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MEDITATIONS
ON THE
MYSTERIES OF OUR HOLY FAITH;

TOGETHER WITH
A TREATISE ON MENTAL PRAYER.
BY THE VEN. FATHER LOUIS DE PONTE, S. J.
BEING THE
TRANSLATION FROM THE ORIGINAL SPANISH BY JOHN HEIGHAM.
REVISED AND CORRECTED.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED
THE REV. F. C. BORGIO'S
MEDITATIONS ON THE SACRED HEART.
TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

IN SIX VOLS.—VOL. I.



Permissu Superiorum.

LONDON:
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TO HIS EMINENCE
Cardinal Wiseman, Archbishop of Westminster,
WHOSE SUPERIOR ENDOWMENTS OF MIND, AND ILLUSTRIOUS
SERVICES IN THE CAUSE OF
THE CATHOLIC FAITH IN ENGLAND,
HAVE MERITED AND RECEIVED, AS WELL
FROM THE VICAR OF CHRIST THE HIGHEST TOKENS OF APPROVAL,
AS
FROM THE ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH THE BITTEREST REVILINGS;
WHO IS ALIKE AN EXAMPLE AND A PATRON
TO ALL WHO ENDEAVOUR, HOWEVER HUMBLY, TO PROMOTE
THE GLORY OF GOD, AND THE GOOD OF SOULS,
THE FOLLOWING WORK IS, BY PERMISSION,
RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY DEDICATED,
BY HIS EMINENCE'S
MOST OBDIENT,
HUMBLE SERVANTS,
THE EDITORS.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

OF the "Venerable" Author of the following work the reader will find a full and edifying account in the excellent "Life of F. Ludovico de Ponte," lately published by the Fathers of the Oratory; of the work itself the subjoined extract, from the same life, is at once a glowing and a truthful testimony.

"It is in truth an immortal work, in which the reader scarcely knows which to admire most, either the extensive learning, or the order of arrangement, or the multiplicity and correctness of the reflections, or the unction with which the mysteries are unfolded: it cannot be read without feeling the will excited to devotion, or without a desire to profit by it. It passed through three editions, and was translated into several other languages within one year after its first appearance. In it he explains admirably the practice of prayer, at the same time furnishing ample materials for it. In it directors and confessors may find wherewith to instruct those committed to their charge. In it religious of every order may find

celestial manna for the daily food of their devotion. In it, in fine, every person of every state may learn how to appreciate the eternal truths and the mysteries of our holy faith ; and also how to live well, if they will frequently read and meditate upon them."

To this eulogium little else need now be added further, than that the "Meditations" of De Ponte constitute a most complete practical development of the science of mental prayer, framed on the model of the "Spiritual Exercises" of St. Ignatius.

The three "ways" or "states" through which the soul advances, as sketched out in that admirable book; viz., the "Purgative," the "Illuminative," and the "Unitive," will be found to succeed each other in their due order, each one separately complete, and forming together a perfect and consecutive whole ; so that the exercitant, whether he seek to go through the entire course in regular succession, or only to apply himself to a particular part, will be able equally to attain his object.

How the Venerable Author has treated each meditation, and made it bear on the scope of the division to which it belongs, can be tested only by diligent practice. Certain it is, that he has brought to the work all the knowledge of a profound theologian, the experience of a consummate master of spirits, and the light and unction of a soul in close and habitual intercourse with God. Hence, whilst the points of

the meditations are stored with sound reasoning and argument, the colloquies are so many out-pourings of the heart in prayer, always natural and impressive—not unfrequently sublime. It may be added, that every expression of the soul, and every tone of the heart, so they be in earnest and rightly disposed, will not fail to find an echo in those deep and devout breathings.

Nor are the quotations from Scripture and the Fathers the least excellence of the work. They are scattered through the meditations, pointing and sanctioning the truths set forth, with a force, frequency, and appositeness which bespeak a rare amount of scriptural and patristic learning.

Those who, through God's grace, feel happily drawn to aspire to this "science of the saints," will find in the Introduction a course of instruction admirably adapted to initiate and lead them on. Nor will it be consulted without profit even by the more advanced.

As a proof of the estimation in which this work has ever been held, it may be observed that it passed through three editions within one year after its first appearance, and has gone through at least fourteen more subsequently.

The edition of which the present professes to be a reprint, is by John Heigham, who is mentioned by Dodd, in his history, as a gentleman chiefly residing abroad and occupying himself in translating works of

piety from the Spanish language into English ; and when we take into account that his translation was made upwards of two centuries ago, and under adverse circumstances, it is not surprising that it should require extensive revision. In revising it, however, it has been the object of the editors to retain the general features of the original, which, though antiquated in style, will not, it is presumed, be found ill-suited to matter of so serious and weighty moment. The corrections are chiefly those of spelling and punctuation, with occasional omission and alteration of words either obsolete or redundant, or not fully expressive of the author's meaning.

The references to the Fathers have been carefully noted in the text, and the scriptural quotations verified and corrected. Moreover, pains have been taken to make the divisions of the meditations clear, by the use of a notation, according to which, the principal and subordinate members are distinguishable at first glance; while, to assist the memory, the significative words have been marked by the use of italics.

Although the editors have used their humble endeavours in preparing the present reprint, they are far from considering it free from imperfections. These, however, it is hoped, will be no bar to the attainment of the one object they had in view;—that of supplying those souls which “hunger and thirst after justice,” (1)

(1) Matt. v. 6.

—now through God's mercy happily on the increase—
with that mystical food which will “strengthen them in
their journey to the mount of God,” (1) and with those
heavenly waters, of which whosoever drinketh, “they
shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up
into life everlasting.” (2)

(1) 3 Kings xix. 8.

(2) John iv. 14.

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I N D E X

TO THE

MEDITATIONS UPON THE GOSPELS OF THE SUNDAYS AND FEAST-DAYS,

According to the use of the Church, applicable for Preachers.

	Part M. Pt.		Part M. Pt.
<i>1st Sunday of Advent.</i>		<i>Sunday within the Octave of the Epiphany.</i>	
There shall be signs in the Sun. Luke xxi. 25, &c. ...	1 13	When Jesus was twelve years old. Luke ii. 42. ...	2 29 2
<i>3rd Sunday of Advent.</i>		<i>Octave of the Epiphany.</i>	
The Jews sent. John i. 19. &c.	3 2	I saw the Spirit coming down. John i. 19 ...	3 3 3
<i>4th Sunday of Advent.</i>		<i>2nd Sunday after the Epiphany.</i>	
Now in the fifteenth year. Luke iii. 1. ...	3 1 2	There was a marriage. John ii. 1. ...	3 9
Prepare ye the way. Luke iii. 6. ...	2 15 3	<i>3rd Sunday after the Epiphany.</i>	
<i>Christmas Eve.</i>		And behold, a leper. Matt. viii. 2. ...	3 33
When Mary, the mother of Jesus, was espoused. Matt. i. 18. ...	2 14	<i>4th Sunday after the Epiphany.</i>	
<i>Christmas Day.</i>		When Jesus entered into a boat. Matt. viii. 23. ...	3 18
And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree. Luke ii. 1. ...	2 16	<i>5th Sunday after the Epiphany.</i>	
The Shepherds said. Luke ii. 15. ...	2 19 1	On the cockle. Matt. xiii. 24. ...	3 45
And the Word was made flesh. John i. 14. ...	2 1 1, 2 8 9	<i>6th Sunday after the Epiphany.</i>	
<i>St. Stephen.</i>		On the grain of mustard-seed. Matt. xiii. 31. ...	3 46
Stephen, full of grace. Acts vi. 8. ...	5 28	<i>Septuagesima Sunday.</i>	
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Jesus said to Peter, Follow me. John xxi. 19. ...	5 13 3	<i>Sexagesima Sunday.</i>	
<i>The Holy Innocents.</i>		A sower went out to sow. Luke viii. 4. ...	3 44
An angel of the Lord. Matt. ii. 13. ...	2 28	<i>Quinquagesima Sunday.</i>	
<i>Sunday within the Octave of Christmas-day.</i>		Behold, we go up to Jerusalem. Luke xviii. 31. ...	4 2
Joseph, and Mary the mother of Jesus, were wondering. Luke ii. 33. ...	2 25 2, 3	A certain blind man. Luke xviii. 35. ...	3 35
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After eight days were accomplished. Luke ii. 21. ...	2 20	On Fasting. ...	3 4, 5
<i>Eve of the Epiphany.</i>		Lay not up for yourselves. Matt. vi. 19. ...	6 51
But when Herod was dead. Matt. ii. 19. ...	2 28 3	Remember, O man, that thou art dust. Gen. iii. 19. ...	1 11
<i>The Epiphany.</i>		<i>Thursday before 1st Sunday of Lent.</i>	
Where Jesus was born. Matt. ii. 1. ...	2 22	There came to him a centurion. Matt. viii. 5. ...	3 10

	Part. M. Pt.		Part. M. Pt.
<i>Friday bef. 1st Sund. of Lent.</i>		<i>Thursday of 4th week in Lent.</i>	
Be you therefore perfect.		Jesus went into a city.	
Matt. v. 48.	3 13 3	Luke vii. 11.	3 40
On the love of enemies.	4 45	<i>Friday of 4th week in Lent.</i>	
<i>Saturday bef. 1st Sund. of Lent.</i>		On the raising of Lazarus.	
When it was late, the ship		John xi. 1.	3 41
was. Mark vi. 47.	3 19 2	<i>Passion Sunday.</i>	
<i>1st Sunday in Lent.</i>		On the memory of it. ...	4 begin.
Jesus was led. Matt. iv. 1. 3	4 5	On the end of meditating on it	4 intro.
<i>Monday of 1st week in Lent.</i>		Abraham, your father, re-	
When the Son of Man. Matt.		joiced. John viii. 56. ...	4 „
xxv. 31.	1 15	<i>Thursday after Passion Sunday.</i>	
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When He was come into Je-		Him to eat. Luke vii. 36. ...	3 25
rusalem. Matt. xxi. 10. ...	3 10 1	<i>Friday after Passion Sunday.</i>	
<i>Wednesday (Ember).</i>		The Chief Priests and the	
For as Jonas. Matt. xii. 40.	3 10 2	Pharisees therefore. John	
<i>Thursday (Ember).</i>		xi. 47.	3 42
On the Cananean. Matt.		<i>Palm Sunday.</i>	
xv. 21.	3 29	And when they drew nigh.	
<i>Friday (Ember).</i>		Matt. xxi. 1.	4 3
There was a festival of the		<i>Monday in Holy Week.</i>	
Jews. John v. 1.	3 33	Now Jesus, six days before	
<i>Saturday (Ember).</i>		the Pasch. John xii. 1. ...	4 5
Jesus taketh unto him Peter.		<i>Maunder Thursday.</i>	
Matt. xvii. 1.	3 21	Before the festival day of	
<i>2nd Sunday in Lent.</i>		the Pasch. John xiii. 1. ...	4 8
Same.	3 22	<i>Good Friday.</i>	
<i>Wednesday of 2nd week in Lent.</i>		History of the Passion. ...	4 thright
Behold we go up. Matt. xx. 17	4 2 2	<i>Easter Sunday.</i>	
Then came to Him the		On the resurrection of our	
mother of the sons of		Lord, &c.	5 2,3
Zebedee. Matt. xx. 20 ...	3 13	<i>Easter Monday.</i>	
<i>Thursday of 2nd week in Lent.</i>		Two of the disciples. Luke	
There was a certain rich		xxiv. 13.	5 7
man. Luke xvi. 19.	3 24	<i>Easter Tuesday.</i>	
<i>Friday of 2nd week in Lent.</i>		Jesus stood in the midst.	
On the Vineyard. Matt.		Luke xxiv. 36.	5 8
xxi. 33.	3 55	<i>Wednesday in Easter week.</i>	
<i>Saturday of 2nd week in Lent.</i>		Jesus showed Himself again.	
On the Prodigal Son. Luke		John xxi. 1.	5 12
xv. 11.	3 49	<i>Thursday in Easter week.</i>	
<i>3rd Sunday in Lent.</i>		Mary stood. John xx. 11. ...	5 4
Jesus was casting out a devil.		<i>Friday in Easter week.</i>	
Luke xi. 14.	3 37	The eleven disciples. Matt.	
<i>Friday of 3rd week in Lent.</i>		xxviii. 16.	5 14
Jesus came to a city of Sa-		<i>Saturday in Easter week.</i>	
maria. John iv. 5.	3 26	The first day of the week.	
<i>Saturday of 3rd week in Lent.</i>		John xx. 1.	5 6
And the Scribes and Phari-		<i>Low Sunday.</i>	
sees bring unto Him a woman.		When it was late. John xx. 19.	5 8
John viii. 3.	3 27	<i>2nd Sunday after Easter.</i>	
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Jesus went over the sea of		dined. John xxi. 15. ...	5 13
Galilee. John vi. 1.	3 17	On the man seeking the	
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He found in the Temple them		<i>3rd Sunday after Easter.</i>	
that sold oxen. John ii. 14.	3 10	A little while. John xvi. 16.	5 16 3
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		I go to Him that sent me. } 5 17	
		John xvi. 5. } 5 22 2	

	Part. M. Pt.		Part. M. Pt.
5th Sunday after Easter.		5th Sunday after Pentecost.	
If you ask the Father any- } 4 18 3		Whosoever is angry. Matt.	
thing. John xvi. 23. ... } 6 33		v. 22. 1 22	
Rogation days—Monday.		6th Sunday after Pentecost.	
Which of you shall have a } 4 18 3		I have compassion on the	
friend? Luke xi. 5. ... } 6 33		multitude. Mark viii. 1. ... 3 17	
Eve of the Ascension.		8th Sunday after Pentecost.	
Jesus, lifting up His eyes.		On the unjust Steward.	
John xvii. 1. 4 19		Luke xvi. 1. 3 52	
Ascension Day.		9th Sunday after Pentecost.	
On the Ascension of our } 5 1 8sq.		Seeing the city. Luke xix 41. 4 4	
Lord. Mark xvi. 14 ... } 5 14		10th Sunday after Pentecost.	
Sunday within the Octave of the		Two men went up. Luke	
Ascension.		xviii. 9. 3 53	
When the Paraclete cometh.		11th Sunday after Pentecost.	
John xv. 26. 5 22		And they bring to Him.	
Whit Sunday.		Mark vii. 32. 3 37	
When the days of Pentecost		12th Sunday after Pentecost.	
were accomplished. Acts ii. 1. 5 23		A certain man went down.	
Trinity Sunday.		Luke x. 30. 3 50	
All power is given to me.		Thou shalt love the Lord thy	
Matt. xxviii. 18. 5 14 2		God. Luke x. 27. 6 11	
Corpus Christi.		13th Sunday after Pentecost.	
This is my body. 1st Cor. } 11 to		There met him him ten men	
xi. 24, &c. } 15		that were lepers. Luke	
On the Holy Sacrament of		xvii. 12. 3 34	
the Altar. 6 39, 40		14th Sunday after Pentecost.	
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vii.—an active life. 7		xxii. 1. 3 56	
viii.—a hidden life. 8		20th Sunday after Pentecost.	
ix.—a glorious life. 9		Unless ye see signs and } 3 30 2	
x.—a life of entire Surrender. } 10		wonders. John iv. 48. ... } 39 2	
xi. On the Price of the Sacred		21st Sunday after Pentecost.	
Heart. 11		On the servant who owed	
xii: On the excess of the love		ten thousand talents. Matt.	
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1st Sunday after Pentecost. Part M. Pt.		Whose image and super-	
Be ye merciful. Luke vi. 36. 6 12, 13		scription is this? Matt.	
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Part. M. Pt.

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THE
INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDITATIONS,
CONTAINING
A SUMMARY OF THE THINGS TO BE MINDED
IN THE
PRACTICE OF MENTAL PRAYER.

So high and sovereign is the exercise of mental prayer, in which we meditate upon the mysteries of our holy faith, and converse familiarly with Almighty God, that the principal master of it can be no other but the Holy Ghost Himself, who, as St. John says, (1) is the unction from whom we receive all things; by whose inspiration the holy Fathers learned it, and left us in writing many counsels, and documents of much importance, how to exercise it with profit, following the motion of that principal master whom they followed; in imitation of whom, availing myself of their doctrine and experience, I will here make a summary of the principal things which mental prayer comprehends, which shall be brief, clear, and distinct, that all may understand it, and reduce it to practice; referring, wherever I shall be found too brief, to that which other doctors have written more at large.

Nevertheless, for the manifestation of the truth, and authority of what I am to say, as well in this summary as in the meditations of this book, I will allege in the margin the

(1) 1 Joan ii. 27.

sources whence I have drawn the same, which are three.

i. The first is the sacred Scripture, the principal fountain of this spiritual science, in which is contained life everlasting, (2) and the most excellent means of attaining a foretaste of it in this life, and full possession of it in the life to come.

ii. The second fountain is, the holy Fathers, who were the masters of mystical divinity, amongst whom I shall make choice of the most ancient and most illuminated in it by Almighty God—such as were SS. Dionysius, Basil, Augustine, Chrysostom, Cassian, Gregory, Bernard, and such others; and with them I will likewise take for my guide our father and founder blessed Ignatius of glorious memory, following the order and form which he left us in his book which he made of *Spiritual Exercises*, the authority of which is very great, as well because we believe, (and not without great foundation,) that he wrote it by special revelation and inspiration of Almighty God, as the Holy Spirit interiorly dictated to him, and taught him these exercises; as also because it was approved by Pope Paul III. in a bull granted the year 1548, which is in the beginning of the said book, whose approbation experience has confirmed by the marvellous effects which our Lord God has wrought and daily works in those who exercise his meditations; as is largely prosecuted by Father Pedro de Ribadeneyra in the history (3) which he wrote of the life of this excellent man.

I will here add only concerning the said book, that the kingdom of heaven, which is comprehended in the doctrine it lays down, is (as is also the divine Scripture (4) whence he extracted it) like a grain of mustard-seed, which being the least of all seeds, grows up to such greatness that it becomes as it were a tree, upon whose branches the fowls of the air repose: for if we behold but the outside and appearance of this book, it is little, and brief, and written

(2) Joan v. 39.

(3) Lib. i. c. 8.

(4) Matt. xiii. 32.

in a plain and simple style; but if we regard what it contains within, it is effectual in virtue, ardent in affections, lofty in sense, large in discourse, and ample in the several manners of prayer and contemplation; insomuch that upon the branches of it they may find rest and spiritual food who, like the fowls of the air, soar aloft in contemplation, having (as St. Paul says) their conversation and interest in heaven. (5) And this will be clearly made manifest by that which we shall point at in this brief introduction, and shall more amply discourse of in the six parts of this book; which are, as it were, six branches of the tree of these sovereign exercises, whose shadow (6) will be the refuge of such as are tempted and afflicted—its leaves (7) will be the health of such as are soul-sick—its odoriferous flowers (8) will comfort such as are young beginners in virtue—its sweet fruits will fortify such as are proficient and go forward in it—and whose round cup will be the resting-place of such as are perfect. For all will find meditations and forms of praying accommodated to their states, as soon after will be seen.

iii. And that it may appear how the piety and sovereignty of mystical theology is founded upon the rigorous verity of scholastic divinity, the third source of what I shall say will be the school-doctors, of whom I will only allege the angelical doctor St. Thomas, for that he alone is fully available for ten thousand witnesses; whose doctrine is sound, secure, and well approved; and with the verities of scholastic divinity he points at the profoundest conceptions and highest sense of mystical theology; for both of them are sisters, and in both of them this glorious doctor is surpassingly excellent, as was his master St. Augustine, and his companion St. Bonaventure, of whose doctrine I shall likewise make use. And since, notwithstanding I have had so good guides, yet as a man I may err in what I shall write, my

(5) Phil. iii. 20. (6) Cant. ii. 3. (7) Apoc. xxii. 2. (8) Cant. ii. 5.

will is that all shall be entirely subject to the correction of our holy mother the Catholic Church, which is the foundation and pillar of truth, from which whenever, either through ignorance or negligence, I shall depart, I forthwith revoke whatsoever I have said.

CHAP. I. ON THE NATURE OF MENTAL PRAYER, SHOWING
WHAT IT IS.

MENTAL prayer (of which we here treat) is a work of the three interior faculties of the soul, *memory*, *understanding*, and *will*, exercising, by God's assistance, their acts about those mysteries and truths which our holy Catholic faith teaches; and speaking within ourselves to God our Lord, conversing familiarly with Him, begging of Him His gifts, and negotiating all whatsoever is necessary for our salvation and perfection: insomuch that the substance of mental prayer consists principally in these four things. (1)

1. The first is, with the memory to be mindful of God our Lord, with whom we are to speak, and to negotiate; and to be mindful also of the mystery that is to be meditated, passing briefly through the memory, with clearness and distinction, that which is to be the matter of the meditation, as it is taught by faith, and as it is divided into several points in the form that we shall hereafter explain. And that this memory or recordation be not dry, it is good to join to it the acts of faith, believing with the greatest liveliness that we can the verities of that mystery, because God, who is all truth, has revealed them, making of faith a ladder to mount up to perfect knowledge, seeing that (as Isaias says) "unless you believe, you shall not understand." (2)

2. The second thing is, with the understanding to make several reasonings and considerations about that mystery,

(1) S. P. Ignatio in 1 exercitio primæ hebdomadæ. S. Tho. 2, 2, q. lxxxiii., art. 1, et q. clxxx., art. 1, 3 et 4, et 3, p. q. 31.

(2) Cap. vii. juxta Septuag. S. Jer. *ibid.*

inquiring and searching out the verities comprehended in it, with all the causes, properties, effects, and circumstances that it has, considering them very particularly, in such a manner that the understanding may form a true, proper, and entire conception of the thing that it meditates, and may remain convinced, and persuaded to receive, and to embrace those truths that it has meditated, to propound them to the will, and to move it thereby to exercise its actions.

3. The third is, with the freedom of our will to draw forth various affections or virtuous acts, conformable to that which the understanding has meditated—some with regard to oneself—others with regard to God our Lord; as are hatred of ourselves, sorrow for our sins, confusion for our own misery, love of God, trust in His mercy, praises of God, thanksgiving for benefits received, desire to obtain true virtues, effectual purposes to do good works and to change and amend our life; resignation of ourselves to the will of God offering to do and to suffer whatsoever God shall ordain and dispose, and such other like; which we call affections, because they are to be done with the affection and liking of the will, moved by what the understanding has demonstrated to it: and in these consist that which we call substantial devotion, from which arises the spiritual peace and alacrity of the soul. And for the sake of them (as says St. Thomas) is meditation and contemplation principally ordained, and those other acts of the understanding which are exercised in mental prayer; for which cause St. John Damascene (3) says of it, that it is “*ascensus mentis in Deum*,” “an ascending of our spirit to God,” joining with Him by actual knowledge and love.

4. The fourth thing is, to make petitions to God our Lord, entertaining speech and conference with Him, by way of asking of Him what the will has desired and the under-

(3) S. Tho. 2, 2, q. lxxxii., art. 3, et q. clxxx., ars. 7, ad 1, Lib. 3, de fide orthodoxa, c. 24.

standing has speculated, and whatsoever else that we have need of; in which consists that which we properly call prayer, which is an humble, confident and fervent petition of such things as are convenient for us, and which we desire to obtain of Almighty God.

These petitions and colloquies are to be directed sometimes to the Eternal Father, at other times to His only-begotten Son Christ Jesus, and at other times to the whole most Blessed Trinity, alleging to them titles and reasons that may move them to grant us what we demand.

i. These titles may be taken from three parts—(4) some from the part of God, as He is God, as for instance, asking Him something for His goodness for the love that He bears us; for the desire He has of our good, for that He commands us to ask Him; for the glory of His holy name, that He may be praised by all His creatures; and finally, there may be made as it were a litany of His perfections and attributes, saying unto Him, “Grant me, O Lord, what I require of Thee, for Thine own sake,” “for Thy charity,” “for Thy mercy,” “for Thy liberality,” “for Thy wisdom,” “for Thine omnipotence,” “for Thine immensity,” “for Thine eternity,” &c.

ii. Other titles there are on the part of Christ Jesus our Lord, true God and man, as, for instance, by His incarnation and nativity; by His circumcision and presentation in the Temple; by His flying into Egypt; by His fastings; His hunger, cold, and nakedness, and by all the labour and travel of His preaching; again, by the dolours, ignominies, and torments of His passion and death; alleging His sweating of blood, His imprisonment, His scourging, thorns, nails, gall, vinegar, with the rest; sometimes speaking to the Eternal Father, beseeching Him to hear me for the love of His Son, for the services He did Him, and the pains that for His love

(4) S. Th. 2, 2, q. lxxxiii., art. 17.

He endured ; at other times speaking to the Son of God, alleging unto Him the love that He bore us, the office that He holds of our Redeemer and Advocate, and the great price that we cost Him ; at other times speaking to the Holy Ghost begging of Him the like, for the love that He bears to Christ Jesus our Lord, and for His merits. And here likewise we may make another litany of the virtues of our Redeemer, alleging His humility of heart, His poverty of spirit, His meekness, His obedience, His patience, His mercy, and His charity, with all the rest.

iii. Other titles there are on the part of our necessity and misery, alleging before our Lord, like David, that we were conceived in sin, (5) that we have disordered passions, strong enemies, very great occasions and dangers, and that without Him we are able to do nothing ; that we are His creatures made according to His own image (6) and likeness, and that for this cause the Devil persecutes us to destroy us, and that therefore it appertains to Him to protect us. And in conclusion we may make another catalogue of our own sins and miseries, counting them before God, and exaggerating them very much with sorrow of heart ; for the more we shall exaggerate them the more we excite God's mercy to remedy them.

Beside this, those men that are perfect may in some case allege with humility their fore-passed services in imitation of Holy King Ezechias, who asked of God the prolongation of his life, alleging to Him that he had "walked before" Him "with a perfect heart." (7) And the like did Christ our Lord, when, after the sermon of the Supper, he prayed to his Father, (8) as will be seen in its proper place.

These three kinds of titles may be mingled one with another, after the form that David said : "For thy name's sake, O Lord, thou wilt pardon my sin, for it is great." (9)

(5) Psal. l. 7.

(6) Psal. cxviii. 73.

(7) 4 Reg. xx. 3.

(8) Joan xvii. 4.

(9) Psal. xxiv. 11.

These and other such-like reasons may be alleged in prayer, rather to move our own heart to ask with fervour, devotion and confidence, than to move God to hear us. For our Lord much more desires to hear us, and to give us the good spirit that we ask, than we to receive it, seeing (as St. Augustine says) (10) "God would not have commanded us to ask of Him, if He had not a will and a desire to give us what we ask;" and asking of Him in the manner aforesaid, we fulfil all that which the Apostle commands us when he says that our petitions should present themselves before God, not alone, but accompanied with three marvellous actions, (11) that is to say—with "prayer," which may raise our spirit and the affections thereof to the presence of God—with "supplication" which may allege reasons for being heard—and with "thanksgiving" for benefits received, which may dispose us to receive those which we ask afresh.

These are the principal things which mental prayer comprehends, whose order St. Augustine declares, saying, "*Meditatio parit scientiam, scientia compunctionem, compunctio devotionem, devotio perficit orationem.*" (12) "Frequent meditation engenders science and knowledge of a man's self and of God;" knowledge engenders affections of compunction for our sins and miseries; compunction awakens affections of devotion towards God for His greatness and mercies; and devotion perfects prayer, making our spirit to join itself lovingly to Almighty God, and to ask of Him things decent and fitting, and in such manner as is convenient.

It remains that we explain and declare the manner how every one of these things is to be done, beginning with that which is most proper and essential to prayer.

(10) Lib. de Verbis Domini, et Sermones v. 29.

(11) Philip. iv. 6. 1 Tim. ii. 1. S. Tho. 2, 2, q. lxxxiii., art. 17.

(12) Lib. de Spiritu et Anima, cap. 70, qui ei tribuitur.

CHAP. II. ON THE MANNER OF SPEAKING TO GOD IN MENTAL PRAYER.

By what has been said, it appears that the essence or nature of mental prayer properly consists in speaking within ourselves to God our Lord, for two principal ends.

1. The first is, to praise Him and bless Him for what He is; and to give Him thanks for the benefits and rewards He bestows upon us, exercising that sovereign manner of prayer which St. Paul counsels us, saying, "Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father by him." (1) In which words the holy Apostle points at four divine affections, with which we may speak in our hearts to God our Lord for the end aforesaid, that is to say, psalms, hymns, spiritual canticles, and thanksgiving.

i. Interior "psalms" are acts of the love of God, with effectual desires and determinations to serve and obey Him, in which we offer ourselves to keep most perfectly His commandments and counsels. This is that music which David calls the "psaltery" "of ten strings:" (2) for as he that plays on the psaltery, or harp, handles all its ten strings at one time, at other times some of them, and sometimes all of them together, so in prayer making this music to God, we are to have fervent desires to exercise the virtues of obedience, humility, patience, and the rest, now one, then another, and sometimes all together; as likewise stedfast purpose to keep God's commandments and His counsels, laying hand now upon one, then upon another, and sometimes upon all together.

(1) Eph. v. 19. Coloss. iii. 16. S. Th. Lectio 7 in Ephes. v.

(2) Ps. xxxii. 2.

ii. "Hymns" are affections of the praises of God, reckoning up all the excellences and perfections that He has, and the works that He has done, for which He is worthy to be praised and glorified of all creatures. Sometimes I may say with the Seraphim, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts!" (3) or instead of this word "holy" I may put in other like words, saying, "*Good,*" "*merciful,*" "*just,*" "*wise,*" and "*powerful*"—"art Thou, my Lord, and most worthy to have Thy sanctity and Thy greatness preached by the Seraphim." Sometimes, with the elders in the Apocalypse, I will say, "'Worthy' art Thou, O 'Lamb' of God who didst die for us, 'to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction' for ever and ever. Amen." (4) And at other times, with the three children of Babylon that were in the furnace, (5) I will invite all creatures to praise and glorify God. And, with David, (6) I will excite my own soul and all its faculties to bless our Lord.

iii. "Spiritual canticles" are affections of spiritual joy and alacrity, rejoicing that God is who He is, and for the infinite good that He has in Himself, for the glory given to Him by the saints in heaven, for the services done Him by the just upon the earth; rejoicing within ourselves for the hope of eternal good, and for the possession which the blessed enjoy, saying that of the Apocalypse, "Hallelujah! for the Lord our God the almighty hath reigned. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has prepared herself." (7)

iv. Thanksgivings are acts of thankfulness for the benefits we have received of our Lord, recounting them all very often, and praising Him for every one of them; and I should not only give Him thanks for the benefits I myself have received, but also for those which He has done to the

(3) Isa. vi. 3. (4) Apoc. v. 12. (5) Dan. iii. 57.

(6) Ps. x. 1. (7) Apoc. xix. 6.

angels in heaven, and to all the men upon earth, and to the insensible creatures that know not how to thank Him, and even for those He has done to the devils themselves, and to the damned, that have no will to be thankful unto Him.

With these four affections we may speak to our Lord in prayer, to the end of glorifying Him, endeavouring (as St. Paul says), that the Holy Spirit be the beginning of our interior speeches, Christ Jesus our Saviour be the middle or mediator, and the Father everlasting the end and person to whom they be directed, although, as has been said, they may likewise be directed to all the three Persons.

2. The second end why we are to speak to God our Lord, is to require of Him new celestial gifts and graces, ordained to our own salvation and perfection and to His glory. These petitions and colloquies may be made in many forms, according to the particular disposition of him that prays and speaks to God.

Sometimes we must speak to Him as a son speaks to his father, asking of Him all such things as a good son may and ought to ask of a good father, with the spirit of love and confidence. And in this manner we speak to God in that prayer of our Pater-noster, where Christ our Lord declares what things we are to ask, as we shall see in the meditation which will be made upon that prayer in the third part.

Sometimes we must speak to God as a poor wretch does to a rich and merciful man, begging of him an alms. With this spirit prayed David very often, calling himself "poor" and "a beggar," (8) begging a spiritual alms of God, who, as St. Paul says, "is rich unto all that call upon Him." (9)

Sometimes we may speak to God as a sick man speaks to a physician, declaring to him his infirmities, and desiring remedy of them; or as a man that has a suit, or as one

(8) Ps. xxiv. 16; xxxix. 18. (9) Rom. x. 12.

that is guilty, speaks to a judge, when he informs him of his right, and requires a favourable sentence or pardon of his crime. And in this case our colloquy must be accompanied with affection of humiliation, of sorrow for sin, of purposes of satisfaction and amendment; of which we shall see hereafter many examples in the meditations upon the miracles and parables of our Saviour Christ.

Finally, at other times we may speak to God with that spirit that a scholar speaks to his master, requiring of him light and instruction in such things as we know not; or as one friend speaks to another when he talks with him of some weighty affair, asking counsel, direction and aid. And if confidence and love shall so far embolden us, our soul may speak to God as the bride speaks to her spouse in several colloquies, with which the book of Canticles is replenished.

In all these ways we may speak to our Lord in prayer, clothing ourselves with the affections before mentioned, sometimes with one and sometimes with another; for all are fitting to us to use in treating with our God, who is our physician, our judge, our friend and the spouse of our souls. True it is that the greatest certainty in these petitions and colloquies depends principally upon the Holy Spirit, who (as St. Paul says) "asks for us with unspeakable groanings:" (10) for with His inspiration He teaches us, and moves us to ask, ordering our petitions, and stirring up those affections with which they are to be made. To which purpose St. Bernard said that "devotion is the tongue of the soul," (11) which whosoever has is very skilful in talking and reasoning with the Eternal Word. But notwithstanding this, we, for our part, must aid ourselves, and learn to treat and confer with Almighty God, observing the manner and the affection with which men speak one to another in the cases rehearsed.

To which I add, that although prayer is properly a

(10) Rom. viii. 26.

(11) Serm. xlv., in Cantica.

speech and colloquy with our Lord, we may, notwithstanding, speak in it to ourselves, and confer with our own soul; sometimes, (as St. Paul says,) exhorting (12) ourselves, and reviving ourselves in the affections and petitions rehearsed; at other times reprehending ourselves for our faults, and for our want of zeal, and being ashamed of ourselves that we serve Almighty God so negligently. In this way David spoke many times to his soul, saying, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why dost thou disquiet me? Hope thou in God, for I will still give praise to Him, the salvation of my countenance, and my God." (13) "Be thou, O my soul! subject to God; for from Him is my patience." (14) From these colloquies we must next proceed to speak to God Himself, as did the prodigal son when he spoke to himself, saying, "How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger! I will arise and will go to my father, and say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, I am not now worthy to be called thy son: make me,' if it so please thee, 'as one of thy hired servants.'" (15)

Finally, we may likewise, in prayer, speak to our Blessed Lady the Virgin, to the angels and saints, for the same two ends aforesaid; either to praise and bless them for their sanctity and virtues, and for the benefits which they do us, or to ask them to aid and favour us in the affairs of our salvation: for which we may likewise allege to them some of those motives which we laid down in the preceding chapter, and other special ones beseeching each of them. To the most sacred Virgin may be alleged that she is our mother and the advocatrix of sinners, and that for our remedy her Son gave her this office in charge; alleging also the love that she bears Him, and her desire that all

(12) Coloss. iii. 16.

(13) Ps. xli. 12; and xlii. 5.

(14) Ps. lxi. 6.

(15) Luke xv. 21.

should love and serve Him, beseeching her to do for us the office of a mother and advocatrix, and to demonstrate to us that love and desire of hers in obtaining for us what we request, that we may the better serve Him whom she so dearly loves. Also to our angel guardian may be alleged, that he comply with the office he holds to present our prayers to God, and to procure a good despatch of them; and that his honour is interested in our being good and having a happy issue of our endeavours for heaven; and that, seeing that the *Devil* sleeps not to tempt us, that *he* sleep not, but be watchful to defend us. After this manner we may speak to the rest of the saints that shall offer themselves in the matter of meditation, or to whom we are devoted, rather to stir up devotion in ourselves than to move them by it: for, as they love us and desire our salvation, so they are very much inclined to solicit it.

CHAP. III. ON THE VIRTUES ACCOMPANYING MENTAL PRAYER, AND THEIR EXCELLENCES.

By what has been explained in the two preceding chapters, it follows how excellent a thing mental prayer is, in which are exercised so many and so heroic acts of the principal virtues that there are in the Christian life. On this account St. John Chrysostom said, with very great reason, that "as when a queen enters into a city there enter with her, in her company, many ladies and noblemen of the court, beside her guard and innumerable people that follow her, so when prayer enters into the soul, there enter with her all the virtues accompanying the spirit of prayer." (1) Some virtues go before, preparing the way and disposing the soul to pray as it ought, as are faith, humility, reverence, and purity of intention; and others which we shall speak of hereafter, according to that saying of the Wise Man,

(1) Lib. ii. de orando Deo, ad finem.

“Before prayer prepare thy soul, and be not as a man that tempteth God.” (2) Other virtues go side by side with her, as are charity, religion, devotion, and wisdom, and those other gifts of the Holy Ghost which illuminate the understanding, and aid marvellously to prayer, as will be seen in the twenty-seventh meditation of the fifth part of this work. Innumerable other virtues follow after her, as are fervent desires and purposes of all that is good in matter of obedience and patience, of temperance, modesty, chastity, and the rest. And as well the one as the other interlacing themselves with prayer, exercise among themselves divers acts that are an ornament and decking the one of the other; for humility joins herself with confidence and charity; charity with religion and thanksgiving; religion with obedience and resignation; and thus with a celestial and divine accord they make a harmony of many voices. Upon which many holy Fathers (3) say that prayer makes men like angels, not only because it is a work of the superior faculties, in which men are like them, but because it communicates to men an angelical life full of purity and sanctity. By prayer (when it is perfect) they participate in the ardent love of the seraphim—the fulness of knowledge of the cherubim—the peace and quietness of the thrones—the rule over themselves of the dominations—the power against devils of the powers—the magnanimity for marvellous things of the virtues—the discretion in government of the principalities—the fortitude in difficult and hard things of the archangels—and the obedience in all things of the angels—and, finally, the wisdom, chastity, and cleanness of the celestial spirits. “For there can be nothing (says St. Chrysostom) more wise, more just, or more holy than a man that speaks to God as it is meet for Him from whom he receives most abundantly those gifts

(2) *Eccles.* xviii. 23.

(3) *S. Chrys. lib. i. de orando Deo. Homil. in Ps. iv. Nilus c. 513, de oratione; Climacus, Gradu. xxviii.*

and graces in which consists true wisdom and perfect justice and sanctity." The reason of this is, that as our Lord is very gracious and gentle, and inspires us to pray, He speaks to us when we speak to Him, and converses familiarly with those that enter into their heart to treat and converse with Him. And the conversation and speech of God is not of words alone but of works; for (as St. Bernard says) "Locutio verbi est infusio doni." (4) "For God to speak is to communicate gifts infusing his graces and virtues upon them to whom he speaks;" filling them with that spiritual "joy unspeakable," (5) and with that "peace that surpasses all understanding." (6) And upon this David said, "I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me; for He will speak peace unto His people, and unto His saints, and unto them that are converted to the heart." (7)

It is for this cause that in prayer we must speak in such a manner to God, as to be attentive to hearken, and to hear what He speaks to us by His inspirations, to obey them, and to dispose ourselves to receive those gifts which thereby He intends to communicate to us; as we shall see in the second part in the twenty-sixth meditation.

By what has been said appears the excellency and necessity of mental prayer, of which Cassian says, (8) that it has such a connexion with all virtues, that neither can *they* be perfectly obtained nor preserved without prayer, nor perfect prayer be obtained without *them*; for it is (says he) the end of all, and to it are directed all the labours and pains we take to gain them; inasmuch as prayer, of which we here treat, in its perfect degree embraces union with God, by the means of actual knowledge and love, with great joy in possessing Him. Hence it arises that God (as St. John Climacus says) in prayer pays in ready money

(4) Serm. xlv. in Cantica.

(5) 1 Peter i. 8.

(6) Phil. iv. 7.

(7) Is. lxxxiv. 9.

(8) Collat. ix., c. 1.

a hundred times the double of that which is left or endured for His cause, beside great pledges of the last reward that is to be given in the life everlasting. (9) I might say many things of this sovereign virtue which I omit, because this book is written for those that desire to exercise it on account of the great estimation in which they hold it. And in the prologues and introductions to every one of the six parts of this book, something will be spoken to discover the excellence of this sovereign exercise, and the good that proceeds of the same.

CHAP. IV. ON THE MATTER OF MENTAL PRAYER FIT FOR MEDITATION.

THE matter of mental prayer in which the three faculties of the soul (especially the understanding) are to exercise their acts, is all that which God has revealed in the divine Scripture, especially the principal mysteries of our faith, which are most expressed and recommended in it.

