of the most solid structures of residence and factory cites, while the humble dwellings around them were left noticeably intact. Heaps of bricks and mortar are still standing without roofs or windows to attest to the industry of Lithuania that has been destroyed. On the other hand, the small dwellings and barns are being rapidly repaired from the debris of the more important buildings.

The sounds of saw and hammers echo over rich fields and hills and valleys of unusual fertility and beauty. There are few fences or hedges, but numerous roadside crosses and rural shrines, for we are in a country that is very devout in its practices, although the last to relinquish its pagan deities of wood and stream for the religion of the Cross. Here and there on the pastures are to be seen the herds of cows that are the remnant of the mighty dairy industries for which Lithuania has been famous for centuries. The German invaders, in carrying off the live stock from the country, left a paper receipt for what they took, and spared one or two of the cows from each large establishment to provide the necessary aliment for the owner's family. Therefore the butter of Lithuania—scarce as it is at present—is still the finest in the world. There has never been known to be richer churning, and it is to be hoped that these famous dairy farms will soon be restored to their former efficiency.

All this seems to go to show that a people reduced to supplying itself from its own products, is not too hardly off in the result. An artist and craftsman can but delight in this Lithuanian spirit of self-helpfulness, similar to the spirit that must have prevailed in the old guild days of the thirteenth century, when all Europe arose and recovered from its period of barbarian devastation. Certainly it is a pleasant sight to discover beds that for years have been without sheets and pillow-covers now furnished with the new, sturdy linen covers; to see windows long shattered now with new glass and the curtains of paper replaced by spotless muslins; to behold the farm lands beginning to deliver their harvests, in the wake of the peace and pastoral joys that are spreading over Lithuania.—Thomas Walsh in Catholic World.

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