

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

By Rev. N. M. Redmond
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

"BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM"

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

The practical followers of our Lord distinguish themselves in their daily lives from those who are not so, their profession nothing to the contrary, by their works.

If you love Me, keep My commandments. The practical followers of our Lord only are true Christians, whilst all others, be their profession or pretensions what they may, have to be classed with the heathen and the publican.

Our Lord is, as well as man, the God of all truth—Truth itself. Those, therefore, who oppose His law and the precepts of His Church, not being with Him, are against Him.

These are the false prophets to whom we should give thought today. They are daily engaged in blasting good in souls.

A child will instinctively turn from liquor, and if given it, its body will shudder at the unnatural administration. The first drink I ever took was at an open bar, at the age of twenty.

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TEMPERANCE

THE EFFECTS OF LIQUOR

The evil consequences of drink extend much farther than the drinker himself imagines, as is illustrated by the following story:

Mr. Burdick was a man who never touched liquor in any form, but he had several men in his employ who imbibed more or less. He had habit of dropping into his office at any time and asking for an interview with his chiefs of departments for instructions.

One afternoon about 4 o'clock, he came in quite unexpectedly, and sent for Mr. Boyle. The office boy returned and reported that Mr. Boyle had not been down all day.

"Well," said Mr. Burdick, "ask Mr. Cutler if he can step in here for a moment."

The boy soon returned. "Mr. Cutler hasn't come down yet," said the boy.

"Well," said Mr. Burdick, "find Mr. Congdon or Mr. Page, or Mr. Wood—anyone; I must see one of them immediately."

The boy went away again but came back with the discouraging word: "They ain't one of 'em down sir. There was some blowout last night and they all went."

Mr. Burdick muttered something in an undertone. Then rising, he said: "Well, for a man who don't drink, I certainly suffer more from the effects of liquor than any one I ever knew."

HOW THE HABIT GROWS

The Delinquent, (May, 1916) has an article by former Governor Malcolm Patterson of Tennessee, who describes among other things the beginnings and the hold of the alcohol habit:

A child will instinctively turn from liquor, and if given it, its body will shudder at the unnatural administration. The first drink I ever took was at an open bar, at the age of twenty.

I was never an habitual drinker at any time in my life; but later on, the craving would come at intervals, especially after fatigue, when one drink would follow another in rapid succession, with the inevitable result of disordered nerves, lowered vitality, incapacity to act or think clearly, and a feeling of inferiority and disgust.

When I would compare the misery that was mine after a day or a night of moderate drinking I would gladly have paid any price in exchange for the fatigue and the effects of drink combined.

ST. THOMAS AND DANTE

ON ST. PAUL'S DEFINITION OF FAITH

I have often heard it said, and have seen it in print, that Dante's "Divina Commedia" is St. Thomas's "Summa Theologica" in verse, writes Rev. William A. Sutton, S. J., in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record.

However the matter may be viewed, it is worth while calling attention to Dante's and St. Thomas's independent interpretation of St. Paul's definition of faith.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

FALLING AWAY FROM CHURCH

Who will insure that the faith which now rules the conduct of your Catholic household will last beyond the present generation?

Study the meaning of the expression: They "fall away" from the Church by neglecting to go to church. They lose their interest in religion. They do not come to hear the priest. They do not come to gain spiritual inspiration.

One remedy for "fallen away Catholics" would be for the priest to go to their household—or for their Catholic neighbors to visit them and exhort them to come back. But this is rarely or ever done.

OBSTACLES

We meet them everywhere. Even good people are confronted with an obstacle to their goodness now and then. Those early champions of the cause of Christ, the holy women, found a hindrance to their work of love in the great stone that sealed His tomb.

We are always so ready to find some "great stone" on the door-step of our religion. Strange that we find so many there and so few in our haunts of ease and pleasure. Almost anything will prove an obstacle when we are called upon to perform the "reasonable service" due to God, but it takes nearly the hand of death to stop us in the unreasonable service which we imagine is due to ourselves.

We're a selfish lot in the final analysis. It's not such a difficult matter, according to one of the doctors of the Church, to give away our possessions, but it's a mighty hard task to give ourselves. We're selfish by nature, and it's only by the grace of God that we are ever rendered unselfish.

How little it takes, for instance, to make us neglect the duties which our faith demands. It doesn't take much to keep us from the obligation of Sunday Mass—a little fall of rain, an early trip to the beach, a game of golf, almost a suggestion of a headache, or even less, will prove sufficient justifying causes to free us from the debt we owe to religion.

Change the picture; let the object of our duty be something of an emolument to self, and all the rain in the heavens, all the pleasures of the sea-shore, all the games imaginable, all the worst physical pains possible, will not keep us at home. There are no "great stones" in our way then, because at the end of the way we see in big letters of gold the word self.

Engagements with God are easily broken, but heaven help the one who forgets or treats lightly the engagement made with us. Let some one fail to keep with us an engagement to go to the theatre, and the results are awful. Friendship, that sacred bond, is shattered. Excuses are all in vain, we will never forgive such indifference. Man will not forgive the offense of his fellow-man, but God must always forgive His creatures.