These mysteries may be reduced in general to three orders, accommodated to the different states of those that meditate, among whom some are sinners that desire to get out of their sins, or beginners that desire to mortify the vices and passions of their former life; and these walk in the way which we call the purgative way, (1) whose end is to purify the soul of all these vices, and to obtain cleanness of heart. Others pass more forward, and become proficient in virtue, and these walk in that way which we call the illuminative way, (2) of which the end is to enlighten the soul with the splendour and brightness of many verities and virtues, and to obtain great augmentation and increase of it. Others are already perfect and very much exercised, and these walk in that way which we call unitive, of which the

(9) Gradu. xxviii.

(1) S. Dionys. c. 3, de Eccles. Hier. cap. 3 et 5. S. P. Ignat. annotatio 10.

(2) James iv. 8. Ps. xxxiii. 6.

end is to unite and join our spirit to Almighty God, (3) in the union of perfect love.

Each one of these persons is to have matter of meditation, accommodated and agreeing to his state and aim, from which he may easily draw forth the affections and purposes that his necessity requires. And although this matter may be reduced to three orders of mysteries and verities, accommodated to those three states and ways which have been described, yet, for the greater perspicuity and clearness, we reduce it in this book to six parts; assigning two to those that are beginners, two to those that are proficient, and other two to those that are most perfect, in this form ensuing.

1. Sinners who desire truly to be converted, and to turn to God, and to change their life, are to take for the matter of their meditation their own sins, and all such things as may aid them to know the number and enormity of them, or that may cause a detestation of them, and sorrow for having committed them. And inasmuch as fear is usually the beginning of justification, whatever awakes this fear is matter of meditation accommodated to them; such are the last things of man, as death, judgment particular and universal, hell, and such other like things, which will be put in the first part, with certain forms of prayer, accommodated for the examination of the conscience, for confession, and communicating, and for the obtaining of perfect justification, which is the end of the purgative way.

2. Such as are already justified, and desire to treasure up virtues, and to increase in them, are to take for the proper matter of their meditation the mysteries of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, whilst He lived in this mortal life; because His life and doctrine, His passion and death, formed a most perfect pattern of all virtue for all classes of those

(3) 1 Cor. vi. 17.

that are just, although in a different manner; for (as St. Augustine said, and after him St. Thomas) (4) charity, when it is already begotten, and is born by the means of penances, has those three states which have been mentioned—of spiritual childhood, of augmentation or increase, and of perfection.

The newly justified, which are the beginners, and, as it were, infants newly-begotten in the being of grace, are to take for the matter of their meditation the mysteries of the incarnation and childhood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, of which we treat in the second part, and in those meditations they will find sufficient motives, as well to prosecute and continue on the journey of the purgative way, mortifying and purifying themselves from those vices and passions which have remained in them as dregs of their former life, as also to begin the journey of the illuminative way, treasuring up virtues contrary to their vices, and accommodated to their state.

Such as are proficient, and go onward increasing in virtue, have two ways to this—the one by doing, and the other by suffering; I mean, either by exercising divers works of virtue of their own election, which appertain to the active and contemplative life, or by suffering with great perfection the troubles, persecutions, and afflictions inflicted upon them by the hand of another. And this way, though it be the sharper, is the most effectual to increase in virtues, and to attain to their perfection.

In these two ways our Saviour Christ walked with great excellence, of whom St. Augustine says, that His exercises among men were “*mira facere et mala pati*,” (5) “to do marvellous things and to suffer painful things,” and all for our instruction; of which we treat in the meditations of

(4) Tract. 5, super 1 Joan. S. Th. 2, 2, q. xxiv., art. 9.

(5) In Ps. xl.

the third and fourth part. For in the third we will put the mysteries of what He did and said the three years of His preaching, from His baptism to His last entrance into Jerusalem, and in the fourth the mysteries of His passion and death. And although both mysteries teach us to do and to suffer, yet the one is most resplendent and shining in the first, and the other in the last, which are the most powerful to move us to all kind of virtue, with greater excellence and perfection.

3. Finally, those which arrive to the state of perfection, walking in the unitive way, have two other paths to attain to the perfect union of love. The first is, by contemplating the glorious life of our Saviour Christ, and the wonderful works that He did after His resurrection, sending upon His disciples the Holy Ghost, which is the Spirit of Love; and of these mysteries the fifth part treats. The other way is, by contemplating the mysteries of the Divinity and Trinity of God, His perfections and benefits, of which the sixth part treats. And these two last parts are most proper to such as are perfect, according to the saying of David in Psalm ciii. "The high hills are a refuge for the harts, the rock for the irchins;" (6) giving us to understand in a mystical sense, (as Cassian notes,) that perfect men who, like stags, run lightly in the way of heaven, feed themselves with the consideration of the mysteries of the divinity and glory of Christ, figured by the high mountains; but men full of prickles like irchins, with the prickles of their sins and imperfections, or afflicted with troubles, take for remedy the consideration of the earth and dust, and the mysteries of the humanity and humility of Christ Jesus our Lord, figured by the rock, in whose wounds they repose, and with whose doctrine and examples they sustain and profit themselves. (7)

(6) Psal. ciii. 18.

(7) Collat. x. cap. 13.

By what has been said it follows that the meditations of these six parts are as the six wings of the Seraphim which God has upon earth, like unto those which the Prophet Isaias saw; (8) with which they depart from what is gross and earthly, and fly to that which is celestial and heavenly, where, after they have purified, illustrated, and perfected themselves, they fly likewise to purify, illustrate, and perfect others, desiring to have all burn with the love with which they burn; since these meditations conduce to all these ends, and in all of them ought all men to be exercised—even those that have most advanced, though with a different end and manner. And the reason is, that as in the three degrees of souls, the vegetative proper to plants, the sensitive proper to brute beasts, and the reasonable proper to men, the superior, besides *his own* works, does likewise the works of the *inferior*, though after a more excellent manner; so also (as St. Thomas says)(9) in the three states of people that dedicate themselves to prayer and to the service of God, those which are proficients must exercise themselves in the meditations and works of the beginners, and the perfect in those of them both, but after a more perfect manner, drawing out of them the fruit which they intend with more advantage, that is, more perfect mortification of themselves, and a more excellent manner of imitating our Saviour Christ in His virtues.

Besides this, experience teaches, that when a great spirit or affection for any virtue whatsoever is predominant in a soul, upon what thing soever it meditates it takes occasion to feed and augment itself. If the spirit of humility predominate, whether he meditate upon hell or upon heaven, whether he think upon his own miseries or upon the divine excellences, he will draw out of all affections of humility. And if in his heart the spirit of love predominate, though

(8) Isaiah vi. 2.

(9) 2, 2, art. ix., ad. 3.

he meditate upon judgment and hell, he converts all into the affections of love. So likewise beginners, proficients, and those that are perfect, upon whatsoever they meditate, may draw forth those affections and purposes that are fitting to their state and necessity.

Hence it is, that although by the ordinary law we are to observe the order propounded, yet need we not be so tied to it that it shall not be lawful to change it; it is sometimes even convenient; for some cannot apply themselves to considerations of fear who yet are easily moved with meditations of love, and others contrarily. Some find devotion and profit in considering the mysteries of the childhood of our Saviour Christ; others in considering the mysteries of His Passion; some in one mystery and some in another; and it is not good to force them overmuch, nor to draw them from their consideration to pass them to another in which they find not what they desired. And for this cause our Lord has provided the matter of meditation to be so copious and ample that every one may find somewhat that is fitting to his purpose.

CHAP. V. ON ENTRANCE INTO PRAYER.

IT is the counsel of the Holy Ghost, before prayer to "prepare the soul;" (1) for to go without preparation is as it were to *tempt God*, proposing the end and fruit of prayer without using the means ordained to obtain the same. It is therefore necessary before we enter into prayer to carry the matter foreseen, which we are to meditate upon; for ordinarily meditation cannot be attentive, nor recollected, if the matter be not first prepared, well digested, and divided into points after that manner that we here shall prescribe. And yet for all this nothing hinders, if our Lord by special inspiration shall move us to think upon some other

(1) *Eccclus. xviii. 23.*

thing, but that we may occupy ourselves therein, omitting till some other time that which before we had premeditated, because divine impulsions or moving is the principal cause of this work which we are to follow, provided, however, that it proceed not from lightness of mind nor instability of heart, to jump from one matter into another without sufficient cause. This being premised, before we begin meditation we are to do these things following.

1. First, we are to lift up our heart and the faculties of our soul to God our Lord, beholding Him as He is there present with an interior, attentive, reverend, and loving regard; since if a man is to speak with a prince, it is necessary that he go to his palace, or to the place where he is, and present himself before him; for with one that is absent we cannot speak; and seeing God is present in heaven, and in earth, and in every place, assisting all and beholding all, when I am about to pray, and to speak to Him, I need not go to seek Him in any other place, but to quicken my faith, and to behold how He is there present, persuading myself that when I pray I am not alone, but that there is also with me the most holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to whom I speak, who sees me and hears me, and is accustomed to answer within my heart, with inspirations and illuminations, communicating the light of truth to the understanding, and fervent affections of devotion to the will, and infusing gifts and virtues, and other graces, into the soul, as has been said before.

Sometimes I may behold God as he is round about me encompassing me on every side, and myself within Him, as the fishes are within the sea. At other times I may behold Him as he is within me by essence, presence, and power, knowing what I do, and aiding me to do it. And in this manner is fulfilled the saying of our Lord Christ, "When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber," that is, into thy

heart, "and having shut the door" of thy senses, "pray to thy heavenly Father in secret; and thy Father who" is there, and "seeth in secret, will repay thee," (2) that is, will give you what you ask.

This truth of the presence of God within me and round about me wheresoever I am praying, I am much to quicken, that it may move me to reverence, confidence and due attention. And if with this consideration I perceive myself moved to these and other like affections of devotion, I may well detain myself to enjoy this taste that God gives me, for the time it will last; for this already is a prayer, and a very good one. But the ordinary rule will be to detain myself in this thought during a Pater-noster, although in all the time of my meditation I must not lose out of sight the presence of God, according to that of David: "The meditation of my heart is always in Thy sight:" (3) but in the time of my petitions and colloquies I must renew it with more fervour, "pouring out," as David says, "my prayer," in the "sight" of our Lord. (4)

2. Secondly, this done, I must make a great and profound reverence to the Majesty of God, bending before Him the knees of my heart, (5) and of my body, once, twice, and three times, as they do that enter into the presence of kings. I am to adore him *in spirit*, acknowledging Him for my God and my Lord, the Father of immense Majesty, and the King most worthy of infinite reverence; and with my *body* to humble myself, even to the fastening my mouth to the ground; and yet more, to prostrate myself, as did our Lord Jesus Christ in the prayer of the garden, of whom St. Paul says, that He "was heard" by the Eternal Father, for the great "reverence" (6) He bare Him; giving us to under-

(2) Matt. vi. 6. S. Hilar. can. v. in Matt. Amb. lib. vi. de Sacra, c. 3. Aug. conc. ii. in Psal. xxxiii.

(3) Ps. xviii. 15. (4) Ps. cxli. 3. (5) Orat. Manassæ, "flecto genu cordis mei." (6) Heb. v. 7.

stand how much it imports to reverence God in prayer, to the end that He may hear us.

3. This humiliation being made, I will kneel down in the place appointed for prayer, and forthwith it is good to cross myself with inward feeling of the words that then are spoken; desiring of God by that sign to deliver me from those enemies that are wont to molest us in prayer, saying with this affection, "Per signum crucis de inimicis nostris libera nos Deus noster," "By the sign of the cross from our enemies deliver us, our God;" and then presently I should add, "In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti," "In the name of," &c., as one that intends to begin his prayer not in his own virtues, but in the virtues of the most blessed Trinity. Some are accustomed immediately to say the general confession, in order to begin with humiliation, and to comply with the saying of the Wise man, that "the just" man in the beginning of prayer is first an accuser of himself. (7) Others are used to begin with thanksgiving, following the order that St. Basil prescribes; of which we will speak in the first part, in the meditation of the examination of the conscience.

But although everyone may begin with that which is most conducive to his devotion, yet that which generally is convenient for all is, to begin with a short prayer, preparatory, as it were, to that which we intend; in which we may beseech our Lord to direct that work to His honour and glory, and to give grace necessary to perform it as He requires. This brief prayer I must make speaking to God our Lord, whom I behold as present, saying to Him with great earnestness and affection of heart:

Colloquy.—I offer to Thee, O Lord, whatever I shall here think, speak, or treat of, to the end that all may be ordained purely to Thy honour and glory; and

(7) Prov. xviii. 17, juxta Septuag.

I beseech Thee by what Thou art to assist me in this hour, to the end that I may assuredly pray in such manner as Thou requirest, for the glory of Thy most holy Name, and for the profit of my soul. Amen.

This manner of prayer may be directed to the Three Divine Persons in this form :

Sometimes to the Eternal Father, saying to Him, "Sovereign Father, I offer unto Thee this my prayer, united and incorporated with that of Thy only-begotten Son Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I beseech thee to aid me to pray in such manner as He prayed, that my prayer, as His was, may be acceptable to Thee."

At other times it may be directed to the Son of God, saying to Him, as did the Apostles, (8) "My Redeemer and Master, teach me to pray, and aid me to pray with attention, purity, and fervour like to that which Thou hadst when Thou didst pray to Thy Father, that my prayer, as Thine was, may be acceptable to Him."

At other times to the Holy Ghost, saying to Him that of the apostle St. Paul : (9) "Most Holy Spirit, I am an ignorant and wretched sinner, I know not what to pray for, nor how to ask it as behoveth me. Thou, my God, ask within me, moving me to ask with groanings unspeakable, that my prayer may be well received, proceeding from so noble a beginning as Thou art, to whom be honour and glory world without end. Amen."

In this way is fulfilled that which St. Dionysius (10) says, that every theological or divine act (which that is that beholds God, and treats of Him and with Him) ought to begin with prayer, invoking and calling upon the favour of the Most Holy Trinity, who is present in every place, delivering up ourselves to Him with pure petitions, with a settled

(8) Luc. xi. 1.

(9) Rom. viii. 26.

(10) C. 3. de divinis nominibus.

mind, and with an affection well disposed for the union which we aim at in this holy exercise.

CHAP. VI. ON THE MANNER OF MEDITATING AND DISCOURSING IN PRAYER, AND HOW WE ARE TO RESIST DISTRACTIONS THAT THEN ASSAIL US.

THE work of the understanding, which we call meditation, is one of the most difficult and hard that there is in mental prayer. For though it is easy to meditate upon divers things, running from one to another without order or method, yet it is very difficult to meditate upon one thing alone with attention, having the memory and understanding fixed upon God, without being distracted and diverted to other things. Even the greatest saints were wont to be sometimes molested by this, and complain of it. Job said of himself, "My thoughts are dissipated, tormenting my heart; they have turned night into day;" (1) because they deprive me of the quietness of recollection, in which I was wont to spend the night. And David cried to God, saying, "My heart hath forsaken me," and has departed from my house: "be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me" (2) from this trouble.

This very evil we all have experience of, and it is wont to proceed from divers roots and beginnings: i. From the Devil, to hinder us from the fruit of prayer. ii. From our own imagination, which is free, untamed, unstable, and ill-governed. iii. From some affections unmortified, which draw our thoughts after them; for "where" the "treasure is there" is also the "heart." (3) iv. From cares which sting and divide the heart into a thousand parts. v. From weakness and coldness, through not enforcing nor applying ourselves to this noble exercise. vi. From ignorance, through not knowing how to reason or meditate, or how to search

(1) Job xvii. 11, 12.

(2) Ps. xxxix. 13.

(3) Matt. vi. 21.

out the hidden truths, or to ponder them in such a way that they may move the will, and stir up affections of devotion. This ignorance, by the favour of Heaven, will be remedied by that form and method which I shall here prescribe.

i. In meditation, we are to establish ourselves very well in the truth of the mystery which faith teaches us, labouring to believe and to understand it truly as it passed and as it is revealed. ii. We are to inquire the true causes and roots from whence proceeded the matter that we meditate, excluding the causes that are false and apparent. iii. By reasoning, we are to search out the true ends for which it was ordained, excluding all others that are contrary. iv. We are to inquire the effects proceeding from the matter; that is, the good or harm that it brings with it. And v. Certain properties and circumstances that accompany it. This will be clearly understood by this example.

If I would meditate upon the mysteries of the Incarnation—i. I must well consider and understand what our faith teaches; that is to say, that the Son of God joined to Himself in unity of person our human nature, in such a way that God is truly man, and man is God. ii. I am to inquire out the things before propounded, considering how the *causes* and *roots* of this work were not our merits, but only the bounty and mercy of Almighty God; and the *ends* were the redemption of the world and the manifestation of His divine goodness and charity. iii. I will consider the *profit* that thereby came to us, viz., pardon of sins, destruction of death, entrance into heaven, and such like; and then the *loss* we had sustained if this work had not been done, remaining all enemies of God, slaves of the Devil, and condemned to hell. iv. The *circumstances* of this work touching *place*, and *time*, and *manner*; and what properties of body and soul Almighty God took when He was incarnate.

In each of these things the understanding is to make a pause, detaining itself in every one so long as it shall find devotion and spiritual relish, without caring to pass to another, moving the will to divers affections of love and confidence, as has been said, making petitions and colloquies with our Lord according to what has been meditated and desired. And when our understanding has considered well one of these things, it may pass to another with the like quietness and calmness of mind, and so proceed in the rest. Of all this we shall see manifest examples in the ensuing meditations, especially in the first, which will be a pattern for the rest.

I only notice that when the Holy Spirit, with special inspiration, moves us to pray, all is easy and sweet; for He refreshes the memory, revives the reasoning, rains showers of meditations, enkindles the affections, grants the petitions, disposes the colloquies, and makes perfect the whole work of prayer, ourselves co-operating without trouble. But when this special succour is wanting, it is necessary that we ourselves, using our free will with the assistance of grace, which never fails us, apply our faculties to the exercise of their acts in the form aforesaid, by which we invite the Holy Spirit to aid us with the special succour of His inspirations. For spiritual men who exercise prayer should not be like ships of high building, that cannot sail without wind, but rather like galleys, that navigate both with the wind and with the oar; and when they fail of the prosperous wind of divine inspiration, they are to navigate with the oar of their faculties, aided by the divine favour, though it be not so sensible. And this kind of prayer is wont to be sometimes most profitable, (though it be not so pleasing,) on account of its greater merit, in fighting against distractions and dryness of heart. And if we persevere, using the oars of prayer, in His time Christ our Lord will come to visit

us, with whose visitation this tempest will cease; as it happened in a like case to the holy apostles, (4) as we shall see hereafter.

The weapons to fight against these distractions of heart and dryness of spirit are principally four.

1. The first is profound *humility*, acknowledging our weakness and misery, and being ashamed of ourselves to stand before God with such distraction; and accusing ourselves of our offences past and present, for which we are now chastised; for whoever in this manner "humbleth himself" in prayer "shall be" in that "exalted." (5)

2. The second is *fortitude* of mind, making a manly resolution not advisedly to allow entrance to any thought that may separate us from that matter out of which we make our prayer, though it be one that ministers to us much pleasure, or seems of very much importance; for at that time nothing imports so much as to attend to my prayer and to God, before whom I am to pray; and when unwittingly I find myself diverted, I will turn again to tie the thread of the good thought and reasoning begun; and if a thousand times I should be diverted, I will turn a thousand times to the same without losing my courage or confidence, remembering that Abraham, persevering in chasing away the importunate birds that approached to the sacrifice, came to sleep a mysterious sleep, in which God discovered to him great secrets, and passed like fire through the midst of the sacrifice in testimony that He accepted it. (6) So labouring with perseverance to chase away importunate thoughts that disquiet me in the sacrifice of prayer, I shall come, with God's favour, to sleep the quiet sleep of contemplation, in which He may illuminate my soul with His light that I may know Him, and inflame it with the fire of His love that I may love Him.

(4) Matt. xiv. 25. Marc. vi. 48. (5) Luc. xiv. 11.

(6) Gen. xv. 11. S. Gregor. lib. xvi. mor. c. 19.

3. The third weapon is *prayer* itself, beseeching our Lord to "build" in my soul a city of "Jerusalem," (7) that it may become a vision of peace, collecting my thoughts and wandering affections that they may inhabit there and busy themselves quietly in prayer. The like will I beseech the holy angels, who assist those that pray. And in this manner I will employ all my strength ; (for prayer is so powerful that it can obtain of God all things, and itself with them ;) using in the midst of these disturbances some brief prayers to this purpose. Sometimes I will say with David, "My heart hath forsaken me : be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me" from the violence I suffer, and "look down, O Lord, to help me." (8) At other times I will say with the same royal prophet, "My soul is as earth without water to Thee ; hear me speedily, O Lord, my spirit hath fainted away." (9) At other times I will cry out with the apostles in the midst of the tempest, saying, "Lord, save" me, for I "perish." (10) Or like the blind whose prayer was hindered by the press of the people, I will lift up my voice, saying, "Son of David, have mercy on me." (11) And if I persevere crying, though it be with dryness and violence, our Lord Jesus Christ will not fail to have compassion on me, as He had on this blind man ; which we shall consider in its place.

4. The last weapon must be a great *confidence* in God our Lord, persuading ourselves that, seeing He commands us to pray, He will give us grace and help for the same, by which we may be able to resist the Devil, to bridle our imagination, to repress our passions, to moderate our cares, and to cast from us our lukewarmness, that they may not hinder us in the exercise of prayer. But with this confidence we must join diligence, endeavouring, as Cassian says, before prayer to remove all such occasions as we

(7) Ps. cxlvi. 2.

(8) Ps. xxxix. 13.

(9) Ps. cxlii. 6.

(10) Matt. viii. 25.

(11) Luc. xviii. 38.

would not should distract us in it, imitating in this the subtlety of our adversary, who (as St. Nilus the abbot says) (12) ordains all his temptations, with which in the daytime he tempts spiritual persons, to hinder them from prayer and its fruit. He tempts them with gluttony to make them in prayer heavy and sleepy. He tempts them with impatience to disquiet them; with curiosity of the senses to distract them; with multitude of business to disturb them; and with pride and ingratitude to make them dry. And seeing we ought to be no less provident and careful of our good than the devil is of our evil, there is great reason so to order our works and business of the day that they may all help to further well our prayer. And so with this, in some way, we shall fulfil what Christ our Saviour said: "It behoveth always to pray, and not to be weary;" (13) for he always prays that spends his whole time in prayer or in preparing himself for it. With this confidence I should enter into mental prayer, saying to the devils that of the psalm, "Depart from me, ye malignant, and I will search the commandments of my God." (14) And to my powers, thoughts, and affections I will say that of another psalm: "Come, let us adore and fall down and weep before the Lord that made us; He is the Lord our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand." (15)

CHAP. VII. ON THE MANNER OF AIDING OURSELVES WITH
THE IMAGINATION AND THE TONGUE, AND THE REST OF
THE FACULTIES FOR MENTAL PRAYER.

ALTHOUGH mental prayer, as has been said, is the work of the three supreme faculties of the soul, in regard of that part which is pure spirit, and is called *mens*, from whence this prayer also is called mental—yet, notwithstanding, the

(12) Collat. ix. c. 2, and Collat. xiii. c. 13. Cap. 48, 49, 50.

(13) Luc. xviii. 1.

(14) Ps. cxviii. 115.

(15) Ps. xciv. 6.

other faculties of the soul which are inferior also aid the exercise of it.

1. Among these, the first is the imaginative; which, when it is untamed and disordered, as it notably hinders prayer, so also aids much, when it can with facility form within itself certain figures or images of such things as are to be meditated, as if it were present. According to this, it were good before we begin meditation to endeavour with the imagination to form within ourselves some figure or image of the things we intend to meditate with the greatest vividness and propriety that we are able. If I am to think upon hell, I will imagine some place like an obscure, strait, and horrible dungeon full of fire, and the souls therein burning in the midst of those flames. And if I am to meditate on the birth of Christ, I will form the figure of some open place without shelter, and a child wrapped in swaddling-clothes, laid in a manger; and so in the rest.

But here we are to notice, that this be done without fatiguing the head: for whoever finds much difficulty in forming such figures, it were better to leave them, and use only the spiritual faculties in the manner already mentioned. And contrariwise, those that are very imaginative are to be very well advised; because their vehement imaginations may be to them an occasion of many illusions, by supposing their imagination to be revelation, and that the image which they form within themselves is the thing itself which they imagine; and so, through their indiscretion they come to confuse their head, and convert to their hindrance that which, taken with moderation, might have been to their profit.

2. The tongue likewise may help in prayer, for (as St. Thomas says) mental prayer, and vocal, which is done with exterior words, are not contrary, but sisters, that help one another. (1) Mental prayer is wont sometimes to break out

(1) 2, 1, q. lxxxiii, art. 12.

into vocal, speaking to our Lord exterior words arising from the interior fervour and devotion: (2) and vocal prayer is used to quicken the soul, to make it more attentive to mental. For when, being in it, we perceive ourselves to be distracted or dry, it is a good remedy to speak some words that may awaken and re-collect us either speaking to our Lord or to ourselves; for as the body aids the soul, so the works of the body are accustomed to aid those of the soul; (3) and the exterior word, and that which the tongue speaks, helps to touch the heart. This (as St. Bonaventure remarks) (4) may be practised in two manners.

i. The one is, everyone composing the words as his necessity or devotion shall dictate to him, not standing upon this, whether they be well or ill ordered: for our Lord regards rather the disposition of the heart, and the fervour of the affections, than of the words, and He is better pleased with the rude speeches of the stammering child and penitent sinner than with the well-composed words of a learned man that is proud.

ii. The other manner is, saying some prayer made by another, as are those of the Church, or of some saint, appropriating them to himself, and speaking them with such feeling and affection as if he himself were composing them; after that manner which we will prescribe in the ninth chapter.

3. As for our corporal senses, there can be no certain rule given; for some find themselves best holding their eyes shut; others help themselves with opening them, looking up to heaven, or beholding some image. Some are troubled with the hearing of anything; others are inflamed with hearing some song or music of the Church; some feel devotion with striking themselves often on the breast, as St. Jerome

(2) Ps. xv. 9.

(3) S. Aug. epis. 121, ad Probam. cap. 9.

(4) Processu. 7 religionis cap. 3.

did in imitation of the Publican ; others with much bending of the knee, as did Simeon of the pillar, who prayed bowing the knee with his head even to the ground, and then raising up himself and repeating this innumerable times.

The like we may say of other motions and gestures of the body, as to stretch the arms in form of a cross, to lie prostrate on the ground, to stand fixed in one place, to walk in some part, or to sit in some lowly seat ; in all which we must make choice of that which helps most to the quietness and devotion of the heart, having consideration of the weakness of him that prays, and of the edification of such as are present if the place be public ; for in such case that settling of the body is to be used which may not be offensive to the standers by.

CHAP. VIII. ON THE EXAMINATION OF PRAYER, AND ON THE FRUITS THAT MAY BE DRAWN FROM THENCE.

PRAYER being ended, it is exceeding profitable to examine what has passed in us in it, and although this examination ought to be made after any work or exercise whatsoever of vocal prayer, whether it be divine offices, the Rosary or the Mass, yet particularly it ought to be done after retired mental prayer, in which a man has spent one or more hours.

1. First, I must examine whether I have observed the directions of those things that precede prayer ; as whether I premeditated the *matter* of the meditation ; whether I put myself well in the presence of God ; whether I offered to Him this action in spirit ; and what purity of intention I had in it, with such other like ; being very sorrowful for any defect that I find, and purposing from that time forward to amend it.

2. Secondly, I must examine whether I was attentive, or distracted ; whether devout or dry ; whether I contented myself with discoursing only, (for that were no prayer, but

study,) or whether I had good affections and purposes; whether I begged of God, and spake to Him in my colloquies with reverence and confidence, or without it. And if I find that it has gone well with me in all, I will give thanks to God for it, attributing this good success not to my diligence, but to His grace and mercy: but if I find that it has gone ill with me, I will examine the *cause*, whether it were any fault of mine, or any passion or disordered affection, or any negligence or remissness: and, being sorry for my fault, I will purpose to amend it, with determination to mortify myself, and to remove the cause of this defect.

3. Thirdly, I must examine the motions, and inspirations, or illuminations, and spiritual taste that I have felt; marking well what effects they have wrought in me, to know whether they spring from a good spirit or not, and to gain experience that may help me to know the variety of spirits. To which end it will help much to know the rules that are prescribed for this, of which we shall give many in the discourse of these meditations.

4. Fourthly, I must examine the resolutions that I made in prayer, to see when and how I am to put them in execution; and generally I must examine what fruit I draw from prayer and conversation with God: for if my prayer be a tree without fruit, it will be cursed like the fig-tree, and presently wither; (1) but if it bear fruit, it shall be blessed and grow up like a tree planted nigh to the streams of waters. (2) The fruits of prayer are these:—To reform manners, to withdraw us from sins, be they never so light, to avoid the occasions of them, and of all imperfection;—to subdue passions, to curb the senses, to mortify sinister inclinations, to vanquish the repugnances and difficulties that I find in virtues;—to fight valiantly against temptations, to animate myself to suffer much affliction with alacrity;—to encourage myself to fulfil

(1) Matt. xxi. 19. (2) Ps. i. 3.

readily the will of God declared in His holy law, in the Evangelical counsels, and in the rules and orders of my state and office;—to procure also the augmentation or increase of virtues, imitating those of Christ Jesus our Lord, especially His charity and humility, His obedience and patience in afflictions, His love of the cross and of contempt, and of chastising the flesh. And particularly every one is to seek that virtue that he has most need of according to the quality of his state, whether it be modesty, or chastity, or fortitude, or any other of the theologial or moral virtues, with a most effectual resolution and purpose, as shall be explained in the twenty-ninth meditation of the first part. And when I shall make an examination of prayer I must make good trial whether I have drawn out any of these fruits in the manner aforesaid.

CHAP. IX. ON THE SEVERAL FORMS OF PRAYING ON DIFFERENT MATTERS, ACCOMMODATED TO DIFFERENT PERSONS AND TIMES.

THE taste of man is so easily disgusted in spiritual exercises, that it soon begets tediousness and loathing, if his food be given him dressed always after one fashion, though it be never so precious; as the Israelites were cloyed with manna(1) though it was exceeding sweet, because it was always the same. For this cause the saints and spiritual masters have invented different forms of prayer, accommodating it in different manners, with this variety, to take away the weariness we might have in the exercise of it, when the Spirit of God goes not always renewing the delight of it, making us (as David says) always to “sing” “to the Lord a new canticle.” (2)

In this the seraphical doctor St. Bonaventure was very excellent, in his many and large treatises that he made of

(1) Num. xxi. 5.

(2) Psal. xcvi. 1, and xcvi. 1.

these matters ; and no less was our glorious father Ignatius, couching in his little book not only variety of matter for meditation, but also several forms of praying for the examination of the conscience, for the application of the interior senses of the soul, and for divers similitudes and parables ; and especially he taught three very profitable forms of prayer, accommodated to those who walk in the three ways above mentioned—purgative—illuminative—and unitive,—although they are all three of great profit for them all.

1. The first form of praying is upon the *commandments of God*—upon the seven capital sins, commonly called the seven deadly sins—upon the three faculties of the soul—and upon the five senses, taking all this for matter of meditation and prayer. This form is proper to those that walk in the *purgative* way, labouring to cleanse themselves of their sins. And so we will declare this form in the first part, making special meditations of all these things, with the rest that belong to the manner of praying, examination of conscience, and preparing oneself for confession and communion, whereby is purchased purity of soul.

2. The second form of praying is upon *words* ; by taking for matter of meditation some psalm of David, or some sermon or sentence of our Saviour Christ, or some prayer or hymn of the Church, ruminating every word by itself, and drawing forth the spirit and affection that is in them. For as the words of Holy Scripture were dictated by the Holy Spirit, so they have all some mystery worthy of consideration. And as the Church is governed by the same Holy Spirit, so it speaks not a word, but it contains much spirit.

The *form* of meditating these is, to consider *who* speaks that word, to *whom* it is spoken or directed ;—to *what ends*, with *what manner* and *spirit* it was spoken ;—and what is its *signification* ;—that is to say, what it is that it commands

or counsels, threatens or promises, or what it is that is required or intended therein, drawing out of all affections agreeing with what has been formerly considered.

For in *another* way are those words to be meditated which God speaks *to man* than those which man speaks *to God*:—The first, as a man that hears God, who is his Master, Lawgiver, Counsellor, Protector and Rewarder; hearing Him with desire to learn what He teaches, to execute what He commands, to follow what He counsels, to fear what He threatens, to hope for what He promises, and to love Him for what He says:—The second are to be ruminated with that spirit with which He that ordained them spake them, and according to the end to which they are directed, which is manifestly seen in the psalms of David; for some he made with the spirit of praising God, and thanking him for the benefits which he had done to his soul and to his people;—some with a spirit of contrition, to ask Him pardon of his sins;—and others with a spirit of affliction, joined with great confidence to implore His aid in tribulations. And therefore to ruminate them, or to say them with profit, we must clothe ourselves (as Cassian (3) directs) with the same spirit with which they were spoken, as if we ourselves had made them to the same end.

And even experience teaches us that he that feels himself cheerful for the benefits received from God recites with devotion the psalms of joy, as are, “Benedic anima mea, Domino; et omnia quæ intra me sunt, nomini sancto ejus,” etc.; “Bless the Lord, O my soul; and let all that is within me bless His holy name.” “Laudate Dominum de cælis,” etc.; “Praise ye the Lord from the heavens.” And at such time he finds not so much relish in the psalm of “Miserere mei Deus;” “Have mercy on me, O God!” And, on the other hand, he that is afflicted with his sins says with devo-

(3) Collat. x. cap. 10.

tion the psalm of "Miserere mei," "Have mercy on me," and applies not himself then to the psalms of joy. This we are to consider that we may choose for matter of meditation those words and prayers which accord with that spirit which we feel, and with the end that we aim at.

This second form of prayer is most proper to those that walk in the *illuminative* way, pursuing the knowledge and understanding of the truths of faith so to increase in spirit; and of this we will explain the practice in the second and third part, meditating in this way upon the salutation of the angel, upon the canticle of the Virgin, upon the prayer of the "Our Father," and upon certain sentences and prayers of our Lord Christ, upon whose words we will always meditate with more attention, because, as the Spouse said, "His lips are as lilies dropping choice myrrh," (4) that is, they teach most excellent virtue, the first and most surpassing of all other; and (as St. Peter said) His words are "the words of eternal life;" (5) and our Lord Himself says that His "words are spirit and life." (6) And therefore whosoever meditates them as is fitting shall draw forth abundance of spirit and most pure life of grace, by which he may be worthy of life everlasting.

3. The third form of prayer is by way of *aspirations* and *affections*, which answer to the respirations of the body, taking care that, between respiration and respiration, there may breathe out from the inward part of our soul some holy affection, or some groaning of the spirit, or some short prayer of those which we call *ejaculatory*, spending the whole time, that is, between one respiration and another, in the pondering or understanding and spiritual taste of what we desire or ask, or of the thing for which we groan and sigh to God. This form is most accommodated to those that walk in the *unitive* way, aspiring and thirsting

(4) Cant. v. 13.

(5) Joan. vi. 69.

(6) Ibidem, 64.

for actual union with Almighty God; and with this desire they labour to pray with the greatest continuance and frequency that they can: for prayer is as necessary for the perfect spiritual life of the soul as respiration is for the life of the body, according to that of David which says, "I opened my mouth and panted, because I longed for Thy commandments." (7) And in testimony of this, as often as they open their mouth to breathe, so often would they pray. And now, seeing this is not possible through our imbecility, they take at certain times some space for this exercise, frequenting in this way the ejaculatory prayers, of which we will presently speak, casting them up to heaven like darts or arrows which are shot from the heart as from a bow with vehement affection and love.

CHAP. X. ON CONTEMPLATION, AND ON THE MANNER HOW SOME MAY USE MENTAL PRAYER WITHOUT VARIETY OF DISCOURSE.

By what hitherto has been said the ordinary forms that are to be used in mental prayer are explained, which are accommodated to all sorts of persons that desire to treat with Almighty God, though all proceed not after one manner. For some in their prayer have more discourse and less affection; others, on the other hand, content themselves with little discourse, and busy themselves most in affections. Others, again, have need of no more but a single sight of the truth, and with that they are moved to all the acts of devotion that have been rehearsed; and these enjoy that which we call contemplation; which (as St. Thomas says) is a single view of the eternal truth, without variety of reasoning, penetrating it with the light of heaven, with great affections of admiration and love, (1) to which ordinarily no man arrives but by much exercise

(7) Ps. cxviii. 131.

(1) S. Tho. 2, 2, q. clxxx., art. 3.

of meditation and discourse. In the same manner as a woman, when she intends to marry a man, spends many days in asking and certifying herself what he is, inquiring of his lineage, wealth, condition, health, affability, discretion, virtue, and other parts, reasoning and thinking much upon them ; and, finding him to be to her liking, is content to love him and take him for her husband ; but afterwards, when she has known him and taken him for her husband, she needs make no new discourses, but with only seeing him, or remembering him, or hearing his name, she loves him, and desires to give him content and to be always with him. The like happens with a scholar that would make choice of some new master ; or with a servant that intends to take a new lord ; or with one friend that desires to make a new and strict league of friendship with another.

2. Even in like manner beginners in virtue and in the exercise of prayer had need to spend much time in meditations and reasonings, inquiring what and who God is, who Christ our Saviour is, what be His perfections, virtues, and His marvellous works ; moving themselves with these considerations to love Him, and to take Him for their Master, for their Lord, for their friend and spouse of their souls. But after they are much exercised and practised in this, it happens oftentimes that a single view or remembrance of God, without new discourses, is enough to inflame them in His love and in the other affections aforesaid. There are even some that with only hearing the name of Jesus or Father, or but hearing the name of mortal sin, hell, or heaven, penetrate in a moment what is comprehended in them with great affections of love or sorrow. True it is, that as our understanding lays not much hold on things that it perceives not with the senses, it easily loses the estimation of spiritual and divine things and forgets them, and so has need often to renew those meditations and reasonings which

it made at the first; for otherwise it will find itself much distracted and dry, unless it be a time when our Lord by special favour will without them give light and knowledge enough to enkindle the affection of love, by communicating the grace of contemplation.

3. By what has been said I infer, for the comfort of some persons that are desirous to use mental prayer, and yet for want of health or some other cause dare not reason nor dive to the bottom of that which is inclosed within the mysteries of our faith, that they despair not of the principle contained in this sovereign exercise; for to such God uses to grant, under the title of their necessity or infirmity, what He gives unto others under the title of many services and large meditations wherein they have been exercised. For as He is so liberal and easily contented, He asks of no man more than what, according to his portion, he can give Him, supplying that which is wanting with His divine illustrations.

Such persons, therefore, as doubt their capacity for the intellectual part of meditation, ought to be admonished that the end of all the meditations and discourses that shall be put in the six parts of this book is to attain to three notions or sorts of knowledge:—One of *himself*, and of his innumerable necessities and miseries of body and soul; the other of Christ Jesus our Lord, true God and man, and of His excellent virtues, especially those which were resplendent in His nativity, passion, and death; and the third of Almighty God Three and One, and of His infinite perfection and benefits, as well natural as supernatural, that proceed from Him. (2) These three sorts of knowledge go linked one with another, entering and issuing from one to another; ascending from man himself, and from Christ to God, and descending from God to Christ and to himself. And from them (says St. Thomas)

(2) Joan. x.

springs that devotion which comprehends three sorts of affections corresponding to them in the will. (3)

4. Some affections concern himself; confounding himself for his sins and want of zeal, being exceedingly sorrowful for them, purposing amendment, and humbling himself for that instead of fruit he has brought forth nothing but sin. Others concern Christ our Lord; compassionating His afflictions, rejoicing in His virtues, desiring in them to imitate Him, and asking His grace to that end. Others concern God our Lord, admiring His greatness, praising Him for it, giving Him thanks for the benefits He has done us, and offering ourselves very sincerely to serve Him in return for them, mingling with this petitions of celestial graces and gifts for himself, and for the whole Church, and for his neighbours, particularising those things of which he has greatest necessity.

