

## FIVE MINUTE SERMON

By Rev. N. M. Redmond  
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

TWO REASONS WHY WE SHOULD FAST  
"And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry." (Matt. iv. 2.)

The chief motive which our Blessed Lord had in undergoing His fast of forty days and forty nights, was to teach us by His divine example to correspond with our obligation to fast, which is inculcated by the divine law both in the Old and the New Dispensation. Our obligation to fast is divine in its origin. The Church simply designates the time and the manner in which, according to circumstances, it must be fulfilled. Religion's entire history is replete with details of the strict observance of this duty by the servants of God both in the Old and New Law. No one, who is at all conversant with the Sacred Scriptures, needs proof of this. I cannot, however, refrain from reminding you that the gospel commends Anna, the prophetess, for her constant service of God "in prayer and fasting." Neither should we forget that St. Paul spent his life after his conversion "in hunger and thirst, and often fasting." No less was this the holy practice of the other Apostles who ministered to the Lord, and fasted; "and when they had ordained priests in every church they prayed with fasting." These few instances suffice to show that the Apostles considered fasting a duty, which God exacts of His servants. Nothing different, of course, can be found in the example and teachings of the Fathers, and of the Saints of the Church as regards the obligation to fast; they have always been and must always be the same. No change, save those of a disciplinary nature, respecting the circumstances of time and manner, can be introduced. So long as there are men on earth, the object of the law, and therefore the law, will exist. In his organization man ascends in likeness to God, and descends in his likeness to the animal of the field. He has in his twofold nature a resemblance to the two extremes of being. Till the fall the relation between these extremes was perfect—that is, the supremacy of his better nature was undisputed by the inferior part. Since then, as sad experience will not allow him to doubt, it has been quite otherwise. Hence, God, knowing the constant warfare, "man's life is a warfare on earth," between the two natures in man, and willing the better nature's supremacy, for thus only could man serve the purpose for which He created him and reach his final destiny, has commanded him to use certain aids to the end. Amongst the many is the one to fast. This then is one view of the twofold object of the divine law to fast. It has been one of the primary motives that have kept the servants of God, both in the Old and the New Law, in fidelity to their obligation to fast. They have, like St. Paul, thus "chastised their bodies and brought them into subjection lest they should become castaways." Has it not the endorsement of reason? Do we not temper the food of animals, which we use for domestic purposes, with a view to keep them within control?

The other side of the object of the law, of which the true Christian never loses sight, is the penitential process which is effected in the fulfilment of his obligation. He knows full well that the attainment of our Blessed Lord was superabundantly sufficient to satisfy for all the sins of the human race, but he is not ignorant of the fact that, the fruits of that atonement must be applied to each in the manner ordained by our Lord. One of the means of this application, as our Lord and His apostles have taught, is penance. This is absolutely necessary for all who have forfeited innocence by the commission of sin. We must have either innocence or penance to show after life's journey, else we will not be adjudged of God. Nay, both the innocent and the guilty need to practice this virtue; the former, as we have seen, as an antidote; the latter, as a chastisement and satisfaction. Hence the words of our Lord: "Except you do penance, you shall perish." St. Paul no less clearly announces the necessity of the practice of the virtue of penance for all, be their spiritual condition what it may, when he says: "God now declareth to man, that all should everywhere do penance." Equally in line of course were the Fathers of the Church when they taught that, we must either "do penance or burn." The great and necessary penance for all in mortal sin is, of course, a good sacramental confession. This is, as it should be, foremost in the minds of all, as the supreme means of reconciliation between God and the sinner. We suppose it in the case of him who had sinned mortally, ere we speak of merit accruing to him from fasting or other penitential works. Supposing then that all here have thus been reconciled with God, that their sins have been condoned, and the eternal punishment due to them has been remitted or, as some express it, committed to temporal, have we not in this, a powerful motive to fast and perform other penitential works? Whether this temporal debt stands against us by commutation or otherwise it must be satisfied for either here or in the fire of Purgatory. All will admit that it is far better to purify ourselves of it on earth, than to be purified of it, so as by fire, hereafter. Hence, you see, dear people, our obligation to fast is from God. As

you perceive, it is necessary as a preservative; it is necessary as a penance. Engage and continue in it, in peace with God, and with the ardent desire to make your inferior nature subservient to the superior, and to satisfy for the temporal punishment due to your sins. "Do penance or burn."

