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LITTLE
TEMPERANCE CATECHISM

OR
SHORT TREATISE ON ALCOHOLISM,
ITS RAVAGES, ITS REMEDIES,

BY
REV. CANON R. PH. SYLVAIN,

CHAPELAIN TO THE SISTERS OF THE HOLY ROSARY

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

RIMOUSKI

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PREFACE

All those who are interested in the welfare of the Canadian people are alarmed at the ravages caused by alcoholism in all ranks of society. Legislators, Economists, Bishops and Magistrates are seeking for a remedy against the terrible plague.

The most practical and efficacious means that has been suggested to stop the progress of this evil and to assure the future happiness of our country, is the anti-alcoholic training of childhood and youth in the family and at school.

The earliest education belongs to the parents, especially to the mother. Hers is the mission of developing the intelligence and will of her child. In the very beginning, as soon as possible, especially with boys, she should inspire them with the horror of alcohol; then gradually form their conscience on this point, especially by appealing to religious sentiments.

Mothers should never forget that it is like wilful murder to give intoxicating liquor to their young children. But in order to instruct children as to the dangers of alcohol, such dangers must be known. Hence the reason for this **LITTLE TEMPERANCE CATECHISM**.

We have written it particularly for children and young men, and we have tried to make it clear, concise and accessible to all. It contains neither statistics nor scientific notions which children could not make out, but the most important and practical information, such at least as it seems to us.

Paragraphs containing explanations which we judged a useful complement to a certain number of answers have been printed in smaller type.

We do not pretend to have exhausted the subject ; parents and teachers who wish to make use of our Catechism, may complete it by explanations and reflections appropriate to the age and minds of the children under their care. They may also add choice quotations, striking facts capable of strongly impressing their imagination and averting them for ever from the degrading vice of drunkenness.

May these lessons be so deeply imprinted in the minds of children and young men that neither time nor temptation may ever erase them.

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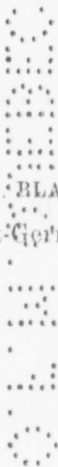
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Imprimatur.

† A. A. BLAIS,

Bishop of St. Germain of Rimouski.

April 23rd, 1905.



A
LITTLE TEMPERANCE
CATECHISM.

I

ALCOHOL,
ITS NATURE AND EFFECTS.

1. *What is Alcohol?*

Alcohol is a colourless but strong smelling and very inflammable liquid, obtained by the distillation of wine, but especially by the fermentation of certain berries, grains, and even vegetables.

2. *What effect does Alcohol produce?*

Taken frequently and in strong doses, Alcohol produces Alcoholism and Drunkenness.

3. *Do beer, wine, gin, whisky and brandy contain Alcohol?*

All those different kinds of liquor contain more or less Alcohol, and their intoxicating power is in proportion to the quantity of Alcohol therein contained.

4. *How many parts of Alcohol do such liquors ordinarily contain?*

They ordinarily contain, particularly the last mentioned, 45 parts of Alcohol to 55 parts of water and other substances, whatever they may be, which give taste, colour, and smell, especially to gin, to whisky and brandy.

5. *What are those other substances which enter into the composition of such liquors?*

They are water, sugar and the colouring matter. These substances are harmless.

6. *Are there any other dangerous ingredients in liquor?*

Yes, there are such as acids and essences of a poisonous nature.

7. *Are all liquors equally injurious?*

All strong liquors, whatever may be the shape and price of the bottle, contain more or less powerful doses of Alcohol and poisons of great virulence, which make them equally per-

nicious.

8. *Is Alcohol a poison?*

Generally speaking and in the ordinary conditions of life, we should say that Alcohol is a poison and that it kills those who make an undue use of it.

II

PREJUDICES REGARDING ALCOHOL.

9. *Which are the most popular prejudices regarding Alcohol?*

They are the following: Alcohol stimulates the appetite; it helps digestion, strengthens, nourishes and warms the body.

