FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. F. PEPPERT SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Chrit... that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened by His spirit with might unto the in-ward man." (Eph. iii, 14, 16.)

As all outward mortifications are nerely means of perfection, and not an end in themselves, they ought to be recommended and employed only ne recommended and employed only in as far as they do not interfere with health, nor with the perform ance of the ordinary duties of life. Hence we ought to be very cautious in recommending others to practise austerities, and in imitating the things done by others. All mortifications have the same object, viz, to bring us nearer to Christian perfecbut the means employed must necessarily vary according to the age, constitution, character, circumstances and position of each individual. In ame way all medical treatment aims at the restoration of health, but the remedies prescribed vary according to the disease from which the patient is suffering and his physical

psculiarities. How absurd it would be to give to one patient the medicine prescribed for another, and to imagine that a drug which proved beneficial in one case, must be a cure for all sick people, no matter what malady they have! The absurdity of this is plain to everybody, but some of us do not recognize the folly of a similar treat-ment of the soul, which is of more

value than the body.

It does not at all follow, because a confessor orders one man to practise one particular mortification, that another person ought to practise it too; on the contrary, what is beneficial to one may be harmful to another, and therefore we ought not to tell others what penance has been imposed upon us at our confession. If we ses others practising this or that mortification, it does not follow that we should imitate them. Let us do what is good for us individually, according to our confessor's advice. Imitation in this respect has often done much harm, for, even if the mortifications imitated are not injurious, people are sure to say:
"What kind of piety is this, that does this or that simply in order not to be unlike others?" Experience teaches us that those who do things that attract attention, solely from a desire to copy others, are equally ready to copy what is bad. It is my duty to caution you never to put yourselves forward to guide or coun sel others with regard to any extraordinary works of mortification. We can not be too zealous in encouraging others to observe the ordinary rules and duties of religion, but we ought to act with extreme care when any question arises of extraordinary works, which can be beneficially un dertaken only after a thorough vestigation has been made of the circumstances of each person. Some are only too ready to give advice, but it is not easy to acquire both the general knowledge of mankind and the particular knowledge of the individual, which alone can enable anyone to decide whether a work, good in itself, will be useful and advantageous in some particular case. With regard to bodily sickness, we often see that ignorant people, with all the good will in the world, do a great deal of harm by their advice, and precisely the same thing is true with regard to the soul.

All the saints are agreed that, in practising works of exterior mortifi-cation, it behooves us to be on our guard against injuring our health and strength. This is a penances, which would destroy our penances, which would destroy our health or perhaps actually kill us, were performed by them only because God gave them special sanction. On this subject St. Thomas Aquinas writes: "We ought to judge of the end and of the means applications to it in different ways. conducive to it in different ways; the end (viz', perfection) should be sought unreservedly; but, in apply. ing the means, we must always take into consideration whether they are conducive to the attainment of the end in the case of the person applying them. Hence, continues the saint, it is important to reflect that in the spiritual life the end is perfection; but fasting, vigils and other bodily austerities are only means, and should therefore be applied with reasonable moderation, so as to over-come the passions without injuring the health, as St. Paul tells us, when he says: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service."

St. Jerome says that whoever injured his body immoderately by such exterior mortifications, offered God a sacrifice obtained by violence and robbery. St. Basil expresses a similar opinion when he writes: "Let it be regarded as more honorable and profitable to provide for the preservation and increase of physical strength, than to diminish it by mis-taken austerities; let it be thought better to keep the body strong and healthy, so that it may be of service in doing good works, than to exhaust it by excessive mortification." St. Bernard, too, agrees with the saints to whom I have just referred, and gives a reason, derived from sad ex-perience, for carefully avoiding experience, for carefully avoiding excessive severity in this respect. He says that people who go too far in their blind zeal as a rule grow tired of all the exercises of piety, and either return to a worldly existence. either return to a worldly existence, or, under the pretext of wishing to recover their strength, indulge in every imaginable luxury, even in those that are sinful. All excess, even in what appears to be good, leads to a lamentable end.

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There is no need for me to prove that our exterior mortification ought no more to interfere with the performance of our ordinary duties than be prejudicial to our health. Our duty is always the chief thing for us to keep in view, as it is imposed upon us by God, and is the expres-sion of His will. It is by no means right to undertake any voluntary good works that cause us either to neglect our duty, or to discharge it in an imperfect manner ; it is in fact absolutely wrong, and an unmistak able token of thoroughly false piety, unless the mistake is due to som

mental weakness.

To sum up what I have said to day We may be sure that no exterior practices of mortification ought to ipjure our health or interfere with our duties. Let us be guided by this principle, and we shall then be in no danger of giving way to false plety, for we shall undertake such practices only as are conducive to our true welfare. Amen.

TEMPERANCE

THE OTHER SIDE OF HOLIDAYS No one of us would deny the honest workingman, the laborer in shop, office or factory his holidays, and every citizen is pleased when prosperity smiles upon all! But there is another side to the question of holiday making which is not appealing and bodes little good for the future of America's youth!

