

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

REV. P. P. HICKY, O. S. B.
ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

THE ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH: THEIR
ALLY, THE DRINK EVIL

"He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little." (Ecclesiastes, xix, 1.)

We have studied the great enemies of the Church—the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Let us now look at their ally—the Drink Evil—and learn to fear it. What a poor, weak text, you will say, my brethren, for a sermon on the devastating evil of drink! You perhaps may think these words are addressed to pious people, warning them not to omit or curtail their devotion. In the Holy Book, from which they are taken, they are preceded and followed by condemnation of drink. (Ecclesiastes, xix, 1, 2.)

And my aim this morning is to warn and frighten beginners, and not to try and reclaim habitual drunkards. One man, who signals and stops a train and averts an accident, does more good than twenty doctors, who, after the collision, attend to the injured.

No one is a drunkard to begin with. How does the evil take hold of people? "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little." It is an insidious evil. Some, alas! from heredity, have a lurking craving for it. Woe to those mothers who, through being saturated with drink for years themselves, leave their poor children with this cursed weakness. A taste begets the liking, the liking a craving—a craving that is insatiable.

Others, not prone to this vice, the devil has to lay siege to and make captive in some way. Perhaps they are weak and delicate, and they are ordered wine as a stimulant. They take it and learn to enjoy it; it does them good. There is no sin as yet. But in how many cases is it the beginning of a downfall? The amount is increased; recurrence to it more frequent; then it is craved for; then taken secretly; conscience is stifled, its fears are ridiculed. And another one has proved the text: he would not believe it till he tried himself. "Shall fall by little and little."

And company, good fellowship, the habit of standing treat, the fear of being thought niggardly or cowardly if you do not the same as others—all this drags off souls of men into the evil, as the travelers net the helpless fishes of the deep.

Oh the pity of it! If men and women would only listen to a warning, would only be humble and fearful, and learn from the experiences of others, all would be well; but no; each one thinks he will escape, where others have perished.

How simple and easy is the beginning! And for some time no great evil happens. That is the craft of the devil! If you fall into deadly sin at once, you would draw back affrighted, take the pledge, never let drink pass your lips again. Oh no! the devil lets the liking for it grow, and the habit get a firm, steady hold of you. And you, as yet, have done nothing wrong. So what you read and hear of the evils of drunkenness seems such an exaggeration, that you begin not to believe sermons or holy books. Yes, your better feelings are blunted, your mind is darkened; you are less afraid of it day after day. The liking and the quantity taken grow insensibly—a craving comes on; the power of resisting, weakened already, snaps, and you are helpless. You thought you were a man, and a free man, to do as you liked; and you wake up to find that you are the sullen slave of drink!

The Sacred Books warn us. The Saints of old warn us. Is it any use? Saints Basil, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Augustine denounce drunkenness. They all four call it "the mother of every vice, the parent of every crime, the root of wickedness."

Let us test whether these words are exaggerations; if so, they lose their power, and harm the cause instead of aiding it. According to them the drink evil is the greatest of all, for it leads to all sin, to the breaking of all the Commandments. Is that so? Is it not enough to break one? Can it be that Catholic men and Catholic women give themselves over to a vice, that breaks all the Ten Commandments?

See for yourselves. The First Commandment: "The Lord thy God thou shalt adore, and Him only shalt thou serve." And St. Paul points at the drunkards: "Whose God is their belly" (Phil. iii, 19). Adore, pray, raise up your mind and heart! How can he? St. Cyril says: "Drink dulls the senses, leads captive the mind, dims the sight, ties the tongue, and dishonors it." We have all heard the senseless babbling of a drunken man; could that be prayer? And the Second Commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Oaths, curses, and blasphemies are the language of the drunkard, even in the case of those, who otherwise do not commonly sin in this way.

"Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day." Remember! How can he? The drunkard has no senses to remember with. And when the Church bells ring for Mass they fail to waken him out of his drunken sleep. God's day is dishonored by the drunkard.