10. *Does Alcohol stimulate the appetite?*

No. Because taken while fasting, if not weakened with much water, Alcohol burns in the stomach and, instead of exciting it and helping the work of digestion, it puts it out of order and renders it unable to fulfil its functions.

11. *What are the means of stimu-*

lating the appetite?

Walking in the open air, especially in the country and other physical exercises, the influence of cold in winter, seabaths in summer, are the best means of stimulating one's appetite.

12. *Can Alcohol help digestion?*

No. Alcohol cannot help digestion: on the contrary, it causes a chronic disease of the stomach, called dyspepsia.

13. *Why does not Alcohol help digestion?*

Because it destroys the properties of the juices or fluids destined to favor digestion by preparing the food to be mixed with the blood, and also because it stops the action of the stomach.

The stomach must furnish the gastric juice which dissolves the food; it moreover must contract and dilate continually to knead the alimentary mass and mix it with the gastric juice; under the influence of Alcohol these two functions are retarded and are even often stopped. Thus, Alcohol hinders digestion instead of favoring it.

14. *Does Alcohol give strength?*

Alcohol is not a stimulant; I mean that it does not increase muscular strength, so as to give persistency and endurance in work.

A glass of liquor, taken by a working man, produces a nervous excitement that may be compared to the slash of a whip given to a horse. The effort made by the horse is very soon over, and whipping has to be repeated. So it is with the glass of liquor: it somehow gives the laborer greater strength, but for a few minutes only; very soon he becomes unable to work as he should. Therefore, taking liquor to get strong is a non-sense.

15. *What then gives man more strength to endure hard labor?*

Food is what mures man to hard labor, as fuel alone keeps a steam engine in motion.

16. *Is Alcohol a food?*

No, Alcohol is not a food, because in the body it is not converted into blood and flesh, as is the case with meat, eggs, &c.

So neither brandy, nor wine, nor beer may be said to nourish the body. Compared with bread as a food, the value of beer is as

3 to 50; that of wine as 1 to 50. Alcohol burns in the stomach, but does not feed the body.

17. *Does Alcohol give heat to the body?*

Alcohol gives the impression of heat, but it does not really warm the body.

When a man is cold, if he takes a glass of liquor, he at once feels an agreeable sensation, but he is not really warmed; in other terms, the temperature of his body is not raised. Alcohol has simply dilated the arteries and the small capillary veins, by forcing the blood into them with violence, by paralysing the small muscles which serve to compress them. The veins of the skin having been dilated, the skin grows somewhat warmer, and then a sensation of heat is felt more or less keenly. The blood thus cooled returns to the heart, which sends it in this state to all the organs, and the real temperature is gradually lowered.

18. *What is the best proof that we can be protected from cold without taking liquor?*

The best proof is that no Alcohol is used in the countries bordering on the North Pole.

Captain Nansen, who made an expedition to the North Pole, had imposed total abstinence from alcoholic liquor on his crew of twelve mariners ; he had taken on board neither gin, nor any other intoxicating liquor. Nevertheless, his voyage, which lasted two years, was very successful. He came nearer the North Pole than any of his predecessors, and all his sailors returned safe and sound.

19. *What is the easiest way to get warm?*

It is to take a warm drink, of whatever it may be : broth, tea, coffee, chocolate, lemonade, or merely warm water.

III

ALCOHOLISM AND DRUNKENNESS

20. *What do you mean by Alcoholism?*

Taken in a restrictive sense, Alcoholism is a nervous disease very common to drunkards, often fatal, caused by the abuse of spirituous liquors.

Considered as a sickness, Alcoholism concerns medical science. Ta-

ken in a wide sense, Alcoholism means that accumulation of ruins and of religious, moral, intellectual and physical troubles that befall a nation addicted to drink.

21. *What is the difference between Alcoholism and Drunkenness?*

Alcoholism is a disease caused by the use of spirituous liquors, undermining more or less all classes of society, and especially young men, whilst Drunkenness is a vice that drives to the abuse of those liquors and leads its victims to shame and ruin.