5. This presupposed, any person whatsoever desirous to use mental prayer, however weak he be, may put himself in the presence of the living God, whom he has near him and within him; and renewing the knowledge which he has by faith of the three things aforesaid, may quietly exercise the affections corresponding to them, sometimes confessing to God all his miseries one by one, with affections of grief and humiliation, and desiring remedy of them—sometimes calling to memory the virtues resplendent in some mystery of Christ our Lord, His humility, obedience and patience, with affections and desires to imitate them—at other times recounting the benefits he has received of God, with affections of thanksgiving; or remembering the infinite perfections of God, His bounty, mercy and providence, with affections of prayer and joy. And these affections by God's favour will be drawn forth without any difficulty; for the mysteries and verities of our faith are like flint-stones, which, in touch-

(3) 2 2, q. lxxxiii., art. 8.

ing them with the steel of any single consideration, cast out sparkles of love, which if the soul, like tinder, be well disposed to receive, they presently raise up flames of great feeling and affection. To do this with more facility, it will help much to have first read some one of the meditations which ensue, labouring always to re-collect in the memory some of the most notable truths of our faith, which may be as it were the repast of these feelings, saying with the Bride, "A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me, He shall abide between my breasts;" (4) giving us to understand that she had recollected many truths of those mysteries which belong to her Beloved, which she set before her, regarding them simply with the eyes of the Spirit, and embracing them with the enkindled affections of the heart, and applying them to herself with effectual purposes of imitation.

6. Of these we are to take sometimes one and sometimes another for the foundation of mental prayer, as did our Saviour Christ, re-collecting Himself to pray in the garden of Gethsemane, who took three times for the theme and foundation of His prayer these brief words: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou." (5) And in the weight and sense of these words He spent a long time, as in its place we shall see hereafter.

CHAP. XI. ON THE EXTRAORDINARY FORMS OF MENTAL PRAYER, AND THE DIVERS MANNERS GOD COMMUNICATES HIMSELF IN IT.

1. By those things that have been said concerning prayer, it manifestly appears, as St. Augustine says, that it is the gift of the Holy Spirit, promised by God our Lord to His Church, (1) when He said, "I will pour down upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem," "spiritum

(4) Cant. i. 12.

(5) Matt. xxvi. 39.

(1) Epis. 105, *prope fin.*

gratiæ, et precum," "the spirit of grace and of prayer," (2) without which spirit none pray rightly. For, as St. Paul says, "We are" not "sufficient to think anything" holy "of ourselves, as of ourselves," (3) nor do "we know" "what we should pray for, as we ought," (4) if the Spirit of God does not teach us and move us to it. For this He has divers ways, guiding some one way and some another, so that it would be an intolerable error to imagine that all are to go by the same way that I am guided; for the Spirit of God "est unicus et multiplex," is "one" only and "manifold;" (5) one only in the substance and principal end which it aims at, and manifold in the means and ways it takes to obtain it.

2. These ways, in general, are two: one *ordinary*, which comprehends all the forms of prayer that hitherto we have treated of; the other *extraordinary*, which comprehends other forms of prayer more supernatural and special, which we call prayer of *quiet* or silence, with suspension, extacy, or rapture, and with imaginary figures of truths which are discovered, or with only an intellectual light of them, (6) together with revelations and interior speeches, and with other innumerable means that Almighty God has to communicate himself to souls, of which no certain rule can be given, because they have no other rule but the teaching and direction of the Sovereign Master, who teaches it to whom He will and how He will. For such sorts of prayer are not to be desired nor attempted by ourselves upon pain of being proud and presumptuous, and in that case unworthy of them—nay, rather on our part we are to refuse them with humility, because of the danger we may incur of being deluded by Satan, transfigured into an angel of light. But when God shall communicate them, they are to be received with humi-

(2) Zach. xii. 10.

(3) 2 Cor. iii. 5.

(4) Rom. viii. 26.

(5) Sapient. vii. 22.

(6) S. Tho. 2, 2, q. clxxiv., art. 1 ad 3; *ibid.* S. Isidor; et art. 3, et q. clv.; art. 1 et 2, ad 1 et 2.

lity and thanksgiving, and with great wariness and prudence, following certain directions which we shall give in this book, especially in the third part, in meditating the miracle in which Christ was held for a phantasm; and in the fifth part, in meditating the apparitions and revelations that Christ our Lord made to His apostles and disciples; in which we will describe the signs and effects that are wrought in the soul by the visitation of God and the coming of the Holy Spirit, and to what height of life He exalts men by the means of His seven gifts and celestial inspirations, which is the thing we all ought to desire and pursue.

3. But that we may have some light of these extraordinary and marvellous means that God has to cheer souls, and to communicate Himself to them in mental prayer, I will point at some of them; in which also are touched certain things that pass ordinarily in all, and it is good to know them, for they will help to understand an ordinary form of prayer by application of the senses, of which we are hereafter to treat.

4. For explanation of which I premise, that as the body has its five exterior senses with which it perceives the *visible* and delectable things of *this* life, and takes experience of them, so the spirit, with its faculties of understanding and will, has five interior acts proportionable to these senses, which we call seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching spiritually, with which it perceives the *invisible* and delectable things of Almighty God, and takes experience of them; from which springs the experimental knowledge of God, (7) which incomparably exceeds all the knowledge that proceeds of our reasonings, as the sweetness of honey is much better known by tasting a little of it than by using much reasoning to know it. (8) And so by these experiences mystical theology is obtained, which is the savoury wisdom and science of

(7) Cassian, collat. xii. cap. 13.

(8) Gerson, 3 p. tract de mystica. Theologia, c. 2. S. Dionys de divinis nominibus.

God, in such way that St. Dionysius says of divine Hierotheus that he had knowledge of divine things, not only by the doctrine of the Apostles, nor only by his industry and discourse, but by *affection* and *experience* of them, which is obtained by means of the five interior senses, of which the said Scripture makes much mention, and the holy fathers, especially St. Augustine, (9) Gregory, Bernard, (10) and others, whose sayings St. Bonaventure copiously alleges in his treating of the seven ways to eternity, in the sixth way; from whom I will borrow somewhat of that which I am about to state, presupposing that (as the glorious St. Bernard says), "In hujusmodi non capit intelligentia, nisi quantum experientia attingit;" "In many of these things the understanding attains no more than that which experience perceives." (11) And therefore I will go on also pointing as it were to that which belongs to all.

i. First, God our Lord communicates Himself sometimes by a spiritual *presence* with His illuminations, communicating to the understanding a manner of light so elevated that by it, like another Moses, it *beholds* and regards the invisible as if it were visible. (12) And although it retains the virtue of faith, yet it retains it so illustrated and perfected concerning the mysteries thereof, that it appears another light. This *sight* is used to go accompanied with a kind of spiritual alacrity, which is called joy, leaping as it were with pleasure and joy for the strangeness of the divine greatness that it has seen, according to that which is written in Job, "He shall pray to God, and He will be gracious to him, and he shall see His face with joy." (13)

To this manner of contemplation or interior beholding our Lord Himself invites us, saying, "Be still, and see that

(9) Aug. lib. x. confes., et lib. de spiritu et anima, c. 9.

(10) Bern. lib. de dign. et natura amoris divini, c. 6 et sequentibus.

(11) Serm. xxii. in Cant. (12) Heb. xi. 27. (13) Job xxxiii. 26.

I am God:" (14) which is to say, Cease from sins, and disengage yourselves from earthly business, and attend carefully to the consideration of my works, and you shall come to see with great light that I only am God, glorious among the nations and exalted over the whole earth. Somewhat of this our Lord communicates very ordinarily to His servants by certain sudden illustrations, which, like lightnings, discover to them some verity of our holy faith, after a manner very different from what they perceived before, (15) which, although they pass suddenly, yet leave the heart very much inflamed with manifold affections of the love of God or sorrow for sins, according as the verity requires which with that light they have contemplated.

With these same illuminations our Lord God also touches sinners to convert them, discovering to them on a sudden the greatness of their sins, the danger of their damnation, and other like truths to move and allure them to change their lives; which we shall speak largely of in the fifth part, in the 29th meditation of the conversion of St. Paul.

ii. The second manner of our Lord's communicating Himself to us is by a spiritual *hearing*, speaking within our soul by His inspirations certain interior lively and effectual words, and sometimes even as distinct as those which are heard with our bodily ears; with which He teaches some truth, or discovers His will with such efficacy as to work its fulfilment. And sometimes (as the Spouse says of herself) the soul is mollified, waxes tender, and melts (16) in the love of Almighty God. And he who had his heart sad, dismayed, frozen and hardened touching spiritual matters, with one of these interior words in a moment becomes joyful, confident, enkindled and softened for whatsoever God will do with it.

(14) Ps. xlv. 11.

(15) Ps. lxxvi. 3, and xvi. 4, 11.

(16) Cant. v. 6.

And although these interior speakings are used to come after such extraordinary manner that it is only known to ~~Him~~ ^{him} that hears them, yet after another ordinary manner they pass through all, and are called inspirations; for (as the glorious Doctor St. Augustine says) "The interior speaking of God our Lord is a secret inspiration, by the which invisibly He discovers to the soul His will or His truth." (17) With this He speaks to just and to sinners; but oftenest to those that are very spiritual, whom He teaches, corrects, reprehends or exhorts, comforts and moves to works of virtue and perfection. And therefore David, as one well experienced in feeling these inspirations and divine impulses, said, "I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me;" (18) desiring that He would speak to him, and showing himself prepared to comply with whatsoever He should say.

These two manners of prayer or contemplation by spiritual seeing and hearing holy Job touched when he said to God, "With the hearing of the ear I have heard Thee, but now my eye seeth Thee;" (19) in which he gives to understand, (as St. Gregory (20) notes,) that it is a more noble manner of knowing God by an interior *beholding* than by the *hearing*; for the hearing has more obscurity in the darkness of faith, and the sight more perspicuity, beholding God more near, and as it were more present; at other times in the Scripture supreme contemplation is declared by means of hearing, as we shall hereafter see in the introduction of the third part.

iii. The third manner of God's communicating Himself interiorly is by spiritual *smelling*, infusing into the soul an odour and fragrance of spiritual things so sweet that it comforts the heart and revives it to aim at and seek them, running (as it is said in the Book of Canticles) "after" Him "to

(17) Lib. de triplici habitaculo.

(18) Ps. lxxiv. 9.

(19) Job xlii. 5.

(20) Lib. xxxv. moral. c. 4.

the odour of" His sweetest "ointments." (21) And the glorious Evangelist St. John, as one well experienced in this inward conversation with Almighty God, was wont to say, "Odor tuus, Domine, excitavit in nobis concupiscentias eternas:" (22) "Thy odour, O Lord, has raised in us eternal desires and affections." Odour he calls a very spiritual sensibility of eternal things which we see not and yet believe and hope to obtain, from which proceed fervent acts of hope, with enkindled desires to aspire after them, and great animosity and courage to use all possible means to obtain them with a great alacrity, which the Apostle St. Paul calls "rejoicing in hope." (23) For as hounds by the scent follow the chase with great swiftness and pleasure, not staying till they come to the place where (if they can) they lay hold of it;—so souls that in prayer receive this scent and odour of the divinity of God our Lord and of His most sacred humanity, of His charity and bounty and His other virtues, run with great fervour and diligence in the pursuit of those eternal things which they have scented, not staying till they possess them in such manner as they may in this life, with hope to possess them entirely in the other. Of which we have some token in such persons as God calls to a religious life, and gives them any sense and odour of the sweetness, security, and sanctity that they shall find in it, for which they tread under foot a thousand difficulties, and rest not till they obtain what they desire. And for this very cause, (says St. Paul,) that the just "are the good odour of Christ" (24) our Lord; because their notable examples comfort and move us to follow them and to imitate Christ, from whom they principally proceed.

iv. The fourth manner of God our Lord's communicating himself is by a spiritual *taste*, communicating to the soul such fervour and sweetness in spiritual things that those of

(21) Cant. i. 3.

(22) S. Bonaven. sup. distinct. 6.

(23) Rom. xii. 12.

(24) 2 Cor. ii. 15.

the flesh seem unsavoury to him. And (as David says) "My heart and my *flesh* have rejoiced in the living God" (25) and in all His works; and by the experience of this sweetness and of the marvellous effects of it come to know the greatness of God, the excellence of His law, of His virtues and celestial rewards. Upon which David said, "Taste, and see that the Lord is sweet;" (26) that is to say, if you taste what God is and the works that He does within you, by this taste you shall know how sweet He is, how good, how wise, how potent, how liberal and how merciful. And after the same manner may we say, Taste and see how sweet is His yoke and His law, how sweet His obedience and humility, patience, temperance, chastity and charity. For every virtue has its proper sweetness, upon which the same David said, "How great is the multitude of thy sweetness, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee!" (27) He calls it *great* and manifold, to signify that as in meat there is variety of savours, so God has in His mysteries and virtues much variety and greatness of *consolations*. For if manna, being but *one* meat, had the savour of *all* meats to cherish the just with its corporal sweetness, (28) with how much more eminence has God the sweetness of all things for the consolation of those that converse with Him by the means of prayer? For to some He gives it meditating His perfections;—to some, meditating His benefits;—and to others, meditating His holy *law*, which David said was sweeter unto him "than honey and the honeycomb." (29) But this sweetness is hidden for those that fear God and reverence Him, for *they* only taste it with most abundance, but having once tasted it, they have (says Cassian) no tongue to declare it, for it far surpasses all whatsoever our sense attains to. (30)

(25) Ps. lxxxiii. 3.

(26) Ps. xxxiii. 9.

(27) Ps. xxx. 2.

(28) Sap. xvi. 20.

(29) Ps. xviii. 11, and cxviii. 103

(30) Collat. xii. c. 12.

True it is that God gives part of this to beginners, and even to sinners to wean them from the milk of their earthly consolations; but much more abundantly He gives it to those who for His love have mortified themselves in depriving themselves of them.

v. The fifth manner of God's communicating Himself is by a spiritual *touching*; touching with his loving inspirations the recesses of the heart, and our Lord joining Himself to the soul with such gentleness and affection, as cannot be expressed but by those similitudes of which the Book of Canticles makes mention; (31) which I omit, lest our grossness should be dazzled with so much tenderness; but yet all rest in this saying of the Apostle St. Paul, that "he that is joined to the Lord is" become "one spirit" (32) with Him; for God interiorly embraces him with the arms of charity, and cherishes him, giving him inward testimonies of His presence, of the love that He bears him, and of the care that He has of him, with great tokens of peace and very familiar friendship. And whosoever perceives himself so favoured, embraces within him God Himself, with the arms of love, saying that of the Bride, "I held Him," and "I will not let Him go." (33) And here are exercised those tender colloquies, those petitions with groanings unspeakable, and those acts called *anagogical*, high elevated in matter of spirit, which our Lord grants of His singular grace to whom He pleases; but these are not to be ambitioned, but received when they shall be given, as already has been said.

5. These are the *extraordinary* manners of our Lord's communicating Himself by the interior senses of the soul. It belongs to our account only, by God's grace to mortify very well the five corporal senses, that God may open to

(31) *Osculetur me osculo oris sui.—Venter meus intremuit ad tactum ejus—Dextera ejus amplexabitur me.—Cant. i. 1, ii. 6, v. 4.*

(32) 1 Cor. vi. 17. (33) Cant. iii. 4.

us the spiritual ; for, as St. Gregory says, (34) if the exterior sense be shut, forthwith the interior sense is open. And contrariwise, as St. Augustine says, the interior sense sleeps, if the exterior be given over to its pleasures.

6. Besides this, we may use another means more easy to apply the interior senses of our soul upon the mysteries of our holy faith; the practice of which will be seen in the second part, in the 26th meditation ; with which let us so dispose ourselves that our Lord, if it be His good pleasure, may communicate to us that part which shall be convenient for us of what has been said.

CHAP. XII. ON THE ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY TIME THAT IS TO BE EMPLOYED IN MENTAL PRAYER, AND OF EJACULATORY PRAYERS.

1. THE time that is to be spent in mental prayer is of two sorts : the one *ordinary* for every day so long as life and health shall endure ; the other *extraordinary*, re-collecting ourselves at certain times for the space of a week or two, or more, spending them all in these meditations and exercises, which may be done for divers ends and upon divers occasions.

i. First, when one is heavy laden with sins and desires to make a true confession and perfect conversion, it is an admirable means to withdraw one's self for some eight days or more to some retired place, spending all that time in thinking upon his sins and in meditations that may move to sorrow for them and to make a very perfect renovation and change of life.

ii. Secondly, when any one desires to learn this mystical science of the spirit to know how to pray mentally, how to converse with Almighty God, and to gain herein some use and experience, it is good to dedicate a month or two to this exercise, until he prove well versed. For although the

(34) S. Bonaven. sup. distinct. 4. Lib. iv. de spiritu et anima, c. 9.

principal master of this science is God Himself, yet it is also a help to have a visible tutor that may direct him, and to take time to learn and practise what he shall teach.

iii. The third occasion is, when one desires to take some state of life, and doubts which were fittest for him to choose for his salvation and perfection ;—or when he desires to begin any great enterprise in the service of God, and stands in doubt of our Lord's will and pleasure therein ;—or, being assured of it, he desires to enter with good footing, and to prepare himself with prayer, imploring God's favour to have good success therein ;—in such cases, it is very convenient to take some time of retirement, as Christ our Lord, before He began to preach, retired Himself forty days into the desert. (1)

iv. The fourth occasion is, when those that use this mental prayer perceive themselves cold, distracted, and dry in it, and, besides, find themselves very slack in matters of divine service. In these cases, the most effectual means to renew themselves and to re-enter into their former fervour is to dedicate eight days to these meditations, spending therein the greatest part of the day ; and as this slackness ordinarily enters by little and little into all, it is good once every year to re-collect one's self some eight days to this end.

v. Finally, although a man find no slackness, yet it is good now and then to give himself an abundance and fulness of God, so to increase in His love and to excel the more in His service, as many saints were accustomed to do, who by this means attained to very high degrees of sanctity.

.2. As for the *ordinary* time, there can no general rule be given for all ; for this time must be measured by the health and ability, by the state and office, and by the necessary obligations and occupations of every man. But all this considered, the more time that may be employed in this exercise without being wanting to the things above mentioned, the

(1) Matt. iv. 2.

better it is. Ordinarily, it were meet for a man to retire himself an hour in the morning or night, seeing that not without cause our Saviour Christ spent an hour in that retired prayer which He made in the garden of Gethsemane, as we may collect out of the reprehension He gave St. Peter, saying, "Could you not watch one hour with me?" (2) But he that by reason of his business cannot be an hour, let him be half an hour; and if he cannot be half an hour, yet let him employ, if he please, but a quarter of an hour in that mental prayer which we call examination of the conscience, in the manner that we shall hereafter prescribe; and let him allow himself some longer time for prayer upon holy-days, because they were instituted to attend to the service of Almighty God.

3. Concerning this ordinary time, we must be very considerate that after a man has set down his time that he intends to employ daily in prayer, whether it be in respect of the rule of his state (as some religionists do), or by special devotion, or direction of his ghostly father, he must be very constant in spending that *whole* time entirely in his holy exercise, without letting slip the space of one day, or losing even one "credo" of the hour allotted; for the devil, with great solicitude, invents a thousand devices, sometimes of corporal occasions, and sometimes of cares and business, under the pretext of piety, to make us interrupt our prayer; for omitting it one day through any sinister end, a man comes to omit it afterwards another and another day, and at length to omit it altogether. Whereupon St. Chrysostom (3) says, that a just man should hold it for a thing more sorrowful than death itself to be deprived of prayer; imitating in this the holy prophet Daniel, who was accustomed to pray three times a day (4), and although the King of Persia commanded that no man upon pain of his life should pray

(2) Matt. xxvi. 40.

(3) Lib. i. de orando Deo.

(4) Daniel vi. 10.

to God for thirty days, yet he would not omit his accustomed prayer: "Ne tantillum quidem temporis sustinuit ab orando cessare." He did not so much as for the least time cease to pray to Almighty God; for he understood that his spiritual life depended upon prayer; and for fear of the death of the body he would not endanger the life of his soul; which (says St. Chrysostom) is as dead when it wants prayer as the body is dead when it is abandoned by the soul. And as Daniel, although by occasion of praying he put himself in danger of death (for he was cast into the lion's den), yet in effect he died not, for God delivered him from that danger, shutting the mouths of the lions because he opened his mouth to pray, so also we may believe that for accomplishing the task of our prayer we shall lose neither life, nor health, nor content, nor the happy despatch of other business; nay rather, by the means of prayer we so dispose ourselves that Almighty God may take them to His charge, and perform with His omnipotence and wisdom what we ourselves are not able to do by reason of our imbecility and ignorance. And if at any time, out of real want of health or for other lawful or urgent cause, we shall be forced to interrupt our prayer, the impediment being past, we are forthwith to return to our exercise; that the interruption which began through pure necessity be not continued by sloth and trepidity.

4. Lastly, that no man may exempt himself from this so high and sovereign an exercise, I add, that all in general, as well those who have a set time for retired prayer (if they will preserve their devotion) as also those that have not this time, to supply this defect ought to exercise themselves oftentimes every day in the brief acts of mental or vocal prayer which we call ejaculatory prayers, of which we have made mention in the ninth chapter, in which (as St. Augustine (5) reports) the Fathers in the deserts exercised

(5) Epis. cxxi. ad probam. c. 10; S. Chrysost. hom. 79, ad pop.

themselves very often every day, briefly putting themselves in mind of Almighty God and of His benefits or else of their own sins, and shooting forthwith like a dart a fervent affection up to heaven, or some brief petition for some virtue, saying as it might be thus:—"O Lord, that I had never offended Thee! O my God, that I may love Thee! Oh! that I may obey Thee! Give me, O Lord, purity of soul, humility of heart and poverty of spirit! Pardon my sins, O my Redeemer, because they are exceedingly grievous!"

5. This manner of prayer being short is easy to all, and may be made with very great attention and zeal, as Cassian (6) tells us. And for this cause they usually are very effectual to obtain of our Lord what we require; for (as St. Basil says) (7) it is more available to pray a little and well with attention, than to pray much after another manner; for God is not overcome with the multiplicity of our prayers, but with the weight and fervour of them.

6. The brevity of these prayers is to be recompensed with their frequency, labouring by means thereof to fulfil in some sort that which our Saviour Christ said, "We ought always to pray, and not to faint." (8) That is, not to fail either in the time assigned for prayer or in the fervour thereof, or in confidence, or, if possible, in the frequency thereof; multiplying these ejaculatory prayers, which (as David says) (9) are "the remainders of" those holy thoughts that we had in the morning, making to ourselves a feast, and preserving our devotion all the day.

7. St. Chrysostom says that at the least we ought every hour to offer to God one of these prayers: "Ut orandi cursus cursum diei æquet;" (10) that the course of prayer may equally go with the course of the day, so that when the clock

(6) Lib. ii. de Institut. cap. 10, et col. ix. cap. 35. (7) In consti. monast. c. 2.

(8) Luc. xviii. 1. (9) Ps. lxxv. 11. (10) Lib. i. de orando Deo ad finem.

strikes the hour it may serve as an alarm to prayer. But those that are very fervent employ much more frequency, imitating the holy monks of Egypt, of whom Cassian says, that when they laboured, all that day they also prayed: "Preces et orationes per singula momenta miscentes;" (11) "Mingling with their handiworks prayers and affections every moment of the day:" and by this short method they arrived in a little time to much sanctity and attained to great merits. Nor is it to be wondered at that we should be very eager of this holy exercise; for (as St. Bonaventure (12) says) at all times and at all hours we may gain by prayer that which is of much more value than the whole world. And we see manifestly that so it is; for if a man should waste the whole day in framing interior acts of blasphemies, vengeance, hatred of God, and purposes of other great and enormous sins, in the end of the day he shall have merited most terrible torments; so, on the other hand, if he spend it in the interior acts of this mental prayer, multiplying good desires and determinations to please Almighty God, with petitions of virtues, in the end of the day he will find himself enriched with incredible gain of celestial gifts and of an everlasting reward; for God is no less liberal in rewarding than he is rigorous in chastising.

8. We will put many of these ejaculatory prayers in the meditations of this book, especially in the third part; considering some short prayers that were made to Christ our Lord by some leprous and blind men, by the woman of Canaan, the sisters of Lazarus, and other such like.

(11) Lib. iii. c. 2. et lib. ii. c. 14: (12) Opusc. de perfec. vitæ, c. 2:

CHAP. XIII. CERTAIN DIRECTIONS CONCERNING THE
MEDITATIONS ENSUING.

1. For the better use of the meditations ensuing I premise that there may be divers ends in the reading of them, as there were in the writing of them.

i. The *first* end is to employ some little time in that most noble and profitable exercise which we call spiritual reading, in which (as the holy Fathers say) (1) God speaks to the heart the same that is in the book, illustrating the understanding with the light of the truths written in it, and in kindling the will with the fire of other like affections. And for this cause in some meditations I enlarge myself somewhat, mixing certain admonitions and rules of perfection concerning the vices or virtues of which I treat in them, that they who read them to this end may learn also this science of the spirit. But they must read them with attention and repose, ruminating and pondering what they read with inward feeling of it, so that with their reading they join some manner of meditation, first beseeching our Lord to illuminate them, and to speak to their hearts the words of that book, saying with Samuel, "Speak, Lord! for Thy servant heareth." (2)

ii. The *second* principal end of reading these meditations is, to recollect matter of prayer and contemplation, retired and alone by oneself with our Lord. For (as St. Bernard says) (3) reading disposes and aids meditation, which, without it, or something equivalent, is wont to be straying, wandering and distracted. And in such cases they are only to read those points that serve them for meditation in their hour assigned. And because sometimes one point is large,

(1) S. Aug. ser. 22, ad. frat. S. Isid. lib. iii. de summo bono, c. 3. S. Bern. ser. 30, ad. sororem.

(2) 1 Reg. iii. 10.

3) In sca claustralium.

comprehending some three or four considerations, whose number is noted in the margin ; it will be good to divide such a point into many, and briefly to gather for the meditation two or three verities of those considerations, to ruminate them more at leisure. And if any one desire to have more copious matter of meditation he may make of two points one.

Yet it is to be noted that although we prescribe in them the practice of mental prayer, exercising affections, petitions, and colloquies, yet we tie no man to those words in which they are delivered ; but he himself may invent them, as our Lord shall dictate the same to him, and the light of the verity which he considers, and his own feeling of devotion, which (as has been said) is the tongue of the soul, may suggest ; and whosoever has it knows very well how to speak with Almighty God, (4) and without it is as it were mute and dumb ; and then it is good to make use of those colloquies here set down, making them as if they were his own.

iii. The *third* end of reading these meditations may be to practise them with others ; for it belongs to spiritual masters and confessors to give and prescribe such points of meditation to their disciples and penitents, exercising them in this manner of prayer when they are capable thereof ; but they are not to give all alike to all, but select those meditations, points, and considerations that are most accommodated to the state and capacity of him that receives them.

iv. And besides this, they may also help themselves with these for their own sermons or spiritual speeches, which are used to be made in common to such as live in religion or out of the same, with desire to obtain that perfection that is proper to their state.

(4) Cap. ii. S. Bern. serm. 45 in Cantic.

2. For all these ends I have endeavoured that the meditations should go confirmed and accompanied with places and sentences of Holy Scripture which were written for the same ends. So that here are declared, in a manner, all the four Evangelists:—the greater part of the Acts of the Apostles:—the beginning of Genesis, and many other places of the Old and New Testaments. And as many of them may have divers senses, I have endeavoured to make choice of the most received, according to the exposition of the saints, from whom I have collected these considerations; as also from that which other spiritual men have experienced to whom our Lord has communicated these tastes and feelings.

3. So that, by this means, such as are lovers of variety in these exercises of the spirit will find in this book divers meditations for the several times of Advent, Lent, Sundays, and principal feasts of the year, accommodating themselves in every time to the spirit, which in them the Church represents. And as many have a devotion for meditations distributed according to the seven days of the week, they will here also find variety of them.

i. Those which treat of purifying themselves from vices in the *purgative* way will find meditations of the seven deadly sins,—for every day its meditation; and they themselves may easily collect others of the seven principal things that are in this life, that is to say, meditation of sins, death, judgment particular and universal, hell, purgatory, and the glory of heaven. As also of the seven notorious sinners that our Saviour Christ converted, namely—St. Matthew, St. Mary Magdalen, the woman of Samaria, the woman found in adultery, Zaccheus, the good thief, and Saul, otherwise called Paul.

ii. Those who treat of gaining virtues in the *illuminative* way will find meditations on the seven petitions of the

“Our Father,” of the eight beatitudes, of the seven stations, in which is consummated the whole passion of Christ our Lord, of the seven words that He spake upon the cross; and they may easily make choice of seven parables, or seven of His most notable miracles, for the seven days of the week.

iii. Those who treat of union in the *unitive* life will find meditations of the seven divine *attributes*, in which principally this union is fed;—that is to say, bounty, charity, mercy, immensity, wisdom, omnipotence, and providence. And if they will meditate God’s *benefits* they will find meditations of the works that Almighty God did the first six days of the world and his rest upon the seventh day; also of the seven rewards of glory which Christ our Lord declared in His sermon of the beatitudes, and those which He promised the seven bishops in the Apocalypse. And after this manner they will find various meditations of the most blessed sacrament and of our blessed Lady the Virgin, and for the fifteen mysteries of the rosary. All which they may easily seek in the tables of contents prefixed to each of the volumes.

4. Finally, every one part of the six parts which this book has, in which are divers meditations with different manners of praying and contemplating, is like a banquet of many and different meats, dressed after many and divers fashions, which are set upon the table, not that every one that is invited should eat of all, although he may make a trial of all, but that he should eat principally of that meat that gives him most relish, or which is most agreeable to his complexion or necessity, leaving the rest for others that shall find relish where he finds it not, because they have another complexion or necessity different from his. For it would be a great ignorance in this matter to seek to lead all after that form of praying that suits me, contemning those that

use another way. And therefore, every one guiding himself partly by the counsel and directions of his spiritual master—partly by the experience of his own comfort and profit—must lay hold of those meditations and forms of prayer which arm him best to this end, although it is not amiss to “prove all;” (5) for perhaps our Lord will open to me a way which I thought He had held very close shut.

5. By what has been said I conclude, that those who desire daily to climb the mystical ladder of Jacob, (6) which St. Augustine calls the “ladder of paradise,” and St. Bernard, “the ladder of men who are religious;” (7) the steps of which are, reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation—will find in this book matter and instruction fit for this ascent, relying principally upon God’s grace, by whose favour we shall all be able to climb and arrive to that union with our Lord, who is at the top inviting us to mount up thereby; and to this end He sends His holy angels who ascend and descend for our good: they ascend to present to God our desires and petitions, and they descend with the good despatch of them, and always animate us to climb up every day with great perseverance, until we enter into the paradise of our God, where we may see Him and enjoy Him, world without end. Amen.

(5) 1 Thess. v. 21.

(6) Gen. xxviii. 12.

(7) In tomo 9.

THE FIRST PART
OF THE
MEDITATIONS ON SINS
AND ON THE
LAST ENDS OF MAN;

WITH FORMS OF PRAYER APPROPRIATED TO THOSE WHO WALK IN
THE PURGATIVE WAY, TO PURIFY THEMSELVES OF
THEIR VICES.

THE INTRODUCTION ON PURITY OF SOUL, WHICH IS THE END OF THE
MEDITATIONS OF THE PURGATIVE WAY.

1. AMONG those excellences which the frequent use of meditation and mental prayer comprehends, the first that opens the way for many others is to purify (as St. Bernard says) (1) the fountain itself from whence it springs. And as it springs from two fountains, the one superior, which is God, with His inspirations, and the other inferior, which is the soul, with her faculties, its excellence consists in cleansing this second fountain in the virtue of the first, purifying the *memory* of culpable oblivions, the *understanding* of errors, the *will* of depraved desires, the *appetites* of their unbridled passions, the *senses* of their superfluities, the *flesh* of her sensual cherishings, and the *soul* of her vicious customs; upon which the Apostle St. Peter said that God purifies hearts by faith, (2) not because faith alone is sufficient for this, but because faith, quickened with the profound consideration of the verities and mysteries

(1) Lib. 7. de considerat. ad Eugenium.

(2) Acts xv. 9.

which He reveals, awakens the acts and affections of the soul, which, with the divine grace, dispose to the perfect purification of the heart.

2. And although this excellence is found in *all* the meditations of the mysteries of our faith, yet it is most notably resplendent in those which appertain to the *purgative* way, whose principal end is to move the will to acts and exercises, with which perfect purity is obtained, and the trenches are dug for the edifice and building up of virtues.

3. These are reduced to three classes.

i. The first comprehends the acts of knowledge of ourselves with contempt of ourselves, wherein (as St. Bernard says)(3) true humility consists. And it is of two sorts;—one is proper to the just that never sinned, and proceeds from the knowledge of the *nothing* that we have of our own growth; and this is principally obtained by the meditations that will be put in the sixth part. The other is proper to *sinner*s, and proceeds from the knowledge of the *sins* and *miseries* into which we have fallen; and this is obtained by the meditations of this first part, whose acts are to despise ourselves, to hold ourselves worthy to be despised by all men, and as much as lieth in us to desire it, and take means to procure it, exercising some humiliations, and accepting those that happen to us in such a manner as we shall practise in the meditations themselves.

ii. The second class comprehends those acts which dispose to our justification, that is to say, fear of God's justice, hope of His divine mercy, perfect sorrow for our sins, strict examination of conscience, humble and entire confession of offences, and satisfaction with works of penance to revenge upon ourselves the injuries that we have done against Almighty God, and other such like.

iii. The third class comprehends those acts which aid

(3) Tractat. de decem gradibus humilitatis et serm. 36 in Cantic.

towards taking away the roots and remainders of former sins, in order never more to return to them—such are, chastising the flesh to subject it to the spirit, mortification of unbridled appetites, reducing them to the rule of reason, abnegation of our own will, to make it conformable to the will of God, detestation of ourselves and of all things that nourish self-love, that God our Lord and His holy love may find an entrance into our heart.

4. These are the paths in which we are to walk in the purgative way, to make a very perfect conversion. For supposing that, according to the counsel of the Wise man, (4) in all our works we are to be very diligent and fervent, yet in none more than in the work of our justification, and in the means ordained to that, fulfilling at the least that which St. Paul gave us in charge when he said, “As you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, so now yield your members to serve justice unto sanctification.” (5) And as St. Augustine says, “Quales impetus habebas ad mundum, tales habebas ad artificem mundi,” (6) “Carry as great vehemency of love to the framer of the world as thou didst carry to the world itself,” serving the Creator with that fervent affection wherewith thou wert wont to serve the creature, bearing as entirely the image of the heavenly Adam as thou bearest that of the earthly Adam. (7) And because the holy Apostle (as St. Gregory remarks) (8) spoke this as condescending to our weakness, it is reason that such as are fervent labour to be much more diligent in good than before they were in evil, complying with the counsel of the prophet Baruch, (9) when he says that we should convert ourselves “ten times” more to God than we separated ourselves from him. So did the glorious Mag-

(4) *Eclus.* xxxi. 27; xxxiii. 23.(5) *Rom.* vi. 19.(6) *Præfatione* in *Psal.* xxxi.(7) *1 Cor.* xv. 49.(8) *Lib.* xix. *moral.* cap. 16.(9) *Baruch* iv. 28.

dalen, Zaccheus, Saul, and other notable penitents, of whose marvellous conversions we shall make special meditations in the third part, in which those that have passed by these (which will be put here) may exercise themselves.

5. And although these are most proper to such as desire fervently to convert themselves to God our Lord, and to such as are beginners in virtue, who desire to purify themselves from all the dregs and ill customs of their former life; (10) yet (as the Holy Spirit says) because no man should lose the fear that his sin is not pardoned, and because the "just man" falls "seven times," (11) it is therefore reason that the just also now and then should renew these meditations, to purify themselves of their present sins, and to assure themselves the better of the pardon of those passed; for to this end is the counsel of Ecclesiasticus, that we cease not to pray nor to justify ourselves until death. (12) And Christ our Lord says in the Apocalypse, "He that is just, let him be justified still, and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still;" (13) increasing every day in purity of conscience and in sanctity of life.

THE FUNDAMENTAL MEDITATION I.

ON THE END FOR WHICH MAN AND ALL THINGS THAT SERVE HIM WERE CREATED.

THIS first meditation is the beginning and foundation of the spiritual life; for (as Cassian (1) notes in his first Collation of a Religious man's end) before all things we are to fix our eyes upon the end of our life and of our profession, as well upon the *last* end, which is the kingdom of heaven, as upon the *nearer* end and mark, which is purity of heart,

(10) Eccles. v. 2. (11) Prov. xxiv. 16. (12) Eccles. xviii. 22.

(13) Apoc. xxii. 11.

(1) Cap. iv. et v.

without which this kingdom is not obtained. For the end is the rule of the means, and according to that all the works of our life are to be squared and directed; so that in this meditation all those ought to exercise themselves very often that walk in any of the three ways above mentioned, seeing all of them come to rely and stay upon one and the same final end. And it will serve also for an example in which we may see put in practice what has been said concerning mental prayer.

2. Afterwards, having done those three things which we spoke of in the fifth chapter, before I begin meditation, to tie my imagination to one place, in such a manner as it may be done here. I will imagine God our Lord seated on a throne of infinite majesty, like an immense sea, (2) from whence issue out the rivers of creatures, all returning to Himself, as to their final end and place of perpetual rest. Then will I humbly beseech Him for what I desire in this meditation; that is to say, celestial light to know my true final end, and to direct according to that my crooked life, saying with David, "Send forth, O Lord, from on high, Thy light and Thy truth," (3) that they may guide me, and bring me to Thy holy mount and to Thy everlasting habitations, for Thou didst create me to live in them. This done, I will begin my meditation in the form following.

POINT I.

The first point shall be to call to memory the end for which man was created: that is, to praise, reverence, and serve his God, and by this means to save his soul, (4) according to the saying of St. Paul to the Romans: "You have your fruit unto sanctification, and your end life everlasting." (5) As if he should say, "The aim and end of

(2) Apoc. iv. 2; xxii. 3.

(3) Ps. xlii. 3.

(4) S. Ignatio in fundamento exercitiorum.

(5) Rom. vi. 22. *Cum ubi erunt.*

your works in this life is to serve Almighty God with purity and sanctity, and the final end to which they are ordained is, to obtain life everlasting.

Upon this truth the understanding is to form its reasonings to bring to light what is comprehended therein, considering thus:—Who created me, and ordained me to this end, and for what cause? How sovereign an end this is! How ill I have pursued it in my past life, and in what peril I have been of losing it! What heavy losses I sustain by losing it, and how great benefits ensue if I obtain it! and how great reason there is that from this day forward I should vigilantly seek to obtain it! With every one of these considerations I will move the will to the affections and acts it requires in this manner:—

1. First I am to consider how the infinite *majesty* of Almighty *God*, who hath no need of His creatures, not for my merits but of His mere goodness created me to His image and likeness; not that I should live at *random* to follow my own lusts, nor that I should seek honours or dignities, riches or delicacies, or any other thing created, but only that I should reverence and praise Him, that I should love and obey Him in this mortal life, and afterwards obtain life everlasting. And although it had been sufficient to give me for my end that which my nature required, yet Almighty God was not contented with this, but of His mere mercy ordained and raised me to another more high and sovereign end, which is to see Him manifestly, to enjoy Him, and to be happy and blessed as are the angels, or as God is Himself, according to that of St. John: “We shall see Him as He is.” (6)

Colloquy.—O immense charity of our sovereign God! What is this, O Lord, thou dost? A creature so miserable as this little silly worm—man, dost Thou

(6) 1 John iii. 2.

exalt to so high an end as to see Thee apparently in Thy glory? What! was I not obliged to serve Thee freely and for nothing as Thy slave? then why dost Thou assign me so excellent a reward? Blessed be Thine infinite mercy, and let all the angels praise Thee for this sovereign benefit! What shall I return Thee, O Lord, for so great a reward? (7) I offer myself to serve Thee freely all my life, without desiring any other interest more than to serve Thee, for to serve God is to reign. And seeing Thou art my first beginning and my last end, give forthwith beginning to my new life, and aid me with Thy grace that I may attain to its final end. Amen.

2. This done, I will consider how *ill* I have *pursued this end* in my past life, living as if I had been created, not to serve God, but to serve my own lusts, and to seek honours, delicacies, and riches; committing for this cause innumerable sins, as if the end of my vocation had not been "sanctification," (8) but uncleanness; not "liberty" of the spirit, but liberty of "the flesh." (9)

Colloquy.—O wretch that I am, how blindly have I gone astray in that which it most importuned me to know! O how ungrateful have I been to Him that created me to so high an end, and how evilly have I paid Him that did me so much good! O my Creator, that I had never offended Thee! Pardon, O Lord, my transgressions for Thine own sake, and help me to get out of them that I may lead the remainder of my life conformably to the end for which Thou hast given it me. Amen.

3. Then will I consider the *great losses* I sustain by losing this end; for what loss can be greater than to lose my soul, to lose God's divine grace, to lose the peace and alacrity of

(7) Ps. cxv. 12.

(8) 1 Thess. iv. 3.

(9) Gal. v. 13.

conscience, and to lose all blessedness to which are joined eternal damnation and the forfeiture of God Himself? For "what doth it profit me to gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of my own soul" (10) and of my God, in comparison of whom all the world is even as nothing?

