

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

Rev. F. Heffer
TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

THE VANITY OF WORLDLY THINGS
"Whence then hath it come?" (Matt. xiii, 27)
There is an old and true proverb which says: All is not gold that glitters. Many things that have a pleasant and alluring appearance turn out, upon closer inspection, to be hollow and deceitful, and to these things belong the treasures and pleasures that the world can offer. They are truly creaking.

It was the custom among the ancient Persians on some high feast day of the year, to place upon the royal throne a criminal who had forfeited his life, to place the scepter in his hands, the crown upon his head, and royal honors were shown to him. Upon this day this man could have pleasure to his heart's desire. The following day he was seized, scourged, and finally put to a painful death upon a cross.

My dear Christians! So does the world to her votaries. It raises them to high position and honors, procures many pleasures for them, but all this lasts only for a short time, and disappointment, pain, and adversity soon follow upon these blissful days. Remember the fate of Baltassar. He was in his full power and magnificence, enjoying himself at a great feast, and in the same night his city was conquered and he was captured and slain. There are so many people laboring day and night, by the sweat of their brow, to gather wealth; they seek nothing but riches, honor and pleasure, when suddenly death overtakes them. "What hath pride profited us," they will say with Solomon, "or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow" (Wisdom v, 8, 9). King David says of them: "They have slept their sleep; and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands" (Ps. lxxv, 6). They may be likened to the man who dreams that he has acquired great riches and magnificent possessions and awakes to find it has been an idle dream. So the world and its treasures. They may have the appearance of a field of beautiful flowers and delicious fruits and eventually found to be only creaking.

Too many people become aware of this only when their last hour has come. Then they realize that they have pursued shadows, that they possess nothing that can be taken into eternity; that all their scheming and planning is now of no avail. Woe to us, my dear Christians, if we fail to realize that the possessions and pleasure of the world are nothing but vanity! Woe to us, if before we appear at the judgment seat of God, we have not gathered up treasures which neither rust nor moth doth consume and have not placed them where thieves can not break through and steal! Woe to us if that last moment arrives before we have performed any good deeds, such as will merit us eternal life! For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark viii, 36; 37). He can give nothing in the hour of death, "for the night for him has come in which no man can work."

Let us realize now, my dear Christians, what is necessary for our salvation, now while there is yet time, and before the days come of which we must say: "They do not please us." Let us not be deceived by the false splendor of this world! Let us follow the advice of St. John: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof, but he that doth the will of God, abideth forever" (1 John ii, 15-17). Let us not seek our salvation in the world, but in God, who alone can make us eternally happy. He that possesses God possesses all, and vastly more than this whole world can ever offer, for he possesses the guarantee of eternal life, a life of true and everlasting happiness. Amen.

TEMPERANCE

THE LESSON TO THE DOCTOR

An expressman brought his car, on a bitter cold day, up to the door and could barely climb down from his seat. Hours of exposure had almost benumbed him. He was brought in, the master of the house was called, and a physician, dining at the house, came into the kitchen with the host.

"Bring me some whisky," ordered the doctor.
"One minute," said the host.
"Why whisky?" asked the doctor.
"Naturally," answered the doctor.
"Why not try hot water?" suggested the host. "Wouldn't hot water give the required heat?"
"All right. Hot water, if he can get it down," answered the doctor.
After half an hour the man "thawed out," and, as he "came to," he recognized the master of the house and said:

"Mr. Robinson, I don't want you to think that I am a drinking man. I was simply benumbed with cold and had lost almost all feeling. I

take pride, sir, in the fact—especially for my boys—that a drop of liquor has never crossed my lips."
And, as the host and the physician returned to their dinner, the former said to the latter: "A bit of a lesson, isn't it?"
"Yes," answered the doctor. "I fancy we doctors are pretty quick to think that nothing will do the trick at such a time but alcohol. Thanks, old man.—Ladies Home Journal.