The too early closing of factories and shops is breeding intemperance ! This increase in drinking has been noticed for some time and any one who wishes to be better informed as to the truth of this statement needs but to walk the public avenues on a Saturday night in any large city in this country, and he or she will quickly learn that instead of making much of this awful increase in a desperate evil, there has been very little exposure made and in conse quence the youth of the land are well on the path to a tippler's record long before they have reached their

twenty fifth year. teens, stagger along the streats, very often half dragging young girls, whose condition is a disgrace to womanhood and a shame to the man-bood which allows and accounts as hood which allows and encourages ment. such viciousness. One of the lament able sides to this depressing question is the fact that in nearly every case the tipplers bear all the earmarks of prosperity. They are well dressed, have money to spend and are out to contract vicious habits, simply be cause they have too many idle hours and the devil has plenty of amuse-ment in store for those who love the rosy path.—Michigan Catholic.

TOTAL ABSTINENCE WORK A SOCIAL SERVICE

That temperance work is one of the highest forms of social service, has long been recognized. It is especially gratifying to note the following editorial which appeared in a recent issue of the Boston Journal:

One of the most useful organiza tions in this city, from a constructive point of view, is the St. Joseph's Total Abstinence Society of the West End, which was organized fifty years ago and which celebrated its golden anniversary in April. It is the oldest association of its kind of Boston, and it was doing welfare work in its section of the city when welfare work as such, had noteven won its modern

designation. The West End, which was once the court end of Boston, has changed much in fifty years. Its population has increased, and the pitfalls for young men have not diminished, to put the fact conservatively. Every charter member of the society has passed away, but it has continued to passed away, but is massed away, but is madest manner, has enjoyed the membership and cooperation of distinguished men, lay and clerical, and has rescued from the dangers and evils of alcoholism more

fitty years, without endowment or the patronage of wealthy men. Its his-tory furnishes a striking lesson for

for mutual helpfulness in every arish of every faith. SOBRIETY, AN ESSENTIAL

VIRTUE "Sobriety is the essential virtue of

a successful railroad man and the chief requisite for permanent employment in any railroad service. Especially in every man connected with the movement of trains, a clear head and steady nerves are necessary for the correct indement that will for the correct judgment that will prompt right action at the right time to avert danger and insure safety. The officers of every rail. road know, that the employee who gives a part of himself over to the slavery of liquor is not the man they want. They want a complete man, not a part of a man."—Safety on the

IS LIFE WASTED IN CONTEMPLATIVE ORDERS?

ON THE CONTRARY, THE WORLD OWES THEM INESTIMABLE DEBT FOR PRAYERS

Because a daughter of a prominent Denver family, says a writer in the Denver Catholic Register, has entered the postulancy of a contemplative religious order, there has been much talk, within the past few days, about whether this is really an ideal state

"It was possibly all right in the niddle ages," the writer heard one good Catholic assert, "but I doubt whether, with so much work needed in the world, it is advisable at this period.

The Church has always encouraged the contemplative life. It was true that certain saints who wished to lead it were prohibited by heaven for a time, as there was other unfinished work for them to do in the world. But these cases are exceptional.
When Christ refused to comply with Martha's wish long ago and would not chide Mary for neglecting her household duties to listen to His words, He proved what He thought of the contemplative life.

God only knows what punishments the Trappists, Discalced Carmelites and other cloistered orders have kept from the world. The Old Testa nent gives some startling instances of how punishment was withheld from the wicked at the prayers of the just. Christ Himself showed the value of contemplation when He withdrew to the desert to pray and fast for forty days. I hear some enemy of the contemplative life say: "Oh, yes, but He did not spend His entire life there." No, but He did spend most of His life in retirement. The world knew Him as a public figure only three years of his thirty. three on earth, and these forty days were part of those three years. John the Baptist also prepared for his ministry by the contemplative life. Many other religious leaders, in imitation of these, have led the contem-

plative life. From all we know of the Blessed Virgin, it is reasonable to suppose that her entire life was practically contemplative. She could not have had many household duties, for she had too small a family. But did you ever hear of her participating in any public affair? It is true that she allowed herself the pleasure of Public cates, in which liquor is dispensed, cater to young men and women. Boys scarcely out of their teens, stagger along the streats, very

After Christ's death most o she was the greatest woman that the she was the greatest woman that the world has ever known. Catholics believe that she enjoys the highest gifts and power which Almighty God can give to a creature. And she her-self, in visions to saints, has declared that she obtained these graces, not that she obtained these graces, not merely because she was the mother of Christ, but because she deserved them.

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In every age of the Church we have had contemplatives. The story is told of an anchorite in the early Church who lived forty years within

radius of four feet.
Is life wasted in the contemplative orders? Stop to think why man was created. We believe that we have sen sent here to honor and adore God on earth, then to enjoy him forever in heaven. Is a life wasted, then, which is spent entirely in ador-

It is not God's will that all our orders should be contemplative. Christ has plainly told us that He expects Christians to care for the sick, the poor and the ignorant. In Catholicity, as in nothing else, His command is strictly carried out. The religious orders devoting themselves to this work are extremely popular even among non-Catholics, in Americs, for there is a vast wave of humanitarianism extant. But the world needs prayer as much as physical help, for prayer appeases the just anger of God which brings on the punishment that makes physical

assistance necessary.

