FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. F. PEPPERT THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Rejoice with me, because I have found My sheep it was lost." (Luke xv, 6.)

Nothing tends more to spur us on really to correct our faults than the thought of God's infinite love and mercy. If we look closely at them, we can not resist their influence, for we have a God, a Redeemer, and a Shepherd, who seeks His lost sheep with true, unselfish love. Our being with true, unselfish love. Our being found adds nothing to His majesty and happiness, our being lost does not diminish them, and yet He desires us to attain to salvation and eternal bliss. If we hold aloof from Him we do so to our own injury. How foolish and ungrateful it is on our part to turn a deaf ear to His our part to turn a deaf ear to His voice, when He calls us to amend-ment of life, for love of Him and for our own welfare! We ought to be more concerned about correcting our faults than about anything else. Let us do our best to have pure hearts to offer to Him. Let us persevere in our endeavor to reach Him and to become more and more per-fect. Jesus sought us and found us; means of baptism He admitted us His Church, and whenever we have sinned He has sought and found us again in the sacrament of penance and the Holy Eucharist. Let us hold fast to Him! A noble example of adherence to Christ is set us by the first community of Christians, who gathered round the Apostles as soon as the Holy Ghost had come down upon them. The thrilling words of St. Peter's first sermon had moved all hearts, and when they had been purified in the water of baptism, and had received the grace of God, they formed a community destined to be a model for Christians of every age. Those early Christians had recourse to the right means of preserving and increasing the grace bestowed upon them. They persevered in the outward tion, and we read in the Acts of the Apostles the following short but striking account of them: "They were persevering in the doctrine of ostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers " (Acts ii, 42.)

These words show us that Christians have always regarded the outward worship of God as a sacred duty, and as the best means of attaining salvation. It is a disastrous mistake to suppose that it is enough to worship God in one's heart, and that it is unnecessary to take part in any public worship. Such a mistake can be made only by the lukewarm who care nothing for the things of God, or by those who fancy themselves cultured and think that they display their superiority by refusing to join others in prayer, or by eccentric dreamers, who prewhat is imaginary to what is solid and true. It is a duty, binding upon every Christian, to take part in the public worship of God, and this duty is a great joy and privilege, for to join with others in asking favors of God and to share with others the grace that He bestows, is indeed a happiness, and at the same time each one is helped and strengthened by his neighbor's example. By God's grace and the force of mutual example, public worship becomes a source of blessing and encourage Hence you should at all times take pleasure in devoutly assisting at it; may it conduce to your spiritual progress, strength and perfection, and may you be at the same time a means of edifying and perfection, and may you be at the same time a means of edifying and encouraging your fellow worshippers. Many Christians in this world complain that their sphere of action he better instructed in the doctriers. If all obstacle is the first Plenary Council of Quebec warn physicians to take that of others, or, at least, it prevents him from doing as much good as he would be able to effect, were intemperance. As ordered by a careis very limited and they cannot be of use to many people, but what a wide field of activity lies open to each of us at public worship! There it is possible for the simplest and hum-blest to do more for the edification and encouragement of others, by unaffected piety, genuine devotion and quiet fervour, than can be effected by the most eloquent sermons. Attendance at public worship is a duty for the strong. as well as for the weak. How strong were those first Christians, the original three thousand and the others who joined them in accepting our Lord's doctrines! Yet it is of them that St. Luke says They were persevering in the doc trine of the Apostles, and in the com-munication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii, 42.) We have here in the history of the early Church all the essentials of public worship in the Catholic Church to this day, viz., instruction, the sacri fice of Holy Mass as Communion, and prayer. In the Acts, the most holy Sacrament of the Altar is mentioned between the instruction and prayer, for it is from Holy Mass, the sacrifice of the Altar, that both instruction and prayer derive their efficacy. Without it instruction would be

given to no purpose, and our prayers would not penetrate to the height of heaven. "They were persevering . . . in the communication of the breaking of bread," i. e., they broke bread in common. Even non-Catholic commentators do not deny that this refers to the most holy Sacrament of the Altar. It was so called because, at its institution our Lord Himself broke the bread that He changed into His own Body. St. Paul, too, writes: "The bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord?" (I. Cor. x, 16.)

Like the first Christians, the Catholic Church still regards the holy Sacrifice of the Mass as the chief part of our worship of God, for there is no real worship without sacrifice.