4. On the other hand, if I attain to this end I obtain the possession of God Himself, I shall save my soul, I shall have peace and cheerfulness of heart, I shall be protected by the Divine Providence, I shall find quietness and perpetual repose, as all things find in their end and centre. This, then, being so as it is, animate thyself, O my soul, to seek the end for which thou wast created by God, and herein employ all thy care, for there is nothing that more imports thee. Convert thyself to God who is thy rest, for beside Him all whatever else is torment. (11) If thou servest God what wilt thou more? If God be thy possession, what wantest thou more? Delight Him in seeking Him, and be confident to obtain Him, for He loves His creatures, and takes contentment that they should obtain the end for which He created them.

Colloquy.—O infinite God, centre of my soul, convert me to Thee that I may take rest, for Thou madest me for Thee, and my heart is unquiet until it comes near to Thee. (12) O eternal Father, seeing Thou didst create me that I might love Thee as a son, give grace for Thine own sake, that I may love Thee as a Father! O only-begotten Son of the Father and Redeemer of the world, seeing that Thou didst create me, and didst redeem me, that I might obey and imitate Thee, aid me that I may always obey Thee, and imitate Thee in all things. O Most Holy Ghost, seeing that of Thy goodness Thou didst create me to be sanctified, grant

(10) Matt. xvi. 26.

(11) S. Cyp. ser. de asc.

(12) S. Aug. lib. i. confes. cap. 1.

me that it may be so for Thine own glory. O angels of heaven! O most blessed saints! that have attained the end for which you were created, beseech this our Lord whom you enjoy that I may also obtain Him, ascending up to enjoy Him in your company, world without end. Amen.

POINT II.

In concluding the first point I must pass to the second, which is, to call to memory the end for which all *the other* things of the earth were created, that is to say, that they might help man to attain to the final end of his creation, taking them for a means to serve Almighty God our Lord and to save himself, according to that which the royal prophet David said of his people, God "gave them the lands of the Gentiles, and they possessed the labours of the people, that they might observe His justifications" or holy commandments, "and seek after His" holy "law." (13)

1. Upon this truth I am to consider first, how liberal Almighty God has showed himself towards me in creating such a multitude of creatures, so fair and so admirable for my sake, and not only created things necessary to preserve my life, but also many others for my delicacy and delight, and for the recreation of my sight, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching, for which I am to give Him infinite thanks; seeing that the good which He did to these creatures He did it more to me than to them, for that He did it to them in respect of me.

Colloquy.—Let all these Thy creatures bless Thee, O Lord, and let my soul praise and glorify Thee for them all. I give Thee thanks for the being which Thou givest to the heavens and to the elements, to beasts and to plants, and to all the other bodies of the earth. I give Thee thanks also for the beauty of

the colours, for the harmony of the sounds, for the pleasantness of the odours, for the sweetness of the meats, for the softness of our raiments, and for all those things which recreate my five senses, seeing Thou createdst them for me that I might praise and serve Thee with them.

2. And then I will consider *how well these creatures* comply with the end for which Almighty God created them, serving me and nourishing me, because God so commanded it; and contrariwise, *how evilly I* have complied and do comply with my end, using them evilly to offend God with all, placing in them my final end, as if I had been created to enjoy them, making the end of that which was but the means. And if I run through my senses, I shall find that they have gone lusting after creatures, using them only for their delight, and not to glorify God that gave them me; for the which I justly deserved that God should take them from me, and that He should "set at liberty" (as he said by Oseas) His "corn and wine," His flour and His "wool" from the "service" (14) they are in under my possession, using them against their inclination to offend their Creator.

Colloquy.—O most just Creator, how is it that Thou didst not justice upon him that so abused thy creatures, using them against Thee? O my soul, how art thou not confounded with such treachery as this? And how art thou not ashamed of this great baseness thou hast committed, abasing thyself to place thy final end upon a thing so vile as is the creature to the injury of the Creator! O my God, how ungrateful have I been for Thy sovereign benefits! for what Thou gavest me to serve Thee I converted into an occasion to offend Thee. Pardon, O Lord, my unthankfulness, and assist me, that from henceforward

(14) Oseas ii. 9.

I may not use that so evilly which Thou gavest to me for my good.

3. I may also consider that these creatures were created, as the Holy Scripture says, that by them I might *know* the *perfections* and excellences of the *Creator*, (15) and that I might love Him with all my heart; and so I may imagine that every one stands crying to me, and saying, "This perfection which I have is better in God than in me. He gave it me. Know Him, love Him, and use it for His service." And with this consideration, I will excite myself to ascend from the visible creatures to the invisible Creator to unite myself to Him as to my last and final end.

POINT III.

1. The third point is, a practical conclusion drawn from what has been said in the two preceding points; that is to say, *how* from henceforward I *am to use* creatures and what indifference my will has to hold in the use of them, not coveting more than that which may help me to serve my Creator, and to obtain the end for which I was created, procuring as much as lies in me, not to desire riches rather than poverty, honour than dishonour, health than sickness, long than short life; but only that which shall be most convenient for my salvation. For it is a great part of wisdom not to take of the means more than is meet to obtain the end, as of any purgative drug we take not a greater quantity than is necessary for our health.

2. With this consideration I must also enter into my heart and make a dissection of the disordered inclinations and affections that it has to riches, honours and delicacies; to parents, kindred and friends; and its own health and life; labouring to move my will to desire to mortify the

(15) Sap. xiii. 4.

superfluous love of creatures, persuading myself to this by the motive aforesaid, and by others that I may inquire out with my reasoning, especially by that of the Divine Providence which most carefully assists those that wholly resign themselves into the hands of God, "casting (as St. Peter says) all their cares upon Him," (16) to serve Him with the greater perfection. For it is most certain that Christ our Lord will fulfil His word which He gave us when he said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you;" (17) as if He should have said, "First seek the kingdom of God, which is your final end, and its justice, which are the means to obtain it, and thus doing, be assured that the providence of your heavenly Father will provide you temporal things necessary to sustain your life."

3. But because with my own powers I am not able to attain to this resignation, I must have recourse to Him that can give them me, framing some colloquy with our Lord, and saying to Him very earnestly:—

Colloquy.—I confess, O my God, that my heart very much cleaves and is tied to creatures with inordinate love: seeing, therefore, I am so wretched and feeble that, having fastened myself to creatures, I cannot unfasten me; favour me with Thy omnipotence in my weakness, destroying this connexion, and weeding out from me this inordinate love, that I may love Thee, and serve Thee with all my heart and with all my powers. For Thou art my love and my repose, to whom be honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

(The matter of these three points shall be handled more at large in the sixth part.)

(16) 1 Pet. v. 7.

(17) Matt. vi. 33.

POINT IV.

From these same principles I must draw another practical conclusion, as the foundation of the purgative way; that is to say, that I must *detest sin* above all the most detestable things of the world; for that mortal sin only is contrary to my final end, and by it only is it lost. So that neither poverty, nor infamy, nor dishonour, nor pain, nor infirmity, nor baseness of parentage, nor rudeness of wit, nor want of natural sciences, nor all the other miseries of the world, are directly contrary to my final end; nor shall I lose it for them, but only for mortal sin, by which, as much as lies in me, I destroy the true final end, which is Almighty God, "denying Him (as St. Paul says) my works." (18) I even devise another final end to myself, which is the creature, which I take for God. And upon this the same Apostle says that gluttons hold "their belly" for "their God;" (19) proud men their glory, "and covetous men make an idol of their money." (20)

(This truth shall be considered in the meditations ensuing, to move us to the abhorring of so great an evil as sin is, and to purify ourselves of it with great care.)

MEDITATION II.

ON THE GRIEVOUSNESS OF SIN, BY THE EXAMPLES OF THE SIN OF THE ANGELS, OF ADAM, AND OF SOME OTHERS IN PARTICULAR.

1. The end of this meditation is, to know by *examples* the grievousness of sin, by which to abhor it, the terrible-ness of God's *justice* in chastising it, by which to fear Him, and to appease Him by penance; and the instability of man in good, by which to know his weakness and not to

(18) Tit. i. 16. (19) Phil. iii. 19. (20) Ephes. v. 5.

trust to himself, but to humble himself in the presence of God. And all this I am to beg of our Lord, at my entrance to meditation, beseeching Him to illustrate with His divine light my understanding to know it; and to move my will to have a feeling of it with great affections of contrition, and to aid me that I may be warned by others' miseries, before the chastisement light upon my own head.

2. And that this meditation, and those which follow, may make the deeper impression in the soul, I am to form first in my imagination a figure of Christ Jesus our Lord, as of a judge seated upon his tribunal to give judgment—with a severe countenance (1)—from whose throne issues forth a river of fire to burn sinners; and I will imagine myself before Him like a deep and heinous offender, bound with the fetters and chains of innumerable sins, fearing and trembling like one that deserves to be condemned and burnt with that terrible fire.

POINT I.

The first point is to call to mind the sin of the *angels* who were created by God in the empyreal heaven, replenished with wisdom and grace; but, abusing their free will, they grew proud against their Creator, for which they were thrown out of heaven and cast into hell; losing for ever the end and blessedness for which they were created. (2) In this truth of the Catholic faith there are three things.

1. First, I will reason considering how liberal Almighty God was to the angels, creating them according to His own image and likeness, and communicating to them, without any merit of theirs, most excellent gifts of nature and grace. By reason of which we may say of all, as was said of one, that they were adorned with nine stones very precious—that is, with nine excellences, which Lucifer

(1) Dan. vii. 9.

(2) S. Th. i. p. q. lxxiii.; Isa. xiv. 12; Luc. x. 18; 1 Pet. ii. 4; Apoc. xii. 9.

and the rest received in their creation. (3) For Almighty God made them; i. pure spirits without admixture of body; ii. immortal, without fear of corruption; iii. intellectual with great delicacy of wit; iv. free, that nothing could force their will; v. wise, with fulness of all natural sciences; vi. powerful, above all inferior creatures; vii. holy, with the gifts of grace, charity, and the rest of the virtues; viii. inhabitants of the paradise of delights, which is the empyreal heaven; ix. and, finally, capable of seeing Almighty God clearly, with promise of this glory, if they persevere in His service, which they might easily do, and were obliged thereunto by the law of gratitude for these nine titles.

2. Secondly, I will consider how ungrateful some of them were against Almighty God, growing arrogant with these gifts, and arming themselves with them against Him of whom they had received them, not giving Him that reverence and obedience which they ought with humility to have given Him, but employing their liberty and powers to offend Him whom, on so many accounts, they ought to have served.

3. Thirdly, I will consider how terrible Almighty God showed Himself in chastising them instantly, without giving them respite or time of repentance, depriving them, for that only sin, of those gifts of grace which He had given them, and throwing them, like lightning from heaven, (4) into the everlasting flames and fires of hell, without respect either to the beauty of their nature or to the greatness of their state, or that they were His creatures made according to His image and likeness, or that they were exceeding wise, or that they had been once His friends; for one mortal sin is *alone* sufficient to obscure all this, and is worthy of so terrible punishment which (as St. Peter says) God's justice

(3) Ezech. xxviii. 13.

(4) Luc. x. 18.

permitted, and ordained for our example. "For if He spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell unto torments," (5) although they were so noble, how much less will He omit to punish men obstinate in their transgressions, being as they are so vile and so base? And if the angels, "fortitudine et virtute majores non portant adversum se execrabile judicium," "who are greater than men in strength and power, bear not the execrable judgment against them," (6) but with great raging and impatience; how much less shall feeble and wretched men be able to endure it? Oh, how "fearful" "a thing is it to fall into the hands of the living God," (7) hands so heavy that the angels themselves cannot suffer them!

4. These three things I am to apply to myself, pondering how liberal Almighty God has been towards *me*, doing me innumerable benefits; and how ungrateful I have been to Him, committing innumerable sins against Him; and how I have deserved that God should punish me as He did the angels, and even much more, for their sin was but one, mine many; theirs was but a sin of thought only in matter of pride; mine both of thought, word, and deed, in matter of pride, of luxury, of wrath, and of other vices; theirs was not injurious to the blood of Jesus Christ, for it was not shed for them; mine are injurious against this blood of the Son of God, which was shed for me upon the cross. Then this being so, how just a thing were it that God should have sunk me into hell in the company of the devils, making me partaker of their pains, seeing I would needs be so of their sins!

Colloquy.—O God of vengeance, how is it that Thou hast not revenged thyself on a man so wicked as I?

(5) 2 Pet. ii. 4.

(6) 2 Pet. ii. 11.

(7) Heb. x. 31.

How hast Thou suffered me so long a time? Who has withheld the rigour of Thy justice that it should not punish him that has deserved so terrible punishment? O my soul, how is it that thou dost not fear and tremble, considering the dreadful judgment of God against His angels? If with so great severity He punished creatures so noble, why should not so vile and miserable a creature as thou fear the like punishment? O most powerful Creator, seeing Thou hast showed Thyself to me not a God of vengeance but a Father of mercy, continue towards me this Thy mercy, pardoning my sins and delivering me from hell, which most justly for them I have deserved.

POINT II.

The second point shall be to call to memory the sin of *our first parents*, Adam and Eve, who, having been created in Paradise, and in original justice, broke the commandment of Almighty God, eating the fruit of the tree which, upon pain of death, He had prohibited them, for which they were cast forth of paradise, (8) and incurred the sentence of death, and other innumerable miseries, as well for themselves as for all their offspring.

1. Upon this verity of faith, I may reason as upon the former, considering how liberal Almighty God was to our first parents, creating them of His mere goodness according to His own image and likeness, and placing them in a paradise of delights, giving them His grace and original justice; subjecting their appetites to reason and the flesh to the spirit; freeing them from mortality and penalties to which by nature they were subject, and granting them a happy and most contented state. And all this He did of His pure grace and mercy, granting it them not only for

(8) Gen. iii. 1; S. Th. 2, q. clxiii., clxiv.

themselves but also for their successors, if they had persevered in His service.

2. Secondly, I must consider how ungrateful they were to Almighty God, and what motive they had for that; for the serpent coming to tempt Eve, and promising her guilefully that if she ate of the forbidden fruit they should not die, but should rather be as God Himself, having knowledge of good and evil; she suffered herself to be beguiled, ate of the fruit, and invited Adam to do so; who, to please her, ate also of it, treading under foot the pleasure of God for the pleasure of his wife, without making account either of the benefits that God had done him or of the punishments that He had menaced and threatened him with.

3. Then will I consider how terrible Almighty God showed Himself in chastising them, casting them out of paradise, depriving them for ever of original justice, subjecting them to death and to all the miseries of a corruptible body, which miseries all we his children incur; because we all sin in him, and for his cause we are born the children of wrath, (9) enemies of God, and adjudged and condemned to the self-same death. And that which more affrights is, that from this original sin that we inherit of him, proceed as from their root those innumerable sins that are in the world, and the inundations of miseries that overflow it, (10) by which I may perceive how terrible, dreadful, and hideous an evil mortal sin is, seeing one alone deprives of so much good, brings so much evil, and so highly provokes the wrath of Almighty God, though He be much more inclined to mercy than to the rigour of justice.

Colloquy.—Who shall not fear Thee, (11) O King of worlds? Who shall not abhor so great a mischief as to offend Thee? O my soul, if thou knowest what thou dost when thou sinnest like Adam, doubtless

(9) Eph. ii. 3. (10) Rom. v. 12. (11) Apoc. xv. 3, 4.

thou wouldst tremble at the heavy burden with which thou loadest thyself! (12) O sin, how heavy art thou to me! Thou deprivest me of grace, robbest me of virtues, chasest me out of Paradise, condemnest me to eternal death, subjectest me to temporal death, takest away the life of my children (which are my works) depriving them of the merit of glory, disquietest the kingdom of my soul, and fillest it with innumerable miseries. O my God, deliver me from so great an evil! O my soul, fly from sin (as the Wise man counsels thee) more than from snakes and serpents, (13) since one alone is more cruel and venomous than they are all being put together!

4. Besides this, I must make comparison of my sin with that of Adam, like as in the preceding point; for I (wretch that I am!) being tempted by the devil, suffered myself to be deluded by him, not once, but often. My flesh has been like to seduced Eve, that has provoked me to sin, and my spirit, effeminated like Adam, to please it, has a thousand times displeased God by breaking His commandments; my pride and ingratitude have arrived to that height that I have often desired to be as God, usurping to myself that which is proper to His deity. Then, if God inflicted such punishment on my first parents for one sin of disobedience and pride, founded upon no more than eating one apple contrary to the precept of Almighty God, how great punishments have I deserved for so many acts of disobedience and pride, and for so innumerable offences as I have committed against Him? Oh, how just had it been that, at my first sin, death should have swallowed me or all the miseries of the world showered down upon me!

5. Lastly, I will consider what a long penance Adam and Eve did for this sin of theirs, how bitter that morsel was to them, and how dear it cost them; for Adam having

(12) Ps. xxxvii.

(13) Ecclus. xxi. 2.

lived more than nine hundred years, spent them all in weeping and mourning, and suffering a thousand incommodities which the state of his corruption attracted to it, but in the end, (as says the Divine Wisdom,) through penance he obtained pardon; (14) and with this example I must animate myself to lament my miseries and to do penance for my sins, that Almighty God may deliver me from them, imitating in penance him whom I imitated in sin, and beseeching our Lord to chastise me as much as He will in this life, so that He pardon me and deliver me from the torments of the other.

POINT III.

The third point shall be to call to memory *some mortal sin*, as perjury, carnality, or such other like; for which many souls are burning in hell, and that very justly, for injury done to the infinite majesty of Almighty God.

1. I must, then, descend with my consideration into hell, which is full of souls, among which I shall find many that are there burning for one only sin; some for one perjury, others for a lustful thought consented to, and others for some other sin of word or of deed. And then I will consider how all these condemned persons were men as well as I, and many of them Christians as well as I, who enjoyed the same sacraments and sacrifices, and those sermons and sacred books, that I enjoy, and were perhaps some time very holy and highly in favour with Almighty God; but by little and little they grew careless and came to fall into that mortal sin, and, by the just judgments of God, death attacked and fell upon them in it, and they were most justly condemned for the same. For (as the Apostle St. James says) whosoever shall "offend in one point," breaking a commandment, "becomes guilty of all," (15) the same as he

(14) Sap. x. 2.

(15) Jac. ii. 10.

who breaks many ; for he offends the God of infinite majesty, who commands them all to be observed.

2. Then must I make comparison of this sin with many of mine, pondering with how much more reason I have deserved to be in hell, as those souls are, for having offended Almighty God, not once, but often, in other kinds of sins than theirs, and that without number.

Colloquy.—Oh, how justly have I deserved that death should have attacked me in committing my first offence and crime, and that God should have given me no time of repentance ! What moved Thee, O my God ! to bear with me more than with these ? I confess that I deserve to be in their company, but seeing Thy majesty hath with so much mercy borne with me, I resolve, with Thy grace, to be very truly and entirely penitent.

3. I may also consider that it is no less a mercy of Almighty God to have preserved me from hell, withholding me from descending to everlasting torments, than if, *after* I had descended, He had *delivered* me from them ; for which I may say with David, “I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Thy name for ever,” (16) for Thy mercy has been very great towards me, delivering my soul from the deepest hell. And to know how to esteem aright of this heavenly favour, and how to repay it as I ought, I may speak to myself, saying,

Colloquy.—If God should deliver one of these souls out of hell, and give it a time of repentance, what rigorous penance would it perform ? how thankful would it be to Almighty God ? and with what fervour would it serve Him ? Thou, therefore, art to do the like, considering that God has done to thee so singular a favour as to deliver thee from the danger before thou didst fall into it.

(16) Ps. lxxxv. 12.

POINT IV.

ON THE GREATNESS OF OUR SINS, UNDERSTOOD BY THE PAINS THAT CHRIST OUR LORD SUFFERED FOR THEM.

1. The fourth point shall be both matter of a sweet colloquy and of a most devout consideration, to see the greatness of sin and the dreadfulness of God's justice by another example, very different but no less effectual than the former; that is, by the chastisements which the divine justice inflicted upon *Christ Jesus* our Lord, not for His own sins, but for *mine*, and for the sins of the whole world; that I may understand how He will chastise man laden with *his own* sins that so chastised Him that bore the burden of *other men's* sins, and how the *guilty slave* shall be handled when the *innocent Son* was so terribly punished, calling to mind that dreadful sentence which our Redeemer spake to the daughters of Jerusalem, "If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" (17) As if He should say to me, "If I be treated with such rigour being a *green tree* and *full of fruit*, with what rigour wilt thou be treated that art a *dry tree* and *without any manner of fruit at all?*"

2. Then I must set before my eyes Christ Jesus crucified, beholding His head crowned with thorns, His face spit upon, His eyes obscured, His arms disjoined, His tongue embittered with gall and vinegar, His hands and feet pierced with nails, His back and shoulders torn with whips, and His side opened with a lance; and then pondering that He suffers all this for my sins, I will draw various affections from the inwardest part of my heart, sometimes trembling at the rigour of God's justice, who (as the prophet Zacharias said) unsheathed his "sword" against the man that

(17) Luc. xxiii. 31.

“cleaved with him” in person ; (18) sometimes bewailing my sins which were the cause of these sorrows, and sometimes animating myself to suffer somewhat in satisfaction of my offences, seeing Christ our Lord suffered so much to redeem them. (19) And, finally, I will beg pardon of Him for them, alleging to Him for a reason all His troubles and afflictions, saying to Him in amorous colloquy :—

Colloquy.—O my most sweet Redeemer, who descendedst from heaven and ascendedst this cross to redeem men, redeeming their sins with Thy sufferings, I present myself before Thy Majesty, grieved that my grievous sins have been the cause of Thy terrible pains. Upon me, O Lord, these chastisements had been justly employed, (for I am he that sinned,) and not upon Thee that never sinned. Let that love that moved Thee to put Thyself upon the cross for me move Thee to pardon me what I have committed against Thee. By Thy thorns I beseech Thee, draw out of my soul the thorns of my sins; by Thy scourging, pardon my thefts; by Thy gall and vinegar, pardon my evil works; and by the wounds of Thy feet, pardon my evil steps. O Eternal Father, “look upon the face of Thy Son,” (20) and seeing in Him Thou didst chastise my sins, let Thy wrath be appeased by these chastisements, and use towards me Thy mercies, “casting all” our “sins into the bottom of the sea,” (21) in virtue of that blood that was shed for them. Amen.

(This point we shall dwell upon largely in the fourth part.)

(18) Zachar. xiii. 7. (19) Isa. liii.

(20) Ps. lxxxiii. 10. (21) Mich. vii. 19.

MEDITATION III.

ON THE MULTITUDE OF SINS, AND ON THE GRIEVOUSNESS OF THEM, BY
REASON OF THEIR MULTITUDE AND REPUGNANCE TO REASON.

POINT I.

1. THE first point is to call to mind the *multitude of sins* that I have committed in all my former life, to which end I must run through all the stages of it, and through all the places where I lived, and through the offices, occupations, and employments that I have had, observing how often and in what manner I have offended in respect of each of the seven sins which we commonly call *deadly*, and of each of the commandments of the law of Almighty God and of His Church, and in respect of each of the laws and rules of my state and office: to which end it will help me to know the kinds of sins that may be committed in these matters, as they shall be put in the first points of the 18th meditation and nine following meditations.

And this remembrance of sins must not be dry, but moistened with tears full of shame and confusion, as was that of the holy king who said, "I will recount to Thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul." (1)

2. Having called these sins to remembrance, I will make in prayer an humble confession of them before God, like Daniel, (2) accusing myself of them all, at least of the principal of them, striking my breast as the publican, (3) and saying, "I accuse myself, O Lord, that I have sinned before Thee in pride, presuming vainly of myself, speaking boasting words, despising my neighbours, and rebelling against Thee." And in this manner will I prosecute the accusation in all the seven deadly sins, and throughout all the Ten Commandments.

(1) Isa. xxxviii. 15. (2) Dan. ix. 5. (3) Luc. xviii. 13.

3. After I have confessed those sins which I know, I am to believe that there are very many other that I know not, which David calls "secret sins," (4) but they are not hidden from God who is to judge me, (5) and chastise me for them. And this must keep me careful and sorrowful. These sins are hidden from me for one of these three causes:—either because I have already forgotten them;—or because they were very subtle, as interior pride, rash judgments, sinister intentions, negligences and omissions;—or because I committed them with some ignorance and error, or by the illusion of the devil, thinking that I did God service in them. And thus joining the sins that I know with the sins that I know not, I may believe that they amount to an innumerable multitude, and that they are (as David said) "more in number than the hairs of my head" (6) and (as King Manasses said) "many more than the sands of the sea." (7) Hence I will draw great admiration at God's patience in suffering me. For one injury, or two, anyone may bear; but so many, so often repeated, so divers, and done with so great perverseness, who can suffer but Almighty God?

Colloquy.—Truly, O my God, there was need of such an infinite patience as Thine to bear with such an infinity of wrongs and injuries as mine; but seeing Thou hast not been wearied to bear with me, let it stand with Thy good pleasure to pardon me. Amen.

POINT II.

1. Hence I will ascend to consider the *grievousness* of these sins, by reason of their *multitude*, profiting from some similitudes used in the Divine Scripture. For if sin be like "a millstone hanged about the neck," with which man is thrown into the "depth" (8) of hell, my sins being as many as the sands of the sea or the hairs of my head, what an immense burden

(4) Ps. xviii. 13.

(5) 1 Cor. iv. 14.

(6) Ps. xxxix. 13.

(7) In oratione ejus.

(8) Matt. xviii. 6; Apoc. xviii. 21.

will they be! with what a furious violence shall I fall with them into the abyss of hell! If God of His goodness hold me not back, who shall be able to hold me? And what are so many sins but an iron chain of innumerable links (9) with which I am linked, bound, and chained, which is so long that it reaches to hell, and at which Satan stands pulling to drag me to him. And if the sins of the angels (as says St. Peter) were "ropes" that drew them from heaven to the lower hell (10) how much stronger ropes shall my sins be, being twisted with so innumerable cords? My soul is also encompassed with this multitude of sins as with an army of "dogs" "lions," "bulls," (11) "serpents," and other savage beasts that terrify it with their roarings, tear it in pieces with their mouths, and rend it with their claws; like bees they sting, and like serpents they bite and gnaw the conscience. Finally, I am that "wicked servant" that "owed" his lord "ten thousand talents," which is so great a debt that, although they should sell "all that he hath," "both his wife, his children" and himself, yet all would not suffice to pay the least part of it. (12)

Colloquy.—Then what dost thou, O my soul, with so great a burden of sins? If this army of savage beasts made Christ sweat blood with anguish, how comes it that thou dost not weep tears of blood, of sorrow and pain? O most merciful Saviour, by that sorrow and feeling that Thou hadst of my sins in the garden of Gethsemane, I beseech Thee, assist me to have such a feeling of them, that I may be acquitted and delivered of them. Amen.

2. To this I must add another circumstance that may much aggravate my sins, which is my relapse and repeated falls into the same sins, after Almighty God had pardoned me

(9) Isa. lviii. 6.

(10) 2 Pet. ii. 4.

(11) Ps. xxi. 13, 14, 17, 21, and 22.

(12) Matt. xviii. 23.

once and many times, striving, as it were, with God, I to sin, He to pardon me, and I to return again to sin as if I had never been pardoned; imitating (as says the Apostle St. Peter) "the dog" that "returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (13) For which I deserved that God should vomit me for ever from Himself, and overwhelm me in the filth of hell, leaving me bound hand and foot in the power of those infernal executioners, as He did with the unthankful servant that owed Him ten thousand talents, and after he was pardoned returned again to offend Him. But yet for all this, trusting in the infinite patience and mercy of Almighty God, I must again return to Him unfeignedly, and, prostrate at His feet, must say to Him, "Have patience with me, O Lord, and with Thine assistance I will pay Thee the total debt of my offences; and if Thou pardonest me this once I will never more return to them."

POINT III.

1. Thirdly, I must consider the *deformity* and *vileness* of these sins, inasmuch as, though there were no hell for them, yet they are contrary to natural reason; for man being created to the likeness of God, by sin he is transformed into a beast, and with their multitude engenders within himself bestial manners and vicious habits. His appetites prevail against reason, the flesh against the spirit, and the slave commands him that by right is the lord; for the wretched spirit is made a slave to the flesh and to her appetites, and is basely enthralled to many other creatures. For (as Christ our Saviour said) "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin;" (14) "by whom a man is overcome, (says St. Peter,) of the same also he is the slave," (15) and (as a slave) is

(13) Prov. xxvi. 11; 2 Pet. ii. 22.

(14) Joan. viii. 34.

(15) 2 Pet. ii. 19.

subject to the conqueror. If I am ambitious, I am the slave of honour, and of all them that can give it me or take it away. If I am covetous, I am the slave of wealth; if a glutton, I am the slave of delicate food; if luxurious, I am the slave of sensuality, and of those persons that have robbed me of my heart and of my liberty. And what greater baseness can be than this? What more heavy slavery than that of sin made inveterate by vicious custom?

2. This should move me to great detestation of my sins, to cast off from me this servitude, and to restore my spirit to liberty, bringing myself back to the service of my Creator and Redeemer, of whom I am to ask that, seeing He bought me with His blood, (16) He would vouchsafe to free me from the slavery of sin, that with this new title I might be His slave, that He permit not that I be any more the slave of my flesh, of my vices, nor of the devil His deadly enemy.

MEDITATION IV.

ON THE GRIEVOUSNESS OF SIN, UNDERSTOOD BY THE BASENESS OF MAN THAT OFFENDS GOD, AND BY THE NOTHING THAT HE HAS OF HIS OWN.

THE end of this meditation is, to know the grievousness of *doing injury to Almighty God*, and the *baseness* of him that *offends* Him; for the more vile the offender is, so much the greater is his audacity and shamelessness in offending the supreme Emperor both of heaven and of earth.

POINT I.

1. First, I must consider what I am with regard to the *body*, pondering that my original is dirt, and my end is dust; (1) my "flesh" is "a flower," and soon "withers like

(16) 1 Pet. i. 19; 1 Cor. vii. 23.

(1) Gen. ii. 7, and iii. 19.

grass;" (2) my life is a breath of wind, and as "a vapour" that soon passes; and it is "short" and "filled" (as Job says) with many "miserics," (3) and necessities of hunger, cold, grief, infirmity, poverty, and dangers of death. It has no security of one day of life, nor of rest, nor of health; so that by my own strength it is impossible to free myself from these miseries, unless Almighty God our Lord, with His protection and providence, defend and deliver me from them.

2. Now what greater madness can there be than for a man so needy and miserable to dare to offend his only Helper and Protector? And what greater madness can there be than for the flesh, being but dust and ashes, a filthy dunghill, a swarm of worms and rottenness itself, to presume to injure the supreme Spirit of immense majesty, before whom the powers and all the other blessed spirits tremble?

Colloquy.—O "earth and ashes," why art Thou so "proud" (4) against Almighty God? O vessel of clay, how dost thou gainsay thy Maker? (5) O miserable flesh, if thou so much fearest man that can deprive thee of thy temporal life, without doing thee any greater harm, how dost thou not tremble at God, who can deprive thee of eternal life, and cast thee into the fire of hell? Return into thyself, and, if it were but for thine own interest, cease to offend Him who can free thee from so many evils.

3. With these considerations I must greatly confound and terrify myself that have fallen into such madness, and have been so exceedingly fool-hardy; and beseech Christ Jesus our Lord that by His most holy flesh He will pardon this audaciousness of mine, and reduce it hereafter to reason.

(2) Isa. xl. 6; Jac. iv. 14.

(3) Job xiv. 1.

(4) Eccles. x. 9.

(5) Isa. xlv. 9.

POINT II.

1. Secondly, I will consider what I am with regard to the *soul*, pondering that I was created of nothing, and that of myself I am "nothing;" (6) that I merit nothing, and that presently I shall be turned into nothing if God do not continually preserve me; neither should I be able to do anything if God did not continually aid me. (7) Besides this, "I was conceived in iniquities," (8) and with an inclination to sin through the disorder of my appetites and passions; I live subject to infinite miseries of ignorance and error, environed with innumerable temptations within me and without me, by visible and invisible enemies that on all sides encompass me; and through the imbecility of my free-will I have consented and do consent to them, committing many sins, by which I come to be *less than nothing*; for it is a less evil *not to be* than to *sin*, and "it were better for" me "not to have been" (9) than to be damned.

2. And if this be that which I am, much worse is that which I *may be*, through my great mutability and weakness; for in the thread I have the clue of the whole ball, and by the interior motions that I feel to innumerable sins of infidelity, blasphemy, anger and carnality, I gather and conclude that I am subject to all these sins, and should fall into them if God should take from me His holy hand; and by what all the sinners of the world do and have done, I may gather what I should have done if I had been left at my own liberty. For (as St. Augustine says) "there is no sin that one man does but another man may do the same." (10) And therefore I must imagine myself as a fountain of all the sins that are in the world, and as a dead and stinking

(6) Ps. xxxviii. 6. (7) Joan. xv. 5. (8) Ps. l. 7. (9) Matt. xxvi. 24.

(10) S. Aug. in soliloq. c. 15.

dog which it is loathsome to behold ; or as a body buried in the grave and full of worms, which lies consuming and turning into dust. For all which I should condemn myself, and judge myself worthy to be despised of all.

Colloquy.—This, then, being so, to what further point can my folly reach, than with my own will to offend the majesty of Almighty God ? If I be nothing of myself, how dare I offend Him that is being *itself*? And wherefore do I abase myself so much as to make myself less than nothing—unworthy of the being I have ? If I am subject to so many calamities as may come to my soul, why do I not appease Him that may deliver me from them ? O God of my soul, have regard to that which Thou createdst out of nothing ; draw it from this nothing, which is sin, and join it to Thee ; that by Thee it may have the essence and life of grace, and may obtain the blessed being of glory. Amen.

POINT III.

1. Thirdly, I will consider the *littleness of my being*, and of all the good that I have in comparison of God, proceeding by degrees, and beholding, i. What I am in comparison of all men joined together ; ii. What I am in comparison of men and angels ; iii. What all creatures are in comparison of God, before whom, as Isaias says, “ the nations are ” “ as if they had no being at all, and are counted to Him as nothing and vanity ; ” (11) they are as “ a drop ” of water, or “ as the morning dew that falls down upon the earth, ” (12) and can hardly be seen. Then what shall I *alone* be before Almighty God ? As the stars appear not in the presence of the sun, and are as if they were not, so I, how great good soever I have, am as if I were not at all in the presence of God, and much less than a little worm in comparison of the whole world.

(11) Isa. xl. 17.

(12) Sap. xi. 23.

2. My knowledge, my virtue, my power, my discretion, my fortitude, my beauty, and all whatsoever good I have or can have, is as nothing in comparison with that which God has; for which our Saviour said with great reason, "*None is good but God alone*;" (13) none is potent, nor strong, nor beautiful but God: for He only is goodness, wisdom, and omnipotence itself, in comparison of which that which creatures have deserves not the name.

Colloquy.—Then what intelligence can understand how a man of so little being dares to despise Almighty God, and to offend Him by so many sins? O fool, what hast thou done? O wretched I, that have been so audacious! O immense God, in comparison of whom I am as if I were not, by the infinite excellence of Thy being, I beseech Thee to pardon my sins and illuminate me to know the vileness into which I am fallen through them. Grant me that I may abhor and despise myself, and esteem myself less than nothing; and that, like Job, I may "do penance in dust and ashes," (14) accounting myself for such a one in Thy divine presence.

MEDITATION V.

ON THE GRIEVOUSNESS OF SINS UNDERSTOOD BY THE GREATNESS OF ALMIGHTY GOD'S INFINITE MAJESTY, AGAINST WHOM THEY ARE COMMITTED.

THIS meditation has most efficacy to move to perfect contrition and sorrow for sin, which proceeds from the *love* of Almighty God above all things, considering the grievousness of sin, not only by the *baseness* of the *offender*, but by the *highness* of the *offended*; for by how much greater the injured is, so much greater is the injury; and as Almighty God is infinite in His essence and perfection, so sin in this

(13) Luc. xviii. 19.

(14) Job xlii. 6.

behalf (as St. Thomas says) is likewise, as it were, an infinite injury. (1)

POINT I.

First, I consider the infinite perfections Almighty God has *in Himself*, especially those against which sin directly fights, and from whence it receives greatest deformity and heinousness.

1. And first of all I will consider the infinite *goodness* of Almighty God, for which He is highly to be beloved of all His creatures; and if another infinite love were possible, it were all due to Him. And this goodness is so great, that it is impossible to see it clearly and not highly to love it, as the blessed do. Now what greater mischief can there be, than to abhor and despise so infinite a goodness? and what greater injustice than to injure Him by hatred that is worthy of so infinite love?

Colloquy.—O infinite Goodness, how have I abhorred and despised Thee! Oh that I never had offended Thee! My grief, O my God, is greater for sin than for all else whatsoever! For I desire to love Thee above all, whatsoever else may be beloved.

2. Secondly, I will consider the *immensity* of Almighty God, together with His infinite *wisdom*, by which He is really and truly present in every place, seeing and contemplating all that is done; and I should behold myself within this all-seeing immensity, within which I committed all my sins past and do commit those present, provoking Him by them to indignation, loathing and vomiting; for His “eyes (as the Scripture says) are too pure to behold evil” (2) without loathing, and His heart is so pure that wickedness makes Him “vomit.” (3) Now, what greater blindness can there be than for me to live within the im-

(1) 1, 2, q. lxxviii.; art. 4 et 3, p. q. i., art. 2 ad 2.

(2) Hab. i. 13.

(3) Apoc. iii. 16.

menseness of Almighty God and in view of the wisdom of God, and yet for all this to injure Him by my offences? To what greater height can the impudence of the slave reach than to tread under foot the will and honour of his Lord being in His presence? And what greater audacity than to do all this, our Lord being powerful to chastise him as his ingratitude deserves?

Colloquy.—O Lord, how hast Thou suffered me to be near Thee and in Thy presence? How is it that Thou hast not annihilated this disorderly and disloyal slave? How is it that Thou hast not turned Thine eyes from me, and vomited, and cast me out of Thy mouth for ever? I am grieved to the heart for my impudence and audaciousness, and I purpose, with Thy grace, never more hereafter to do anything unworthy of Thy presence.

3. Thirdly, I will consider the sovereign *omnipotence* of Almighty God, by which He is in all creatures, giving them the being they have and concurring with them in all their works; for without this concurrence of God's omnipotence, I can neither see, nor hear, nor speak, nor move hand nor foot, nor understand, nor will, nor do any other thing whatsoever. And consequently, when I sin, I aid myself with His divine omnipotence to think, speak, or do the thing that disgusts Him; and such is His goodness and mercy that to preserve my liberty He denies me not this concurrence, nor denies it to the creatures of which I make use to offend Him; He concurs with my meat that it may be savoury to my taste, even when I sin in eating it, and with the beauty of the creature that it may recreate my sight, although I did sin in beholding it. Then what rashness is this for me to make war against God with the *very power* of the same God! And what does His aid avail me when I convert it to His injury?

Colloquy.—O omnipotent Goodness, how dost Thou so liberally give Thy concurrence to him that so evilly abuseth it? Why dost Thou not employ this omnipotence to chastise him that makes no better of it? Pardon, O Lord, this boldness, which hath been greater than I can imagine, for I am grieved at it more than I can express, and yet I would that it grieved me much more. O infinite God, that showest Thine omnipotence principally in pardoning and having mercy on a sinner, (4) pardon me and have mercy on me, and aid me that I may never more use Thine infinite power unless it be to serve Thee!

And in this manner may be considered the attributes of the *mercy, justice, and charity* of Almighty God, and others that shall be touched in the following point.

POINT II.

Secondly, I must consider the infinite benefits of our Lord and what Almighty God has *been to me*, comparing it with what I have been to Him, and what exceeding great injury it is to offend an infinite benefactor. (5)

1. First, I will consider the benefits of *my creation, preservation, and government*, which include innumerable benefits belonging to the natural essence and being both of body and soul, and aiding the supernatural being of grace. And with this consideration I will endeavour to be exceedingly sorrowful for having offended my Creator, without whom I had had no being; my Preserver, without whom I could not have continued; and my Governor, without whose providence I could not live. To this end it will help much to consider all that which Moses said to his people in the canticle which he made reproaching them with their sins, especially in these words, "Is this the return thou

(4) Eccles. in Collect.

(5) S. Bernard, serm. 16 in Cant.

makest to the Lord, O foolish and senseless people? Is not He thy Father that hath possessed thee, made thee," and created thee? (6) "Thou hast forsaken the God that begot thee, and hast forgotten the Lord that created thee" (7) and redeemed thee.