22. *How can a victim of Alcoholism be distinguished from a drunkard?*

The former is a man who habitually uses liquor, taking many glasses daily without committing great excesses, whilst the drunkard is one that falls now and then into great excesses.

A victim of Alcoholism may be exteriorly, and even for a long time, a man of respectable appearance and of good behaviour; he

may be still held in esteem by his fellow-citizens, and may think himself sheltered from the dangers to which the abuse of liquor unconsciously leads him. But sooner or later, he will give signs of early decrepitude and premature old age.

A drunkard, on the contrary, draws the attention and contempt of all, by openly showing his degradation ; he wilfully becomes an object of mockery to all by his grotesque behaviour during his fits of drunkenness. But as soon as he returns to his senses, he is often ashamed of himself and feels a disgust for the state of abjection into which he has fallen, and he curses his passion, until he begins again to satisfy it.

The sufferers from Alcoholism are more numerous than those commonly called drunkards.

23. *What is ebriety or intoxication ?*

It is a transient state of poisoning caused by the too abundant and rapid absorption of Alcoholic liquors.

24. *How is it manifested ?*

This poisoning is manifested at once by physical signs showing that certain organs, the stomach, intestines, lungs, heart and nerves, have been affected by liquor, and also by

the evidence of a sudden action of Alcohol on the brain.

IV

LIQUOR AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

25. *What harm does liquor cause to man?*

Liquor ruins the body and troubles the action of the faculties of the soul.

26. *How does liquor ruin the body?*

Alcohol, even taken in moderate doses, causes a general weariness, an uneasiness which is a predisposition to serious maladies, the commonest of which are inflammation of the bowels and of the kidneys, poisoning of the blood, pneumonia or inflammation of the lungs, epilepsy, paralysis, heart disease, consumption and typhoid fever. The lungs and bronchiae are soon saturated with Alcohol.

27. *What are the chief characteristics of a drunkard?*

He cannot resist sickness; he is

not only apt to contract the most dangerous diseases, but he cannot fight against them, for all his natural means of reaction are paralysed.

28. *What is the effect of liquor on the intelligence?*

Taken in excess or in too strong doses, liquor darkens and even destroys the understanding, that noble faculty, which is one of the most precious gifts that God has given to man.

29. *What is its effect on the memory and will of the drunkard?*

His memory becomes uncertain and sluggish, and his will, by losing its energy, becomes a slave to the most shameful passions.

30. *What effect does liquor produce on the passions?*

Liquor, especially when of an inferior quality, stimulates the passions, excites the imagination, urges to violence and leads to every crime; it is responsible for so many robberies, quarrels, murders and acts

of immorality, of which drunkards become guilty, and for which they are summoned to the bar of criminal courts.

31. *Does liquor cause insanity?*

Physicians admit that most cases of insanity found in lunatic asylums are due to the abuse of liquor.

32. *Is liquor a source of poverty?*

Liquor causes the ruin and poverty of all those who make a bad use of it.

33. *How so?*

Because he who is fond of drinking neglects his daily task and squanders his earnings to satisfy his passion for drink.

34. *Can a drunkard improve his condition?*

No, because he has not energy enough to take a firm resolution to amass a little wealth, for such a resolution would change his conduct. It is therefore impossible for a drunkard, whilst his bad habit lasts, to acquire wealth, because he has not

the will to do so.

35. *Is he then condemned to poverty?*

Yes, he will always remain poor; and even if he had a little wealth, he will soon be reduced to beggary. It is what the Holy Ghost tells us in the Book of Proverbs: "*Because they that give themselves up to drinking, and that club together, shall be consumed; and drowsiness shall be clothed with rags.*" (Prov. XXIII, 21.) It is also written in the Book of Ecclesiasticus: "*A workman that is a drunkard shall not be rich.*" (Eccli. XIX. 1.)

36. *Why is drunkenness a degrading vice?*

Because it dishonours man.