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It betrays complete ignorance of the essence of religion to suppose that we could dispense with the Sacrifice of the Mass, and that it would be enough to recite some beautiful prayers either in the privacy of one's own room, or out in the open coun-When we say prayers, we make use of our own feeble expressions but at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass Jesus presents our prayers to His heavenly Father, praying for us and acting as our mediator, so that through Him our prayers, offered to the Father in and with Him, acquire infinite power of impetration. Nor can holy Mass be replaced by a sermon or by pious reading, for in both sermens and reading God speaks to us, but in holy Mass He pours out

upon us His living grace. Never in all your life let yourselves be hindered from assisting at the holy Sacrifice with true, heartfelt devotion. In every other part of our worship we seek God, but at Mass we find Him. If you know how to hear Mass as the Catholic Church would have you do, you will certainly not be lost. If you ever begin to waver you will derive fresh strength from the Mass. At the same time you should not neglect hearing in-structions. The first Christians were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles; that is to say, they came eagerly to be instructed by the Apostles, and were never tired of hearing them. The zeal of a Christian should be intelligent, for if it is unenlightened it often is an obstacle of faith. Hence it is of the utmost importance to every Christian to hear God's word devoutly, to impress upon his mind the teaching of the Church, and frequently to meditate upon the truths of our holy faith. The more often and the more attentively we listen to the word of God, the better shall we realize the beauty of our Lord's teaching, and the fact that beneath the mist enveloping the learning of this world there is no solid truth. We shall moreover gain power to resist the temptations by means of which the world strives to rob us of our faith, and with it of our peace of mind and everlasting

The first Christians were persever ing in prayer; nothing checked their faithful practice of it, not the coldness and indifference of the world, and not their own dryness or disinclination. What blessings were won by this persevering prayer! This thought should encourage you to join together in prayer with real devotion, remembering our Lord's



promise: "Where there are two of three gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matth. xviii, 20) When you pray together, think of Jesus as being in your midst, for He really is with you.
He will hear your united prayer and
give you His blessing, so that you
may ever grow in virtue, and sin
may be driven out. He will cause may be driven out. He will cause you to be filled with a spirit of zeal, humility and obedience; He will help you to live at peace with one another and to be united in true charity towards God and man, and then you will become like that first Christiau community, which heard the good Shepherd's voice and was faithful to Him, and so could never be separated from Him. Amen.

TEMPERANCE

THE WAR PLEDGE AND SOME REASONS FOR IT

sed Sacrament Parish Record. Ottaw Have you taken the war pledge t Unless you are already a total ab stainer, it is an act of virtue you owe to yourself, to your neighbor, to your country and to your religion, if not in justice at least in charity, as the following very temperate summary of the drink question will show.

Intoxicating drinks, that is, beer, wine and spirits, are so called because, when taken in sufficient quan tities, they intoxicate, that is, poison The very word intoxicate shows this as it comes from the Greek toxicon which means poison. The poison in beer, wine and spirits is alcohol. The form of poisoning resulting from a heavy dose of alcoholic drink, or from a constant use of it, is called alcoholism. It is one of the most prevalent and harmful of all disease s the Fathers of the First Plenary Council of Quebec put it : " Alcoho is a poison whose awful property is to attack at the same time both soul and body, of which it paralyses energy and dries up every life-spring."

Now drinkers of alcoholic or in-toxicating drinks may be divided into four classes—the abstemious drinker, the moderate drinker, the heavy drinker, and the drunkard.