### TEMPERANCE

#### THE DRUNKARD

It is rather unusual to find a prohibition candidate praising the good qualities of the drunkard. But we are assured that a tribute to the class of men who become drunkards was paid by Ira Landrith, the prohibition candidate for vice president, in an address to young women at Ward Belmont College in Nashville recently.

"Don't judge the drunkard too harshly," Landrith is reported to have said. "For one thing, he never is a tightwad. He who worships the bottle on the shelf. The mean, miserly, narrow skinned does not get drunk. The man who becomes a drunkard likes men; the miser has no social instinct. Prohibition of the liquor traffic will save to us a generation of men who would give a blessing to their time."

The man who yields to the temptation to over-indulgence is not without his good qualities. He usually begins as a hail fellow well met. He likes companionship and is generous, usually to a fault. But with all this there is the fatal defect of weakness in his character. And when he has become a drunkard can there be a more wretched, unlovable being? All his good qualities are then in eclipse. Lost to self-respect he loses the respect even of his friends. He may be rescued and in some measure restored to his former self. But such instances are few enough. Usually he goes down to a drunkard's grave, pitied, but despised by those who realize how he has abused his splendid gifts.

Yes, the potential drunkard is worth saving. But the actual drunkard is hard to save from himself. His family suffers the hardships of want and the disgrace of his fall, while he himself is indifferent to the misery he brings upon others. He was once a bright, generous youth; he has become a slave to his passion for drink. Could anything be more pitiable than the making of a king among men into a sodden, drunken wretch?—Sacred Heart Review.

**ALCOHOL A DEADLY POISON**  
"Habitually alcoholized blood starves and taints the brain cells and allied nervous system. Psychic brain cells bathed in to-infect blood do not give safety and logical surety to the movements of the mind. Alcoholics should be classed with other poisons and their use as beverages discarded. Medical men have had testimony from laboratory, hospital, and fatal family pathologic lineage and sequence testimony against alcohol as an unsafe drink, forceful for harm beyond former estimate. Even in their mildest forms of dilution, as in wines, beers, and ales, alcoholics are not fit for the family table, the social club, or the public bar."—Dr. Charles F. Hughes.

### LENT

Every good quality, every noble achievement, springs from the bitter root of self-sacrifice. A mother's love is the most sacred thing in the eyes of the world just because it takes no account of those things—time, ease, health, amusement and life itself—by which men set most store. Friendship is based on a glad relinquishment of our whims and wishes in many matters. Patriotism appears most beautiful and engaging in war. Art grows because it is watered with sweat. All genuine literature is written in tears. No wonder, therefore, that we are prepared to listen to religion when it asks for blood.

For if religion is the noblest, holiest thing in this world it must perforce ask precisely that which men treasure most—the liberty to enjoy themselves whenever and however they please. It must demand the sacrifice not only of the illegitimate things of life, but also, on occasion, of those pleasures which in themselves are lawful and permissible. And it calls for these things not in a spirit of hard heartedness and stoic inhumanity, but in the hope that by such retrenchment of earthly pleasures we will clear our eyes and sharpen our minds to a fuller appreciation of the very fundamental postulate of revealed religion, which is nothing else than a whole-hearted surrender of ourselves into the hands of God.