CRIMINALS THROUGH DRINK

The word of a prisoner may sometimes be questioned when he tells us "the cause of his downfall," but there is no getting back of the doctor's examination.
The other day I visited the State prison in Michigan City, Ind. There were about 1,200 inmates. One of the interesting features of that visit was the study of a huge chart giving a careful analysis of the records of the prisoners. Two points stood out on that chart; one, the fact that about one-third of these 1,200 men were unemployed when arrested, and, second, that one-half were excessive drinkers.
The fact that one-third were unemployed does not mean that they were driven to commit crime because they had no jobs, for probably the vast majority did not care for work, anyway. They preferred to make their living without working.
But with the one-half who were proven to be excessive drinkers, there was no doubt but that they were strongly influenced by drink when they committed the crimes for which they were serving time. A considerable number were tabulated as "moderate drinkers."
An appalling number of these criminals appeal to their present state because of the drink habit, and there is no doubt but that many of them drank just before they committed crime, to "get up their nerve."
These facts were gotten together through the doctor's examination. And he could tell fairly well whether a man had the drink habit.—Charles Stelzie in National Daily.

one believe that the Church so commissioned to teach an err in faith and morals, or that God would command us to hear the Church, yet allow that Church to teach us error and lead us astray? An American Catholic theologian writes that no one can properly understand the Christian Revelation, without understanding the Church which is its custodian. The pity is that so many will not even try to understand her. Yet she must be taken along with the Bible if truth is to be attained and definite faith secured. She is older than the New Testament, as its books themselves testify.
Our Lord completed His covenant with the Apostles, founded His Church, and had devoted disciples in it before a line of the New Testament was written. Further than that, He committed the teaching of His doctrines to a living authority. For the Church is not the creator of the doctrines she teaches, but is their divinely appointed guardian; her doctrine is not the result of her experience, of her General Councils, or of the declaration of Popes; they were once revealed, are persistently adhered to, and frequently enunciated in an 'ex-cathedra' manner, but none are of her own invention, none have to be discarded, altered, or amended to suit the times, changeful human opinion, or local conditions; being of God, they remain unaltered and unalterable. Let us hope that those who admit and deplore the "reformed" mutilation of the Scriptures will turn to the Living Teacher, who has preserved the Written Word intact from generation to generation, who alone can interpret it, who remains unshaken by the assaults of Luther and his progeny, and by her unerring tuition presents to her children every Apostolic doctrine and tradition of the entire "Christian Heritage," not merely portions thereof; the whole Bible not merely the parts selected by the fallible "Reformers" and adapted to fit to the necessities of their case.—M. C. L. in Catholic Herald.

THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLE

WHICH CAME FIRST?