2. Secondly, I will consider the benefits of my *redemption*, into which enter the incarnation of the Eternal Word, and all the labours and fatigues of the life, passion, and death of our Lord Christ, beholding Him as our Father, pastor, physician, master, and Saviour: so that with my sins I have injured Him who holds all these titles in my regard. And (as the Apostle says) I have crucified Jesus Christ within me, I have trodden under foot the Son of Almighty God, I have trampled upon His blood, (8) I have despised His examples, I have contemned His laws and His precepts, and I have lived as if no such redemption for me had ever passed in the world.

Colloquy.—Then how is it, O my soul, that thou meltest not into tears, having offended such a Father, such a master, such a pastor and Redeemer? How is it that thy heart doth not break asunder with grief for having offended with thy sins Him that died to deliver thee from them? O my Redeemer, how much grieveth it me to have offended Thee! Pardon, O Lord, my offences! Wash out with Thy blood the spots of my transgressions, by virtue of which I purpose, with Thy grace, no more to return to pollute myself with them. Amen.

3. In this manner I may consider the benefits of my *sanctification*, into which enter baptism and the rest of the sacraments, especially that of penance and the Eucharist, and the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, and other innumerable both manifest and secret benefits, as also the promise of future

(6) Deut. xxxii. 6.

(7) Deut. xxxii. 18.

(8) Heb. vi. 6, and x. 29.

benefits in the glorification and resurrection ; with all which I am to charge myself, and with great astonishment to wonder at myself, that I have answered so many benefits with so evil services ; holding competition with God, He by doing me favours and giving me great gifts, and I by doing Him injuries and committing against Him grievous sins, considering that every sin is, as it were, an infinite ingratitude, as being against an infinite *benefactor*, and against infinite benefits that I have received from His hand, given with infinite love and without any merits at all of mine.

4. To exaggerate the more the grievousness of my sins in this respect, it will be good to make use of some histories that make to this purpose : as of that of Joseph, to whom it seemed impossible to sin with the wife of his lord, of whom he had received so many benefits. (9) And that of Saul, who, though he were a cruel persecutor of David, yet grew meek (10) when he heard tell the great services that he had done him. And when he saw that David killed him not when he had power to kill him, he had compunction, and said, "Thou art more just than I, for thou hast done good to me and I have rewarded thee with evil." (11)

Colloquy.—O my soul, how canst thou sin against thy God and Lord, from whom thou hast received all the good thou hast? O God of my heart, how much more just art Thou than I, for thou ceasest not to show me mercies, and I cease not to return Thee offences! Thou having power to take away my life and my being, yet dost it not ; and I having no power to take away Thine, yet as much as it lieth in me I attempt to do it. Thou didst cut off the head of the giant and didst break the head of the serpent to deliver me from death ; and I subject myself unto them by offending Thee! Who is it that, having power to kill his enemy, killeth him not? And yet

(9) Gen. xxxix. 9. (10) 1 Reg. xix. 6. (11) 1 Reg. xxiv. 18.

Thou wilt die that he may not die. Pardon, O Lord, my inhuman unthankfulness, and aid me with Thy abundant grace, that I may no more return to fall into so horrible a misery ! Amen.

POINT III.

1. Thirdly, I must consider what *motive* I had to sin ; for doubtless it increases the greatness of the injury when it is done upon a very light cause and occasion. For why did I offend Almighty God ? For a little wantonness of the flesh, for a punctilio of honour, for a small interest of wealth, for a slight pleasing of my own will ; finally, for things most vile, that pass like smoke, and are as if they were not in comparison of God. And yet, being such, for them I “denied by my works” (12) the living God, and made of them to myself an idol and false God, esteeming them more than the true God, crucifying Christ within me to give life to Barabbas, that is, sin.

Colloquy.—O my Lord, with great reason sayest Thou to the “heavens” that they should be “astounded,” and to “the gates” of heaven that they should “be very desolate” and burst with amazement, for “two evils” which Thy “people” committed ! And yet I, wretched sinner ! have committed them infinite times, leaving Thee that art “the fountain of living water” to draw with labour out of “broken cisterns that can hold no water.” (13) O labour ill-employed ! O inconsiderate change ! I left the infinite God, and the perpetual fountain of infinite and eternal good, for a thing of nothing, of temporal and perishing good, which, like a broken cistern, loses imperceptibly the water that it held, and remains dry. O my soul, if the deed of Esau seem so vile to thee, that sold his birthright for a small dish of pottage, (14) how much more vile shall thine be that sellest thy birthright of heaven for

(12) Tit. i. 16. (13) Jer. ii. 12. (14) Gen. xxv. 34 ; Heb. xii. 16.

a little interest of earth! He sold it to redeem his life, and thou to sell it incurrest death. And if he "found no place of repentance" to revoke the sale, it were very just that thou also shouldst not find it, seeing thy sin was greater than his; but yet, seeing that God's mercy is greater, approach to it with humility, that He may undo by His grace the evil sale that thou madest by thy sin.

2. Finally, in this and the following meditation I must lay fast hold of this truth; for it is an incredible folly to believe by faith what I believe and yet to live in the way I live; that is, to believe that sin is so great an evil as we have described it, and yet for all this to commit it: to believe that Almighty God is so good and so right a doer of justice, and yet notwithstanding to offend Him; and so of the rest.

POINT IV.

1. The fourth point shall be to break out with these considerations into an exclamation, with an affection vehement and full of amazement, that creatures have borne with me whilst I have so grievously offended their Creator and Benefactor; that the angels, who are the ministers of God's justice, have not unsheathed their fiery swords against me; (15) that they have guarded me and been the advocates of so wicked a man as I; that the sun, moon, and stars have illuminated me with their light and preserved me with their influences. That the elements, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, the beasts and plants of the earth, have helped to sustain me. I confess that I deserve not the bread I eat, nor the water I drink, nor the air I breathe; neither am I worthy to lift up my eyes to heaven. I have rather deserved that flashes of fire should descend from thence to burn me like Sodom and Gomorrha, or that the earth should open and swallow me alive like Dathan and Abiron, and

(15) Gen. iii. 24.

that new hells should be found and new torments invented to chastise my grievous sins.

2. And seeing that the goodness, wisdom, immensity, omnipotence, liberality, beneficence, and charity of Almighty God have not been sufficient to bridle me, it had been just that His *justice* should have appeared to revenge the injuries done to these divine perfections and sovereign benefits, and should have given licence to all creatures (as shall be given at the day of judgment) to take vengeance on me for the injuries that I did to the Creator and to them in using them to offend Him. (16)

Colloquy.—But, O my God and my Creator, seeing that of Thy mercy Thou hast thought it good to bear with me, add *this* benefit to the former: think it good likewise to *forgive* and *pardon* me! Amen.

MEDITATION VI.

ON THE GRIEVOUSNESS OF SIN, BY COMPARING IT WITH THE TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL PAINS WITH WHICH IT IS CHASTISED.

POINT I.

FIRST I must consider the grievousness of mortal sin by comparison with all the *pains and miseries* that are in *this* life, considering that it is the *cause* of these temporal evils, Almighty God chastising it most justly by their means. For proof of which I may run over the exterior goods which we call of *fortune* and those which belong to the *body*, of all which sin is the destruction.

1. First, sin destroys *riches*, God depriving sinners of them because they abused them; as He spoiled the Egyptians of their jewels and the Jebusites and Canaanites of their countries. Sin likewise destroys *honour*; for whoever

(16) Sap. v. 18.

takes (as much as lies in him) honour from God and his neighbour deserves to lose his own honour. For this the high-priest Eli and his sons lost the honour of priesthood with their life, Almighty God saying unto them "Qui contemnunt me, erunt ignobiles;" (1) "They that despise me shall be despised." Sin destroys *sceptres* and *kingdoms*. For disobedience God took from Saul the kingdom that He had given him. (2) And Nabuchodonosor, with vain-glorious boasting, lost his also, living seven years like a beast; (3) God cutting down that sightly tree because his sins deserved not that it should stand upright. And it is a just chastisement that he should neither have dignity nor command on earth that subjects not himself to the King of earth and of heaven, and that he should have no pre-eminence over men who by sin makes himself like to beasts.

2. Besides this, sin destroys the *health*; Almighty God chastising sinners with manifold and various infirmities and sores from "head" to "foot." (4) For he deserves not to have health that employs it to offend Him that gave it him; and whosoever keeps his soul sick, being able to heal it, is worthy to have his body sick, and not to be able to cure it; as the lame man that in eight and thirty years could not be healed in the Probatic pond, where, notwithstanding, others were healed. (5)

3. Sin takes away *content* and *cheerfulness*, causing a mortal sadness, which dries the bones, gives a life worse than death itself. Like to the city that said, "God has filled me with bitterness and inebriated me with wormwood;" (6) or, as the miserable Antiochus, that said, "In how much tribulation am I come, and into what floods of sorrow

(1) 1 Reg. ii. 30.

(2) 1 Reg. xiii. 14; xv. 23.

(3) Dan. iv. 22.

(4) Isa. i. 6.

(5) Joan. v. 2.

(6) Thren. iii. 15.

wherein now I am : I that was pleasant and beloved in my power !” (7)

4. Sin takes away *life*, procuring death by a thousand disastrous means. For the sins of Pharoah and his kingdom an angel killed in one night all the first-begotten, and another day drowned his army of innumerable men. (8) And another angel, in the camp of Sennacherib, killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand men ; (9) and many Israelites perished in the desert with divers strange kinds of deaths. (10)

5. Finally, sin causes those three terrible evils that were offered to David, to choose one of them in punishment of his offence, *famine*, *war*, and *pestilence*, (11) with the which innumerable men perish with exceeding great misery and rage. For sin likewise come earthquakes, tempests at sea, deluges, fires, lightnings, hail, storms, and other such chastisements ; for, as sin is the injury of the universal Creator, all the creatures are instruments of His vengeance.

6. Then I will apply all this to myself, beholding my evils and miseries, which have all come upon me justly for my sins, that I may “know and see” by experience (as Jeremiah says) that it is an evil and a bitter thing for me “to have left the Lord my God, and that His fear is not with me.” (12) And so, from the horror which I have of these punishments, I will extract a horror of my sins, saying to myself,

Colloquy.—Seeing thou art so much afraid of temporal misery, why art thou not afraid of sin, which is the cause of it ? If thou tremblest at poverty and dishonour, why tremblest thou not at sin, from which they both proceed ? And if thou fliest the sickness of the body, why fliest thou not the sickness of the

(7) 1 Mac. vi. 11, et 2 Mac. ix. 11.

(8) Exod. xii. 29, et xiv. 27.

(9) 4 Reg. xix. 35.

(10) Exod. xxxii. 28 ; Levit. x. 2 ; Num. xi. 33.

(11) 2 Reg. xxiv. 13.

(12) Jer. ii. 19.

soul?—*that* ends with a temporal death, but *this* hath a death everlasting. O eternal God, illuminate me with Thy sovereign light, that through the fear I conceive of the evils of the body I may learn to feel the evils of the soul! Amen.

POINT II.

Secondly, I must consider that sin is an evil incomparably *greater* than all the temporal evils that have been spoken of, and that with them we cannot pay the *least* part of the penalty that only one mortal sin deserves; considering some manifest reasons of this truth alleged by the saints.

1. The first is, that all the evils that have been spoken of deprive us of *goods created*, which are very much limited; but sin deprives of an *infinite good*, which is Almighty God. (13) And as God only is for excellence called *good*, (14) because the other things created, though they have some goodness, yet being compared with that of Almighty God it is as if were nothing, so sin alone may be called *absolutely* evil, and the malice of other miseries is as if it were not in comparison of it; nor are altogether sufficient to impose upon me the title of evil, if I be without sin; for by sin alone shall I be evil, though I be exempt from all other miseries. (15)

2. Hence it is, that if all the pains of this life were joined together in me, as poverty, dishonour, sickness, pain, grief and persecution, with all the torments that the martyrs have endured, yet they equal not the evil of one mortal sin, and I ought willingly to offer myself to suffer them all rather than to commit one; in imitation of that renowned Maccabean martyr, who answered those that threatened him with grievous torments if he would not break one commandment of God's law, "Præmitti se velle in infernum," "that he

(13) S. Th. 1, p. q. xlviij., art. 6.

(14) Luc. xviii. 19.

(15) S. Dionys c. 4, de divinis nominibus.

would rather be sent into the other world," (16) that is, that he would rather suffer himself to be killed and cut in pieces, and to sink a thousand degrees under ground with terrible pains and ignominies, than to commit such a sin.

Colloquy.—O most glorious martyrs, that offered yourselves to sustain such horrible torments rather than to commit only one sin, willing rather to lose your lives than to admit any offence, though but for an instant, beseech your Eternal and Sovereign King to grant me such charity and fortitude, that to fly from sin I may little esteem any pain whatsoever. Amen.

3. In confirmation of which, I will consider that the evil of *sin* so far exceeds the evil of *pain*, that God our Lord, though He be infinitely good, may be the author and cause of any pain whatsoever; nay rather, as the prophet Amos said, "Shall there be evil in the city which the Lord hath not done?" (17) for this does not make Him evil, neither is it contrary to His goodness; but it is impossible that He should be the author or cause of the least sin whatsoever, for that would be contrary to His goodness, which, as the prophet Habbakuk says, (18) cannot "look upon iniquity" as approving or delighting in it.

4. And by the same reason, Almighty God becoming man, might take upon Himself all the evils whatsoever of *pain* only that were in the world; (19) but it is impossible that in Him should be found any evil of *sin*, and Christ our Lord would have offered Himself to suffer all the torments and dishonours that He endured, and others much greater if it were necessary, to prevent but one sin; in imitation of whom I am to do the like, being exceedingly sorry for the sin in which I have hitherto lived.

(16) 2 Mac. vi. 23.

(17) Amos iii. 6.

(18) Hab. i. 13.

(19) St. Th. 3, p. q. xiv & xv.

Colloquy.—O most pure God, who, being free from sin and from pains, taking our nature upon Thee, didst charge Thyself with pains to discover the detestation Thou hast of sin, load me here with torments so Thou for ever free me from sin!

5. From hence proceeds a *third* reason, which manifestly declares the grievousness of sin. For God our Lord, of His infinite wisdom, ordained the evils of this life for the *medicine* of sin. (20) And seeing no wise physician does any very *great* evil to cure another that is *small*, it is a sign that all these miseries are *less* evils than sin. And therefore with great reason our most merciful Saviour and physician Christ Jesus would suffer such terrible pains in His passion and death, to deliver us from our sins; and yet, had they been much greater than they were, they would not have been equal to our sins, nor would they serve to redeem them nor to cure them had not the Person that suffered them been of infinite dignity and sanctity. Whence I will draw a great horror of so terrible an infirmity, for whose cure are ordained such bitter draughts and drugs and purges, and, moreover, great patience in my afflictions, considering that however great they be, they are incomparably less than are my sins, saying, as it is written in Job,

Colloquy.—“Peccavi, et vere deliqui, et ut eram dignus non recepi;” “I have sinned, and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I have deserved.” (21) O Heavenly physician, that well knowest the grievousness of my sores, burn and cut me here, and spare me not so Thou cure me of them!

POINT III.

1. Thirdly, I must consider the grievousness of sin by comparison with the pains *eternal*, pondering first, that mortal sin is so great an evil, that having caused (as has

(20) St. Th. 1, p. q. xlvi. art. 6, in Sed contra. (21) Job xxxiii. 27.

been said) all the evils of *this* life, yet, as if it had done nothing, causes also the eternal evils of the *other* life; Almighty God chastising with them the sinner that remains in his sin, as if in this life he had received no chastisement at all. So that neither the ten plagues of Egypt, nor the fire of Sodom, nor the tribulations of unhappy Jerusalem, nor the pains that sinners (rebels against Almighty God) suffer here—are put in account to lighten the chastisements of hell, which shall be as great as if here they had suffered no others at all. And so, as making no reckoning of them, (says the Prophet Nahum,) that Almighty God punishes not one thing twice, (22) because the punishment of this life is as if it were not, or is (as St. Gregory (23) says) the beginning of the eternal.

2. Secondly, I will consider the *reason* of this most just rigour. For as sin is an infinite *injury*, (as has been said,) and all the pains of this life are *finite*, it is not sufficiently punished with them if there succeed not others that have some infinity, as those of hell have in two respects: i. Being eternal and having no end in their continuance; ii. Because they deprive of an infinite benefit, which is the sight of Almighty God for ever: whereupon says St. Augustine, “Although there should be no day of general judgment for sinners, and though throughout all eternity they should live with abundance of delights, without fear of punishment, yet only for *this*—that they should for ever want the happy beholding of Almighty God—they should bitterly lament; for it is not possible for a man who has a lively faith of what God is to imagine any pain that is equal to this.” “Quia hæc amantibus pœna est, non contemnentibus;” “This pain they feel who love, not they who despise it.” (24) And as few feel it in this life, therefore another of most terrible

(22) Nahum.

(23) Lib. xii. moral. c. xiii.

(24) In id Ps. xlix. ignis in conspectu ejus exardescet.

fire is threatened, which is felt intolerably; in comparison of which the pains here are so light as if they were no pains at all. Then why shall not I tremble to continue a rebel in sin who deserve that God should punish me with double tribulation, and should break me "with a double destruction,"(25) this temporal punishment being but a scratch, and a beginning of the eternal?

Colloquy.—O infinite God, deliver me from this rebellion, that I fall not into so great a misery and affliction!

POINT IV.

1. Lastly, I will consider the utmost that may with truth be said of sin, which is, that though the evils of pain only which are suffered in hell are so terrible, yet it is incomparably a *greater evil* than *all of them*. Inasmuch, that if one man should suffer the pains of hell without sin, and another should have but one mortal sin only, this last would be more evil and miserable than the other. And if all the pains of hell without sin were put on one side, and on the other one mortal sin only, and that I must of necessity choose one of the two, "I" (says St. Anselm) "would choose rather to throw myself into hell than to commit only one mortal sin."(26) And with holy Eleazar I would say, "Præmitti velle in infernum"—that I would rather enter into hell itself without sin than remain with sin in the world;(27) for the death of sin (says the Wise man) is most wicked, and the worst that may be, "Et utilis potius inferus quam illa;(28) the grave, "and even hell" itself, as touching pain, is preferable to it.

Colloquy.—O infinite God, fix this truth in my heart, that I may fear sin much more than hell, seeing in truth there is no worse hell than to be in sin! O

(25) Jer. xvii. 18.

(26) Lib. de similitudinibus c. 190.

(27) Bern. sermo. 35 in Cant.

(28) Eccus. xxviii. 25.

my soul, bewail bitterly thy sins, not only on account of hell, which thou hast deserved, but much more for the great evil thou hast committed against Almighty God! Cease forthwith to sin, that God may not strike thee "with a cruel chastisement," and "with the wound of an enemy," (29) permitting thee to grow obdurate in thy sins until He chastise thee with never-ending pains.

2. Concerning this last consideration, it is to be recollected that it is set down, not as if it were necessary to make this comparison, for hell is neither without sin, neither can there be any case in which hell may be chosen as an alternative rather than to commit a sin, but only that hereby we may see how great an evil sin is, and how worthy it is to be much more absolutely abhorred than hell, even though there were no hell at all. Upon which St. Ambrose (30) says, that there is no pain more grievous than the wound of conscience, nor any judgment more rigorous than the interior, with which every one judges himself guilty. And though the just man (says he) had Gyges' ring with which he might do what he would invisibly, yet would he not sin; for he departs not from sin for fear of punishment, but for the horror of wickedness and love of virtue.

3. That which has been declared in this meditation in *general* will more manifestly be seen by that which will be declared *particularly* in the ensuing on the last things of man, and in the special punishments that correspond to the seven deadly sins.

MEDITATIONS ON THE LAST THINGS OF MAN, TO MOVE
US TO A DETESTATION OF SINS.

THE meditations of the last things of man, which are death and the grave, judgment particular and universal, hell, purgatory, and glory, are most efficacious to move us

(29) Jer. xxx. 14.

(30) Lib. 3. de offic. c. 4 and 5.

to detestation of our sins, and to an effectual resolution never more to return to them. On which said Ecclesiasticus, "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin." (1) And for the same reason said Moses to his people, "Oh that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last end!" (2) Giving to understand that our true *wisdom, understanding, and providence* consist in well meditating and ruminating those things which are to happen to us in the end of our life, and to be provided against them; and especially the meditations of *death* (as experience teaches us) is very profitable for all those that walk in any of the three ways—purgative, illuminative, and unitive; in which all men ought often to exercise themselves, though with different ends: the beginners to purify themselves of their sins before death assail them and take them unprovided; the proficient to hasten to store up virtues, seeing the time of meriting is very short, and death cuts it off on a sudden; the perfect, to despise all things created, with a desire to unite themselves by love with their Creator: and therefore we will point out considerations that may profit all, but most especially such as help to the end of the purgative life, of which we are now treating.

MEDITATION VII.

ON THE PROPERTIES OF DEATH.

IN this meditation we will consider some properties of death, and what ends our Lord intended in them for our profit, reducing them to three, which are the principal.

POINT I.

The first property of death is, that it is most *certain*, (1) from which none can escape at the time that Almighty God has determined.

(1) Eccus. vii. 40.

(2) Dent. xxxii. 29.

(1) Heb. ix. 27.

2. In this we are to consider first, that God our Lord, from all eternity, has determined the years of our life, (2) and assigned the month, the day, and hour in which every one is to die, so that it is impossible (says Job) to pass it by even for one minute; (3) neither is there any king or monarch that can add to himself or to any other one moment of life above that which Almighty God has determined. So that as I entered into the world the same day that Almighty God willed, and not before—so shall I depart out of the world the same day that God wills, and not afterwards. By this I may understand that what day soever I live I receive it of grace, and that those I have lived have been of grace; for our Lord might have assigned me a shorter time of life, as He assigned to others that died in their mother's womb or in their infancy. And seeing my life so depends upon God, there is just cause I should spend all the time of it in His service that gave it me, holding it for a great ingratitude to employ one only moment to offend Him.

2. Secondly, I am to consider that God our Lord in this His decree shortened or enlarged the days that some men, according to their natural constitution, might have lived, for the secret ends of his sovereign providence. For to some, either for their own prayers or for the prayers of other saints, He enlarged the days of their life; as to King Hezekias He added fifteen years, (4) because with tears he asked it. And the like has happened to the dead who have been miraculously raised to life. To some others He shortens the days of their life for one of two ends: either for their *salvation*, cutting them off (as the Wise man says) "in their youth," lest wickedness should alter their understanding, or lest deceit might "beguile" their "soul;" (5) or, on the con-

(2) Ps. xxxviii. 6.

(3) Job xiv. 5.

(4) 4 Reg. xx. 6.

(5) Sap. iv. 11.

trary, to *punish* their grievous *sins*, and to stop their career that they might not make an addition of greater. Whereupon David said, that "bloody and deceitful men," that is, men very wicked and cruel, "shall not live out half their days." (6) And sometimes He shortens them for sins that seem but light; as it happened to the prophet who, being beguiled by another, did eat in the place where God had commanded him that he should not eat. (7) Out of all this I will draw a firm resolution so to order the days of my life that Almighty God shorten them not for my sins; saying with David, "Call me not away back, O Lord, in the midst of my days," (8) by a sudden death, but remember that Thy years are eternal, and have compassion of mine that are few and fleeting.

POINT II.

The second property of death is, that concerning the day, place, and manner it is most *secretly hidden* from all men, and manifest only to Almighty God.

1. In which I will consider first, that we are not able to know the day nor the hour in which we are to die; neither the place, nor the occasion, nor season in which death may attack us; nor the manner how we are to die, whether it shall be a natural death by sickness, or whether it shall be with a violent death by fire or water, by the hands of men or by beasts, or by lightning, or by the tile of a house that may fall down upon us. This only we know—that death shall come *suddenly*, or sickness and the occasion of it; and that when a man is most careless, it comes "as a thief in the night" (9) to scale his house and rob him of his wealth. So, says Christ our Lord, shall the Son of Man come to scale your house, which is the body, and to rob and spoil it of its soul and to give judgment on it.

(6) Ps. liv. 24.

(7) 3 Reg. xiii. 19.

(8) Ps. ci. 25.

(9) 1 Thess. v. 2; Apoc. xvi. 15.

2. Secondly, I will consider what *ends* our Lord had in this design of His providence, which is to oblige us to be always watchful, apprehensive of this hour, providing ourselves for it, (10) doing penance for our sins before death seize upon us, and making haste to merit and to labour before our light be out, lest "the light" (11) die suddenly and we remain in the dark. This Christ our Lord concluded in His parables concerning this matter. Sometimes He said "Vigilate, quia nescitis diem neque horam," "Watch" daily and hourly, "because you know not the day nor the hour" (12) of your death. At other times He said, "Watch ye, because you know not what hour your Lord will come," (13) and "Be you ready," "for at what hour you think not the Son of Man will come." (14) With these words I will often exhort myself, saying,

Colloquy.—Gird thy body with the mortification of thy vices and passions, and take in thy hands the burning torches of virtues and good works, and be always watchful, expecting the coming of Christ; for He shall come when thou least thinkest of it, and that hour in which thou art most forgetful shall be, peradventure, the hour that He hath assigned; and if He find thee not well provided, thou wilt be miserably deceived.

3. Thirdly, I will consider that all sudden, unexpected deaths that have happened, and daily do happen, are *remembrancers* of this truth given me by our Lord, that I may fear and prepare myself; for death that strikes every man may likewise strike me. And therefore when I see or hear it said that some die suddenly by the sword, some by the hands of their enemies, and others lying down to sleep in good health slept the last sleep of death, out of all this I

(10) Eccles. ix. 2, 10.

(11) Joan. xii. 35.

(12) Matt. xxv. 13. (13) Matt. xxiv. 42. (14) Luc. xii. 40.

should draw fear and warning, for that it may possibly happen that such a kind of sudden death shall light upon me.

4. Upon this I should deeply consider, that *any* mortal sin whatsoever, if I do not penance for it, deserves that God's justice should chastise me with this death, as Christ our Lord admonished to this purpose, in two like cases that happened in His time: the one, when Pilate killed suddenly certain Galileans; (15) the other, when the tower of Siloe fell upon eighteen men. "Think you," says He, "that these Galileans were sinners above all the men of Galilee" or "Jerusalem?" "Non, dico vobis; sed nisi poenitentiam habueritis, omnes similiter peribitis:" "No, I say to you," for this has happened that you may understand, that "except you do penance you shall all likewise perish;" as if He should say, "When you see any die suddenly and of a disastrous death, be not vainly secure, saying, 'This happened to them because they were great sinners;' for, verily, I say unto you, that what sinner soever he be, though he be not so great, if he do not penance he is worthy of punishment, and shall perish as these perished."

Colloquy.—Then if this be truth, as indeed it is, why do not I tremble to live one hour in mortal sin, of what sort soever it be? Who can secure me that the punishment shall not fall upon me that I so justly have deserved? Who hath excepted me from this general threatening with which Christ our God threateneth all sinners? O miserable sinner, have pity on thine own soul, (16) and endeavour to appease Almighty God with penance before so horrible misery light suddenly upon thee.

POINT III.

1. The third property of death is, that it happens *but once*, according to that of the Apostle St. Paul, "Statutum

(15) Luc. xiii. 2, and xiii. 4.

(16) Ecclus. xxx. 24.

est omnibus hominibus semel mori ;” “ It is appointed unto men once to die.” (17) Whereupon it ensues that the misfortune and error of an evil death (being the worst of all misfortunes) is irremediable throughout all eternity, as likewise to die a good death is throughout all eternity durable. So that if I once die in mortal sin, there is no means to remedy this evil. For (as Solomon says) “ If the tree fall,” when it is cut, “ to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall there shall it be.” (18)

2. If by obstinacy in sin it falls to “ the north,” that is, hell, there is no remedy to recover grace nor to escape from pain. But if by perseverance in grace it falls to “ the south,” that is, heaven, there is no fear of returning again to sin nor of the loss of glory. With the lively consideration of this and of the former truths, I should, on the one side, be astonished at myself that, believing this with such certainty of faith, I yet live so careless of my salvation and so forgetful in a matter that so much imports me ; and, on the other side, to animate myself to procure with greatest speed penance and amendment of life, and fervour therein, humbly beseeching our Lord to cut the tree of my life in such a time and place, and on such an occasion, that it may not fall to the side of hell but of heaven. And, moreover, I will examine, as St. Bernard says, (19) to what side I should fall if Almighty God should now cut me off, and will endeavour to assure my good success by doing fruits worthy of true repentance, with which the tree inclines to the part of glory, and being then cut off shall be transplanted into it.

(The crafty deceits that men experience concerning these three truths that have been explained shall be set down in the twelfth meditation.)

(17) Heb. ix. 27.

(18) Eccles. xi. 3.

(19) Serm. 49, paruorum.

MEDITATION VIII.

ON THOSE THINGS THAT CAUSE ANGUISH AND AFFLICTION TO A MAN ON THE APPROACH OF DEATH.

THOSE things that may cause me great affliction and anguish at the hour of death may be reduced to three classes: some past—others present—and others to come. And in order to have the more feeling of this, I should represent that hour to myself as if I were stretched in my bed forsaken by the physicians and without hope of life. This is not difficult to realise, for it is possible that while I am saying, or reading, or thinking on this, there may be remaining to me no more than one day of my life; and seeing that one day must be the last, I may imagine that it is this present day.

POINT I.

First, I will consider the great anguish and affliction which the remembrance of all things that *are past* will cause me, running through the principal.

1. First, I shall be greatly afflicted with the *remembrance of my past sins*, and all the liberties, impurities, revenge, ambition, and covetousness that I have committed in the course of my life; also, of the slackness in the service of Almighty God, the negligences and omissions, and all the rest of my sins that have not been much bewailed and amended. I should imagine that there is at that instant an army made up of all my sins, as of "bulls," "lions," "tigers," (1) and other savage beasts, that rend in pieces my heart, or like an army of terrible serpents, that gnaw and bite my conscience, and neither the riches nor pleasures that I enjoyed can avail me to close up their cruel mouths; for the delight of sin being past there remains nothing but

(1) Ps. xxi. 13.

the sharpness of pain, and seeing I drank the sweet wine of sensual pleasure I am forced to drink the bitterness of their "dregs." (2) Then shall be fulfilled what David says, "The sorrows of death surrounded me, and the torrents of iniquity troubled me; the sorrows of hell have encompassed me" on all sides, the "snares of death prevented me" (3) unawares. Oh, what bitter sorrows! Oh, what furious torrents! Oh, what pinching snares shall these be! from which my own powers are so far from being able to deliver me that I shall hardly know how to make any use of them; for the bitterness of these sorrows will induce me to distrust, the vehement fury of these rivers will trouble my judgment, and the tightness of these snares will strangle me, that I cannot ask pardon of my sins, the devil making use of all this that I may have no escape from them.

Colloquy.—O my soul, bewail and confess well thy sins in thy life that they may not disquiet nor torment thee in thy death! Say not, "I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me?" for thy joy shall soon pass away, and the stroke of sorrow shall come. "Be not without fear about sin," (4) which thou supposest to be pardoned, lest that sin bud out at thy death which thou bewailedst but imperfectly in thy life.

These and such other counsels which Ecclesiasticus notes in his fifth chapter I should collect from this consideration, with a resolved mind to begin presently to put them in practice.

2. Secondly, I will consider how at that instant I shall not only be tormented and afflicted with the remembrance of my sins, but also with the *loss of the time* that I had to negotiate a business so important as that of my salvation, and with letting slip many occasions Almighty God offered me to that end. Then shall I desire but one day of those

(2) Pa. lxxiv. 9.

(3) Ps. xvii. 5.

(4) Eccclus. v. 4, 5.

many which now I lose in sleeping, playing and talking for pastime and recreation, and it will not be granted me. Then it shall afflict me that I have not frequented the holy sacraments nor the exercises of prayer; that I have not answered divine inspirations, nor heard sermons, nor exercised works of penance; that I have not given alms to the poor to gain friends to receive me in the eternal habitations; and that I have not been devoted to the saints, who in that narrow strait might be my mediators and advocates. Then shall I make great resolutions to do that which when I might I did not, desiring to live to accomplish them, and all perhaps without profit, like those of the wretched King Antiochus, the cruel persecutor of the Jews, who being at the point of death, though he made great promises and prayers to God—yet, says the Scripture, “This wicked man prayed to the Lord, of whom he was not to obtain mercy;” (5) not that mercy was wanting in Almighty God, but because there was wanting in this wretch a true disposition to receive it; for all those resolutions of his sprung merely from servile fear and were but to recover his bodily health, as if he could deceive Almighty God as he deceived men.

3. From this consideration I must collect, that the hour of death is the hour of *undeceiving*, in which I shall judge of all things differently from what I do now: holding (as Ecclesiastes says) for “vanity” (6) that which before I held for wisdom, and contrariwise holding for wisdom that which before I esteemed as vanity. And therefore the truest wisdom is to resolve effectually upon that which then I would do, and forthwith to accomplish it. For the ordinary law is, that he that lives well dies well; and he that lives very evilly seldom happens to die well. And especially will I make a full resolution to lose no iota of time, nor to let slip any occasion of my profit, remembering that of

(5) 1 Mac. vi. 12; 2 Mac. ix. 13.

(6) Eccles. xi. 8.

Ecclesiasticus, "Defraud not thyself of the good day, and let not a part of a good gift overpass thee," (7) but make thy profit of all, to the glory of Him that gives it to thee.

POINT II.

Secondly, I will consider the great affliction that my soul shall feel in leaving all things *present*, if I possess them with an evil conscience, or with an inordinate affection; upon which I should persuade myself that in that hour I must perforce, and in spite of myself, leave three sorts of things. (8)

1. First, I must leave the *riches*, dignities, offices, delicacies and possessions that I had, and shall not be able to carry anything with me. And the more goods I have the more bitter it will be to leave them. For death (says Ecclesiasticus) is very "bitter to him that hath peace in his possessions" (9) and dignities, and is desirous to live to enjoy them longer; and the sins he committed in procuring and in abusing them shall augment this bitterness, God's justice so ordaining it that those things which in their life were the instruments of their vicious delights, should in their death be their executioners and tormentors. Then shall be fulfilled that which is written in Job of a sinner. "His bread in his belly," which he did eat with much savour, "shall be turned into the gall of asps within him; the riches which he hath swallowed he shall vomit up, and God shall draw them out of his belly. He shall suck the head of asps, and the viper's tongue shall kill him." (10) That is to say, his delights shall be turned into gall, his riches shall make him disgorge; but he shall neither have courage to dispose of them nor to leave them, until death take them away by force, the serpents and vipers of hell tormenting him for having gotten and possessed them with sin.

(7) Eccclus. xiv. 14.

(8) Ps. xlvi. 18.

(9) Eccclus. xli. 1.

(10) Job xx. 14.

2. Secondly, in that hour I must by force depart from my *parents* and *brethren*, *friends* and *acquaintance*, and from all those that I love, whether it be with a *natural* love or any *other*, either lawful or unlawful. And as we leave not without grief what we possessed with love, (11) and by how much the greater the love is, wherewith it is possessed, so much the greater grief is felt in abandoning it; exceeding great will the sorrow be that I shall feel to depart from so many persons and things that are so fastened to my heart. And in these anguishes I shall say with that other king, “*Siccine separat amara mors?*” “Doth bitter death separate in this manner?” (12) Is it possible that I should leave those whom I so love? And shall I never more see them, nor enjoy them? O cruel Death, how much dost thou rend my heart, depriving me with such sorrow of what I possessed with such joy!

3. Lastly, in that hour my soul is to depart from my *body*, with which it has held so close and old a friendship, and consequently it is to depart from this world, and from all things in it contained, without hope ever again to see, hear, taste or touch them. And if the love I bear to my body, to my life, and to the other things of this visible world, be an inordinate love, I must needs feel exceeding great grief to depart from them; which I may easily realise by that sensible feeling I have when they take from me my wealth, my honour and fame, or exile me from my country, and force me to live from my friends like a pilgrim among strangers, or cut off some member of my body. For all this joined together happens in death, with another and more painful condition, which is—without hope ever to return again to possess it in this life.

4. In each of these three considerations, pondering awhile what is to be noted, I will enter into myself and examine

(11) S. Greg. 1, moral. 13.

(12) 1 Reg. xv. 32.

whether I carry an inordinate love to any of these things mentioned, which if I find that I do, I will endeavour to uproot it by force of this consideration, and with the exercise of mortification, for this is to die in *life*, and with *profit*, taking death, as it were, by the hand, so as not to *feel* it, as religious men do that abandon all things for Christ our Lord, whom I am to beseech to aid me herein, saying to Him :

Colloquy.—O Eternal God, in whose hands are the souls of the just, (13) and under whose protection the anguish of death doth not touch them, take from my soul the inordinate love of all visible things, that in departing from them it may have no feeling of anguish. O my soul, if thou desirest that these three bitternesses of death should not touch thee, love not those things that death can take from thee, for if thou possess them not with love, thou shalt leave them in death without distress or grief!

5. I am likewise to ponder in these considerations how great a madness it is to offend Almighty God, and to endanger my eternal salvation for things that I am so soon to abandon, resolving courageously with myself to avoid forthwith any person, or thing whatsoever, that may expose me to this peril, dying to it rather than for its sake to die to God, and separating it from me rather than it should “separate me” (14) from God; seeing for this our Saviour Christ said that He “came to send” “the sword” and “separation” (15) upon earth, separating from men all persons and things that might hinder their salvation.

Colloquy.—O sweet Redeemer, put forthwith into my hand the sword of mortification, that I may separate from me whatsoever might separate me from Thee, dying to all that is created, to live to Thee my Creator, world without end! Amen.

(13) Sap. iii. 1. (14) Matt. x. 34. (15) Luc. xii. 51.

POINT III.

Thirdly, I should consider the great affliction and anguish that the fear of the *account I am to render* with Almighty God, and of the rigorous *judgment on which I am to enter*, will cause me at that hour, as also that I know not the sentence that shall be pronounced in the affair of my salvation.

1. In this I should ponder the dreadfulness of this fear for *three* causes. i. Because the *evil* that is feared is the *supreme* of all evils, an *eternal* evil and remedyless, and I am now at the gates of it. ii. Because the *sentence* which is to be given is *definitive* and *irrevocable*, and at that instant is to be executed without resistance. iii. Because the *issue* on my side is very *doubtful*, since the sin that I committed is manifest to me, but not the true penance that I did, and my conscience accuses me to have offended the Judge, but I know not whether I have appeased Him. "For man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred;" (16) and though I find no sins in myself, yet it may be that God will find them. (17) For all these causes the fear will at that time be most terrible. For if those who have a suit in any weighty business, on which all their wealth, their honour or life is interested, have very great fear the day that they expect the sentence, how much greater fear shall I be in when I am near the day on which the definitive sentence is to be given of my salvation or damnation? And if the greatest saints are then afraid, how much more shall I fear that am a miserable sinner?

2. This anguish and fear is wont to be augmented by the craft and subtlety of the devil, who in that hour tempts with increased malice, because he sees that "he hath but a short time" (18) remaining, and therefore he stirs up greatly all that may incite to desperation, he excessively

(16) *Ecclus. ix. 1.* (17) *1 Cor. iv. 3.* (18) *Apoc. xii. 12.*

magnifies our sins, and exaggerates the rigour of God's injustice against them. He will tell me that he that lived evil must not die well ; and that he that laid not hold on God's mercy must fall into the hands of His justice. " And if the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ?" (19) And as he is a liar, and the father of lies, and a false accuser of men, if Almighty God tie not his hands and limit not his power he will set before me a thousand false imaginations and accusations, with illusions and horrid spectres, to trouble me, and to make me sweat with agony and endure greater anguish than that of death itself.

3. These are the fears that in that last passage will afflict me, if I provide me not in time to hinder their vehemence, which I should do by entering into myself, and considering, if death should now attack me, what it is that would give me greatest terror, and devising how to remedy it in time. And if I would not that death should seize upon me in my present state, I must endeavour instantly to get out of it ; for it is neither lawful nor secure to live in a state in which I would not die.

4. I will conclude this meditation, setting before my eyes Christ our Lord, naked and nailed to the cross at the instant of giving up the ghost, and I will with great fervour beseech Him, that by His death He grant me a good death, and that if the devil come to my death (as he came to His) that He would deliver me from him, and grant me so assured a confidence that, like Himself, I may say in that hour :

Colloquy.—" Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." O merciful Father, " my soul is" as yet " in my hands" (20) but ready to fly out of them, and in danger of falling into the hands of her enemies ! Oh,

(19) 1 Pet. iv. 13.

(20) Ps. cxviii. 109.

do Thou receive her into Thine, that the work of Thy hands, for which they were nailed to the cross, may not be destroyed! I offer myself to imitate in this life Thy poverty and nakedness, that in death Thy hands may receive me, and may carry me with them to the repose of Thy glory! Amen.