THE ABSTEMIOUS DRINKER The abstemious drinker is he who quantities that they do him no harm. That thoroughly innocent enjoyment may be obtained by the abstemious of wine and other alcoholic drinks is clear from the words of Holy Writ: "Wine was created from the beginning to make men joyful and not to make them drunk. Wine drunken with moderation is a joy of the soul and heart." (Ecclus. xxxi, Besides this effect of "cheer ing the heart of man" (Psalm citi 15), wine is useful as a medicine in 10), wine is useral as a medicine in certain ailments. The words of the Apostle St. Paul to his disciple Timothy, who was a total abstainer, are well known: "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thy frequent infirmities." (I, Tim. v, 23) St. Jerome thus explains this much abused text: "See for what reason the draught of wine is granted: that relief may be afforded to the aching stomach and the frequent infirmity, and lest we should make an excus of an illness he orders that a little should be taken." St. Jerome adde that this little wine should be taken only by a physician's advice. As some physicians are too ready to please patients by prescribing wine and other alcoholic drinks as a tonic (as a matter of fact when used regularly they are toxic not tonic), the Fathers of the First Plenary Council better instructed in the doctrines | ful and conscientious physician alco hol is a useful drug in certain dismoderate quantities, alcoholic drinks have no medicinal value. Apart from the necessary and temporary use of alcohol in certain diseases, the abstemious drinker, above re-proach as he is, would do better to abstain altogether. That this morti-fication is beneficial to himself and pleasing to God is clear from the fol-lowing Mosaic law. "When a man or woman shall make a vow to be sanctified, and will consecrate themselves to the Lord, they shall abstain from wine and from everything that may make a man drunk."
(Numbers vi, 2, 3.) God required total abstinence in the Old Law from the Nazarites, that is from those who sought the perfect life. St. John the Baptist, of whom the angel foretold, "he shall drink no wine or strong drink" was the forerunner of the countless saints of the New Law who have been total abstainers. These included all the early hermits, all the Eastern monks, all the Irish, Scot-tish and Welsh monks, and countless saints and holy persons in every age and in every state of life. In the Greek Church wine was, and to a certain extent is yet, forbidden on days of strict abstinence. That total abstinence is also most beneficial to our neighbor, in removing from him

our neighbor, in removing from him a possible source of scandal or sin is clear from the words of St. Paul:
"It is good . . . not to drink wine nor to do anything whereby thy brother is offended or scandalized or made weak." (Rom. xiv, 21). THE MODERATE DRINKER The second class of drinkers is the habitual moderate drinker. By a moderate drinker we mean one that never offends against sobriety. Modern science has however conclusively proven, what was not generally known before, that the habitual moderate drinker slowly but surely poisons his system. "No person," poisons his system. "No person," stinence with a voice so terrible, states a competent authority, Dr. that lying liquor advertisements and

Austin O'Malley, "has ever yet taken habitually two or three drinks of whisky daily, or a pint of claret and escaped chronic alcoholism." A similar effect is produced by the daily consumption at one sitting of three pints of German beer, a quart of English ports. of English porter, a tumbler and a half of sherry or about half a tumbler of brandy or whisky. The alcohol imbibed weakens or diseases the stoma h, liver, kidneys, heart and nervous system, lowers physical strength and mental efficiency, and as numerous statistics undoubtedly show, shortens life. It can do all this in the moderate drinker who never gets drunk or even shows signs of liquor, as the saying is The signs of liquor are however visible to the keen eye of the physician. If the alcoholism of the moderate

drinker be scarcely perceptible or altogether absent, there is no sin, provided of course drinking does not lead him to other sins; but if the alcoholism be serious and perceived as such, the moderate drinker, though he never offend against sobriety, cannot be excused from sin. For it is sinful deliberately and unnecessarily to injure one's he To injure gravely one's health is a grievous sin. There is another danger to which the moderate drinker exposes himself—the danger of falling gradually into intemperance, for "wine hath destroyed very many." (Ecclus, xxxii, 30.) Hence Holy Scripture warns even the moderate drinker: "Look not upon the wine of shineth in the glass; it goeth in pleasantly, but in the end it will bite like a snake and spread abroad poison like a basilisk." (Proverbs xxiv, 31-32.) The poisonous effects of alcohol are here clearly indicated. Hence total abstinence is better than looking upon wine. The moderate drinker has every reason for becoming a total abstainer. He will be a better man if he will say with St. Jerome: "I will willingly do without the cup, wherein there is the taint of poison."

THE HEAVY DRINKER The third class of drinkers are the heavy drinkers. By them we mean, not persons who become drunk, but persons who drink enough to show outwardly some of the effects of poison that is undermining every organ in their system and, in addition, weakening and destroying their moral character. Though a heavy drinker may possibly never once get drunk in his whole life, he never escapes the terrible penalty of his sin. A few texts will show how this sin is viewed in Holy Scripture. Woe unto you that are mighty to you that rise up early in the mornng to follow strong drink, that tarry till late in the night till wine inflame them." (Isaias v, 11.) "Who hath woe? Whose father hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? . . Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? Surely they that pass their time in wine, and study to drink off their cupe.' Proverbs xxiii, 29-30.) "He that loveth wine . . . shall not be rich."
(Proverbs xxi, 17.) "Wine is a Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, whosoever is delighted therewith shall not be wise." (Proverbs xx, 1.) Wine drunken with excess is bit-erness of the soul." (Ecclus. xxxi, terness of the soul." 39.) "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is riotessness." (Ephes ians. v, 18.)