37. *What is honour?*

It is the esteem and consideration that follow good behavior. Honor is more precious than great wealth.

38. *Then he who drinks does not deserve the esteem and respect of his fellow-citizens?*

He loses all right to the conside-

ration and confidence of his fellow-citizens; if he is the father of a family, he is often despised, even by his wife and children.

39. *Does a young man who drinks also dishonour his parents?*

He is not only a cause of shame for his parents, but of great sorrow.

40. *How does liquor make man unhappy?*

Liquor makes man unhappy by depriving him of the peace and satisfaction of his conscience.

41. *How so?*

Because he who is tormented by the passion of drink has neither rest nor pleasure: the more he drinks, the more he wants to drink; his passion grows stronger and leads its victim to the most debasing excesses.

42. *Does not Alcohol procure a certain pleasure?*

Alcohol may sometimes procure a kind of excitement to the imagination, but the most noble and delicate

aspirations of the soul can in no way be satisfied by it.

43. *What are the effects of Alcoholism or Intemperance upon the practice of virtue?*

The practice of virtue becomes very difficult with Intemperance; it causes the loss of Faith, leads to lust, hardens the heart, checks every feeling of pity, compassion and charity: finally it is the origin of all dishonour and the root of every vice.

44. *Does liquor really render man unhappy?*

It does, because it deprives both soul and body of every blessing.

V

LIQUOR AND THE FAMILY

45. *What harm does liquor cause to the family?*

Liquor brings trouble into the household, ruins the education of the children, and produces misery by wasting the daily earnings in drink.

46. *How does liquor disturb peace in the family?*

The husband when intoxicated will speak uncivilly to his wife; even when she addresses him with kindness, he will abuse and curse her and will sometimes treat her brutally.

47. *Is not a drunkard sometimes a scandal to his wife?*

Should his wife be not a truly Christian and virtuous woman, she is greatly in danger of becoming a victim to Intemperance, as a result of her husband's bad example and ill-treatment.

48. *A young girl, then, is very imprudent in marrying a drunkard?*

A young girl should never consent to marry a young man already addicted to drink, unless he has given serious evidence of real amendment.

49. *What are generally the predispositions of children born of parents afflicted with Alcoholism?*

Considered physically, the chil-

dren of drunkards are scrofulous, epileptic, and frequently idiotic. The children are also more or less alcoholized. Considered morally, these children are inclined to vice of all kinds. Accustomed to disorder from their childhood, they grow up in ignorance and bad habits.

50. *Is not Alcohol also the cause of the premature death of many children?*

According to physicians, Alcohol is the great modern destroyer of children.

51. *How does the drunkard ruin his family?*

By wasting the greater part of his wages or income in drinking and treating his friends.

52. *Liquor, therefore, causes the ruin of families?*

Yes, liquor is a calamity for the household.

VI

LIQUOR AND SOCIETY.

53. *How is liquor hurtful to society*

or to the nation?

Liquor is hurtful to society or to the nation because it is an occasion of useless expense, a cause of numerous accidents, of insanity and ruin.

54. *What is the yearly expenditure for spirituous liquors in Canada?*

The outlay for spirituous liquors in Canada amounts to about fifty million dollars a year.

55. *Does this enormous sum represent the total expense?*

No, because a great many evils caused by liquor require moreover considerable expense for the support of asylums and prisons, for the administration of justice and for the maintenance of the police force.

56. *What is the average expense for liquor per head?*

The population of Canada being of five million inhabitants, the average expense per head is ten dollars a year.

57. *How much does a young man who takes four or five glasses of liquor*

a day spend in a year?

Such a young man spends over a hundred dollars a year; so that after ten years, he will have spent the worth of a thousand dollar farm.

58. *What are the other evils attributed to the use of liquor?*

To the use of liquor are generally ascribed financial disgraces, thefts, fraud, waste of the public treasury, forgeries, bankruptcies, which often result in the ruin of whole families.