Without the purification that comes from tears and fasting, pain and sorrow, it would be sacrilegious, on our part, to dare to offer God a life which we have "polluted and soiled" by our sins and worldliness—for we are not worse to-day than when we came from the baptismal bath? Right here, then, comes in the reasonableness of penance. By it we brush away the dust of the world from our souls; by it we soften our hard hearts for the operation of God's grace; by it we bend our wills to a ready and steady bearing of the divine yoke. Fasting cleanses tongues coated with worldliness, it sharpens eyes befogged by the mists of self-love, it invigorates minds in search of the condescensions of the Master's love. It is at once an antidote to kill the sinful germs that are festering in our souls and a tonic to build up healthy



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spiritual tissues. By weakening the sources on which our passions grow fat it diminishes the number of our sins. It is a spiritual dieting which the saints of God found beneficial.

Hence we should enter upon the Lenten season of fasting not only obediently, as sons who cherish the injunctions of a wise and loving Mother, but self-sacrificingly, as invalids who know that in the acme of pain lies sure release from spiritual lethargy and effeminacy.—The Rosary Magazine.

### SCIENCE

#### BIOLOGY IS NOT SCIENCE CHILD OF NINETEENTH CENTURY

The recent appearance of a timely pamphlet of the English Catholic Truth Society entitled "Don'ts for Students in Science and History," compiled by G. S. Boulger, F. L. S., F. G. S., draws attention to a matter which it is well for Catholics to keep in mind. It has become so much the custom of the present age to link the name of religion with ignorance and hatred of science and to speak quite cocksurely of the opposition between scientific learning and the Church that Catholics are indeed likely to fall victims to this common error. The idea is in the air and all are in danger of becoming inoculated with its injurious poison.

Dr. Walsh gives a good number of "don'ts" which will serve as antidotes for this trouble. "Don't believe," he says, for example, "that there was no study of science until modern times. Many branches of science, especially those of practical application, attained a very high level in medieval times; the medieval universities took a lively interest in scientific research and many questions were studied according to thoroughly scientific methods. In almost every department of science, students are now finding it neglected medieval authorities." That is certainly a matter which it is valuable to remember. When the details in its regard are given the force of its truth can be the better understood. "Don't forget," he adds a little later on, "that it was to the Orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic that the universities of northern Europe owed their early success; to teachers such as the Dominican Blessed Albert the Great and his pupil, St. Thomas Aquinas, and the Franciscan Roger Bacon," and he quotes the words of the non-Catholic Green in tribute to the latter.

Science then flourished in the Middle Ages under the encouragement of such great master minds as those here mentioned! And science of the most "modern kind" was not unknown within the monastery walls of those Catholic centuries! That is the fact, as Father Erich Wassmann, the great Jesuit biologist, has shown in such striking manner in his splendid work, "Modern Biology and the Theory of Evolution." He quotes the testimony of the noted German professor, Dr. R. Hertwig of the University of Munich, and Dr. H. Stadler, to show that biology, the boasted science-child of the nineteenth century, was known and studied in a scrupulously thorough manner by the great Dominican, Albertus Magnus. In a lecture on "Albertus Magnus as an Independent Student," delivered in Munich in 1905, the latter professor said: "This very prolific writer was a scholastic, but he occupies a position on a level with Aristotle rather than subordinate to him, and did not simply reproduce Aristotle's statements, but, as far as he could, explained, completed and expanded them. He displayed great shrewdness and keen intelligence in carrying on his favorite observations on the animals and plants of Germany whence he derived the evidence for his scientific statements that he based upon Aristotle. His writings therefore contain all the information on natural history possessed by the people of Germany of his day; he describes the life of animals as observed by intelligent huntsmen and farmers, fishermen

and bird catchers; everywhere the biological element and his own personality are prominent, and for this reason his writings form a sharp contrast to the dry book-learning of the periods preceding and following his life-time."

From Hertwig we learn, through Wassmann, that Albert "even began to collect his own zoological observations. In many passages of his work on animals he refers to his own investigations, and when he describes anything, he frequently adds the remarks to the effect that he has himself seen the thing in question, and even possesses it in his collection. He devotes several chapters to the habits of the falcon, which he seems to have studied with particular interest. In one instance he tells us that he took a short sea voyage for zoological purposes, and on the shore of an island he collected eleven kinds of 'bloodless sea beasts.'" "Other like details are told of him. (Wassmann, "Modern Biology and the Theory of Evolution," London and St. Louis, 1914, pp. 13-16.)