5. We may likewise make addresses and prayers to our blessed Lady the Virgin, and to our guardian angel and other saints, beseeching their favour for that hour; for while we live we ought to negotiate that which should aid us at that instant.

(To this purpose we shall make use of a manner of preparation to die well, which will be put in the fourth part in the 51st meditation, collected from what Christ our Saviour did at his death, as likewise of what will be said in the fifth part in the 34th meditation, concerning the glorious assumption of our blessed Lady.)

MEDITATION IX.

ON THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT THAT IS MADE OF THE SOUL IN THE INSTANT OF DEATH. (1)

IN this meditation I must presuppose that truth of our faith, that all men (as St. Paul (2) says) are to be "manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may" give a reason of all "that he hath done, whether it be good or evil," while he lived in this body, and this judgment is made invisibly after death; for "Statutum est omnibus hominibus semel mori, et post hoc judicium;" "It is appointed by Almighty God unto men once to die, and after this the judgment," (3) from which (as from death) no man will escape.

(1) S. Th. 3. p. q. lix. ar. 5. (2) 2 Cor. v. 10; Rom. xiv. 10. (3) Heb. ix. 27.

Before this tribunal of Christ I am to present myself in prayer, imagining this sovereign judge seated on a throne of fire, as Daniel (4) saw Him, to represent the terribleness of His wrath against the wicked; or on a most pure white throne of most resplendent light, as St. John (5) saw Him, to represent His infinite wisdom and purity, and His clemency towards the good. And of both these figures I may avail myself, as shall be seen in the following point.

POINT I.

First are to be considered the *persons assisting* at this judgment, regarding the qualities and appearances of each one of them. These are four at the least.

1. The first is the *soul* that is to be judged, which shall stand alone, naked, without her body or any visible things, clothed only with her works. For although at the time of death there are present many kinsfolk and many religious persons, yet in that instant that it issues out of the body there is none of them that can bear it company or favour it. As desolate shall be the soul of a king as that of a clown, of a rich man as of a poor man, of a learned man as of an idiot; for dignities and riches remain here, and though it carry with it its knowledge, there is no great account made of it, but of works. (6) By which I shall see what great senselessness it is to procure with so much solicitude that which cannot help me in that conflict, and to lose that which most of all concerns me.

2. On either side of the soul (as is gathered out of Holy Scripture) shall stand at least the *angel-guardian* and the *devil*, (7) with different countenances, accordingly as they suspect what is likely to happen. I may imagine "that on the right hand" of the wicked "the devil stands," (8) very

(4) Daniel vii. 9.

(5) Apoc. xx. 11.

(6) Apoc. xiv. 13.

(7) Zach. iii. 1.

(8) Ps. cviii. 6; S. Greg. hom. xxxix. in Evang.

joyful for the prey that he expects; and the angel on the left hand, with a sad countenance for the loss that he fears. But contrariwise shall it be in the good; yet always will the devil be there, with his fierce and horrible figure.

3. The fourth person is the *judge*, which is Almighty God Himself, who is to give this judgment invisibly, although He will give tokens of his presence; imprinting in the wicked terrible fear and horror, and in the good peace and consolation. For, as He is infinitely wise, He cannot deceive Himself in judgment; as He is absolutely good, He cannot wrest justice; as He is omnipotent, no man can resist His sentence; and as He is the Supreme Judge, there is no appeal from His tribunal, nor supplication; His sentence is always definitive and irrevocable. For all that may be seen in this process He sees and comprehends it at first sight, so that a review is superfluous.

4. Considering these things, I will imagine that my soul stands to be judged before the tribunal of so upright a judge as God our Lord is. And considering awhile my sins to move me to fear, I will behold the judge in indignation against me, with a severe countenance and an inexorable mind. And I will behold Satan standing on my right side, full of content, and as it were victorious, applying to myself that which the royal prophet David says, "Set thou the sinner over him, and may the devil stand at his right hand: when he is judged may he come forth condemned, and let his prayer" that he maketh "be turned into sin." (9) At another time, to move myself to confidence, I will behold the judge gentle towards me, with an amiable and pleasing countenance; and on my right side my angel-guardian, joyful for my victory, imagining that he is saying in my favour against the devil that which the Prophet Zachariah repeats, "The Lord rebuke thee!" (10) "Is not," perhaps,

(9) Ps. cviii. 6.

(10) Zach. iii. 2.

“this” poor wretch “a brand plucked out of the fire,” that it might not be burned? Then what wilt thou?

Colloquy.—O most just Judge and most merciful Father, I confess that I am, through my sins, a black and filthy brand, and half burnt with the fire of my passions. Wash me, O Lord, and whiten me with the living water of Thy grace, and with that quench this fire that burneth me, that in the day of account the devil may leave me, Thy angel may protect me, Thy mercy may receive me, and Thy justice may crown me! Amen.

POINT II.

Secondly, I am to consider the *time* and *place* in which this judgment is to be made.

1. The *time* is the *instant of death*; for although by the special dispensation (11) of Almighty God, it has been seen to begin visibly a little before death in some cases that have happened for our example, yet ordinarily it is done invisibly, in the very instant that the soul ceases to inform the body, without any delay. And in that very moment the whole judgment is concluded, the accusation is made, and the sentence is given and executed. This moment I am to have always before my eyes, as that which is to be the beginning of my eternal good or evil, saying:

Colloquy.—“O momentum a quo æternitas,” “O moment wherein eternity beginneth,” who can forget thee without great peril, and who can remember thee without great astonishment? Be mindful, O my soul, of this moment, and endeavour not to lose any moment of time, for in every one thou mayest merit the life that shall for ever endure!

2. The *place* of this judgment is *wherever death arrests* any man, without going to the valley of Jehosaphat, or to any other special place; for, as the judge is in all places, so

(11) S. John Climacus, cap. 7; S. Greg. dialog. iv. cap. 37.

in all places He has His tribunal, and makes this judgment, in the earth and in the sea, in the bed and in the street, that in every place I may fear, because I know not whether that shall be the place of my judgment. But as death most ordinarily attacks us in our chamber and bed, when I am in these places I must imagine sometimes that *there* stands the tribunal and throne of Almighty God to judge me, and the good and evil angel assisting at the judgment; for this holy thought will restrain the unmeasurable excesses of the flesh, which bud out from the solitariness of the place.

3. From these two considerations I am to draw a great fear of offending God, for perhaps the time and place wherein I commit this sin shall be also the time and place wherein God will do judgment; as the wife of Lot, who in the same instant and place that she turned to look upon Sodom was turned into a statue of salt, (12) and (as St. Paul says) "he that eateth unworthily" the body of Christ our Lord, "eateth judgment to himself." (13) So when I "drink iniquity like water," (14) I drink judgment to my soul, and perhaps the draught may be so deadly that in that very instant the judgment shall be executed.

POINT III.

1. Thirdly, I am to consider the *frame* and *order* of this judgment; that is, the *accusers* and *witnesses*, the *proof* and rigorous examination that shall be made of all my works, to judge me accordingly.

i. First, the *accusers* shall be three. The first shall be the *devil*, whom St. John calls the "accuser of our brethren" whose office is to "accuse them before Almighty God day and night;" (15) but in this last judgment with greater hatred and fury he will accuse me of all the sins I com-

(12) Gen. xvi. 26. (13) 1 Cor. xi. 29. (14) Job xv. 16. (15) Apoc. xii. 10.

mitted through his persuasion, by consenting to his temptations. And moreover he will add *false* accusations from his own suspicions, as well because he knows not the intentions as also because his anger and malice doth blind him, making him hold as true that which is false. Therefore, O my soul, resist always the devil and admit nothing of his, that when he comes to judgment against thee he may find nothing (16) of his for which to lay hold on thee, nor any sin of which truly to accuse thee.

ii. The second accuser will be every man's own *conscience*, which will likewise be a witness, and stand for a thousand; for its thoughts shall beat against us, and they (as the apostle says) shall in that hour accuse or defend us. (17) And as in confession I myself, of my own will, am the guilty, the accuser, and the witness against myself, that the priest may absolve me; so then also I shall be such perforce, that God may judge and condemn me for that of which here I obtained not pardon.

iii. Finally, the *angel-guardian* himself shall be the third witness, and in a manner accuser against me for my rebellions to his inspirations and counsels. From this I may gather how much it imports me always to consent to the good inspirations and dictates of these two faithful companions, my conscience and my angel, and to yield myself to them when in this life they accuse or reprehend me, that afterwards, in the other, they may not condemn me; following the counsel of our Saviour Christ, who says, "Be at agreement with thine adversary betimes, whilst thou art in the way with him," and "goest" to appear before the prince; for if thou then compoundest not with him, he will "deliver thee to the judge, and the judge" to the officer, who will "cast thee into prison" from whence "thou shalt not go out until thou repay the last farthing." (18)

(16) Joan. xiv. 30. (17) Rom. ii. 15. (18) Matt. v. 26; Luc. xii. 58.

Colloquy.—O Prince of Heaven, to whose tribunal I go to be judged, grant me that I may take Thy wholesome counsel, agreeing always with these two good “adversaries,” that, being freed from the sin, I may be so likewise from the “officer” and eternal “prison.” Amen.

2. But above all, I am to consider the most rigorous *examination* of the *judge Himself*, in which are two terrible things. i. The first is, that it is *universal* with regard to all things whatsoever, charging me with all my sins of deed, word, and thought, though they were but “idle” ones; (19) and with omissions and negligences of my life, with the ingratitude and deficient correspondence to God’s benefits, as well general as special, as are sacraments, inspirations, &c. I shall also be charged with the evil circumstances that I mixed with my good works; for on this it is said, “that when He shall take a time, He will judge justices,” (20) making a very rigorous examination of those works that appear good.

ii. The *second* property of this examination is, that it shall be *evident* to the *examined himself*, for the proof of all these charges shall be a clear light, wherewith God will discover to my soul all its sins, without omitting any one, even those which it had forgotten, and supposed were not at all. And upon this He says by one of the prophets, That He “will search Jerusalem by lamps,” (21) that is to say, that He will not only judge the wicked that dwell in Babylon, but also the just that live in Jerusalem, and that He will inflame such a light to search into their souls that they themselves may see the very corners of their consciences. (22)

Colloquy.—Oh, how afflicted shall my poor soul find itself with so strict and rigorous an examination! Oh,

(19) Matt. xii. 36.

(20) Ps. lxxiv. 3.

(21) Sophon. i. 12.

(22) S. Bern. serm. 55, in Cant.

how astonished shall it be with the evidence of proof so clear and certain ! O eternal God, “ enter not into judgment with Thy servant,” “ for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” (23) Fear, O my soul, although thou find no great sins in thyself ; for He that is to examine and judge thee is Almighty God, (24) that seeth more than thou, and can find them. Examine thyself with the greatest rigour thou canst, and judge thyself rigorously for the sins thou shalt find ; for if thou judgest thyself with grief, thou shalt no more be judged (25) to thy damnation.

These are the principal resolutions that I am to collect out of this consideration, endeavouring to accomplish them every night when I make examination of my conscience, or when I am to confess myself, as shall be declared in the 28th and 31st meditations.

iii. Lastly, I am to consider that in this examination, Almighty God will also discover to the *just* soul all its *good* works, words and desires, even those which it had forgotten, or doubted whether they were good or no. There shall she see her obediences and penances, her prayers and mortifications, comforting herself much with this view ; for upon this said the voice from heaven, “ Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord,” “ for their works follow them.” (26) And with this consideration, comparing the examination of both good and evil, I will animate myself to live such a life as in the last examination may be approved by Almighty God.

POINT IV.

1. Fourthly, I must consider how Christ our Lord, in the instant of death, by His just sentence, *deprives* and unclothes the wretched *soul of the sinner* of those supernatural *graces* and *gifts* which remained with him after sin,

(23) Ps. cxlii. 2.

(24) 1 Cor. iv. 4.

(25) 1 Cor. xi. 31.

(26) Apoc. xiv. 13.

that he may without them enter into the everlasting flames and fire of hell.

i. The terribleness of this sentence, and the pain that the damned shall suffer in this conflict, I may consider by that which happens to a priest who has committed some crime, for which he deserves to be burned. For, not to disgrace the sacerdotal dignity with so infamous a punishment, first a bishop degrades him, taking off from him, one by one, his priestlike garments, saying unto him, "Seeing thou hast made thyself unworthy of the honour of a priest, we take from thee thy priestlike garments, and deprive thee of the honour that thou hadst;" and so being degraded they deliver him to the secular power, which executes upon him the punishment that he deserves.

2. In this manner I may imagine that Christ our Lord, "the bishop and pastor of our souls," (27) degrades the soul of the sinner, to whom he gave in baptism the dignity of spiritual priesthood, and adorned him with sacerdotal ornaments; depriving him of them, because he made himself by sin unworthy of this honour, stripping himself naked of the principal vestment of grace and charity. First, in that instant Almighty God will take from him the light of "*faith*," which was the spiritual "girdle of his reins," (28) saying to him, "Because thou madest thyself unworthy of this girdle, and didst not gird thyself therewith, leading thy life according to thy belief, I take it from thee that thou mayest remain bound hand and foot in perpetual darkness." Then will He take from him the virtue of *hope*, saying to him, "Because thou madest thyself unworthy of this virtue, not making thy profit of it, I take from thee the hope of those aids which I had offered thee to carry the sweet yoke of my law; and the 'stole' and pledges 'of immortality' and eternal life that I had given thee; and I pluck

(27) 1 Pet. ii. 25.

(28) Isa. xi. 5.

from thee the 'maniple of weeping' and repentance, that thou mayest have no hope of my pardoning of thy sins ; and I uncloth thee of the 'amice' of my protection, that thou mayest never more hereafter enjoy it."

ii. He will likewise take from him the graces, given *gratis* or freely, that he had of prophesying, (29) and doing miracles ; saying to him, " Because thou madest thyself unworthy of these graces, using them for thy own vain-glory, and treading underfoot my holy law, I despoil thee of them, and of all grace whatsoever ; because for thee there shall be nothing now but rigour of justice." Thus the unfortunate soul shall remain with infamous nakedness, fulfilling therein the terrible threatenings of Ezekiel : " They shall strip thee of thy garments, and shall take away the instruments of thy glory," (30) and they shall leave thee naked and full of confusion. Oh, what terrible confusion shall the unhappy soul suffer, when it shall see itself stripped naked of that which before adorned it ?

Colloquy.—O Redeemer of the world, Prince of pastors, and " Bishop of our souls," (31) degrade not nor strip naked my soul of the vestments Thou gavest it in baptism : clothe me anew with the garment of Thy grace, which I have lost through my sin, that I may free myself from this nakedness and eternal confusion ! Amen.

iii. Then should I ponder how the soul remains with *one* of these vestments, which is, the *character* or mark of Christianity, which was given it in baptism, and that of confirmation and priesthood, (32) if it have received these two sacraments ; but this shall be for its greater torment ; for the Pagans and Moors that shall be with a Christian in hell, beholding the signal of an edifice that was begun, and not ended, (33) shall scoff at him, saying, " O mad and in-

(29) Matt. vii. 22. (30) Ezech. xxiii. 26. (31) 1 Pet. ii. 25.

(32) S. Th. 3, p. q. lxxiii. art. 5 ad 3. (33) Luc. xiv. 30.

considerate man, that hadst so much good in thy hands, and letst it be lost through thy own fault, why didst thou not finish thy building, seeing thou hadst so much aid for it? If we had been Christians we would have endeavoured to fly from the misery that now we are in. Oh, who deceived thee, and brought thee hither to us?"

iv. Finally, the soul shall be stripped naked of those *moral* and *social* virtues which it acquired in this life; it shall remain without prudence, or fortitude, or justice, or any other; (34) and if any knowledge be left it, that it got with its industry, it shall be to its greater pain, for not having purchased with it the science that might have redeemed it from all this misery. (35) In this manner shall be accomplished therein that dreadful sentence of holy Job: "His bread in his belly shall be turned into the gall of asps, the riches which he hath devoured he shall vomit out, and God shall draw them out of his belly." (36)

Colloquy.—O my soul, look that thou dost not willingly cast forth the riches of grace and charity that thou receivedst, for afterwards they will make thee of necessity cast forth faith, and the virtues that thou hast gained! And those sciences which now thou gainest with delight shall turn into the gall of asps to torment thee!

2. These are the principal fruits which I am to collect out of these considerations, endeavouring to trade with those talents that God has given me, lest at the reckoning-day God take them from me as from the slothful servant, (37) leaving me only those which, like asps and dragons, will most cruelly gnaw my heart, because I profited myself so ill with them.

(34) S. Th. in addit. q. xviii. art. 1 ad 3.

(35) Ibid. art. 7.

(36) Job xx. 14.

(37) Matt. xxv. 26.

POINT V.

1. Fifthly, I am to consider the final *sentence* which in that very instant of death Christ our Lord *pronounces* against the *sinner*, intimating it to him with an interior and terrible voice, saying to him *alone* the same words that He will afterwards say to *all* the wicked in the general judgment: "Depart from me, thou cursed of my Father, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (38) that is to say, "Get thee hence, abominable sinner, that meritest not to stand in my presence, nor to enter into my glory! Go into eternal fire, which thy sins deserve, in company of Satan, to whose infernal power I commit thee, that he may carry thee with him."

2. This sentence being given, in the very same instant Almighty God *forsakes the soul*, and the angel-guardian abandons it, saying to it, as to Babylon, "I did enough to cure (39) thee, labouring thy salvation, and thou wouldst not; therefore I leave thee to the power of him who shall take that vengeance of thee which thy rebellion deserves." And in the very same moment the devil shall attack the wretched soul, without either admitting or hearing supplications or prayers, and carry it into hell. So that the sinner, in the twinkling of an eye, from his bed, where he lay very delicately, environed with many friends and kinsmen, dies, as Job saith, in a moment, with a death to appearance "happy" (40) and peaceable; but in the very same moment he descends to hell, passing from one extreme of temporal good to another extreme of eternal evil. Oh, what will the unhappy soul feel in that first entrance into hell, when it sees what it left and what it finds! when it sees and feels a bed of fire, the "covering" of "ser-

(38) Matt. xxv. 41.

(39) Jer. li. 9.

(40) Job xxi. 23.

pents," (41) the company of devils, and all the rest of torments, from which she has no hope ever to escape!

Colloquy.—O just Judge, have mercy upon me! "Et cum veneris judicare, noli me condemnare;" and when Thou comest to judge, do not condemn me! O my soul, fear this sentence of eternal damnation, and live in such a manner that thou mayest merit to be delivered from it! Amen.

POINT VI.

1. Sixthly, I am to consider the *sentence* that shall be given upon the *just*, Christ our Redeemer saying invisibly to him with an amiable voice, "Come, thou blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (42) "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (43) And at that very instant the devil departs ashamed, and the angel-guardian receives the soul, other angels (as they came to the soul of poor Lazarus) coming to accompany it; and all with great joy carry it to heaven, (44) to enjoy that eternal good, when it has nothing to be purged in purgatory. Oh, what joy shall the soul have in that her first and so much desired entrance! That which was before full of sorrows, humbled with contempts and troubled with fears, in a moment shall see herself far otherwise, all her pain turned into glory and her mourning into rejoicing, in the company of angels, in a place of repose, and engulfed in the view of her Almighty God.

2. These things considered, I will make *comparison* between the good and the evil, and I shall see (as David

(41) Isa. xiv. 11.

(42) Matt. xxv. 34.

(43) Matt. xxv. 21.

(44) Luc. xvi. 22.

says) the death of the wicked, most evil (45) and abominable, the end of their rest and beginning of their torments. And contrarily that the end of the good is precious in the sight of the Lord God, (46) the end of their labours, and beginning of their rest; and herewith I will animate myself to procure a good death, in which I may receive a good sentence, encouraging myself to penance and to the exercise of virtues, trusting in the benignity of the judge, who will sentence me with mercy if in my life I make profit of it.

3. I will conclude with a speech to the most blessed Virgin, (who at that hour interposes not herself in this judgment, for when the soul departs the body the door of intercession and pardon is locked up, and that of rigorous justice is opened,) beseeching her that now presently she will be my advocatrix and intercessor, securing for me this good sentence, and obtaining for me works worthy of it. To which end it will aid me to say with spirit those last words which the Church puts in the prayer of the Ave Maria, and those which it uses in another hymn, saying, "Maria, mater gratiæ, Dulcis parens clementiæ, Tu nos ab hoste protege, Et hora mortis suscipe;" (47) "Mary, mother of grace, mother of mercy, defend us from the enemy and at the hour of death receive us!"

Colloquy.—O Sovereign Virgin, seeing thou art the advocatrix of sinners, be my advocatrix before thy Son, appease His wrath by thy intercession, obtaining for me time of true repentance, before the time be past in which I may do it. And seeing the sentence given in death is irrevocable, plead for me, O most benign mother, that it may be favourable towards me, that I may see "the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus," and enjoy Him in thy company world without end. Amen.

(45) Ps. xxxiii. 22.

(46) Ps. cxv. 15.

(47) Ex hymno ad primam officii parvi B. Mariæ. "Memento rerum conditor."

(Much to the purpose of this meditation is that which will be declared in the third part, in the 24th meditation, where we meditate upon the death of the covetous rich man and of poor Lazarus, which is a lively example of that which here has been meditated.)

MEDITATION X.

ON THAT WHICH HAPPENS TO THE BODY AFTER DEATH, AND ON THE GRAVE.

ONE of the principal utilities that we ought to collect out of the meditations of death is that noble exercise of virtue, much like that which we call mortification; which is nothing else but the death of our passions and inordinate affections, depriving them of the life they have in us, endeavouring to repress and bury them, until they be turned into dust and nothing; as David said, "I will pursue my enemies, and overtake them, and will not return till they are consumed;" (1) I will bruise them until I overthrow them, and put them under my feet. For this cause S. Ambrose said, that the just man's life is an imitation of death; (2) for his continual study is to kill the carnal life that he feels in himself, depriving himself of all those things that his flesh and his own will most inordinately covet; suppressing the desires that sprout out, until he remains as dead to all that is sin, according to that of St. Paul, "Reckon that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God," (3) "and if you be dead with Christ from the elements of this world," "touch not, taste not, handle not that" which shall be "to your destruction;" (4) but mortify your members that are upon earth, that is, the works of earthly life, uncleanness, concupiscence, avarice, and the rest.

(1) Ps. xvii. 38.

(2) Lib. 6, de bono mortis, c. 3.

(3) Rom. vi. 11.

(4) Colos. ii. 20, and iii. 5.

2. The practice of this mortification, like to death, we will set down in this meditation, the end of which shall be the imitation of death itself. And in that we proceed by the affections of fear, which are most proper to the purgative way, yet of themselves those of love are most effectual; of which it is said, that it "is strong as death," and "hard as hell," (5) because it kills, buries, and defeats all that is contrary to its beloved; as we shall see hereafter.

By the way also, in this meditation we will put in practice a very profitable manner of meditating, (6) by spiritualising exterior things that are perceived by the senses, applying them to *interior*, and collecting out of them rules and counsels of perfection.

POINT I.

1. The first point shall be to consider what my body will be after it is dead and abandoned by the soul, pondering especially *three* miseries.

i. First, that it loses the use of its *members* and *senses*, without ever more being able to see, hear or speak, or move to one side or the other, or to enjoy the goods of this mortal life. Now no beautiful things, nor sweet music, nor pleasing odours, nor savoury meats, nor things that are soft, anywise affect it: all this is to it as if it were not. For it has lost the organs by which it could enjoy it, and all that it has enjoyed serves it to little profit.

ii. The second misery is, to remain *discoloured*, *disfigured*, deformed, horrible, stiff, stark, and stinking, hastening rapidly to *corruption*. In such a manner that which a little before charmed the eye with its beauty now raises horror in it with its deformity.

iii. From whence proceeds the *third* misery, that *all leave it* alone in the chamber, in possession of those that are to shroud

(5) Cant. viii. 6.

(6) Part 6, Med. X. & XI.

it in a sheet; and even those of the house, and the dearest friends, hold it a kind of piety to despatch it quickly, and to carry it out of doors.

2. From this consideration I will gather how *safe* a thing it is in my lifetime to do by *degrees* somewhat of that which shall afterwards be done *perforce* and without profit, carrying myself as dead to the world, and to all that is flesh and blood, endeavouring to imitate death in *three other* things like to the aforementioned: i. mortifying my *senses* and depriving myself of their delights, not only of the unlawful, but even of some of those which are lawful and not necessary. So that, like a dead man, I am to have neither feet, nor hands, nor eyes, nor ears, nor taste, nor tongue for anything that is sin, or is against the perfection I profess. ii. And for this reason the *beautiful* and *pleasing* things of this life are to be to me as if they were not, putting them under my feet, beholding (as St. Gregory (7) says) not what they are now, but what they shall quickly be; for though you attire flesh in cloth of gold and in silk ever so much or so gorgeously, yet still it is flesh. And what is "flesh" but "grass?" and what is "the glory thereof" but "the flower of the field," that "is withered" (8) by a passing wind? iii. Finally, I must follow virtue with a generous mind, that, as a dead man complains not that all fly from him and forsake him, so it should be nothing to me that the *world forsakes me*, flies from me, and abhors me like one dead and crucified: rather I am to hold as a happiness what is described by the prophet David, "Those that saw me without fled from me; I am become as a vessel that is destroyed. For I have heard the blame of many that dwell round about." (9)

Colloquy.—Oh that I were dead in earth, that I might not perceive that men used me like one dead! Oh that

(7) Evangel. homil. 13.

(8) Isa. xl. 6.

(9) Ps. xxx. 12.

I were so dead and crucified to all that is in the world that the world also held me for crucified and dead! Grant me, O sweet Jesus, that by the law of Thy grace I may die to the law of sin, to live to God, delighting to be nailed with Thee on Thy very cross, (10) so that "now not I" may "live," but "Thou in me," (11) world without end. Amen.

POINT II.

1. The second point is, to consider the *clothing*, the *bed*, and the *lodging* that is prepared for my dead body.

i. The *clothing*, for the most part, is in a manner the worst of the house, and very slender: for it is nothing more than a poor sheet for a shroud, with no more precious ornaments of silk or of gold: and if they put any of this upon me to carry me to burial, they take it again from me before they lay me in the grave.

ii. The *bed* is the hard earth; and as the prophet Isaiah says, "Under" me "shall the moth be strewed, and worms shall be" my "covering;" (12) and the curtains and pillows the bones of other dead.

iii. And after this fashion shall be the house and the lodging; for it is nothing but a narrow pit seven feet long, that is dug in half an hour; for the other sumptuous buildings of sepulchres serve the wretched body for nothing, it being not capable of enjoying them. Out of all this I will gather great confusion and shame for my vanity and sensuality, with which I desire fineness of apparel, softness of bed, and comforts of habitation, animating myself to mortify my superfluities in these, and to bear patiently all wants whatsoever, seeing what I now have (how little soever it be) is very much and very large compared with that which awaits me.

(10) Gal. vi. 14. (11) Gal. ii. 20. (12) Isa. xiv. 11.

2. But particularly, if I am a religious man, or desire to be perfect, I may draw from hence great motives to be so in excellence, striving to make my life a continual meditation and imitation of death, in three things proper to this state.—

i. In being stripped of all these things to which perfect *poverty* obliges me : so that as a dead man loses the dominion of all his riches, which pass to his heirs or to the poor, he not feeling that they leave him the worst clothing, or inter him in some contemptible place ; so I will not content myself with leaving all that I possessed, and giving to the poor, to follow Jesus naked ; but I will also bear willingly the want of things necessary, and will rather choose that they give me the worst, either of apparel, bedding, lodging or house, without murmuring at it any more than a man that is dead ; for if “naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall return thither,” (13) it is no great matter to live naked in this manner, conforming the *middle* of the life to its entrance and egress.

ii. Secondly, I will imitate death in the renunciation of all those sensual pleasures to which perfect *chastity* obliges me ; so that as in death matrimonies are dissolved, the care of wife, children, and family ceases, and there is made a general divorce of all earthly things, and of the delights of the flesh ; so I with the vow of chastity delight to be as it were dead to all these things, and to their cares, as if there were none in the world for me, or I were not alive for them.

iii. Thirdly, I will imitate the dead in perfect *obedience* ; for as the dead body suffers itself to be tossed and carried wherever they will, and to be handled as they list, without resistance, repugnance or complaint, neither having will to choose the winding-sheet, nor the grave, nor anything else,

(13) Job i. 21.

taking only what others give it; so I, in all that is not sin, will permit myself to be governed by my superiors, obeying them in all that they shall command me, high or low, sweet or bitter, easy or difficult, without replying, contradicting, or resisting anything; without any selfwill to choose this or that; but as one dead to my own will I will follow the will of others, taking with humility whatever they give me. These are the purposes that I must draw out of this consideration of death, encouraging myself to put them in practice; seeing it is not much for fifty years (which perhaps shall not be fifty days) to anticipate death in this manner, for the assurance of eternal life; by which for fifty thousand millions of years I shall possess the riches of Almighty God, I shall enjoy His pleasures, and I shall have perfect liberty, free from all misery. Oh, happy death to which succeeds so happy a life!

Colloquy.—O sweet Jesus, whose life was a continual death, to give us example of a holy and perfect life, grant me that in imitation of Thee I may live and die naked of all earthly things, mortified to delights, and obedient to all human creatures for Thy love: hold me always as dead to all that is visible, that my life be “hidden with” Thee “in God,” (14) world without end! Amen.

POINT III.

1. The third point is, to consider the *journey of the body towards the grave*; pondering first, that I shall be carried in a coffin, or upon a bier on other men's shoulders to church; and that he who but awhile before walked the streets, looking on every side, and entered into the church, noting all that passed, goes now upon other men's feet, blind, deaf and dumb, himself the object of lamentation for his sad lot. And therefore to suppress the wantonness of

(14) Col. iii. 3.

my flesh, I will endeavour, when I rise out of my bed, to remember that some day others shall raise me never more to return to it. And when I go down the stairs of my house, I will say, "A day will come in which others will carry me down these stairs never more to get up." And when I go in the street, or enter into the church, I will imagine, that shortly I shall be carried through that street, and shall enter into that church, never more to come out. Then will I consider with what company I am carried to my grave, some singing, others weeping, and many following me with piety to honour me; and yet how little it will avail my body whether they do it much or little honour, much less my soul if it be in hell: rather this honour would torment it the more, if it knew it.

Then will I consider how they cast me into the grave and cover me with earth, laying a stone upon me, where my body shall be eaten with worms and turned to dust, and suddenly I shall be forgotten of all, as if I had never been in the world. And though there remain of me very great and honourable memory, little will it avail my soul if it enjoy not God; as it little availed Aristotle or Alexander the Great to be magnified in the world, being in hell in terrible torments; for as a holy saint says, "Woe to thee, Aristotle, that art praised where thou art not, and art tormented where thou art!"

2. Out of these considerations I will gather some correctives, persuading myself to make no account of the vain honours of this life, but to humble myself, and in my own estimation to put myself under the feet of all like "a worm," (15) or dust, that of all is trodden upon and cast out; as also not to contemn the poor and little ones, seeing in death I shall soon be equal with them, and speaking to my soul, I will say to her:—

(15) Ps. xxi. 7.

Colloquy.—Consider well what will be the end of this flesh that thou hast ; consider whom thou cherishest, whom thou adornest, and upon whom thou dost build these castles in the air ; for all is but like a little “ dust which the wind driveth from the face of the earth,” (16) which presently returneth to fall back again. Be ashamed to subject thyself to so vile flesh ; endeavour rather to subject it like a slave to thee, that it may aid thee to purchase life everlasting. O eternal God, clear the eyes of my poor soul with Thy sovereign light, that it may behold the wretched end of its miserable body, and contemn that which is present with the view of that which is to come ! Amen.

3. Finally, I will consider that I cannot tell whether it will fall to my lot to have so honourable a funeral, or whether our Lord will permit, for chastisement of my sins, that I be buried in the belly of fishes or of wild beasts, or, as Jeremiah says, “ with the burial of an ass,” (17) or be eaten by crows, or by dogs, like unhappy Jezebel, (18) which I have well deserved for my sins ; for to a bestial life is due the sepulchre of beasts. And therefore as much as lies in me I will abhor the vain pomp of worldly sepulchres, desiring both in life and death to choose for myself the humblest place on the earth.

4. I may also spiritualise what has been said in these three points, applying it to my soul dead by sin, which remains ugly, deformed, and unable to do meritorious works of eternal life, while her passions are carrying her to be interred in the abyss of evil, covering her with the gravestone of obstinacy, until she descend to the obscure and dreadful sepulchre of hell. All this should move me to compassion ; for if I bewail the body from which the soul is absent, much more reason have I to bewail the soul from which Almighty

(16) Ps. i. 4.

(17) Jer. xxii. 19.

(18) 4 Reg. ix. 35.

God is absent. (19) And seeing I would give life to the dead body if I could, there is no reason but that I should procure the life of the soul by those means that God has given me to that end, before body and soul die together without remedy.

Colloquy.—O eternal God, permit me not to carry in a living body a dead soul, but quicken it with Thy grace, that when the body dies the soul may obtain life everlasting! Amen.

(This consideration shall be spoken of more at large in the third part in the meditations 39, 40, and 41, on those three that Christ raised from death.)

MEDITATION XI.

ON THE REMEMBRANCE OF DEATH, AND ON THE DUST INTO WHICH WE SHALL BE CONVERTED IN THE GRAVE.

For Ash-Wednesday.

THIS meditation shall be grounded upon those words which the Church uses on Ash-Wednesday, "Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris;" "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return;" (1) which words our Lord spoke to Adam after he had sinned, intimating to him the sentence of death which his sin deserved; and, by the way, declaring unto us what we were, what we shall be, and what we are, saying that all is but dust.

POINT. I.

1. First, we are to consider that God our Lord, though he might have created the body of Adam of nothing, as he created his soul, yet he would not, but *made it of* a matter of the one side most vile and gross, and on the other visible and

(19) S. Aug.

(1) Gen. 3. 19.

palpable, which is the dust and slime of the earth, (2) to the end that man, seeing daily with his corporal eyes this dust, might continually remember his original and beginning for two ends. i. That he might *humble himself* profoundly, and understand that of himself he deserves to be contemned, trodden under foot and trampled upon like dirt, and that he has nothing (though he have great goods) of which to be proud, because all have their foundation in dust. ii. That he might be moved to *love* and to *serve* his so loving and powerful *Creator*, who from vile dust raised him to so great a height as to be a man according to the image and likeness of God Himself.

2. So that dust and dirt may serve for remembrancers to recall to my memory my original and the matter of which I was formed, imagining when I see them that they cry out to me, and say, "Remember that thou art dust, humble thyself as dust, love, serve, and obey thy Creator that took thee from the dust." And when I wax proud with the gifts that I have, I am to imagine that they cry to me, repressing my vanity, and saying to me, "Of what art thou 'proud,' 'earth and ashes?'" (3) "Why art thou puffed up, vessel of clay?" (4) Be warned by forgetful Adam, who, forgetting that he was dust, presumed to be as Almighty God, and rebelled against his Maker.

Colloquy.—O omnipotent Creator, permit not in me so pernicious an oblivion, that I fall not into so great a danger! Clear my eyes, that I may in spirit behold the dust of which I was formed, and open my ears that I may hear its cries, so imprinting them in my heart that I may never forget them! Amen.

(Of this point we shall speak largely in the sixth part, in the 26th meditation.)

(2) Gen. ii. 7; *de limo terræ.*

(3) *Eccles. x. 9.*

(4) *Isa. xlv. 9.*

POINT II.

1. Secondly, I am to consider that God our Lord, seeing the forgetfulness and pride of Adam, *condemned him to the sentence of death*, and to return into the dust of which he was formed, wherein principally He intended *three ends* for his good and ours.

i. To *chastise his sin* with it, and that we all might perceive how grievous an evil sin is, seeing it is sufficient to destroy and to turn into dust so beautiful and rich a frame as is man; for if Adam had not sinned he had not died, but had been translated into heaven in body and soul with all his integrity and perfection. But through his sin the soul is forced to abandon the body, and the body is dissolved or unwall'd and turned into small dust, according to that of the apostle, "By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death." (5)

ii. The *second end* was that the *memory of death*, and that we are to return to dust, might be a most effectual *medicine* for our *pride*, seeing it was not sufficient to humble us that He had made us of dust. So that the dust and dirt of the earth which I see and feel is not only a signal to recall to my remembrance the original from whence I began, but also the *end* in which I am to stay; and when I behold it I should imagine that it is crying out and saying to me, "Remember thou art to return to earth and dust, and that like me thou shalt be trampled and trodden upon." Then "why" art thou "proud?" (6) Thou art now flesh, thou shalt shortly be dust; wherefore art thou puffed up?

Colloquy.—O Father of mercy, I give Thee thanks that with the chastisement of my sin Thou hast made a medicine for my pride! Grant me that I may not be deaf to these cries that dust giveth me, that the

(5) Rom. v. 12.

(6) Eccclus. x. 9.

chastisement of a merciful Father turn not into the punishment of a severe Judge!

iii. The *third* end was, that the fear of this chastisement and of this dust in which the flesh is to rest, might be a *spur* to our *backwardness* to do penance for our sins committed, and a bridle to our sensual proneness to curb our passions. So that if the remembrance of the sovereign benefit that Almighty God did to us, to take us out of the dust of the earth, be not sufficient to spur and to curb us, yet at least the remembrance may suffice, that when we least think of it we shall be turned into dust, and so what love could not do fear may bring to pass.

Colloquy.—Therefore, O my soul, take counsel of the prophet who saith, “In the house of Dust sprinkle thyself with dust” (7) and seeing thou livest in flesh, which is dust, and art shortly to dwell in the house of dust, which is the grave, sprinkle thyself with dust and ashes, doing penance for thy sins; and with the remembrance of this dust defeat the sweet and pleasing things of this life, that they may not carry thee after them to death everlasting.

POINT III.

1. Hence I will ascend to consider *the spirit* that is included in these words, pondering that not without cause they say not unto me, “Remember that thou” *wast* “dust,” but that “*thou art dust*” at this present; to signify that of *my corrupt nature* I am earth and dust, since I am inclined to earthly things, as riches, honours, and pampering of the flesh, and that “as dust” (8) I am mutable and unstable, suffering myself to be tossed with the “wind” of every temptation, especially of vanity. And if I restrain not myself I shall turn into earth and dust, following my

(7) Mich. i. 10.

(8) Ps. i. 4

inclinations, and turning myself into an earthly, ambitious, sensual and vain man. For which I am greatly to humble myself and to tremble at my own mutability and weakness, and at the peril in which I live.

2. Then will I ponder *how* by God's grace *I may free myself from these dangers*, remembering that as well I myself as all those earthly things that I love are to end and to turn into dust. And in this spirit when I behold a rich and powerful man whose riches and power carry my eyes after him, that avarice and ambition may not overthrow me I will remember that he is but "dust" and that his gold and silver is earth, and that all shall return to that. And if I see any beautiful woman, that I may not be tempted and vanquished by luxury I will also remember that she and all her ornaments are dust, and that therein they shall rest. And in this spirit I will apply these words to all things upon earth, saying to myself, "Remember that what thou seest and desirest is dust, and shall turn into dust and ashes; and if thou dost love it inordinately, *thou* likewise shalt be dust and earth as it is. Therefore love God only and celestial riches, that by virtue of His grace it may be said to thee, "Thou art heaven, and to heaven thou shalt return, transforming thyself by love into heaven which thou lovest."

POINT IV.

Fourthly, I am to consider that God our Lord, *by the means of the dead* and of their skulls and bones, *says* to me *these very words*, "Remember that thou art dust, and that into dust thou shalt return," that they may be the more strongly imprinted on my heart, and that out of them I may gather the greater profit. This I may consider, calling to memory that memorable sentence of Ecclesiasticus, which comprehends the sense and spirit of the said words, "*Memor esto judicii mei, sic enim erit tuum, mihi heri, et*

tibi hodie;" "Remember my judgment, for thine also shall be so; yesterday for me, to-day for thee." (9) And because the dead had two judgments, *one* of his body, by which he was condemned to turn to dust and to worms, the *other* of his soul, by which he receives sentence conformable to his merits; of both of them he would have us remember ourselves. And therefore in seeing any dead body, or the skulls and bones of the deceased, I should imagine that they say to me, "Remember that where thou seest thyself I saw myself, and where I now see myself thou shalt see thyself. Yesterday ended my life, to-day peradventure *thine* shall be ended. Yesterday I turned into dust, to-day the like will begin for thee. Yesterday the bell tolled for me, to-day, perhaps, the same shall toll for thee. Yesterday I gave an account to God of my works, to-day thou shalt give a reckoning of thine. Yesterday I received sentence according to my merits, to-day thou shalt receive according to thine. Consider well that all this shall be 'to-day,' (10) for all the time of thy life is but as a day, and perhaps for thee this day will be thy last, and thou shalt not live until to-morrow."

