
A Skeptic Leaves His Card.

From Father Neil Boyton's biography of Don Bosco, "The Blessed Friend of Youth," we take the following interesting picture:

.... Don Bosco visited Paris. The usual crowds surrounded him. Don Bosco found time for each who sought him. A white-haired old gentleman came to the crowded antechamber. He took his place in line and waited three hours till his turn came. Many there recognized him, for he was a world-famous writer, and waiting there he must have observed his companions. He must have heard their eagerly expressed hopes that Don Bosco would cure themselves or some loved one. He could not escape noticing the joyous features of those who came out of the antechamber, where, from the lips of the humble Turin priest they had received words of comfort, and hope, and forgiveness.

When his time came this white-haired old gentleman went into the other room. We have Don Bosco's own account of that interview.

The gentleman said: "Above all, Don Bosco, I refuse to believe in the miracles which some persons are so loudly proclaiming about you." "Sir," said Don Bosco, smiling gently, "tell me, what do you believe or admit with regard to a future life?"

"Oh, we need not lose time discussing that question!" was the flippant reply. "I will speak of the future when it arrives." Don Bosco looked kindly at this aged scoffer and asked: "If it is thus with you, what then do you hope for? Very soon the present will no longer be yours. Of the future you will not hear a word. Now, what is your hope?" The priest paused a moment, and then with gentle gravity, continued: "You are bound to think of the eternal future, my friend. You have but a short span of life, and if you profit by it to return to the bosom of the Church and to beg the mercy of God, you will be saved. If not, you will die as an unbeliever and as a reprobate."

The white-haired old gentleman hesitated for a moment before replying and then murmured something to the effect that the most advanced in philosophical thought have never been able to solve the problem of immortality or annihilation. He added, "Don Bosco, I will think over what you have been saying, and, if you will allow me, I will come back another day."

Saying this, he rose and grasped the hand of Don Bosco. Then he laid a visiting card on the table and in silence left the room. Don Bosco had not asked the old gentleman his name, but after he had departed, he picked up the card and read "Victor Hugo."

The third day after, the famous writer was back in the antechamber. Again he waited his turn and when it came he was admitted. This time he approached with outstretched hand and exclaimed: "Don Bosco, I was but playing a part the other day, when I spoke to you as I did. I want you to be my friend. I do believe in the immortality of the soul. I believe in God, and I hope to die in the arms of a Catholic priest, who will recommend my soul to its Creator."

What reply Don Bosco made to Victor Hugo has never been divulged. We can readily guess that it had something to do with tempting Divine Providence and putting off till too late a reconciliation with God. It must have been disappointing to the proud intellect of one who had been "a god unto himself" these many years. Victor Hugo left the presence of Don Bosco. He lived a little over a year longer. There was no outward sign given, but it is known that Victor Hugo in his last moments was calling for a priest and calling in vain, because his Masonic "friends" would not heed the dying request. Poor Victor Hugo, may Blessed Don Bosco have aided him in those last precious moments!

PRAYERS: Dr. Ed Ryan asks prayers for his wife who is very ill.