A leaflet headed "Apocrypha," written by a County Down gentleman, is of interest when one considers how glibly non-Catholics talk of "the whole Bible," just as if they had it, and were its sole possessors; whereas only Catholics have the whole Bible, entire and un mutilated.
The writer of the leaflet states that King James I. of England objected to certain books being included in the Bibles which His Majesty permitted to be printed, although the earlier English "Reformed" Bibles had not rejected the said books; and he regards it as most unfortunate that they have been deleted from the British Protestant Bible. "Unless some reader is fortunate enough to possess some special edition of the Bible, an early 'Black Letter' or a modern Douay, he will probably be totally unacquainted with writings which were beyond all 'poes' and 'may,' as familiar to the Apostles as the Psalms are today to a Presbyterian, or as the Church Prayer Book to an Episcopalian. . . . The pity of it is that the strange gap in the symmetry of the Bible has led to wrong interpretations of literary allusions found in the New Testament." The mutilation of the Bible is not approved by all the spiritual offspring of the Reformation, though Bible Societies and the like continue to circulate more or less correct translations of an incomplete Bible to heathens who cannot always read, or to the soldiers of our Catholic Allies. One would be distributor of incomplete Scriptures, restrained meantime for want of funds, has depicted the Italian Catholic Soldiers as in need of the light of the Gospel, which apparently only his society can give them. Being Catholics they already have that light, and a definite faith, taught them by the Divinely appointed teacher of nations, and the intrusion of self-commissioned sectarians is nothing but a short of impudence. It is curious that non-Catholics deny the infallibility of one representative of Christ in the Church, yet in effect bestow it upon all Bible readers, no matter how widely their interpretations differ, no matter how obvious it is that the Divine Spirit of Truth cannot be the author of hundreds of contradictory sects, nor an inspired Book support doctrines opposed to each other. Curious, too, that the very people who claim to be most diligent searchers of the Scriptures, and to believe them as the word of God, place private judgment above the authority of the Church; churches can and do teach error, they say. Yet surely no one who accepts the New Testament will deny infallibility to the Apostles, or say that they could or did teach error. "He that heareth you heareth Me." "Go, teach all nations, and behold I am with you, even to the consummation of the world." How do the Scripture-searchers evade the logical consequences of those words? The Apostles were to constitute the teaching authority of the Church under the leadership of one who was specially chosen and appointed by Christ, and clearly from His words that teaching authority was to last for ever. It was never at any time to be superseded by a multitude of independent Bible readers, nor hearing the Church to give way to the theory of "every man his own teacher" or interpreter. Can any

OUR STEWARDSHIP

"We live by certainty of principle; and the principle that must permeate the world and regenerate mankind ere oppressed humanity can be relieved is the Godlike principle of Justice, of Christian charity—of the love for one another that Christ, our Master, commands to ever man."
"Fill the public places with the orators and visionaries, fill the air with clamorous speeches and the eloquent sound of sonorous periods and balanced sentences and then wait; the echo dies and the world is just as it was before. But let one speak of Christian Charity, of God like brotherly love light up for an instant the souls of men, and behold the transformation."
"The sea of ice melts and flows in sparkling rivulets, free, limpid, unimpeded, mingling in holy harmony and peaceful unity. When man has learned that divine law of love of neighbor as himself; when he has not only learned by heart but practices the teachings of our Holy Church; when the rich become honest and the poor just; when the millionaire and the laborer both use the goods of nature and of art as trusty stewards; when squandering shall be recognized as a crime and sharp trading as dishonesty, then will the elements of society fall into proper place, then will unity spring from disorder, then will the different classes, like the objects in the kaleidoscope, form one beautiful picture, pleasant to look upon, beautiful to the eye of God and man."
"Man of the world, remember that you are but a steward of God—steward of the health you enjoy; steward of the success you achieve; steward of the enjoyment you seek; steward of the money that you hold; steward most of all of your soul, your reason, your intellect, your will! Have a care! They are yours to use, to enjoy, to do good with."
"But for useless waste, for sinful neglect of anyone of these, you will be held responsible before the judgment seat of God, where you shall hear those words so full of terror to the unfaithful: 'Give an account of thy stewardship for thou mayest be no longer steward.' At death's door the reckoning shall be made. See that your honor is safe at that moment; for what man could look into the face of God for all eternity who was conscious of defrauding Him of His benefits? What man could gaze upon the divine countenance during those endless years who had proved himself only a swindler and a thief of the divine benefits? He would hang his head in shame and sorrow and utter against himself his own sentence of condemnation, 'I cannot live in the overwhelming presence of Him whom I have betrayed.'"
"There is one fact that must strike any observer of human nature whether the field of his observation be the recorded history of nations, the biography of men famous in the tale of the world's advance through, or the practical dealing of men with man in the everyday ordinary commerce of ideas, social and industrial intercourse, and that is, that with exceptions made for individuals of permanent character, and allowances given for the change of particular circumstances, mankind has changed but little since its first creation."
"Men are singularly alike. Faces and form and habit and manner differ; these are but the outward dress, the veneer coating with thin veil the essential humanity beneath. The