The harm that the heavy drinker. who never gets really drunk, does to his body, his mind, his soul, his parents and children, neighbors and friends, to his country and to his church, is quite inconceivable. The amount of disease, poverty, degra-dation, insanity, premature death and amnation caused by heavy drinking is worse than the evils of war, pestilence and famine combined. For the heavy drinker, total abstinence is not merely useful, it is as a rule, practically necessary, if he wishes to overcome his vice.

THE DRUNKARD

Finally, to conclude our short and temperate summary, the fourth class of drinkers is the drunkard. We shall not even refer to the evils of this crime and sin. The words of the Holy Ghost are sufficient: "Do not err. . . . drunkards . . . shall not possess the kingdom of

God." (1 Cor. vi, 10.) For the drunkard total abstinence is an absolute necessity. It cannot be prac ticed however unless accompanied by such physical and mental as may be necessary, and as well by prayer, frequentation of the sacraments, and the diligent striving to obtain, in addition to temperance the other three cardinal virtues; for the drunkard lacks all four.

To sum up, total abstinence from alcoholic drinks is necessary for some persons, and beneficial to all others. Or as St. Ambrose neatly puts it, "Wine hath done harm to many, abstinence to none.'

THE WAR PLEDGE

The truth concerning alcohol has been preached in print and pulpit since the oldest man living was born, yet it is far from being universally accepted. This is largely due to the fact that the enormous capital invested in the liquor traffic spends vast sums to cover our bill boards and fill the columns of our newspapers with lying advertisements to further the sale of alcoholic drinks. some of our daily newspapers have begun to imitate the weekly religious press in refusing liquor advertisements. A law might well be passed prohibiting liquor advertise-ments on bill-boards. A teacher has arisen, however, who preaches ab-stinence with a voice so terrible,

in many other things, is now teaching us to abstain from alcohol. England and Ireland suffer more from Drink than they do from the War, awful as the War is. The same is true of Canada. No nation wishes to fight the enemy without and the enemy within at the same time. Hence the War Pledge to abstain from intoxicating drink till the and rence the war Pleage to abstain from intoxicating dripk till the end of the War. By taking the War Pleage we perform a noble patriotic act. Have you volunteered to join the army against dripk? Millions of recruits are wanted. When you join, add to your patriotic western. join, add to your patriotic motive religious one, one that will make your act supernaturally meritorious, the desire to honor God, aid your neighbor and further your own salvation. Let the pledge or promise to abstain from intoxicating drinks be made prudently, not rashly or thoughtlessly; let it be practised faithfully with a willing acceptance of such inconveniences and mortifi-

The following prayer is an excel-lent means of keeping our total ab-stinence resolution in the super-

indulgence may be gained any day by any person, who with a contrite heart recites it. (Pius X. March 29, 1904.) for Thee, to repair Thine injured honor, to obtain the salvation of cations as may accompany it, and without pride, self sufficiency, or the habit of reflection upon those who

KING FERDINAND RECONCILED TO THE CHURCH

altar. Amen."

natural plane. Three hundred days

"God, my Father, to show my love

souls, I firmly determine not to drink

wine, beer or any inebriating drink to-day. I offer Thee this mortifica-tion in union with the sacrifice of

Thy Son Jesus Christ, Who daily to Thy glory immolates Himself on the

King Ferdinand of Bulgaria has be come reconciled to the Church and publicly made his Easter duty a few weeks since. It will be remembered that he consented twenty years ago to have his son Boris baptized in the Orthodox Church and brought up in the same schism. He even came to Rome at the time of Leo XIII. to endeavor to secure the consent to this action, which would go to show that he was at first ignorant of the gravity of what he was doing. The penalty of it was excommunication. But the King has now made all the amends in his power and is once more to be reckoned among the Catholic sov-ereigns of Europe.—From Rome.

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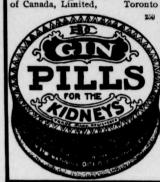
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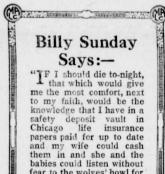
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