59. *Is it true that many accidents are due to liquor?*

Nearly one half of the accidents and disasters happening on the railroads, for instance, are due to liquor.

60. *May the same thing be said of cases of insanity and numerous crimes?*

Cases of insanity are increasing in an alarming degree in all the countries where liquor is used to excess; and mostly all rash deeds and crimes should be attributed to alcoholic excitement.

61. *Alcoholism or the habit of drinking is then a national plague?*

Alcoholism is a national plague ; it is the cause of material, intellectual and moral decline.

VII

LIQUOR AND MORALITY.

62. *Is drunkenness a mortal sin?*

Wilful drunkenness, when it totally deprives a man of the use of reason, is a mortal sin.

63. *Why is drunkenness a mortal sin?*

Because it deprives man of his reason, degrades him to the level of beasts, and also because the Holy Scriptures always mention drunkenness as being a grievous sin.

64. *Quote a few words to that effect from Holy Scriptures.*

The Holy Ghost says through the prophet Isaias : “ *Woe to you that rise up early in the morning to follow drunkenness, and to drink till the*

evening, to be inflamed with wine." And again: "*Woe to you that are mighty to drink wine, and stout men at drunkenness.*" (Is. V, 11, 22.) Saint Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said: "*Be not deceived: neither thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards.. shall possess the kingdom of God.* (1 COR. VI, 9, 10.)

65. *What conclusion is to be drawn from these words of Holy Scriptures?*

The conclusion is that a sin which God has cursed and which shuts out a soul from Heaven is in itself a mortal sin.

66. *Is a drunken man accountable for all the sins he commits while drunk?*

A drunken man is accountable for all the sins that he knows himself likely to commit while drunk.

67. *What do you think of a drunkard who takes no means to amend his life?*

A drunkard who takes no means to amend his life on that point is in a continual state of sin.

68. *Is he not in great danger of*

dying in that state?

He is in greater danger than any one else of dying in that sad state. In his excesses he is exposed to all kinds of dangers, fatal accidents, and sudden death.

VIII

OCCASIONS OF DRINKING.

69. *On what occasions is a man most exposed to excess in drinking?*

During election-time, at wedding-feasts, at picnics and “bee”-parties, and on his return from “shanty” work.

70. *To what does the passion of drinking lead in election time?*

To the selling of one’s vote for a bottle of liquor, in spite of the prohibition of the Bishops of the Province to give or offer liquor as an incentive to vote for one candidate rather than for another.

71. *Would not the elections succeed better without liquor?*

They would thereby be worthier.

of wise and patriotic citizens.

72. *Are also weddings the occasion of great excesses?*

Weddings are too often the opportunity for excesses in drink, which only draw down the curse of God on the families that indulge therein.

73. *Should truly Christian married couples thus celebrate their union?*

No. Christian and virtuous married couples should banish from their weddings all such excesses, in order to deserve the blessings of Heaven.

74. *Are picnics and "bee"-parties also occasions for drinking?*

In truth, they are dangerous occasions and are often used as pretences for drinking to excess; picnic-parties and excursions are dangerous, especially to townsfolk, who join them on Sundays and waste their week's salary in sinful enjoyment.

75. *When they come back from "shanty work" how do young men generally behave?*

They hasten to treat one another, and in a few days, waste all the money they have so painfully earned ; thus they unconsciously acquire the habit of drinking.

76. *Is not a young man obliged to do like his fellows ?*

A Christian young man must observe the maxims of the Gospel and follow the voice of his conscience, and not the dictates of evil custom. Drinking to please a friend is an act of folly and the sign of a weak character.

IX

TEMPERANCE AND SOBRIETY.

77. *What is Temperance ?*

It is a moral virtue that controls pleasure and submits it to reason.

78. *Is the practice of that virtue commanded by God ?*

God himself commands us to be temperate in pleasure ; that is why He has endowed us with reason.

79. *The pleasures of the body, then,*

should not be preferred to all others?

Certainly not, because man being composed of a soul and a body, the soul must govern the body.