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keen perception of a close observer dives below all that, and reaches the principle that gives activity and individuality to all that which appears without, and that principle is self consideration.
"This it is which the men of the earliest and latest times have in common. It is the common trait of poor and rich alike. Selfishness prompted the first sin man ever committed, and selfishness is the cause of the thousand sins that have been committed while I speak to you. The unjust steward is an example of the dishonesty, avarice and duplicity which are the result of self seeking and the forgetfulness that we are but keepers, not owners of the goods that have been put in our charge, material or spiritual.
"Happily time is still ours and we are still God's stewards. Guard well your sacred trust, so that when the accounts are made the balance shall stand on our side and God's. To such how welcome beyond all comprehension will be the invitation extended only to the faithful servant, 'Enter into the joy of thy Lord.'
From the Works of His Eminence, Cardinal O'Connell.

with his own thoughts, with his own intentions, with his own prayers, separate but concordant, watching what is going on, watching its progress, uniting in its consummation; not painfully and hopelessly, following a hard form of prayer from beginning to end, but, like a concert of musical instruments, each different but concurring in a sweet harmony, we take our post with God's priest, supporting him, yet guided by him. "There are little children there, and old men, and simple laborers, and students in seminaries, priests preparing for Mass, priests making their thanksgiving, there are innocent maidens, and there are penitent sinners; but out of these many minds rises one Eucharistic hymn, and the great action is the measure and the scope of it." So much for Cardinal Newman. Besides, there is Thomas Carlyle. He died in 1881; he was known as the "Censor" of his age, and was generally considered to have been one of the profoundest thinkers of his time, but a pessimist of the blackest hue, for he was continually proclaiming that there was nothing good left in the world. What about him? What did he say? Only this much: "The Mass is the great reality; the only genuine thing of our time." He too, fooled himself in his pride, because he laughed at miracles, which he never could understand, but he took his hat off to the Mass.
The least we can do if we don't understand, is to admit a lack of brains, and we'll be respected and honored as being sincere; nobody, not even the most learned genius, can understand everything; then why laugh and ridicule?—Lordman.

PRISONERS OF WAR

TRACT PUBLISHED BY ANGLICAN CHURCH REVIEWS VARIOUS EFFORTS MADE BY POPE

"Some Facts About the Pope and Prisoners of War" is the title of an interesting appendix to a tract, published by the Society of St. Peter and Paul of London, Publishers to the Church of England, which appeared but recently. The tract entitled "No Small Sin" deals with the Papal appeal for peace.
The appendix in question gives a very comprehensive and fair summary of the benevolent activity of our Holy Father on behalf of so many of the unfortunate victims of the war. "A proposal," it tells us, "for the general exchange of prisoners unfit for military service was made by His Holiness to the Sovereigns and heads of states of the belligerent powers on Dec. 31, 1914." All the governments accepted, though not all put the suggestion into practice.
The Pope then took up the question of invalid and wounded prisoners, and in May, 1915, opened negotiations with the belligerent states with a view to such prisoners being exchanged and interned in neutral countries." The French, Swiss and German Governments accepted this proposal and as a result many thousands have been sheltered in Switzerland.
"In 1915," we are told again, "the Pope made a further appeal in order that they should agree to allow the strict observance of Sunday rest for prisoners of war. All the Governments adhered to this proposal."
As a further move to ameliorate the condition of prisoners we hear that: "In April, 1916, the Pope put forward a plan for interning in a neutral country, after eighteen months' captivity, the fathers of at least three children." This suggestion was not accepted except in a tentative and experimental way in a very few cases.
Then too "An Office in favor of prisoners of war" was opened in December, 1914, as a department under the Papal Secretary of State." The work of this department is to make inquiry for missing soldiers and to conduct investigation into the condition of prisoners.
"When reprisals on prisoners were threatened, the Pope," we are told, "intervened by proposing to the various Governments that they should abstain from all measures of this kind."
So too "as regards spiritual matters the Pope has recommended Bishops to look after prisoners' camps in their dioceses, has sent representatives to visit camps and has granted special powers to Chaplains."
Nor did he overlook the material needs of these unfortunate as the tract informs us, "Material assistance has been given in the form of provision to French prisoners, of Christmas presents to Italians of Easter presents to Austrians and of gifts distributed by the Apostolic Delegate at Constantinople to the French and other English prisoners in Turkey."
Finally summing up a diversity of other Papal activities in behalf of the unfortunate of the War we learn that "Inter alia, the Pope has frequently intervened on behalf of individual prisoners with a view to their release or confinement in more suitable conditions, especially as regards health, has been instrumental in establishing technical courses and libraries for students, and has promoted the unrestricted exchange of priests."
surely this is a splendid record of benevolent activity which elicits even the frank admiration of those not of our faith. It justifies, perhaps, the hope that when the longed-for hour of peace has come, he, the common Father of Christendom, will be able to raise his voice and be heard for a happier and more secure future.
C. B. of C. V.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