The Fourth Commandment! Poor children, how can you keep that, when you see your parents drunk?

Honour her, a drunken woman, a mother! "Her reproach and her shame she! not be hid." (Ecclesiastes, xxvi, 11.) Honour that man, and call him father! He is the thief of the household; he has drunk the money that should keep and provide for you; he makes you an outcast from the Church; and you have to honour him.

Quarrelling and murder, forbidden by the Fifth Commandment. Does not drunkenness lead up to nine-tenths of these crimes? And the Sixth. Drink is scarcely ever mentioned in the Scripture without a reference to the sins against the Sixth Commandment. They are not nice even to read, and some very foul to utter. The Seventh he breaks, stealing from his children to spend on drink. And the Eighth Commandment, too, because when his vile passions are stirred up, no man's good name, no woman's good name, is safe with a drunkard. "His tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity." (Jas. iii, 6.) And the Ninth and Tenth Commandments. There is no restraint about them. Drunkards are seething with bad desires, unrestrainedly indulged in.

Yea, even worse may follow: a drunkard's death is no uncommon thing. Alas! then our Lord's words come true: "You shall die in your sins." (John viii, 24.)

My dear brethren, will you be wise and take a word of warning? You may never yet have been tempted to drink, but you can be humble and afraid of it. Make up your minds to resist the beginnings. Pray for those, who are the slaves to it, that you may have the holy fear of it yourselves. Draw back at once if your foot is set on the downward path. Ask God for humility and holy fear, the only safeguard, for "he that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little."

TEMPERANCE

A GOOD TEST

Not long ago an investigation was made at a great British ship-building establishment to discover the loss to laborers from the habit of drink. Two groups of eight men (otherwise as equal as possible) were selected: one abstainers, the other moderate drinkers. They were kept ignorant of the test. At the end of the year it was found that the sober men, on an average, earned \$250 more than the average drinker. The lowest steady man earned annually \$50 more than the highest drinking man! These losses were those due to illness and drunkenness. Subtracting what the drinkers paid for liquor, it was found that the abstainer, on an average, took home to his family nearly \$400 more than his drinking mate. A mighty argument for abstinence from the point of view of industrial efficiency!—St. Paul Bulletin.

THE VOID IT FILLS

A liquor journal recently published the following statement: "The saloon fills a great social void in the community."

It is true, the saloon fills a void: it fills men's stomachs with poison. It fills jails with drunkards. It fills penitentiaries with criminals.

It fills poor-houses with paupers.

It fills hospitals with sick and injured.

It fills asylums with insane.

It fills orphanages with orphans.

It fills our streets with loafers.

It fills labor's ranks with incompetents.

It fills homes with sorrow.

It fills wives and children with want.

It fills court calendars with cases.

It fills property records with mortgages.

It fills communities with disorders.

It fills politics with corruption.

It fills politicians with fear.

It fills graves with the dead.

It fills hell with the damned.

It is true, sadly true, that the saloon fills a void.

THE LIQUID INSPIRATION TO
MURDER

Some time ago a citizen of Fargo, N. D., went across the river to the license city of Minn., and purchased some whisky.

While under the influence thereof he committed a horrible murder, was convicted and came up before Judge Charles A. Pollock for sentence.

Fixing the penalty at imprisonment for life, the Judge said:—

"I do not know, and under the present state of our law, I never want to know, who sold you the liquor under the influence of which you have committed this unnatural crime. Let that man's conscience bring such remorse that its energizing power will never let go until the largest possible reparation be made."

Whosoever he was, and wherever he may be at this sad moment; whether his place of business is in the well-adorned and highly decorated room where tempting viands appear to the taste; where sweet music delights the ear and lulls to sleep the reasoning faculties, or whether it was in the lowest, dirtiest man abandoned, God-forsaken and death-dealing, charnel house of despair, where only abides thoughtless and sullen greed for gain, it matters not; before the bar of God, if not of man, he stands alike with you morally responsible for this horrible crime.