Colloquy.—O my soul, hear the cry of the dead, hearken to the lecture that withered bones read thee. Consider well what judgment passed on *them*, for such shall be thine. Live as they wish they had lived; prepare thyself as they would that they had prepared themselves; measure often alive this course that they passed, that when thy hour approacheth thou mayest run it in such a way that thou mayest obtain life everlasting! Amen.

(9) *Ecclus.* xxxviii. 23.(10) *Heb.* iii. 13.

MEDITATION XII.

ON THE GREAT DECEITS AND GREAT DANGERS OCCASIONED BY THE FORGETFULNESS OF DEATH, AND THEIR REMEDY.

THIS meditation I will ground upon the speech of our Saviour Christ concerning a *rich man*, whose fields having yielded him plenty of fruits, he thought within himself to enlarge his granaries or barns, to gather and to keep them ; and speaking to his soul, said to it, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer. But God said to him, Thou fool ! this night do they require thy soul of thee ; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ?" (1) In the person of this rich man (so forgetful of his death) are represented to us those that have the like forgetfulness, especially when they are rich, healthful and young, which I am to apply to myself in the following form :

POINT I.

1. First, I am to consider *three* great *deceits* which the forgetfulness of death brings with it, by reason of which our Lord God calls this rich man "fool."

i. The first deceit is, to promise to myself *many* years of life and to bethink me what I shall do with them, as if this depended only on *my* will, and not upon God's, who, perhaps, has determined to take from us our life the very same night or day in which we thought it should have been longest ; and herewith he defeats our imaginations, and discovers how much they went astray, on which I will reprehend myself with the words of the apostle St. James, saying to myself, "How darest thou say, To-morrow" I "will go into such a

(1) Luc. xii. 19.

city, and there" I "will spend a year, and will traffic and make" "gain, whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is a vapour which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away. For that you should say, If the Lord will, and if I shall live," I "will do this or that;" (2) for otherwise thou shalt find thyself deceived, if Almighty God have determined the contrary.

ii. The second deceit is, to promise to myself not only long life, but also to assure myself that I shall have *health, strength, and content*, with all the goods that I possess, and that they also shall last as long as I; whence it proceeds that upon this I exhort my soul, saying, "Requiesce, comed, bibe, et epulare;" "Take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer;" give thyself to banqueting and pleasure, for thou shalt want nothing. And this is a most grievous illusion; for all this depends on Almighty God, who can take from me my goods before my life be ended, and though He take not them away, He may (as Ecclesiastes (3) says) take from me my health and strength, that I may not enjoy them.

iii. The third deceit is, to *forget* to provide what is *necessary for the other* life, as if there were no more but this present. And this was the grossest folly of this rich man, who having provided his soul of so much wealth to pass this temporal life, was altogether careless to provide it with those necessary goods for life everlasting; for which it needs be, that the unhappy soul that in this miserable life ate, drank, and banqueted, must afterwards endure perpetual hunger, thirst, and eternal misery.

2. Considering these three deceits, I will examine if my soul be beguiled with them, and will exhort her contrarily to what this rich man did, saying,

Colloquy.—O my soul, promise not to thyself many

(2) Jac. iv. 13.

(3) Eccles. v. 16.

years, for perhaps thou shalt not live out this present ! “Boast not for to-morrow, for thou knowest not what the day to come may bring forth.” (4) Give not thyself to rest, but to labour ; not to feastings and banquets, but to fasting and tears. Have a care of eternal life which awaits thee, for after death there is no means to merit any durable rest or contentment. (5) O eternal God, deliver me of Thine infinite goodness from the miserable deceits, before death seize upon me in them ! Exhort Thou my soul to works that are pleasing unto Thee, that this day it may more and more separate itself from all such things as offend Thee ! Amen.

POINT II.

Secondly, I am to consider the great *losses* they suffer in death that have been thus beguiled all their life, drawing them from the words of our Lord to this rich man, “Stulte, hac nocte animam tuam repetent à te, et quæ præparasti, cujus erunt ?” “Thou fool ! this night do they require thy soul of thee, and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ?” In this are touched *four* grievous losses, for which King David had great reason to say, that “the death of the wicked is very evil.” (6)

1. “*Thou fool.*”—The *first* loss is to die in his very *folly*, without falling into a reckoning of it till it be past remedy. For, late or early, both good and evil shall come to perceive their errors, but in a different manner : for the wicked continue in their error until death, and then, with the *experience* of their torments and miseries, they fall into a reckoning how much in their lifetime they were beguiled, calling themselves “*Insensati,*” (7) “men without sense” or judgment. But the good in their lifetime perceive their error

(4) Prov. xxvii. 1.

(5) Eccles. ix. 5, 10.

(6) Ps. xxxiii. 22.

(7) Sap. vii.

by the light of *faith*, and prepare themselves for death before death seize upon them. Therefore, O my soul! to perceive thy own errors, take for thy teacher this divine light, if thou wilt not have the experience of eternal misery to be thy teacher, and beware by other men's dangers before this loss light upon thee with thy own.

2. "*This night*."—The second loss is to die in the *night*, that is, by a sudden and hasty death in the midst of their crimes; for oftentimes when men are healthful and contented, as this rich man was, Almighty God intimates to them the sentence of death, and moreover executes it, so that they pass from a temporal night to an eternal, and from the interior "darkness" of the heart to the "exterior" of hell. (8) With this fear, I will ask very earnestly of our Lord, that He would in such manner forewarn me of the peril of my death, that I may have time to dispose myself to it, as He forewarned King Ezechias by means of the prophet Isaias, saying to him, "Take order with thy house, for thou shalt die." (9) But to this end I am not to expect revelations from heaven; but my prophet Isaias must be the light of faith and of reason, the inspiration of God, the grievous sickness that assails me, and the warning of the physician when he tells me I am in danger. And generally, seeing I have no certain day of life, and every day I may expect death, it is wisdom to imagine that Almighty God says this day to me, "Take order *to-day* with thy soul, for to-morrow thou shalt die;" and so do it immediately.

3. "*Do they require*."—The third loss is, to die by *force* and with violence, because their souls are required and forced out in despite of them. In this I will consider the difference between the just unbeguiled and sinners beguiled; for the just offer themselves voluntarily to death, when God's will is that they should die, and they say to

(8) Matt. viii. 22.

(9) Isa. xxxviii. 1; 4 Reg. xx. 1.

Him with David, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name;" (10) and "into Thy hands I commend my spirit," for "Thou redeemedst me, O Lord the God of truth!" (11) And although nature somewhat shuns death, yet grace prevails against it, and when Almighty God requires of them their soul they yield it with great resignation. But the wicked abhor death, and bear it very impatiently, and therefore it is said that the devils (the ministers of God's justice) do require and force from them their soul against their will.

Colloquy.—O eternal God, grant me that I may live so unfleshed from all things of this life that there may be no need to pull from me my soul perforce! Require it of me when Thou wilt, for I am ready and willing to give it unto Thee, in what day soever Thou requirest it.

POINT III.

1. Thirdly, I am to consider the *dreadfulness* of that terrible *question* that God our Lord makes, "Whose shall be the things that thou hast provided?" In this is represented the final loss of those who (as has been said) live forgetful of death, which is suddenly and with great grief to leave the goods which they possessed, without enjoying them, or disposing of them, or knowing to whom they shall come. This is to say to them, "Whose shall be the things that thou hast provided?" Whose shall be the *house* in which thou livest, and the bed in which thou sleepest; the rich *garments* with which thou attirest thyself, and the *treasures* of gold and silver that thou hast in thy chests? Whose shall be the *servants* that now serve thee, and the *friends* that now entertain thee, and the *office* and dignity for which all do honour thee? O wretched man, that storest up "treasures," and knowest not for whom

(10) Ps. cxli. 8.

(11) Ps. xxx. 6.

thou didst "gather" these things;(12) for thy wretched soul, for whom thou didst provide them, can now no longer enjoy them!

2. This question I am to *make to myself*, examining what kind of goods I have "stored" up in this life, and saying to myself, "Then whose shall be the things that thou hast provided" when thou art dead? Will they peradventure be thy soul's, or one be thy "heir" whom thou "knowest not?" (13) If they be temporal goods, certainly they shall be none of thine; for the rich man, "when he shall die," shall take away nothing with him, nor "shall his glory descend with him;" (14) but if they be spiritual goods of virtues and good "works" (15) thine they will be; for these accompany those that die in our Lord, and forsake them not till they put them in the throne of His glory. Therefore, O my soul, labour to treasure up goods that in life and death may always be thine, and of which nobody can deprive thee!

3. Like this question I will *make another to myself*, saying, This soul that thou hast in thy body, whose shall it be? Will it peradventure be God's or the devil's? Will it be Christ's that redeemed it, or Satan's to whom it has subjected itself? If I am in mortal sin, and die in it, doubtless it will be the devil's; he will come to require it of me, and will carry it away, for it is his through sin. But if I be in the grace of Almighty God, and persevere in it, it will be God's, and He will come for it, to carry it with Him. Therefore, forthwith do penance for thy sins, that if to-day "the prince of darkness" should "come," he may "not" find "in" thy soul "anything" (16) that is his, and so may leave it.

Colloquy.—O King of heaven and of earth, "Tuus sum ego, salvum me fac," (17) "I am Thine, save

(12) Ps. xxxviii. 7.

(13) Eccles. ii. 18, 19.

(14) Ps. xlviii. 18.

(15) Apoc. xiv. 13.

(16) Joan. xiv. 30.

(17) Ps. cxviii. 94.

me!" My soul is Thine, for Thou didst create it; it is Thine, for Thou didst redeem it; let it also be Thine sanctifying it with Thy grace, that it may be perpetually Thine, crowning it with the reward of Thy glory! Amen.

POINT IV.

1. For conclusion, and confirmation of what has been said in these three points, I will consider a terrible *example* and type of it in King Baltassar, who, while eating and drinking in a banquet, suddenly saw two fingers of a hand, which wrote upon a wall these words, "Mane, Thecel, Phares;" "He hath counted, He hath weighed, He hath divided;" which Daniel expounded in this form: "*Mane*—God hath numbered thy kingdom and hath finished it. *Thecel*—thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting. *Phares*—thy kingdom is divided, and is given to the Medes and Persians."(18) All which things, he "being slain the same night," came to pass.

2. Applying this to myself, if I live in the like forgetfulness, I am to imagine that suddenly will come a day, or a night, in which God our Lord, with the fingers of His omnipotence, will *write* on the wall of my *conscience* the *sentence* of these three words. i. God hath numbered the days of thy life, (19) and those which thou hast to enjoy thy kingdom, thy wealth, thy honour, dignity and office, and they are already complete, and this day shall be the last. ii. He hath weighed thee in His scale, examining thy works, without omitting any one, and He hath found that they were light and not "full works," (20) for that thou hast not fulfilled all thy obligations. iii. God hath divided and separated from thee thy kingdom, thy wealth and dignity, and the goods that thou possessedst, and hath delivered them to thine enemies, or to strangers and to others to enjoy them.

(18) Dan. v. 25—28.

(19) Job xiv. 5.

(20) Apoc. iii. 2.

He hath likewise divided thy body and soul, and thy body He hath delivered to the worms to eat, and thy soul to the devils to torment it. And in the very same hour that God shall intimate this sentence, He will execute it, and none shall be able to resist Him.

Colloquy.—Oh, what tremblings shall I then feel, more terrible than those of King Baltassar! Oh, what clamours and lamentations, what troubles and agonies of death shall afflict my poor soul, with so much the greater torment as the forgetfulness was the greater! Remember me, O God, for Thy mercy, and imprint in my soul the memory of these three sentences, that I may always remember the account that Thou hast made of my days, and of the last which must be the end of them, that I may live with such care that at the day of judgment, when Thou shalt weigh me in Thy scale, Thou mayest not find me wanting, but entire, and weighty in all my works: and that although Thou dividest from me the kingdom of the earth, Thou mayest not exclude me from Thy kingdom of heaven! Amen.

MEDITATION XIII.

ON THE GENERAL JUDGMENT, AND ON THE SIGNS AND THINGS PRECEDING THAT DAY.

For the first Sunday of Advent.

POINT I.

1. For the foundation of this matter, I am to *consider* the verity of that article of our faith that teaches us, that besides the *particular* judgment that is made of *every* man in the *hour of death*, there shall be another *general judgment* of *all* men together in the *end of the world*, which

judgment shall be public and visible, ordained by the divine providence for many reasons.

i. To *confirm* the *sentence* that was given in the *particular* judgment, and to manifest to the world its equity, and withal to supply what was wanted. For in death judgment is made of the soul only, and not of the body; and sometimes it happens that the soul is condemned in the judgment of God, and the body is carried to the grave with great honour. (1) Or, contrarily, that the soul is carried with great glory to heaven, and the body with great ignominy to the grave. And since body and soul were united together in serving or offending Almighty God, it is just that there should be a day in which judgments should be made of them both. On which I will animate my flesh to serve the spirit, seeing that *with* it it is also to be judged.

ii. The *second* reason is, for Almighty God to manifest Himself for the *honour* of the *just* that were oppressed in this life, and much more for the good credit of His government, that all may see that He was both wise and holy in all whatsoever He ordained or permitted. So that neither the good may then complain any more that virtue was oppressed, (2) nor the wicked glory that vice was exalted (3); and, finally, to "confound" (4) the rash judgments of those that dared to judge what they knew not. Upon this the Apostle counsels that we should "judge not before the time until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." (5)

iii. The *third* reason is, the *glory* of *Christ Jesus our Lord*, that He may not only discover Himself in heaven to the good, but also that on earth, where His ignominy was apparent, He may manifest Himself to the wicked; and

(1) S Th. 3, p. q. lix. art. 5.

(2) Habac. i. 6.

(3) Jer. xii. 1.

(4) Ps. lxxxiii. 18.

(5) 1 Cor. iv. 5.

that those which saw His humiliation may see its reward. And for this cause the place of judgment will be "the valley of Josaphat" (6) near Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives; that in the same place where He was judged, condemned, and crucified for our sins, they may all see Him with great honour to be the judge both of the living and of the dead, (7) and that He that ascended to heaven in the sight of a few disciples shall descend, as it was told by the angel, (8) in the sight of the whole world to judge them all.

2. For these reasons the remembrance of judgment may move me to joy, thankfulness and praise, glorifying God for His sovereign providence, with which He designed it for so high ends; and with David inviting all creatures to "re-joyce," and clap their hands "for joy," for that the Lord "cometh to judge the earth." "He shall judge the world with justice, and the people with his truth" (9) righting wrongs without acceptance of persons.

POINT II.

Secondly are to be considered the signs *preceding* this general judgment, as Christ our Lord reckons them in His gospel, (10) pondering their *number* and *terror*; the *things* which they *signify*, the *effects* which they shall cause in men, the *manner* how they shall come to pass, and withal the *reasons* wherefore they come to pass.

1. First, I am to ponder their *number*; for "He will arm (as the Wise man says) the creation for the revenge of his enemies;" "and the whole world shall fight with him against the unwise." (11) And as all have been instruments of God's mercy, to do them great benefits, so then they will be instruments of God's justice to do them great

(6) Joel iii. 2.

(7) Act. x. 42.

(8) Act. i. 11.

(9) Ps. xcvi. 11; xcvii. 8, 9.

(10) Matt. xxiv. 5; Marc. xiii. 5; Luc. xxi. 8, &c.

(11) Sap. v. 18.

evil, and with great reason, because they abused them to the injury of their Creator. And although they now dissemble this wrong then they shall manifest it with terrible signs.

2. Secondly, I will ponder their *terror*, reasoning on some of them. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, the moon into blood;" "the stars or comets shall fall from heaven" like lightning; and "the powers of heaven shall be moved;" (12) for they shall make a fearful noise, as an alarum-bell when it is let loose to strike the hour; the earth shall dreadfully tremble, opening itself in many parts, and, like Mount *Ætna*, casting forth fire; the sea shall be in a tumult with terrible waves; the winds, encountering one another, shall raise horrible tempests; dreadful thunder-claps, with fearful "shafts of lightnings," (13) shall sound in the air; and there shall appear affrighting visions (14) and horrid monsters, much more horrid than in *Egypt* and *Jerusalem*. The wild and savage beasts and venomous serpents shall stray up and down, running in all parts with horrible howlings, roarings and hissings.

3. But how terrible soever these signs be, they will afflict much more with the terror of the things which they signify, and which men apprehend, because all these are but as a foreshadowing of the dreadful evils which they expect, for the world shall be the very portraiture of hell. The "darkness" of "the sun" menaces eternal darkness, in chastisement of the darkness of the soul. The "blood" of "the moon" is the sign of the indignation of Almighty God, which shall take vengeance of them for staining themselves with the blood of sins. The falling of "the stars" from heaven is the sign of the most unhappy fall which they shall make from the heaven of the Church to the bottomless

(12) *Matt.* xxiv. 29; *Joel* ii. 31.(13) *Sap.* v. 22.(14) *2 Mach.* v. 2.

pit of hell; for they threw themselves down headlong from the height of grace to the depth of sin. The fury of the elements and beasts prognosticates the terribleness of the infernal furies against them for living like beasts without any order or government of their passions.

4. Hence it will arise that *men* shall *wither* with *fear* and *astonishment* as well for the evils which they experience as for those which they expect, being seized upon by the sad spirit that withereth the bones. (15) Oh, what a difference shall there be in this case between those that have a good and secure, and those that have an evil and unquiet conscience! for although all will fear, yet the fear of the good will be mixed with great confidence in God's mercy. And so our Saviour Christ comforts them, saying, "When these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand," (16) the end of your labours and the beginning of your rest. But the fear of the wicked shall be full of desperation and great impatience, for, as the Wise man says, "a troubled conscience always forecasteth grievous things." (17) And if already (says David) "they have trembled with fear where there was no fear," (18) how much more will they tremble where they have so much to tremble at, beginning presently to have that trembling and gnashing of teeth which they shall ever have in hell? Pondering all these things, and every one of them, I will exhort myself to the fear of God and detestation of my sins, saying to myself,

Colloquy.—How is it, O my soul, that thou fearest not the wrath of Almighty God, who the more merciful He is now shall *then* be the more rigorous? Why embracest thou not with love the sacraments and signs of His grace before the terrible signs of His wrath fall

(15) Prov. xvii. 22.

(16) Luc. xxi. 28.

(17) Sap. xvii. 10.

(18) Ps. xiii. 5.

upon thee? If the pillars of heaven shall then tremble, why dost not thou fortify thyself with a celestial life, that though thou fearest yet thou mayest not fall? O infinite God, pierce Thou my flesh with Thy holy "fear," (19) making me fear Thy terrible judgments! Let my bones be withered with sorrow for having offended Thee, rather than I should be withered with an unprofitable fear! Let my face be covered with shame for my sins, that then I may lift up my head for joy of the redemption that I expect from them!

POINT III.

Thirdly, I must consider the *terrible fire* that shall arise from all the four parts of the world to burn and consume the things of the earth, and to renew and purify what is to remain in it. (20)

Concerning this fire, we are principally to consider three things for our purpose.

i. First, that it shall burn and consume exceeding quickly and without resistance the palaces and forests, treasures of gold and precious stones, beasts, birds and fishes, and all men that it shall find alive; for from it none shall be able to escape. And herein shall end the glory and beauty of this visible world, which worldlings so much love and esteem, fulfilling that of Joel, that "before" Almighty God shall come "a devouring fire," and "behind" him "a burning flame: the land is like a garden of pleasure before it, and behind it a desolate wilderness, neither is there any one that can escape it." (21)

Colloquy.—O my soul, why dost not thou abhor "the fashion of this world, which passeth away" (22) so hastily, and shall have so disastrous an end? Tremble at this fire which shall burn its riches,

(19) Ps. cxviii. 120.

(20) Ps. xlix. 3; xevi. 32; Pet. iii. 7, 10.

(21) Joel ii. 3.

(22) 1 Cor. vii. 31.

that thou mayest not give food therewith to the fire of thy avarice. Amen.

ii. Secondly, I will consider that this fire, as says the Book of Wisdom, (23) shall be most *cruel* against the *wicked* and most *gentle* to the *good* that shall then be alive ; for to these it shall serve as a purgatory to purify them from their sins and from its dregs, and to augment to them the merit and the crown that soon after they are to receive. But sinners it shall terribly torment as the beginning of hell that attends them to chastise their rebellion.

iii. Hence it is that this fire shall last in the world till the general judgment be concluded, Almighty God (as David says) dividing its "flame" (24) to enlighten without hurt the bodies of the elect, and to torment the bodies of the reprobate, (25) so that forthwith in rising they shall feel the horrible fire in which they are to remain, which (the sentence being given) like a furious river will overwhelm them and go down with them to hell. Then shall be fulfilled, both in good and bad, that saying of the prophet, "The day" of the Lord "shall come, kindled like a furnace ; and all the proud, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble : and the day that cometh shall set them on fire, saith the Lord of Hosts : it shall not leave them root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name the Sun of justice shall arise, and health in his wings ; and you shall go forth, and shall leap like calves of the herd. And you shall tread down the wicked when they shall be ashes under the sole of your feet." (26)

Colloquy.—O my soul, compare this "furnace" with this "Sun of justice ;" these flames that blind with these splendours that give light ; these "ashes" of torments with these "wings" of ease ; this burning

(23) Sap. xvi. 22 et seq.

(24) Ps. xxviii.

(25) S. Basil *ibid.*

(26) Mal. iv. i.

like "stubble" with this leaping for pleasure like a young "calf;" and choose such a form of life as may free thee from so great evils, and purchase for thee so great good! O eternal God, from whose presence shall flow this "stream of fire" (27) for the punishment of the wicked, and another "river" of living "water" for the refuge of the good, wash me and purify me with the "water" (28) of this second, that I may be free from the fire of the first! Amen.

POINT IV.

1. Fourthly, I am to consider what Christ our Lord says of the day that He has assigned for this judgment: that "no one knoweth, but the Father alone" (29); and that it shall come on a sudden, for which He brings two similitudes. "As," says He, (30) "in the days of Noe," men "were eating and drinking," buying and selling, "marrying and giving in marriage," and carrying on their businesses, "until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all; (31) likewise as it came to pass in the days of Lot," the Sodomites being very careless, "in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all, (32) even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed," and shall come to judgment. For men being occupied in marriages and pastimes, the flood of tribulations shall begin, and there shall rise a fire that shall consume them, and innumerable shall they be that shall be condemned, except some few that, like Noe and Lot, shall be saved.

And seeing that the same happens in many "tribulations," (33) plagues and deaths which suddenly assail us, I

(27) Dan. vii. 10.

(28) Apoc. xxii. 1.

(29) Matt. xxiv. 36.

(30) Luc. xvii. 26.

(31) Gen. vii. 5.

(32) Gen. xix. 24.

(33) Matt. xxiv. 21.

am to endeavour to live so well prepared that I may merit to be saved, taking the counsel that our Saviour Christ gave upon this, saying, "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it;"(34) that is, let him mortify his carnal life, for losing it in such manner he shall quicken it with a spiritual life, and shall be secure at the day of this judgment.

Colloquy.—O Sovereign Judge, quicken me with Thy grace, that, like another Noe, I may be saved in the ark of Thy Church! Drag me out of the Sodom of the world, though it be by force, (35) like Lot, that being free from the fires that burn it, I may save my soul in the high "mountain" of Thy glory! Amen.

MEDITATION XIV.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND THE COMING OF THE JUDGE,
AND HIS PROCEEDINGS BEFORE GIVING THE SENTENCE.

POINT I.

FIRST, I must consider the *general resurrection of the dead*, in which men in soul and body are to appear at this judgment. Concerning this article of our faith I am to consider,

1. First, that an "archangel," with a dreadful "voice," (1) in manner of a "trumpet," (2) will summon and call all the dead to rise again and come to judgment, saying, "Surgite, mortui, et venite ad judicium;" "Arise, you dead, and come to judgment!" And so potent will this voice be, by virtue of God's Almighty power, that "in a moment" all (3) the dead will arise. And (as St. John says) the "sea will give

(34) Luc. xvii. 33. (35) Gen. xix. 16. (1) Joan. v. 28.

(2) 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16; S. Th. in addit. q. lxxv. et q. lxxvi.; S. Hier. in reg. monarcharum, c. 30.

(3) 1 Cor. xv. 52.

up the dead that" are "in it;" the earth those that it swallowed alive; and "death and hell" will give up "the dead that" are "in them." (4) Though they were turned into dust, God's omnipotency will form them in a moment, with all the perfection of members they are to have; and in this very moment the souls will ascend from "hell," and those of heaven will descend, and every one will be united to the self-same body that it owned before. So that this "voice of the archangel," and this citation to judgment, all will obey without resistance, excuse or delay, even though they have been kings, popes, and monarchs of the world.

Colloquy.—O my soul, remember often this powerful voice, let this trump sound in thy ears, fear this terrible summoning, and prepare thyself for it! Obey the voice of Almighty God, and of His visible archangel, that saith unto thee, "Rise, thou that sleepest, and arise thee from the dead, and Christ shall enlighten thee;" (5) for He desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted, raised up, and live.

2. Secondly, I will consider what body will be given to the soul of the *damned* that comes up from hell, and what it will think to see itself engaged in it. For there will be given to it a body on the one side passible, and on the other side immortal and impassible, (6) that may ever suffer and never die. A foul, stinking, and horrid body, that will be the eternal prison of that wretched soul, and a new hell to it in which to abide. Oh, what maledictions will the one cast forth against the other in that first entrance! "Cursed be thou, body," will the soul say, "for to pamper thee, and for that thou hast been rebellious to me, have I suffered so many and so great torments, and will for ever suffer them with thee." "Cursed be thou, soul!" will the body say, "be-

(4) Apoc. xx. 13.

(5) Eph. v. 14.

(6) Apoc. ix. 6.

cause thou didst not with thy free will mortify and subdue me I am to suffer with thee such horrible torments." In this way these two miserable companions, that in this life joined together to seek their delights, drinking therewith innumerable sins, will then be joined and knit together like "thorns," (7) to prick one another, and to be their own executioners, and to augment one another's most terrible torments.

3. Thirdly, I will briefly consider the body that will be given to the soul of the *blessed* that descends from *heaven*, and with what delight and pleasure it will enter into it. For there will be given to it a body immortal, impassible, resplendent, every way perfect and exceedingly glorious. Oh, what benedictions will they pour forth one upon another! Oh, what welcomes will the soul give to her beloved body! "Blessed be thou," (will she say,) "for thou hast aided me to merit the glory that I have enjoyed! Blessed art thou, that sufferedst thyself to be mortified, and didst yield with obedience to fulfil whatsoever Almighty God commanded! Be comforted, for now the time of labour is past, and the time of rest is come! Thou wast 'sown' and buried in the earth 'in dishonour:' thou art now returned to live with new 'glory.' (8) Glorify God with me, because with me thou shalt reign." Finally, making comparison of that which shall happen to the good and the evil, I will say to my own body, "Animate thyself in this mortal life to suffer, that the happy lot may fall upon thee to rise again to life everlasting!"

POINT II.

Secondly, I must consider the coming of the Judge to judgment, His descending from heaven, the *majesty* of His *person*, the train that accompany Him—His royal standard

(7) Nahum i. 10.

(8) 1 Cor. xv. 42.

—His glorious throne—the form of His countenance and His assistants that are on either side.

1. First, I will consider how Christ our Lord will really and truly *descend* from *heaven*, (9) and come the second time into the world to judge it, but in a way very different from that which He came at His first coming. For at this second coming He will come with a glorious and resplendent *body*, crowned with a crown of glory and immortality, with such splendour that the sun, moon, and stars, will not give light in His presence; and with such *majesty* that angels and men, righteous and sinners, and even the devils themselves, will subject themselves to Him, and adore, and (be they never so loth) acknowledge Him for their God and their Almighty Lord. For then will the eternal Father fulfil the promise that He made Him, to subject all things to Him, and to “put all His enemies under His feet,” (10) that “every knee should bow” in His presence, and “every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.” (11)

Colloquy.—O my Saviour, very just it is that Thy second coming should discover that glory which at Thy first coming Thou didst conceal! Grant me, O Lord, to imitate the humility of the first that I may enjoy the glory of the second! Amen.

2. Then will I consider *the train that accompanies Him*, for (as “Enoch” prophesied) “the Lord shall come with thousands of His saints,” (12) encircled with the whole army of heaven, (13) with the three hierarchies and the nine choirs, assuming (as may piously be believed) aerial bodies resplendent like the sun, discovering therein the beauty and excellency of their hierarchy and choir. Before Him (as is

(9) Matt. xxiv. 30.

(10) Ps. cix. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 25.

(11) Phil. ii. 11.

(12) Judæ, 14.

(13) Dan. vii. 10; Matt. xvi 27; xxv. 31.

collected out of the Gospel) shall come the *banner* (14) of the Son of Man, which is the royal standard of the holy cross, with an admirable splendour. The which being one and the same will be most pleasing and delightful to the just that in this life embraced and esteemed it, crucifying their flesh with its vices and concupiscences; but most horrible and dreadful to the wicked, who believed not in it, or abhorred it, being enemies of it, because they held "their belly" for their "god." (15) And therefore in seeing it they shall weep bitterly, for they shall see in it the just cause of their damnation.

Colloquy.—O my soul, follow the banner of the cross in this life, that thou mayest see it with peace and security in the other! Bewail the enmity thou hast had against it, that thou mayest then behold it with joy and alacrity! Amen.

3. Thirdly, I will consider how our Lord Christ, coming to the valley of Josaphat, will be *seated* in a most excellent *throne*, made of a most beauteous and bright-shining cloud, and His *divine face* being one and the same, will yet appear most *amiable* to the good and most *terrible* to the wicked, so that to behold Him only they will remain full of terror and confusion. And from the most sacred wounds of His feet, hands, and side, will issue out rays of light and delectable splendour to the good, who, by the corporal view of these wounds, will receive most singular comfort, considering how infinite the love was of this sovereign King, in virtue of them to vouchsafe to receive them. But from the same wounds will issue rays of wrath, and as it were of fire against the wicked, who (as the Scripture says) "shall" bitterly "bewail," (16) that they reaped so little profit of them. But much more shall the Jews and Gentiles weep, that with so great cruelty made and pierced those precious wounds.

(14) Matt. xxiv. 30. (15) Phil. iii. 19. (16) Zac. xii. 10; Apoc. i. 7.

Colloquy.—O most sweet Jesus, by these Thy most sacred wounds, I beseech Thee “give me wings like a dove” to “fly and be at rest” (17) in them while I live, mourning for my sins, for whose cause Thou receivedst them, that at the day of judgment I may look on them and behold them with joyfulness, and through them mayest admit me to Thy glory! Amen.

4. Fourthly, then will I consider how on Christ our Saviour’s side will be placed another throne of exceeding great glory for *His* most sacred *Mother*; for it is very just that in this judgment she, like another “Bethsabe,” (18) should be seated on the side of the true Solomon, not to be the advocate for sinners, (for that time is now past), but to confound them, because they would not make use of so holy a Mother and so powerful an advocate as they had, as also that the righteous may be comforted by her presence, and she herself be honoured before all the world for the humiliations that she suffered in this life from those that knew her not, and did her outrage in the passion of her Son.

Colloquy.—O sovereign Virgin, I rejoice for the glory thou shalt have at that day! Aid me, I beseech thee, with thy intercession, that then also I may be joyful with thy presence!

5. Finally, *round* about the *throne* of our Lord Christ will stand another throne, where His *Apostles* (as He promised them) shall “sit judging the twelve tribes of Israel,” (19) and all the nations of the world, condemning by their exemplary life the evil life of sinners, approving the sentence of the supreme Judge, and in His name declaring the righteousness of it. And, as many holy fathers affirm, there shall likewise be seated in thrones of glory the poor (20) of spirit, who, in imitation of the apostles, left all things for Christ.

(17) Ps. liv. 7. (18) 3 Reg. ii. 19. (19) Matt. xix. 28; Isa. iii. 13.

(20) S. Th. q. lxxxix. addit., art. 1, 2; Job xxxvi. 6.

Oh, how astounded will the tyrants and emperors be that martyred these apostles, when they shall see them exalted with so great glory! Oh, how much shall the poor religious be honoured, who in this world lived contemned!

Colloquy.—O sovereign Judge, if Thou dost thus honour those that are voluntarily poor, I embrace poverty with a great good will, not so much for my honour as for the glory which to Thee ensues from it!

POINT III.

“*The separation of the good and bad.*”—Thirdly, I am to consider that Christ our Lord, to finish His judgment, “shall separate the” good “from the” evil, “as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats;” (21) the righteous will be placed “on His right” hand, and the wicked “on His left.”

1. Concerning this, I must consider that this world and the Church is now like a *flock* of sheep and *goats*, of good and evil so mingled together that we cannot always discern who is “the sheep” of Christ, or “the goats” of Satan. And through this ignorance oftentimes we honour the sinner as a just man, and despise the just man reputed him a sinner. Whence also it proceeds that the just and the unjust have not always that place which they merit; for oftentimes wicked men usurp the “right hand” and most exalted place of the earth, and the good stand on the “left hand,” in the most contemptible place of the world. For which Solomon says, “I saw” a great evil “under the sun, in the place of judgment wickedness, and in the place of justice iniquity; and I said in my heart, God shall judge both the just and the wicked,” (22) and then shall be seen what every one is.

2. Now this time being come, Christ our Lord, to dis-

(21) Matt. xxv. 31.

(22) Eccles. iii. 16; x. 6.

cover these deceits and oppressions, shall *separate* "the wheat" from "the cockle," the grain from "the chaff," (23) the good fish from the bad, and the lambs from the kids. And the good, "He shall set on His right hand," taking them up (as St. Paul says) "into the air," (24) that all the world may know them, and honour them as saints; and the wicked, "He will set" "on his left" hand, leaving them upon the earth that all may know them, and despise them as sinners. Oh, how great shall the *confusion* be of the *wicked*, who, in this life, had the right hand and were mighty, when they shall see themselves on the left hand in such an extremity of baseness! Oh, what a raging envy will they have against the righteous, when they shall see them so honoured, and themselves so contemned! What will the prince and the lord say when he shall see his slave exalted to so high a place? What the superior and the master, when he sees his subject and disciple so preferred before him? All at once they will say that of the Book of Wisdom, "We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour; behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints! Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined to us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us." (25)

Colloquy.—O Sun of Righteousness, illuminate the eyes of my soul with Thy celestial light, that I may behold the blindness of these wretches, and be warned in time by their calamity! Amen.

3. Contrariwise, the *righteous* shall be very *full of content* to see themselves on the right side of Christ, and Christ our Lord very joyful to see them at His side; for then that saying of David begins to the letter to be visibly fulfilled: "The Queen stood on Thy right hand in gilded clothing.

(23) Matt. iii. 12; xiii. 30, 47. (24) 1 Thess. iv. (25) Sap. v. 4.

surrounded with variety." (26) Oh, how glorious then will that congregation of the just be there, like a queen that shall soon be placed in the kingdom of her spouse, rejoicing to behold herself set at the right hand of her beloved, adorned with virtues! In this life she was much humbled with contempts, and now she is seen in an instant exalted to great honours. Oh, happy he that seats himself in the lowest place of the world, for then Christ will say to him "Amice, ascende superius," "Friend, go up higher;" (27) ascend above the proud of the earth, and forthwith thou shalt ascend with me to the thrones of heaven.

Colloquy.—O my soul, choose in this life a low place among men, that at the day of judgment Christ may give thee a high place among the angels! Make no account of the right or left hand that thou hast in this world, but of that thou shalt have in the tribunal of Christ, endeavouring to live with such purity that thou mayest merit to be on His right hand! Amen.

3. Lastly, if I would know what hand I shall be on at the day of judgment, I must consider whether I be a "sheep" or a "goat;" that is, if I hear the voice of my pastor Christ; if I have meekness and humility; if I suffer with patience adversities and injuries; and if I distribute my goods liberally to others. Or contrariwise, if I be proud and vindictive; if I seek my temporal profit to the detriment of my neighbour, and to the loss of my spiritual good; and so making reflection upon this, I will endeavour to be "a sheep" of this sovereign Shepherd, confidently trusting that He will place me on His right hand with exceeding pleasure and profit.

POINT IV.

On the manifestation of consciences.—The fourth point shall be to consider the manifestation that will be made at

(26) Ps. xliv. 10.

(27) Luc. xiv. 10.

the day of judgment of all the consciences of the *good* and *evil* before men and before angels, (28) when "the Lord," as the apostle St. Paul says, "both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart," (29) with a special light, which Almighty God shall communicate, in order to make them to be seen.

1. In this I will consider how God our Lord on that day shall open (as the Holy Scripture says) and unfold "the books" (30) of men's consciences, which during the time of this life were fast shut up, so that all shall read what is written in the book of every one's conscience, and every one what is written in that of all; and according to the contents of those books judgment shall be concluded and sentence pronounced, that all may see the truth and uprightness of God's justice, as well for the honour of the good as for the confusion of the wicked. Whence I will gather how much it behoves me to consider well what I write in the book of my conscience; for I may now write what I please and cover it as I will, but in that day, whether I will or no, all shall come to light, and if the book of my conscience be well written, according to the book of life, which is Christ Jesus, my "book," (31) says Job, shall be my defence, my honour and my crown. But if it be contrary to that of Christ Jesus, it shall be my accuser, my dishonour and my condemnation.

Colloquy.—O most tender Saviour, whose book in the day of judgment shall be opened, that Thy life may be as a law and living rule by which judgment shall be made of ours, permit me not to write in the book of my conscience anything that may be contrary to Thy book! And if at any time, through my

(28) S. Th. in addit. q. lxxxvii.

(29) 1 Cor. iv. 5.

(30) Dan. vii. 10; Apoc. xx. 12.

(31) Job xxxi. 35.

frailty, I shall so write, aid me to blot it out with penance, that in the day of my account, seeing me conformable to Thee in life, Thou mayest likewise make me conformable to Thee in glory! Amen.

2. But particularising more at large what is to pass in this manifestation, I will consider that then the *secret sins* of the *heart* shall be published, and the foul sins of deed that were committed in corners, and those which for shame were concealed in confession, or were covered with excuses and shifts. Then shall also be manifested evil intentions, secret treasons, hypocrisies, and all other works that seemed holy and were in truth wicked. Then shall be known unfaithful servants, false friends, feigned Christians, with very great confusion to see themselves discovered; for if I feel it so much to have my secret sin published before twelve men, how shall I feel it to have all my sins together published before all men and before all angels?

Colloquy.—O my soul, how darest thou sin in secret if thou believest that thy sin shall be published and manifested before all the world? How canst thou in confession cover some sins through shame, if thy faith tells thee of this confusion thou shalt suffer for concealing them? Remember what thy Redeemer saith, “Nihil opertum quod non reveletur, neque occultum quod non sciatur;” “There is nothing covered which shall not be revealed, nor hidden which shall not be known.” (32) Therefore cease to commit that sin that thou wouldst not have manifested.

3. Then I will consider how God our Lord shall manifest the *good* works of the *just*, how secret soever they have been; their pure thoughts, their holy affections, their intentions so closely hidden that the left hand knew not what the right did; and their exterior works which they covered

(32) Luc. xii. 2.

for humility, and those which the world esteemed for evil, and on that account calumniated and condemned them; for which, notwithstanding, they shall be honoured and exalted. Oh, how foul and abominable shall vice then appear, and how pleasing and beautiful virtue! Oh, what honour and credit shall it then be to have been obedient and humble, and to have suffered injuries silently, without excuses or complainings! Oh, happy they who embrace these virtuous exercises, since through them they shall receive so great a glory!

Colloquy.—Cover, O my soul, thy good works with humility, that pride may not rob thee of them; for in His good time our Lord, to thy great glory, shall discover them! Amen.

4. Lastly, I will consider how the just Judge in that day will discover as well the *good* works which the *evil* did as the *evil* works which the *good* did; but with a different end and issue. For the good works of the evil shall arise to their greater ignominy, for not having persevered in that good, losing the reward of it for mingling it with many evils. And when they shall see the advices and good counsels which they gave to the elect they will be much the more ashamed that they took them not for themselves, nor made any profit of them. Contrariwise, when God shall punish the sins committed by the just, He will likewise publish the penance which they did and the good they drew from the same, so that they shall not be to them an occasion of confusion, but rather a motive to praise Almighty God who pardoned them and freed them by His great mercy from so great a misery. And all shall redound to the greater confusion of the wicked, seeing others that committed the same or greater sins than theirs in so great honour for having done penance for them in seasonable time.

POINT V.