It is a relief, too, to think that there are spots in America where men and women are not money mad; where the rush for material things

does not penetrate.

It the contemplative life was a waste of time, so was it a waste when Christ retired to the desert for forty days; when He hid Himself at Nazareth, before His public life. He could have made thousands of converts and healed hundreds of the afflicted in this time. But He thought the world needed His prayers more. Certainly He did not need prayers Himself.

TALKING ABOUT PEOPLE

Talking against people of any sort, no matter whether clergy or laity, is one of the commonest besetting faults of humanity at large. Whether such talk is sinful or not depends entirely on the circumstances of each case. If people do things which ought not to be done, they can only expect to be talked against. In such case, if the talking is confined to the truth, and is done with due moderation, this amounts to "fair criticism," and not a word can be said against it. At the same time the principle of Christian charity always dictates the less rather than the more. This means that our habitual tendency should be, first, to put the best interpretation we can on what is done. Secondly, even if our best interpretation is an adverse one, the less we spread the matter amongst our neighbors the better. Thirdly, what talking we do should have some fairly useful purposes—perhaps to unburden our-selves of our feelings, so as to lorget the matter as soon as possible, or perhaps to get the matter put right by aid of other people's counsel and advice, etc., etc. Fourthly, there should be no malice or mere love of gossip or mischief about it. It is laid down that to talk againg

our neighbor can be a sin in two

Where what we say is untrue Ways. or misleading and mischievous, it be comes calumny; a mortal sin if by the falsehood the person is seriously injured. Secondly, if what we say is true, but is private and ought not to be spread, the sin is that of detrac-tion; that is, needlessly lowering our neighbor's reputation. The degree of the sin committed by calumy or detraction is measured by the mis-chief done and the mischief will depend not only on the thing said but also on the position and status of the person talked against. It is in this way that talklife must have been spent in con-templation. All Christians agree that because they are the clergy. A priest from his very profession needs to be held in higher respect and reverence than a layman, because of the higher relation which he helds towards his people. Thus it is bad enough if a prominent layman gets into bad repute through the wagging of critical tongues, but it is still worse if a priest gets into the same evil case. It is not a question of the person, but of the office. The work of a clergy-man depends very much upon the esteem in which he is held by those with whom he has to deal; and, more over, people expect so much more from him than they expect from s layman. Hence the spirit of criti-cism which tends to engender a feeling of distrust or dislike or depreciation among the parishioners is certainly a most mischievous spirit one which ought to be suppressed in themselves by all well disposed Cath-olics and discouraged and discoun-tenanced by them whenever they come across it in others. The cordial and co operative relation which is supposed to exist between clergy and laity is of the greatest importance for the spiritual well-being of the parties, and is well worth preserving even at a great personal sacrifice.
We will not undertake to define

exactly where talking against the clergy becomes sin. Enough in general to say that it becomes a sin as soon as it begins to injure this cordial and co-operative relation; and it would become a mortal sin as soon as the injuries become serious. Better and more stimulating will it Better and more stimulating will it be to dwell on the other side and to say with St. James: "If any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man; he is able with a bridle to lead about the whole body. For when we put bits into the mouths of horses, that they may obey us, we can turn about their whole body. So the tongue also is indeed a little member, but it boasteth big things. Behold how small a fire kindleth a great word. So also the tongue is

a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is placed among our members, and it deflicts the whole body and inflameth the whole circuit of our nature, being set on fire from hell. For every nature, of beasts and of birds and of the rest is temed by man; but the tongue no man can tame, being as it is an un-quiet evil, full of deadly poison. quiet evil, full of deadly poison. Who, then, is a wise man among you? Let him show forth his work by good conversation in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have better zeal, and there be contention in your hearts, do not glory in it, thus belying the truth; for this is not wisdom from above, but is something earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envy ing contention is, there is inconsist ency and every evil work. But the wisdom which is from above is first chaste, then peaceable and modest, easy to be persuaded, sympathetic with good, full of mercy and good

are of peaceful mind." You see that St. James says it much better than we can. If his words are taken to heart there will be not need for discussion about mortal sin; there will be no sin at all.—Sacred Hears

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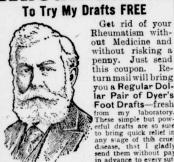
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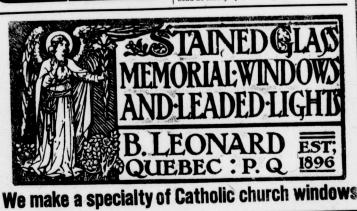
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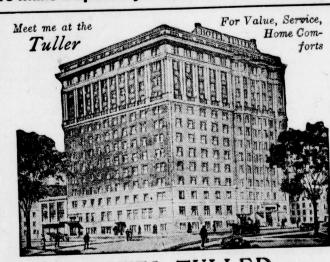
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