Biology therefore is not so new as we have been led to imagine. Aristotle lived quite a time ago. And in the famed Dark Ages, a white-robed Dominican, suffering to-day under the label of "ignorant," which is placed upon the monks of his time, worked sedulously to learn of some of those things which many have regarded as comparatively recent discoveries. Catholics should certainly know something of these things and not allow themselves to fall into the misconception which so many people harbor at the present day. Science and Religion go hand in hand—a fact which the records of History strongly attest.—New World.

### THE SLEEP

God thought of sleep, so that He might  
Cradle His Man in the cool night  
With more than mother's love, and hold  
Warm to His breast the child of old.

Poor Man, that is so proud and high,  
Yet he must fall asleep and lie  
Open to all the winds and harms,  
Unless God rocks him in His arms.

Poor Man, though all besmirched,  
Yet the last innocence of sleep,  
And like a child must lie alone  
Defenceless, harmless, overthrown.

God's gentleness with sinners see!  
In sleep they will not disagree  
Nor hurt as only lovers can;  
They are at one, God and His Man.

Tenderly night shall find him, held  
To a kind breast, who late rebelled,  
New-reconciled with kisses he  
Shall slumber on a mighty knee.

Man's bare and toddling child, stripped  
Of all the countless years that were:  
Little and low; God's art to keep  
A youngling thing in His arms asleep.

—By KATHARINE TYNAN in The Queen

### CLIENTS OF THE CHRIST-CHILD

The Queen's Work reminds us that: "Christmas time is indeed a season when our generosity to the missions should be newly kindled by the sight of the manger of Bethlehem. So long ago Christ came to save the world, and as yet only a bare third of the human race have heard the tidings of His coming. More than a hundred million pagan babies, some of them cast out to die by their inhuman parents, are waiting for the waters of baptism, which there are none to pour upon them. Fancy, if you can, the numbers of even the infants in pagan lands. If they were to be carried by you in procession, one every second, by day and by night, that sad procession would be nearly three years in passing. If they were gathered together in one place, they would people with their tiny forms twenty cities like New York or London. Even 20 cents is enough, sometimes to save a dying baby."



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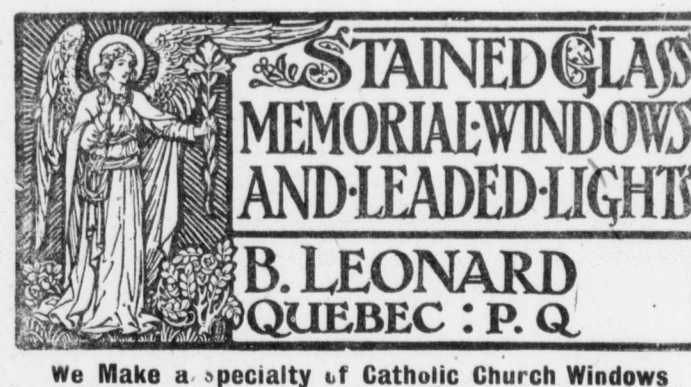
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The Williams is more than a life-long enjoyment. It is an instrument for whose enduring worthiness your children—and those who follow—will grow to cherish and love.

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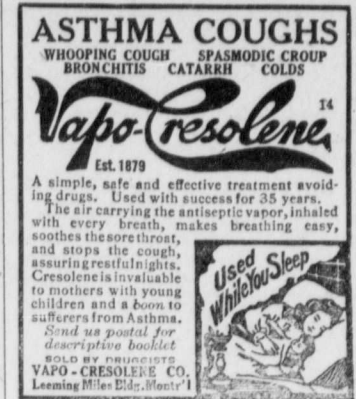
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God hath yoked to Guilt her pale tormentor, Misery.—Bryant.



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