80. *According to what maxims should we behave?*

According to the following: The soul must be preferred to the body; the joys of conscience, to sensual pleasures; the health of the soul, to that of the body; the welfare of the soul, to material comfort; the interests of the soul must be valued more than food or drink.

81. *What are the advantages of Temperance?*

Temperance favours health, procures joy for the mind and heart and bridles the passions.

82. *Do the Holy Scriptures advise us to be moderate in eating and drinking?*

Yes, we read in the Book of Ecclesiasticus: "*Use as a frugal man the things that are set before thee: lest if thou eatest much, thou be hated. How*

sufficient is a little wine for a man well-taught; and in sleeping thou shalt not be uneasy with it. Challenge not them that love wine, for wine hath destroyed very many." (ECCLI. XXXI, 19, 22.)

83. *What is Sobriety?*

It is a virtue that confines drinking within the limits of necessity.

84. *Has Sobriety been practised in all times?*

Sobriety was practised in the days of the Patriarchs, among the Hebrew people and even among Pagans.

85. *Are we obliged to practise that virtue?*

As Christians, we are particularly obliged to practise Sobriety. Saint Paul, the Apostle, tells us that Our Lord Jesus-Christ came on earth to teach us to live soberly. (TIT. II. 11.) He advises men and women advanced in years, as well as young people, to be sober.

86. *Is, then, Sobriety generally recommended to every one?*

Sobriety is recommended to the rich and the poor, to professional men and to workmen. It is a duty for all Christians to love Sobriety.

87. *What are the advantages of Sobriety?*

Like Temperance, Sobriety promotes health by preserving the body from the numberless infirmities caused by the abuse of spirituous liquors; it brings peace to the soul, and helps intellectual activity.

X

HOW TO PRESERVE ONE'S SELF FROM THE HABIT OF DRINKING

88. *By what means may a young man preserve himself from the habit of drinking?*

By acquiring in his early youth the habit of Temperance and Sobriety.

89. *How can these two virtues be acquired?*

By a thorough knowledge of the advantages they procure, by the de-

sire to acquire them, and by prayer to obtain from God the grace of duly practising them.

90. *Should not a young man take the habit of keeping account of his earnings and expenses?*

Keeping an account of what he earns and spends is an excellent means, for a young man, to preserve himself from the habit of drinking. At the end of the year he will be surprised at the sum he has saved by not acting foolishly like so many others.

91. *Should he not attend to his health?*

Yes, and to do so, he must practise frugality and avoid all excess in eating and drinking.

92. *Cannot reason also be a great help to him?*

Certainly. By recalling to mind on one hand the necessity and advantages of Sobriety; and on the other, all the troubles that liquor causes to persons, to families and to society;

the difficulty of mastering the bad habit of drinking when once it has taken root, the young man will be more easily determined to shun the degrading vice of drunkenness.

93. *Is not the sense of honor also a means of overcoming the temptation to drink?*

A young man who respects himself, who recognizes the dignity of manhood and of Christian virtue, avoids drinking, in spite of the taunts and jeers of his comrades.

94. *Should he avoid bad companions?*

He should indeed, because bad example always exerts great influence on man. "*He that loveth danger, says the Holy Ghost, shall perish in it.*" (ECCLI. III, 27.)

95. *Should a young man take the Temperance Pledge and join the League of the Sacred Heart?*

A young man should consider it an honour and a duty to join the Temperance Society, and the League

of the Sacred Heart, in order that he may find among other advantages, the encouragement of good example, which he so greatly needs.

96. *What other advantages do those societies offer?*

That of faithfully performing one's religious duties, the grace of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist being the best means of supporting good resolutions.

97. *Should not a young man who loves his country also love Sobriety?*

To be a true patriot, a young man should also love Sobriety, because it assures national as well as individual prosperity.

98. *Are you determined never to drink spirituous liquors?*

Yes, I am firmly resolved never to drink spirituous liquors, and it is with a determined will that I take this resolution.

END.