"The trouble is he is not here with you to receive a merited punishment."—New Republic.

Experience is the extract of suffering.—A. Helps.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN

Sing loud, sing strong, each Christian heart;
Sing grand, the glories of thy Queen,
For at her death earth had no part,
Since angels bore her hence unseen.

Bore her away to Heaven above,
Where Jesus long before had gone;
And there she reigns in endless love
With Father, Son and Holy One.

On earth she watched o'er all mankind
Her Son had freely died to save;
And now enthroned she keeps in mind

Each one of us, from king to slave;
And helps us fight the fight of life
And triumph 'gainst what stops our way.

O'er sin and death, whatever the strife,
She is our help, our strength, our stay.

But those she helps with double aid
Who on her power always call,
And saints they were, who often said,
"Her faithful children cannot fall."

To her o'er be our fervent love,
Our hope in her will not be vain;
She'll bring us safe to God above,
And share with us her endless reign.

Rejoice, rejoice each faithful soul!
Look up to her, enthroned on high,
And "Watch and Pray," you'll gain the goal;

Heaven awaits you when you die,
She followed in the wake of Christ,
And keeps for all the gates aside;
With God she is enthroned in light,

Loved daughter, mother, spotless bride.

—BISHOP COLTON

TRYING TIMES FOR
THE POPEPOWER AND INFLUENCE USED
FOR WELFARE OF ALL
(By Rev. William Demory, D.D.)

The position of our Holy Father in these trying times, is not an easy one. Perhaps never before in the history of the world has it been so difficult—as we view it—for the occupant of the See of Peter to exercise his power and influence, and show his undivided love as father to all of the children of Mother Church. They have not doubted their spiritual father and ruler's position, but rather—demonstrating, in a manner more pronounced than ever, their allegiance and love—they fly to him to side with their cause. Like a good parent who loves all his children, he must not yield to any particular one, but must manifest love for all and interest in all. This his tactics have been such, and his views and affection impartial, stand out as one of the most glorious traits of his character, thus far unveiled to the world.

No one, however, need think that the present incumbent of the throne of Peter has been blind and inactive regarding the needs of humanity, during the present War. He has charity to the war sufferers in many ways. Through his efforts prisoners have been exchanged and men condemned to death have been saved; his purse has been open to those most in need—to the Poles, the Belgians, the Ruthenians and the Armenians. Nor have the sick and wounded been overlooked by him. In Switzerland, a neutral country, he has succeeded in having many removed so that they could get the care and treatment impossible to administer to them in the countries at war. Many a heart has been gladdened also by the fact that he had established a bureau for lost soldiers and their whereabouts have thereby been revealed to those interested and dear to them. Much more has been done in a private way that the world has not heard about. It has all been the work of a kind and interested father.

TIME NOT YET RIPE

We do not wonder at our Holy Father's attitude; for we perceive it to be the proper one; but we admire him for so wisely and effectively occupying, and so strongly and impartially holding, the place a wise father's love points out as best suited to the occasion. He compromises without a compromise. He must sympathize with each member of his spiritual family, even though each one thinks he has a right to carry out—though it be to death—and a victory to win. He has a heart wide enough to enclose the convictions—no matter how varied and contradictory—of all his children, and an ear willing enough to listen to them, as they proclaim their rights and set forth the reasons and arguments for their positions.