Our feelings must never be tampered with; His feelings are not to be considered.

We go even further. How easily do we allow the simplest failings of our life partner in marriage to become a handle for separation. We are almost glad to find matter for excuse to liberate ourselves from the sacred bond of matrimony. On God's property there must appear no signs to prohibit us from trespassing, but on our own we feel free to write on every inch of it the words: Keep Off! His Sacraments are mere nothing, whereas our rights are simply everything.

Our judgment must be the last course of appeal. Our selfish self must be considered before all else, first, last and always.

Nothing to our eyes appears more sacred than the complete gratification of our every desire. We must never be thwarted. There must be no obstacles in our path; the whole world, and God Himself, must step aside to let us pass. Everything in us is of the greatest import, and we will tolerate nothing outside of the realm of self.

Oh, for the dawn of the day of the unselfish man! Will the saint of that day ever find a man who can behold the face of such a one. It did rise once, but its span of life was very short; but thirty-three years. And at its end selfish man found no obstacle to prevent Him from being nailed to the Cross. Thirty pieces of silver looked greater to poor Judas than the great reward of the faithful John. Judas was in the plan of Divine Providence not only to procure man's redemption from the sin of Adam, but to obtain likewise for man the great possession of unselfishness, which so gloriously shone forth from the Cross and Tomb of Christ.—The Tablet.

"BEHOLD THY MOTHER!"

One of the sweetest graces Our Lord gave us was at the close of His life, when, in the person of St. John, He made His Mother ours—she who had stood by the cross and willed the death of her Son because it was God's will. God's interest and here were one. After the long training of the thirty years she had lived with Jesus, she had no self left. Imagine what it must have meant to have lived with and watched Our Lord for thirty years—how she had imbibed His spirit; and when the time of parting came, as we look into those two human faces and human hearts, we understand that God does not want our human hearts to be crushed but sanctified.

And what has Mary done for us? She has loved us, taken joy in us, and interest in our work. From our very birth she has had her arms around us. What have we done for her? Can we look up and say sincerely, "Yes, I have done something for her in my life; I have always been glad to do or say whatever could promote her honor?" Still with all this we have many times given her pain. But there is this about wrongs done to Mary—we may make her angry, but we have never made her angry. God created her without anger. She is the reproduction of His kindness. His mercy, His love, His compassion, but not of His justice. Even with the cruel executioners she was not angry;

OCCASIONS OF SIN

The following passages from a pastoral of the late Bishop of Newport, England, are peculiarly timely: "There are those," says the Bishop, "who will not profess the creed of the libertines, but will refuse to renounce the frequentation of places, the company of persons and the readings of books which are plainly and experimentally dangerous occasions of sin. These occasions occur under pretext, sometimes of amusement and sometimes friendship. The following principle may here be laid down: If a thing is a grievous sin, we commit a grievous sin by exposing ourselves to the strong temptation of committing it. There are practically no exceptions to this rule, for the large majority of persons. Next, a thing that is a grievous sin to do, it is a grievous sin to desire, and even to dwell upon the thought. And finally no excuse of friendship, relationship or company can make a thing not to be a sin which would be a sin under other circumstances."

It is wrong to read books and newspapers which tend to excite the passion. No doubt, it is very difficult, under our modern conditions, to choose what to read, and to avoid all that is objectionable. But sin is in spite of such difficulty. The more the effort has to be made, and the self-restraint and self-denial to be practised. Parents have a most serious duty not to allow books and newspapers indiscriminately in the house. Trades-people are bound not to sell what is really bad. Young men and young women must be determined to avoid what is corrupting, and must absolutely give up what they find by experience has led them into sins of thought and desire. Again, there are in every town amusements that are productive of evil.

The fact is—and it cannot be stated too plainly—that the world does not recognize as wrong many actions, imaginations, desires and situations which the Catholic Church teaches to be grievously sinful. Hence it is quite possible that in the ordinary forms of amusements—such as theatricals, variety entertainments, dances and some kinds of games—there may be grievous harm. The same may be said of company-seeking with or without a view to marriage. It is well known how strict an older generation was on these matters and with good reason. It is certain that no pretense of custom, of altered times, of modern ideas, can make a thing lawful which is wrong in itself.—Sacred Heart Review.

LORD NINIAN

CHAPLAIN'S MEMORIES OF LAST DAYS OF HEROIC FIGURE

A French priest who was a vicar in one of the Paris churches and is now serving as a priest-interpreter with the English staff has sent the Croix the following letter in which he tells of the last Communion received by Lord Ninian Crichton-Stuart, son of the late Marquis of Bute, and brother of present holder of title, two days before his death: "This accursed war, with all its horrors, is yet fruitful in thousands of encouraging incidents. Here is one which happened in the last days of September in Artois, of which I was a witness. Having in the general confusion lost contact with the English unit to which I was attached as interpreter, I wandered in the cold and rain all night until the small hours of the morning, when I found myself near a little country church standing amid ruins. I made my way quickly to it, but scarcely had I crossed the threshold when my foot tripped in the gloom against a human form on its knees on the cold damp floor. I found that I had disturbed the prayers of a colonel of the brave English army. I excused myself as well as I could, and telling him that I was a priest, and that I had come in to see if I could say Mass.