Ignorance, they say, is the mother of all errors. So often we meet with people who ridicule things they don't understand. This you must admit, is characteristically idiotic; and still, very many among us are infected with this mild form of insanity. We criticize and scoff, and in doing so confess openly our ignorance and our smallness. Let me ask the question bluntly: Why is it that so many of our Protestant friends smile at the mention of the word Mass? They seem to pity us for wasting our precious time in attending Mass. They consider it idolatry, superstition, and some who know even less than these, call it all nonsense.
But worst of all, it is not even necessary to go outside the fold to find men who ridicule the Mass; we have quite a number within the ranks. These critics within the fold may not be as outspoken in their terms, but their actions, to a certain degree, portray a sad want of understanding and appreciation.
It may not be out of place, therefore, to say a little about so often repeated and so prevalent a service as the Mass; it may be of interest to many. Just listen for a few moments to a voice from a bygone age—Cardinal Newman. To me, he says, "nothing is so consoling, so brave, so thrilling, so overcoming, as the Mass, said as it is among us. I could attend Mass forever, and not be tired. It is not a mere form of words—it is a great action, the greatest action that can be on earth! It is not the invocation merely, but, if I dare use the word, evocation of the eternal. He becomes present on the altar in flesh and blood, before Whom the angels bow and the devils tremble. This is that awful event which is the scope, and the interpretation of every part of the solemnity. Words are necessary, but as means, not as end; they are not mere addresses to the throne of grace they are instruments of what is far higher, of consecration, of sacrifice. They hurry on, as if impatient to fulfill their mission; quickly they go, the whole is quick, for they are all parts of one integral action; quickly they go for they are awful words of sacrifice; they are a work too great to delay upon, as when it was said in the beginning 'What thou doest, do quickly.' Quickly they pass, for the Lord Jesus goes with them, as He passed along the lake in the days of His flesh, quickly calling first one and then another; quickly they pass, because as the lightning which shineth from one part of the heavens into the other; so is the coming of the Son of Man; quickly they pass, for they are as the words of Moses, when the Lord came down in the cloud calling on the name of the Lord as he passed by: 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and generous, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth' And as Moses on the mountain, so we too 'make haste and bow our heads to the earth and adore.' So we, all around, each in his place, look out for the great advent, waiting for the moving of the water,' each in his place, with his own heart, with his own wants,

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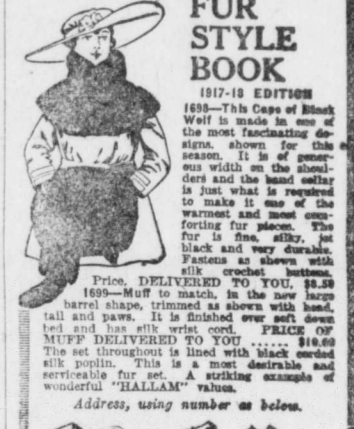


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