Much more, indeed, would he prefer peace—many the efforts he has made to procure it, but the time seemed not yet ripe, and, in the role of father, he still must watch, anxiously and prayerfully, the course being waged among his children. It causes him to weep, it brings to him bitter anguish of soul—but he respects the will of his children, and prays the God of Heaven to help them all in their fight, that a love for justice and not passion, rule them, and that the combat be waged for the same glorious end. That some are in the right, others in the wrong, he well knows; but he understands equally as clearly that each of them is right on his side. To err is human, and in the very throes of the fray, it is all but impossible to point out to one his mistakes. Nay, it is no exaggeration to assert that the end of the world could come and the mistaken ones, if known, would not be convinced. So he is truly neutral and really a



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father who respects his children's convictions, and aims, by the great example of love and its offspring, peace, to be the common parent of all—to whom, at least later, they will all feel inclined to come, as to an impartial mediator.

MORE POWERFUL THAN STEEL

Nor is the wise role that the Vicar of Christ assumes, to influence only his own spiritual children—its benign character is impressing those who have refused to bow to him in allegiance. Such a one as the Holy Father now shows himself to be, has been the need, they realize, of all time. There are powers more effective than shell or shrapnel, and the example of a power, neutral in love and action will bring a sway that bullets could never establish. Men very often need certain conditions or circumstances to surround them before they can form proved and stable convictions. The world at present is placing many where never before they did dwell really in mind or body, and they are thinking and will think of things heretofore undreamed of, or they will realize that what they considered dreams to others are indeed realities. One of these truths to draw in the hearts and minds of many is the fact that our Holy Father the Pope, holds the greatest authority—even from a human standpoint—upon earth. It may have been latent, but the bright light of acknowledgment, though forced on him, is bringing it out where it is silently asserting itself. It is not for conquest of lands, nor possession of countries, but for ruling men's hearts, for directing them in the paths of justice.

God's assistance with the Papacy is bringing about now in the present crisis what history shows him to have done in the past. When it seemed that its sun had set on certain occasions, there were but clouds obscuring its brightness and dimming the rays of its influence. For a time it seemed to have disappeared, but it is silently asserting itself. It is not for conquest of lands, nor possession of countries, but for ruling men's hearts, for directing them in the paths of justice.

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VATICAN SEEKS NO FAVORS

But this power of the Vicar of Christ over men's hearts will assert itself in its full vigor, when blessed peace comes once again. The seething sides of the conflict of to-day will leave behind them a placid ocean over which the bark of Peter will sail unmolested, but not unobserved. If peaceful in war, it will be powerful when stability of nations is again established; and, if the waves of discord come up and begin anew to cast people into turmoil, there is no doubt that they will cry out to their common father to settle their dispute. Among the rulers of men, he, alone, loves the sons of every nation equally well—a truth men are now learning, and which they will practice in future ages. This has a prophetic note to it, but the signs pointing it out make it clear.

From a temporal standpoint, the Papacy could never be less hampered than at the present time. This is evident. It has no political affiliations, as the attitude of its present occupant must clearly point out to the world. Nor is it entering into any compact with any fighting nation or with any nation at peace. The blessings that it can give are generously bestowed upon all who can and will receive them. No clamor has been heard to arise from it, demanding certain favors and promises for its support; nor any attempts made to enter into a scheme for its future temporal aggrandizement. It is true, some unscrupulous newspapers have printed occasionally reports that would incline the public to a contrary belief, but official information has exposed its falsity. Its neutrality is now a proven and recognized fact.

NATIONS DECEIVED TO THEIR COST

One can feel certain a new era is about to dawn for the chair of Peter. Heretofore, in all the great wars of Europe, it had—in a certain sense—to take a part, and pretexts were assumed thereon to accuse it of partiality and of political alliances. The present is different. In a way, it is surrounded by a different atmosphere, and the bugbear of the past must fade away. Deception has played the greatest part in keeping certain nations from fully recognizing the power and endurance of

the Papacy. The truth is gradually breaking the shackles that bound it up, and manifesting itself to man. One must wonder that a power so great and mighty—even presiding from the Divine assistance with it—should have been looked upon by so many, for the last four hundred years with suspicion, and even maligned, though its very existence is unbroken by a continuous line of occupants from Peter to Benedict XV.