At the mention of this word the good colonel rose quickly and said, "We will go and see." Signing to me to follow him, he went before me between two rows of wounded men lying on the straw with which the floor of the nave was covered. "We climbed over a heap of chairs and got into the sacristy, where we introduced ourselves to each other and then set to work to search for vestments and the necessities for Mass. Lord Ninian found what was wanted like a familiar of the house. Scarcely had I vested before the colonel asked me to hear his confession, and cut short any hesitation on my part by offering me a chair, and going down on his knees beside it. It goes without saying that he wished to communicate at the Mass which he was going to serve. But there was no small altar there, but a large one broken into quarters quickly got us out of our difficulty, and so I could proceed to the celebration of the holy mysteries.

AN UNFORGETTABLE MEMORY

"I shall never forget this incident in my military life, and this Mass, which I never to write anything but what is agreeable to his readers, and never to receive any letters but such as tell him he is a great man, and his periodical simply perfect. Sometimes, however, it is his duty to speak plainly concerning some move-

DEATH

DO YOU EVER THINK OF IT

Do you ever think that you will die? I do not mean thinking in a general way—it is appointed unto all men once to die—it will be all the same a hundred years from now—when I am gone—; but as you look up sometimes from your work, and your window shows you a funeral procession filing past, do you stop and think: some morning I, too, shall make that last journey through the haunts of living men, while the heedless passersby look on, and drivers and motormen fret because the cortege causes them delay? Or when you hear a church bell toll do you say to yourself: some morning I, too, shall lie before the altar; some morning for me the Requiem shall, too, be sung; some morning I shall leave the old church to enter it no more?

But even if you do think thus, that day is always thought of as off in the future; you will be very old, all your friends of earlier times shall have passed over to the other side, and you shall be glad to cross yourself—you shall be glad to go, then; but now? Very rarely, if ever, do you say, watching that procession, hearing that sad bell, shall I be the next one?

This horror of death is Life's envelope for her protection; yet nature is merciful and when, the final moment comes it passes and we are content with what is to be. I asked a friend who had looked death in the eyes, in a railroad wreck what were her feelings. She was young, surrounded by love, and the future was full of promise; yet she said, in those moments that seemed an eternity, when she believed the end of life had come for her, she felt absolutely no fear, nor dread, nor regret. Something within her seemed to mount gladly, bravely, and she kept saying to herself, this is death. But after the terrible grinding of the wheels ceased, and the over-turning coach lay still, and she knew that that coach had escaped the worst disaster, then all that calmness of soul departed, and a frantic desire for life succeeded. When the wings of death had passed over her head, life made its fierce claim upon her. Another, for whom death had stood many days with his hand on the latch, said the world and its people and affairs seemed away off, and he was conscious of a feeling of readiness to depart.

But the subject of death in modern days is carefully avoided; we even think it shows want of proper feeling when it is discussed upon in the pulpit. In harder days, it was not so, and when they assembled at banquet board or in festal hall, they "Gave the Stranger place, And when the joyous catch was trolled, And toasts were quaffed and tales were told, They looked him in the face."

I do not see why this now should make us sad. All life is one. They have not ceased to be who have gone before; nor shall we. Life, in the words of the poet, will not say goodbye but in some happier climate bid us good morning.

And how much a closer realization of this uncertainty of death would do for us! If an angel told you that tomorrow, or next week, or next year, this loved one should hear and answer the "one clear call," what tenderness would envelop every thought and act and word! Yes, if your enemy the announcement were made, how swiftly would this hate lose its hold on your heart, how quickly would you hasten to make peace with him or her, lest for you should henceforth be the dire burden of the unforgiving of the dead lays upon the living.

Or if you knew the hand of the dial of time were drawing near the hour marked as your last, how lovely you would strive to make these remaining days! how gallantly you would keep up your fight! how bravely you would strive to gain more abundantly the goods that perish not! Gracious deeds and loving words would crowd the remaining hours; easily could you offer the hand of pardon to your foe, knowing how soon you should be past the bounds of his hating; generously could you forgive as he seems one entering into the Great Forgiveness; splendidly endure as one certain so soon of the Hills of Victory.

Since our only certainty is life's uncertainty, if we were wise would we not act now as if that announcement had been made for us?—Anna C. Minogue, in The Tablet.

WHEN EDITORS MUST SPEAK PLAINLY

"An editor's task," remarks America, "would be a pleasant one had he never to write anything but what is agreeable to his readers, and never to receive any letters but such as tell him he is a great man, and his periodical simply perfect. Sometimes, however, it is his duty to speak plainly concerning some move-

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