Experience alone should have taught the world that no power could last so long unchanged, nor spiritually away millions of souls, year after year, unless it were—we will not say "divine," but at least with the divine impress upon it and the divine aid with it.

So, from the signs of the time, one can say without fear of exaggeration that, as the darkness of War will give way to the light of peace, the Papacy will loom up stronger, humanly speaking, than ever before. It is the one light now upon earth that truly illuminates the hearts of men, and this light will rise to the strength of the mid-day sun. Its present exponent and occupant has the difficult stand of neutrality to take, while in one ear and in the other ring the cries of his children and their pleadings for his support of their side of the battle. He tries to soothe all, and, with parental affection, recognizes their good will and sincerity; but with one he cannot go against the other. All are his children, and his love and solicitude for the one must be the same for the other. The time may come when he will be the chief arbiter in their dispute; but as yet he must suspend his judgment.

INTERNATIONAL LAW

Herbert Francis Wright, in Catholic World

At the present time, when the attention of the entire world has been engaged so long by the War in Europe, it is no unusual thing to hear propounded on all sides such questions as "May Christians make war?" "Have the people any voice in declaring war?" "When are wars just?" "What may be done in a just war and how far may one proceed against enemies?" And while, at first sight, we may think that these questions, which are suggested by the present War, are new, the fact remains that each and every one of them—and many more like them—was discussed and answered by the Spanish moral theologian, Francisco de Victoria, of the Order of Friars Preachers, in his *De Jure Belli*, published about three hundred and sixty years ago as the fifth of his *Relectiones Theologicae* XII. For, to use the words of Thomas Alfred Walker in his *History of the Law of Nations*: "In Victoria's treatment of these problems, the reader who is unprepared for the surprises of the literature of the Reformation Age, will be astonished to discover the setting forth of principles which the historian of international practice is wont to represent as entirely modern."

All that Victoria has said about the law of war can be summarized in the three canons or rules of warfare, with which he brings his *De Jure Belli* to a close. They have reference to the conduct of nations and their princes before war, during war, and after war, respectively.

The first of these canons is: Assuming that a prince has authority to make war, he should first of all not go seeking occasions and causes of war, but should, if possible, live in peace with all men, as St. Paul enjoins on us (Romans xii, 18). Moreover, he should reflect that others are his neighbors, whom we are bound to love as ourselves, and that we all have one common Lord, before whose tribunal we shall have to render our account. For it is the extreme of savagery to seek for and destroy men whom God has created and for whom Christ died. But only under compulsion and reluctantly should he come to the necessity of war.

The second canon is: When war for a just cause has broken out, it must not be waged so as to ruin the people against whom it is directed, but only so as to obtain one's rights and the defence of one's country, and in order that from that war peace and security may in time result.

The third canon is: When victory has been won and the war is over, the victory should be utilized with moderation and Christian humility, and the victor ought to deem that he is sitting as judge between two states, the one which has been wronged and the one which has done the wrong, so that it will be as judge and not as accuser that he will deliver the judgment whereby the injured State can obtain satisfaction, and this, so far as possible, should involve the offending State in the least degree of calamity and misfortune, the offending individuals being chastised within lawful limits. An especial reason for this is that in general among Christians all the fault is to be laid at the door of their princes, for subjects when fighting for their princes act in good faith, and it is thoroughly unjust, in the words of the poet Horace, that "Quidquid delirant Reges, plectuntur Achivi."

It is difficult to imagine how more prudent or more equitable rules could be formulated than the noble Christian principles which summarize Victoria's doctrine on the law of war. So well-adapted are they for universal application to modern conditions, that one can scarcely believe

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that they are over three and a half centuries old. If the rulers of the countries now at war and in fact all other rulers would thoroughly learn and practise these true principles, it would be difficult indeed for wars to come, and, if they should, as come they may, they certainly could not long endure.

It is indeed true that Mary receives great honors; but those who know her well, never find her too much honored.

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