1. *Of the accusations and imputations against the wicked.*
 —The fifth point shall be to consider the terrible *accusations* and *charges* that will *arise out of* this manifestation, against the wicked in favour of the good. For first of all, the devil, the “accuser” (33) and calumniator of men on this day—which is the last of his office—shall do the same with great vehemence, exaggerating the sins of the wicked, the more to confound them, as St. Basil (34) says, before the whole world; for turning himself to the Judge, he will say, “I did not create these, neither did I give them life, or sustenance, or the goods with they enjoyed: I neither suffered nor died for them, nor promised them any eternal reward; and yet notwithstanding, forsaking Thee who didst all these things for them, they served and obeyed me! Therefore mine they are by right; for I vanquished them, and they yielded themselves to me, and esteemed me more than Thee.” This will proud Satan say, as one who after his raging manner desires to triumph over Christ our Lord, and to revenge himself on Him in His creatures. Oh, how ashamed and out of countenance shall the wicked become for having obeyed him!

Colloquy.—Fly, O my soul, from obeying him who will give thee so evil a retribution! Turn for Christ’s honour who created and redeemed thee, deceiving His enemy in this life, that he may not beguile thee in the other!

2. Secondly, I will consider the terrible *charges* that *Christ Himself* will interiorly *lay on* them, calling to every one’s memory the *benefits* He has done them. “I,” will He say, “created thee to my own image and likeness, and thou stainedst it with many sins. I redeemed thee with my precious blood, and thou with thy evil ways didst tread and

(33) Apoc. xii. 10.

(34) Orat. 1 de amore erga Deum et proximum.

trample it under foot. I gave thee the sacrament of baptism, making thee a member of my Church, and thou profanedst it, living with scandal therein. I offered thee the sacrament of penance to restore to thee my grace, and thou choosedst to remain in sin. I invited thee to the banquet of my body and blood for thy sustenance, and thou despisedst it for the flesh-pots of Egypt. I called thee with many inspirations, and thou wast obstinately rebellious unto them. I threatened thee with chastisements, I recalled thee with benefits, and I encouraged thee with promises of great rewards; and of all these thou madest no account. O wretched man, what could I do more for thee than I did? And thou, what couldest thou do more against me than thou didst, esteeming more thine own honour than mine? O angels and ministers, judge you and see, 'what is there that I ought to do more to this vineyard, and have not done to it? Was it that I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes?'" (35) Pondering all this, I will with great feeling pronounce those words of David, "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy indignation, nor chastise me in Thy wrath," (36) but correct me in Thy mercy, whilst yet there is time for my amendment.

3. To this reprehension of Christ our very *guardian-angels* will add theirs, alleging how much they did to divert the wicked from their evil life, and yet with what rebellion the wicked contradicted them. The just likewise who are present shall accuse them—some because they rejected their counsel; others because they received from them great wrongs; and others for the peril in which they saw themselves through their evil example. All this the wretches shall hear and see in the interior part of their soul and o their unhappy conscience, which (as the apostle saith) shall be the most terrible accuser of all; (37) for being convinced with

(35) Isa. v. 2. (36) Ps. vi. 2. (37) Rom. ii. 10.

the evidence of truth, and seeing the reason that all have to accuse her, she shall have nothing to answer, but much of which to accuse herself. Oh, how much better had it been for her to have willingly and profitably accused herself in this life, than to accuse herself at that time through necessity and without remedy!

Colloquy.—O sweet Jesus, grant me that I may worthily accuse myself of my sins before Thee, and before the confessor who is to absolve me of them, that they may not accuse me in judgment to my condemnation!

MEDITATION XV.

ON THE SENTENCES IN FAVOUR OF THE GOOD AND AGAINST THE WICKED,
AND ON THEIR EXECUTION.

THE form of the sentences which Christ our Lord will pronounce (as it is believed, with an audible voice) (1) in favour of the good and against the wicked, is expressed in the holy Gospel, beginning with that in favour of the good, that we may understand how much more God our Lord is inclined to reward than He is to punish.

POINT I.

1. First, I must consider that Christ our Lord, seated on the throne of His glory, looking toward the *righteous*, with a gentle and amiable voice will say to them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father! possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and you gave me to eat," &c. (2) This sentence we will meditate word by word, pondering the mystery which every word contains, conformably to the second form of

(1) Abulen, q. cccxxxiii. in Matth; Jansenius, Sotus, et alii.

(2) Matt. xxv. 34.

praying set down in the ninth chapter of the introduction. And yet we will here do no more than *point at* the considerations of these words; for hereafter they will be handled more at large.

i. "*Come.*"—The first word is "Come;" in which I am to consider for what *cause* He says to them "Come," *whence* they are to come, and *whither* they are to come. He says to them "Come," to recall to their memory their *first* vocation, when He called them to follow Him, saying to them, "Come ye to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you." And, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." (3) And because they hearkened to this vocation, He calls them with such another word, as if He should say, "Seeing you came after me, embracing the *cross* and mortification, to follow my life, come to receive the *reward*, following me in glory. 'Come from' Mount 'Libanus' (4) of my Church, in which ye were baptised and washed with the tears of penance, and grew up like cedars in all virtues. 'Come out of great tribulation,' in which you have lived, having 'washed your robes, and made them white' in my precious 'blood.' (5) Come from the dens of lions and the habitations of tigers, in whose company you have lived, suffering great persecutions. 'Come' out from amongst the midst of them, and come to be crowned, and to receive the reward that you have merited for the many victories you have obtained."

Colloquy.—O my soul, hear speedily the voice of Christ, with which He calleth thee to imitate His life, that thou mayest be worthy to hear this sweet voice, with which He will call thee to receive thy crown! Amen.

ii. "*Ye blessed of my Father.*"—The second word is "*Ye*

(3) Matt. xi. 28; xvi. 24. (4) Cant. iv. 8. (5) Apoc. vii. 14.

blessed of my Father." He calls them "*blessed,*" that all may understand the *immensity of benefits* that He has done, does, and will do throughout all eternity, fulfilling that of the Psalmist, that the "*innocent in hands and clean of heart*" should "*receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God his Saviour.*" (6) And he says not "*Come, ye blessed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,*" nor "*ye blessed of Moses,*" or of the patriarchs and prophets, but "*ye blessed of my*" eternal "*Father, who hath blessed*" you "*with all kind of spiritual blessings,*" (7) communicating to you the goods of His grace, and now entirely those of His glory. And He says not "*Ye blessed of God,*" but of "*my Father,*" that it may be understood that all these blessings proceed from the fatherly love which Almighty God bore them on account of His Son. And because His benediction is effectual, and immediately performs what it signifies, with this sweet word He will replenish them with new and extraordinary delights.

iii. "*Possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*"—Thirdly, He says to them, "*Possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!*" In these words I am to consider *what kingdom* this is—*how long* a time has elapsed since it was *prepared*—that it is prepared for the *righteous*, and that to them is given the *possession* of it; in all which is resplendent the infinite charity of our heavenly Father. For, first, He would that the inheritance and patrimony of His children should be a *kingdom*, so sovereign that on account of its excellence it deserves the name of a kingdom; for it is not an earthly but a heavenly kingdom, whose riches are infinite, and whose pleasures so inestimable that they make their possessors blessed. This kingdom He prepared for them from all eternity, predestinating them of His mere

(6) Ps. xxiii. 5.

(7) Eph. i. 4.

mercy to reign with Him. And "from the foundation of the world" He created the highest heaven, that it might be a royal city and habitation of these blessed kings. And with great tenderness He adds that word "*for you*;" as if He should say, "This kingdom was not prepared principally for the angels, and through want of them for you, entering in place of those who lost the seats of this kingdom, but it was prepared *equally for all* the just, angels and men, and for you, for your souls, and for your bodies.

"Come,' then, to take peaceable *possession* of this kingdom so noble and so ancient, out of which you shall never be expelled! Enter into the joys of my Father, which shall never be taken from you! 'Sit down to reign' with me on my throne, as I 'am also' set down with my 'eternal Father' (8) on His throne!"

Colloquy.—O most loving Father, I give Thee thanks for this so sovereign kingdom which Thou hast prepared for Thy elect, to show in them the infinite riches of Thy grace and charity! Grant me, O Lord, that I may in such manner prepare my soul that Thou mayest reign therein by Thy grace, and afterwards carry it to possess this eternal kingdom of Thy glory! Amen.

iv. "*For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat.*"—Then the Judge declares the *reason* of His sentence, and the *merits* for which He gives them His kingdom, saying, "I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you covered me; sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me," to set me at liberty. And the just, astonished that for so little works He should give them a kingdom so great, and that He should so much esteem these works of mercy, as if they had been done to

(8) Apoc. iii. 21.

His own person, shall ask Him, not so much with words as with affections and inward feelings of great admiration, saying, "Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, and fed Thee? thirsty, and gave Thee drink? Or when did we see Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and covered Thee? Or when did we see Thee sick or in prison, and came to Thee?" Then our Lord will answer them, "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren you did it to me," for I was in them; and though but little ones, I yet glory to hold them for my brethren.

Colloquy.—O happy poor, that are accounted as His brethren by the Judge who shall judge them, and by the eternal King who shall reward them, who likewise rewardeth others for doing them good! O happy works of mercy, whose principal object is Christ, and whose reward is His kingdom! Oh, blessed are the merciful, seeing in this day they shall obtain so great mercy!

2. Lastly, I will consider that although Christ our Lord in the gospel alleges for the reason of His sentence only the works of mercy towards our neighbours, yet He will also declare the *other* good works of obedience and mortification necessary to enter into heaven. And as the voice of God is of infinite power, He will declare to every one interiorly, in such sort that all may understand the special works for which He gives him His kingdom. To the martyr He will say, "Come," "thou blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for" thee, "because Thou shedst Thy blood for me!" And to the virgin He will say, "Come, thou blessed of my Father, for the virginity which thou preservedst with purity of body and soul!" And to the religious man, "Come, thou blessed of my Father, for thou didst leave all things to follow me!" And in this manner I may run through the other states of the just. Oh, what content will all receive

from the sweet voice of this comfortable sentence, with which Almighty God "will give" to "their hearing" complete joy and gladness, "and the bones that" were "humbled shall rejoice." (9) Happy the sheep that in this life "hear the voice" of their "Shepherd," and "follow" (10) His steps; for on this day, being placed on His right hand, they shall hear the voice that calls them to the eternal pastures.

Colloquy.—O sovereign Shepherd, aid me with Thy abundant grace, that I may be worthy to hear so favourable a sentence! Amen.

POINT II.

1. I must in the next place consider that towards the *wicked* the Judge will turn His angry countenance, and with a dreadful voice will say to them, "Depart from me, you cursed! into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me not to eat," &c. This sentence, like the former, we may consider word by word, because in them are declared all the kinds of pains that are in hell, of which we shall hereafter make a lengthened consideration.

i. *Pain of loss or damnation.*—"Depart from me."—The first word is, "Depart from me." In this He condemns them to that eternal pain which is called pain of *loss* or *damnation*, which is a perpetual banishment from heaven, and a privation of the sight of Almighty God for evermore. And the more to wound them, showing Himself so glorious to them, He says, "*Depart from me* who am your God, your first beginning and last end! '*Depart from me*' who am your Redeemer, from me who made myself man for your sakes, and received these wounds for your remedy; from me who invited you with pardon, and you

(9) Ps. l. 10.

(10) Joan. x. 3.

would not accept it! Therefore, depart for ever from my friendship, from my protection, from my kingdom, from my paradise, from my clear sight, and from the copious river of my delights." And since whosoever is separated from Christ is also separated from those who go with Christ, in saying to them "Depart from me" He says likewise, "Depart from the hierarchies and choirs of my angels, depart from my apostles, martyrs, confessors and virgins, and depart from the sweet company of my holy Mother, who would also have been yours, but you would not have her! I did sufficient to draw you to my service and to my house, but you, through your perverse will, separated yourselves and made yourselves strangers. Therefore, in punishment of this, I, by my just will, do banish and separate you from me and all mine, without hope ever to have any part in me, or aught whatsoever that is mine."

Colloquy.—O my Saviour, let not such a punishment fall upon me, to separate me from Thee for ever! Chastise me with what punishment Thou wilt, so that, united with Thee in love, I may always be near Thee! Amen.

ii. "*You cursed.*"—The second word is "You cursed," with which, being very effectual, He pours upon them all the eternal maledictions and miseries that they have deserved by their sins. Cursed shall their *soul* be, and cursed their *body*; cursed their *powers*, and cursed their *senses*. There shall light upon them the malediction of *hunger* and *thirst*, of *sickness* and *sorrow*, of *infamy* and *dishonour*. Cursed in the "city" (11) where they shall live, in the house where they shall dwell, in the company they shall keep, and in all things that shall happen to them. And He calls them not cursed of His *Father*, as He called the righteous *blessed* of His *Father*, that they may understand

(11) Dent. xxviii. 16, et seq.

that benediction originally springs from God our Father, who for His part would that *they also* should have been blessed; but *malediction* originally springs from themselves and their sins, according to that of David: "He loved cursing, and it shall come unto him; and he would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him; and he put on cursing like a garment, and it went in like water into his entrails, and like oil into his bones." (12) Oh, how raging and mad will the wretches be to hear this horrid word of the eternal malediction! Oh, what a raving envy shall pierce their entrails, seeing that Almighty God blesses the righteous, without leaving them so much as one benediction! If Esau, on seeing that his younger brother, Jacob, had got the blessing, "irrugit clamore magno," "roared out with a great cry," (13) and, with fruitless tears, said to his father, "Hast thou not reserved me also a blessing?" how loud will those reprobates figured by Esau cry and roar when they shall see that the elect, figured by Jacob, have purchased the benediction of the heavenly Father, and that not even *one* blessing remains for them! With what rage will they confirm their own malediction; cursing the day in which they were born and the milk which they sucked, desiring rather never to have been born than to hear such a fearful and affrighting malediction!

Colloquy.—O most sweet Jesus, who, ascending the cross, tookest upon Thee "the curse of the law," (14) to deliver us from the curse of sin and eternal pain, favour me with Thy mercy, that upon me may not fall so terrible a misery! Amen.

iii. *Pain of Sense.*—'Into everlasting fire.'—The third word is, "Into everlasting fire." In this He condemns them to the pain which is called the pain of *sense*, which is everlasting fire. As if He should say, "I separate you

(12) Ps. cviii. 18. (13) Gen. xxvii. 34; ib. xxxvi. (14) Gal. iii. 13.

from me, not that you should return to that freedom and liberty of life that you were wont to have, nor that you should live upon the face of the earth at your pleasure, but that you should descend to the obscure prison of hell, and burn in the terrible fires that are therein ; and this not for ten years, nor ten thousand, but for all the time that the fire, which is *eternal*, shall last, and shall do its office to torment you throughout all eternity." Oh, what affliction will that dreadful word cause in those wretched sinners, seeing themselves again condemned to return to the prison and fire whence their soul had come up, that the body also may burn in those flames in which the soul burned !

iv. "*Which is prepared.*"—The Judge adds, that this fire "was" already "prepared," to bring back to their memory that the divine justice, as it prepared a *kingdom* to reward the *righteous*, so also it prepared a *fire* to chastise the *wicked* ; which, although it were hidden from the eyes of the body, yet was so revealed that they might see it with the eyes of faith, and might endeavour to escape it. With these eyes am I to penetrate the earth and see the terrible fire which at this day is in its centre, prepared for the chastisement of my sins, if I do not penance for them, remembering that of the prophet Isaiah, "Præparata est ab heri Tophet," &c. ; "Tophet is prepared by the king from yesterday," that is, very long since, and from the beginning of the world ; a horrid place, "deep and wide. The nourishment thereof is fire and much wood ; the breath of the Lord as a torrent of brimstone kindling it." (15) He calls it "*Tophet*," as our Saviour Christ calls it "*Gehenna*," (16) which was a place of terrible fires, where the children were burned who were sacrificed to the idol Moloch ; (17) to give us to understand that by the furnaces and horrible places of fire, of smoke and brimstone that we see upon the earth, we

(15) Isa. xxx. 33. (16) Matt. v. 29. (17) 4 Reg. .10.

may, as it were, trace out the terribleness of that fire which Almighty God has prepared *under it* for such as sacrifice their souls to the devil.

Colloquy.—O eternal King, who preparedst heaven and hell, to cherish in the one the righteous with the gentle breath of Thy charity, and to torment the wicked in the other with the burning blast of Thy indignation, visit me with the breath of Thy divine inspiration, that I may always be mindful of these two places, preparing myself by Thy grace by such a manner of life that I may attain to the one and be for ever free from the other ! Amen.

v. "*For the devil and his angels!*"—He says likewise to them that this fire is prepared "for the devil and his angels," that they may understand that they are condemned to the perpetual company of the devils, matching them together, that those whom they imitated in *sin* they might imitate in *pain*; and seeing they made themselves of the faction of Lucifer and of his wicked angels, they should have their punishment with them and by their means, those being their executioners who were their seducers. But He says not to them, "Go" to the "*fire*" prepared for you, as He says to the righteous, "Come" to "the kingdom" that I have "prepared for you," in order to upbraid them with the great mercy which He *would have* done them; for it was not His intention to make hell to punish *men*, if they themselves had not through sin made themselves worthy of punishment; and had they not been like the devils *impenitent*, they should not have been cast into the eternal fire prepared for them.

Colloquy.—O God of vengeance, and withal Father of mercy, seeing Thou rather desirest to pardon sinners with mercy than to chastise them with vengeance, give me time of true penance, that I be not chastised with the impenitent devils ! Amen.

vi. (a) "*For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat.*"— Then the Judge declares the *just reason* of His sentence, saying, "*For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat,*" nor did you exercise towards me the other works of mercy. And the damned, desiring to excuse themselves as not having failed in such works towards Christ, He will say to them, "*As long as you did it not to one of these least, you did it not to me; for I was in them, and therefore what you did not to them you did not to me. For he that loveth not his neighbour, whom he seeth visibly with his eyes, how can he love Almighty God who is invisible? And he who forgetteth the image of Almighty God whom he hath present, how will he remember God Himself, whom he considers as absent?*" (18)

(b) I will also consider that Christ our Lord in the *reason* of the sentence alleges those sins that seem the lesser, to give us to understand with how much more rigour He will chastise the greater sins, of which He will also make mention. And He will especially declare to every one (so that all shall understand it) the *cause* for which He condemns him, saying to the luxurious, "*Depart from me, ye cursed, to everlasting fire, for the luxuries and impurities in which you lived;*" and to the perjured and blasphemous, "*Depart from me, because you profaned my holy name, whilst I had so great care of honouring yours,*" &c.

(c) I will consider that the wicked in the day of judgment will allege for their acquittal some glorious works which they did, saying to Christ, "*Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and cast out devils in Thy name, and done many miracles in Thy name?*" (19) Then why dost thou separate us from Thee?" But our Lord will answer them, "*I never knew you; depart from me, you that work iniquity:*" as if He should say, "*I know this faith and these*

(18) 1 Joan. iv. 20.

(19) Matt. vii. 22.

graces that you had, for I gave you them ; but you abused them, mingling them with heinous sins ; and it was reasonable that you who prophesied to others should have prophesied to yourselves ; and who cast out devils out of other men's bodies should have cast them out of your own souls ; and who did miraculous works should also have done virtuous works. And since you did not do this, I neither know you nor approve you ; and though you call me your 'Lord,' I will not admit you as my servants, because you were not obedient to me." Whence I will gather, that if at that time no account shall be made of *prophecy* and the *grace to do miracles without virtues*, less account shall be made of nobility, riches, dignities, sciences, and other much lesser things which yet are much esteemed of men. For to all in general He will say, "I know you not ; depart from me, you that work iniquity !"

(d) The damned hearing the thunder of this dreadful sentence, a mortal raving sadness will fall upon them. For if "the earth" at the *signs* of judgment (which like "lightnings" precede this thunder) "shook and trembled," (20) so as to wither their bones with fear, what a terror shall the thunder *itself* cause ? What affliction the flash, and what torment the fire ?

Colloquy.—O sovereign Judge, send "lightnings" of Thy divine inspirations upon the earth of my soul, that, contemplating what is to pass in judgment, I may tremble and quake, and so alter my life that Thou mayest alter the sentence ! "Change" my heart with Thy "right hand," (21) that in that day I may not be placed on Thy left hand ! "Et cum veneris judicare, noli me condemnare ;" "And when Thou comest to judgment, do not condemn me." (22) Let Thy mercy now pardon me, that then Thy justice may not condemn me ! Amen.

(20) Ps. lxxvi. 19 ; xcvi. 4.

(21) Ps. lxxvi. 11.

(22) Job x. 2.

POINT III.

Thirdly, I am to consider the *execution* of these sentences, of which our Saviour Christ says, "Et ibunt hi in supplicium æternum, justi autem in vitam æternam;" "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting." (23)

1. I will consider the *execution* of the sentence given against the *wicked*; for in the instant that it is given, without any delay, in the sight of the righteous, the earth will open under their feet, and the devils laying hold on them, they will all together descend to hell; and the earth immediately closing up again, they will remain for ever buried in that abyss of fire. Then shall be fulfilled that malediction written in the Psalm, "Let death come upon them, and let them go down alive into hell;" (24) and that which St. John speaks of in his Apocalypse, that "hell and death," and whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the "pool of fire" (25) and brimstone, where, with Antichrist and the false prophets, they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. "This is the *second death*, bitter and eternal, which encompasses the souls and bodies that died the *first death* of *sin* and the corporal death that followed. Oh, what a furious raving will possess the damned, seeing themselves not able to resist nor to impeach the execution of this sentence! Oh, what a bitter envy will penetrate their bowels, to behold the glory of the righteous from whom they are divided! Oh, what a desperate sadness will they receive by this "second death," and in their first entrance into that stinking infernal pool! Oh, what raging agonies, beholding themselves covered with mountains of earth, bolted up with eternal bolts, and bound hand and foot with chains of perpetual damnation! Then shall they see by experience "that it is an evil and a bitter

(23) Matt. xxv. 46.

(24) Ps. liv. 16.

(25) Apoc. xx. 14.

thing'' (26) to have divided themselves from their God, and to have abandoned His holy fear.

Colloquy.—Fear, O my soul, the terribleness of this second death, that thou mayest avoid the iniquity of the first death! “Enter” in spirit “into these holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth,” (27) and hide thyself in them, beholding quietly what passeth there, that thou mayest fear the wrath of the Almighty and escape His fury!

2. I will likewise consider how “the just,” as David says, “shall rejoice when he shall see the revenge” (28) that God’s justice takes on the wicked, for although among the damned there may be their father or mother, brother or friend, they shall receive no pain, but rather joy, to see the great reason that Almighty God has for what He does; so that they shall sing the song that Moses sung when the Egyptians were drowned in the sea, “The depths have covered them, they are sunk to the bottom like a stone. Thy right hand, O Lord, is magnified in strength: Thy right hand, O Lord, hath slain the enemy;” (29) or the song of the Lamb, which St. John makes mention of, saying, “Great and wonderful are Thy works, O Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Thy ways, O King of Ages! Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and magnify Thy name? for Thou only art holy,” because Thy judgments are manifest “to all.” (30)

3. Hence I will go on to consider the *execution* of the sentence of the *righteous*, beholding how all the blessed are carried above the air, following their captain Jesus, singing a thousand songs of jubilation, and glorifying Almighty God for having delivered them from such and so great peril, with those words of the Psalmist, “Blessed be our Lord, who hath not given us to be a prey to their teeth!

(26) Jer. ii. 19.

(27) Isa. ii. 10.

(28) Ps. lvii. 11.

(29) Exod. xv. 1.

(30) Apoc. xv. 3.

Our soul hath been delivered as a sparrow out of the snare of the fowlers. The snare is broken and we are delivered, our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." (31) And in this manner they will penetrate the heavens until they arrive at the highest heaven, where Christ our Lord will place them on those thrones of glory which they are to possess, reigning with Him throughout all eternity with great peace and tranquillity.

Colloquy.—Oh, happy labours of a virtuous life, which are so well rewarded in life everlasting! Comfort thyself, O my soul, with the hope of these rewards, and embrace with great fervency these labours!

THE CONCLUSION OF THE FOREGOING.

There remains for conclusion of what has before been said, that I consider myself in this world as in a *middle place* between heaven and hell, and that I am here (as St. Bernard says) as novices are in a house of probation, (32) Almighty God proving me with the precepts He imposes upon me, and with the afflictions that He sends me, but yet assisting me with His grace to escape out of them, after being first well tried. If I prove *evil*, following the devil's party, by the irrevocable sentence of Almighty God I shall be cast out of the world into hell; but if I prove *just*, fulfilling the will of God, by His sentence I shall be exalted from the world into heaven. Wherefore it behoves me to consider very well how I live, that I may come forth out of this world well approved.

Colloquy.—O eternal God, who madest this earth like a house of probation, to exercise men whom Thou hast ordained for heaven, "prove me and try me," (33) preventing me with Thy mercy, that I may obey Thee in such a way that at the day of judgment Thou mayest approve me, and admit me into Thy kingdom! Amen.

(31) Ps. cxxiii. 6.

(32) Serm. xxxi. ex parvis.

(33) Ps. xxv. 2.

MEDITATION XVI.

ON HELL, AS TO THE ETERNITY OF THE PAINS AND THE HORROR OF THE PLACE; AND ON ITS INHABITANTS, AND THE TORMENTORS.

POINT I.

FIRST we must consider *what hell is*, in such a manner as by faith we are instructed, that, knowing its definition, we may tremble to hear the name.

1. *The nature of hell.*—Hell is a perpetual *prison*, full of fire and of innumerable and very terrible torments, to chastise perpetually such as die in mortal sin. Or, again, hell is an eternal *state*, wherein sinners, for the punishment of their sins, want all that good which they may desire for their content, and endure all kinds of evils which they may fear for their torment. So that in hell is joined together the *privation* of all that *good* which men enjoy in this life and angels in the other, and the *presence* of all those *evils* which afflict men in this life and the devils in the other.

2. This I may consider, by running through in my mind all the evils and miseries that I *suffer* or see *others suffer*, augmenting and *eternising them* in my thoughts; for all that in this life is suffered is little and lasts but a little time, because it has an end, but that which is suffered in hell is exceeding great, and will continue an infinite duration, which has equal extent with that of Almighty God, for it shall continue as long as Almighty God shall continue. If I here suffer hunger and thirst, I must understand that in hell I shall have another kind of hunger and thirst, incomparably greater, and, besides that, everlasting. If I here suffer any sorrow, or dishonour, or poverty, or melancholy, or want of friends, &c., all this I shall suffer in hell, with such excess

that that which is *here* is as it were but painted or like a breath of wind, but that which is *there* shall all of it be most terrible, and shall never have an end; for after it has continued fifty thousand years there remain other fifty thousand millions to pass, and these being passed there remain others, and then others without number or end. For Cain having been in hell more than five thousand years, is as if he began but to-day. And it is some two thousand years now that the covetous Dives burns in hell and asks but one drop of water, and he will for ever burn and for ever desire it.

Colloquy.—Then what folly is it, O my soul, by not suffering in this life so small and so short afflictions, to put thyself in danger of suffering evils so great and so everlasting! How is it that thou wilt not bear patiently that little and short correction which thou sufferest, seeing thou deservest to suffer so great and everlasting for thy sins? O eternal God, enlighten me with Thy sovereign light, that by the evils present I may know the terribleness of those that are eternal, and may live in such manner that I may deserve to be free from them! Amen.

POINT II.

Secondly, I am to consider the *causes* and *circumstances* of this *eternity*, pondering how that *all* that is in hell is eternal.

1. The *damned* himself is eternal, not only as to his soul, but also his body; for he will be immortal, neither can he kill himself nor can any other kill him, neither will Almighty God annihilate him. And though he himself should "desire to die," "death shall fly from" (1) him, neither will God accomplish this his desire; rather his

(1) Apoc. ix. 6.

raving to destroy himself will terribly torment him, seeing he cannot obtain what he desires.

2. The *place* of the *prison* is eternal, and cannot be destroyed; for "the earth" (in the midst of which hell is) "standeth for ever." (2) The *fire* likewise shall be eternal; for the eternal "breath of the Lord" (as the prophet Isaiah says) shall serve "as a torrent of brimstone kindling it;" (3) and so that it shall have need of no other fuel. Or if brimstone serve for fuel, *it* shall likewise be eternal, for the same "breath of" Almighty God shall preserve it. And fire, which has the virtue to burn and to consume, has there, by God's omnipotency, its virtue divided, (4) for there it burns and *consumes not*, and so that which for ever burns for ever continues.

3. The "*worm*" that there "gnaws" shall be eternal, and (as Christ our Saviour said) "dieth not." (5) For the corruption of which it is engendered, which is sin, never ends; and the lively apprehension of it and of the pain never ceases; and so that cruel gnawing which it makes in the conscience shall never have an end.

4. The *decree* of Almighty God is eternal and immutable; for He is resolved never to revoke the definitive sentence which He has given, nor to deliver out of hell him who once enters therein! "Quia in inferno nulla est redemptio;" (6) For in hell there is no redemption of captives, nor ransoming of prisoners, nor any price for them, forasmuch as the blood of Jesus Christ passes not thither. And if when it was fresh, and was shed upon Mount Calvary, it drew out of hell none of the damned, much less shall it now deliver any forth from thence.

5. Finally, all the *pains* shall be eternal, because the sins shall likewise be so. Forasmuch as in hell there is no pardon

(2) Eccles. i. 14.

(3) Isa. xxx. 33.

(4) Ps. xxviii. 7.

(5) Marc. ix. 47; Is. lxvi. 24.

(6) S. Th. 3, p. q. lii. art. 6.

of sins, no true penance, nor satisfaction that may be accepted, neither is the blood of Jesus Christ applied to them; whence it follows that whoever wills to die without doing penance for his sins, virtually wills to remain in them for ever, and that his sins should be eternal, and therefore he deserves that God's justice should chastise him with pains everlasting. (7) And upon this it is, that although a sinner die with true faith and hope, yet on entering into hell he is deprived of them, not only for being (as mentioned before) unworthy of them, but also because now there remains with him no object of hope, neither to obtain pardon of sins, nor to be heard in his petitions, nor to come out of misery, nor ever to attain to any blessedness.

Colloquy.—Then how is it, O my soul, that thou fearest not this being eternal, obliged to eternal miseries? How is it that thou art not affrighted with this fire, this "breath," this "worm," and this decree of God immutable and everlasting? Consider that yet Almighty God will alter the sentence, if thou with penance alterest thy life. Attend not till thy sin be eternal, for then so likewise shall be thy punishment.

POINT III.

1. Thirdly, I am to consider the *continuance* and *unchangeableness* of the pains which go together with eternity; considering that the pains shall in such a manner for ever endure, that they shall be perpetual without interruption and unchangeable without diminution. So that although they should continue millions of years, yet shall there not be even one day of vacation; neither will the pain cease so much as for an hour, or a moment; neither will the substantial pain be diminished, nor have any refreshing, as is apparent in the

(7) S. Th. 1, 2, q. lxxxvii. art 3, ad 1. cum S. Aug. et S. Greg. quos citat. meditat. ix. puncto 4.

rich covetous man, to whom Abraham denied so small a refreshment as to have his tongue touched with "the tip of" a "finger" dipped "in water." (8) Rather accidental torments will be added to them, by the new entrance of other damned; and that change which here is usually refreshing (if in hell there be any change) shall be *thens* a new torment. For if the luxurious (as it is said in Job) "pass from the snow waters to excessive heat," (9) it will be that the heat will more torment them, by reason of its opposition to the cold, and that the cold may cause the greater trembling and gnashing of teeth, through its contrast with the heat.

2. Finally, although these torments be so lasting and continual, yet custom in suffering gains nothing as any cause of their ease; rather every day they are as it were renewed, and are ever fresh with fresh impatience. For as "the pride of" these wretches "that hate" Almighty God (as says the prophet David) "ascendeth continually," (10) so likewise increases their wrath and envy, their impatience, fury and rage. Then what sayest thou, O my soul, and what art thou doing? If thou hast a lively faith of such torments, how is it that thy spirit fails not to consider such terribleness, such perpetuity, such continuation, such immutability and eternity? If, lying in a soft bed, thou feel it equal with death to pass a long night in watching and pain, expecting with much anxiety the refreshing and dawning of the day, how much more wilt thou feel it to be in an obscure prison, in a bed of fire, in perpetual watching, and in terrible pain, in a night so long and tedious that expects no refreshing of the day, because it is eternal?

Colloquy.—O justice of the Almighty, who trembleth not in Thy presence? "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy indignation, nor chastise me in Thy

(8) Luc. xvi. 24.

(9) Job. xxiv. 19.

(10) Ps. lxxiii. 23.

wrath;" (11) but protect me with Thy mercy, that I fall not into so dreadful and eternal a misery! Amen.

POINT IV.

Fourthly, descending to particulars, I must consider the *dreadfulness* of that place which we call hell.

1. For first it is a place under the earth, *obscure* and *full of darkness* thicker than that of Egypt, where never enters the light of the sun, moon, nor stars. And the fire, although it burns, gives no light, but smokes and blinds the sight; for "the Lord," on account of the wicked, "divideth the flame of fire," (12) taking from it the good that it has, and leaving it the evil.

2. Moreover, hell is a most *narrow* place, devoid of the flowery meadows and spacious forests of the earth. For although hell (as Isaiah says) be very "deep and wide," (13) and has its arms far stretched out, yet so many shall descend into it that hardly there will be for every one the space of a very narrow grave, and they will be crowded together like bricks in a fiery furnace, that they will not be able to turn or stir.

3. Besides this, it is a place most distempered with excessive heats, having not so much as a chink where any wind may enter to refresh it. And for this cause St. John, in his Apocalypse, calls it always the "pool of fire burning with brimstone." (14) For as fishes are in a lake of water overwhelmed, and as it were prisoners without being able to get out, so shall the damned be in that burning "pool" of terrible fire, mingled with melted brimstone of a most abominable smell.

4. And hence also it is that hell is a most *stinking* place. For the bodies of the damned shall reek forth an insupport-

(11) Ps. vi. 2.

(12) Ps. xxviii. 7.

(13) Isa. xxx. 33.

(14) Apoc. xix. 20; xx. 15.

able sweat with an intolerable stench. And, finally, it will be fastened on all sides with eternal bolts, that they shall never be able to get out, neither by force nor by subtlety. And if, by the dispensation of Almighty God, any comes out, he carries with him his torment, and returns presently from whence he issued; but that dispensation will never be given after the day of judgment. Oh, how soft and sweet would any dungeon appear to thee, if thou didst well ponder the terribleness of hell!

Colloquy.—O good Jesus, aid me to bewail bitterly my sins, that I may not descend to this land of “darkness,” covered with the “shadow of death,” (15) the land of those that are in despair! Amen.

POINT V.

Fifthly, I am to consider the *misery, wretchedness, and discord* of the *inhabitants* of this place, who are captives in this prison.

1. Pondering how they *want all the good qualities* of bounty, discretion, nobility, parentage, friendship and loyalty, and are clothed with all the *contrary* qualities, with horrible repulsiveness. For in hell are all sorts of persons; some were angels of several hierarchies and choirs, beautiful, potent, and very resplendent; others were emperors, kings and princes, with divers estates and titles of nobility; others were wise philosophers, eloquent and learned in divers sciences; others courtiers, discreet, affable, liberal, grateful and kind; others parents, kinsmen and allies; fathers and sons, brothers or cousins. Others very great friends and acquaintance, companions and neighbours; but in entering into hell they lose all these qualities, having, as Job says, “no order” or concord, but confusion and “everlasting horror.” (16) All make themselves mortal enemies

(15) Job. x. 21.

(16) Job x. 22.

one to another, filling themselves with wrath, rancour, envy, impatience and rage one against another, that one cannot endure to see the other, nor to give him a good word. The father abhors the son, and the son the father; the lord his vassal, and the vassal his lord; one cursing another, biting and rending themselves with rage. And specially those who in this life loved with an inordinate love, and were companions in sins, will much more abhor one another, and their pains will be augmented with rage to see themselves together. For as burning coals, when they are together, kindle each other, so these infernal coals, kindled with the fire of their own anger, will add heat to the burning heat of their companions.

2. Add to this the most painful consideration that, through necessity and in spite of themselves, they will *be eternally together*, not being able to fly or separate one from another. For, flying from one whom they much abhor, they light upon another that is worse; and so shall they have a perpetual and cruel war, having no one to pacify or to comfort them; for from the earth none will go, though he could; and none come from heaven though he would; for none that is good will deign to enter into so infamous a place, insomuch that Christ our Lord, when he descended into hell, entered not into this place, nor gave them any comfort. What will princes, then, think, to see themselves consorted with plebeians, and treated by them with such insolence and hatred? What a torment will it be to be forced to live with my enemies, who actually abhor me and curse me, without being able either to stop their mouths or my own ears! What a pain will it be never to see a person that wishes me well, nor is compassionate of my miseries, but that rather increases and augments them!

Colloquy.—O my soul, ground all thy friendships upon true charity, for this only is eternal, and perisheth

not, and without it all the rest will perish. (17) Have peace, as much as in thee lieth, with all men, that thou mayest not enter into the company of so many wicked !

POINT VI.

Sixthly, I am to consider the terribleness of those hellish *tormentors* and executioners.

1. First, generally in hell, *every one* of the damned is a tormentor of all, and all are tormentors of one, saying and doing things (as is mentioned above) to torment them.

2. Moreover, the *devils* are terrible tormentors of men, revenging themselves upon them, for the rage they have against Almighty God and against Jesus Christ ; and therefore they torment them with affrighting visions, with horrible imaginations, and with all other means that their fierce cruelty can invent.

3. Besides all this, the third and the most cruel tormentor is the *worm of conscience*, which gnaws, and will eternally gnaw, with terrible cruelty ; for the damned wretch, remembering the sins he has committed, and the inspirations he has to get out of them, and to have freed himself from those torments, and yet that through the sin of his own perverse freewill he entered into them, will himself be his own torturer, and will bite himself, and would rend himself in pieces (if he could) with incredible bitterness and rage, herein fulfilling that punishment of which St. Augustine (18) speaks : "Thou didst command it, O Lord, and so it cometh to pass, that the inordinate mind should be its own torment ;" for his sins are his tortures, and his unbridled passions his tormentors, so that he himself is most grievous to himself.

Colloquy.—Learn, then, O my soul, to hearken to

(17) Cassian collat. xvi. c. 2 ; 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

(18) Lib. 1 confessionum.

this knocking of thy conscience, and “be at agreement with thy” good “adversary,” (19) that pricketh thee when thou sinnest; for in hell, like a mad and enraged dog, she will bark and bite, revenging the injury thou didst her, when in this life thou contemnedst her!

4. The fourth tormentor will be the *invisible hand of Almighty God*, which discharges itself upon the damned, using His omnipotence against them; who, knowing this, turn their rage against Him, breaking out into horrible blasphemies, and desiring that He might cease to be. But all is turned to the increase of their anguish and torment.

Colloquy.—O most heavy hand of the Omnipotent, who can abide thee? Oh, what “a fearful thing is it to fall into the hands of the living God,” (20) when He is offended! Keep, O Lord, very far from me this Thy hand of chastisement, and touch me with that of Thy mercy, that, being freed from these fears, I may ever enjoy Thee, world without end! Amen.

MEDITATION XVII.

ON THE PAINS OF THE SENSES AND INTERIOR FACULTIES, AND ON THE PAIN OF LOSS OR DAMNATION WHICH IS SUFFERED IN HELL.

As the sinner commits two great evils, which are, to *separate* himself from *Almighty God*, the fountain of living water, (1) and to *turn to creatures*, to enjoy their perishing delights, so in hell he is punished with two sorts of pain—one which we call of *loss*, or damnation, for the first evil; and another which we call of *sense* for the second. (2) With this we will begin, because the pain of sense is more easy to perceive.

(19) Matt v. 26.

(20) Heb. x. 31.

(1) Jer. ii. 13.

(2) Hier. ii.

POINT I.

1. First, I must consider the pain which the damned suffer when they have a *body*. For according to the laws of God's justice, "Per quæ quis peccat, per hæc et torquetur;" "By what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented." (3) And seeing sin entereth by the *senses*, in them must be its punishment. This may be considered running through all the five.

i. The *sight* will be tormented by beholding their enemies near them, and by suffering horrible visions which the devils will set before them, taking dreadful forms in order to torment them; for they are not able to shut their eyes from seeing them, in chastisement of the sins they committed with this sense.

ii. The *hearing* will always be hearing blasphemies against Almighty God, maledictions and words most injurious, and other most harsh sounds after the manner of horrible howlings and roarings, without being able to shut their ears, in chastisement of the sins which they committed with them.

iii. The *smell* will perceive stinking things like brimstone, but above all, the abominable stench which will proceed from the bodies of the damned and from his own body.

iv. The *taste* in the throat and tongue will taste things exceeding bitter, yea much more bitter than "gall" or "wormwood," (4) with terrible retchings and vomitings of the stomach; and on the other side, it will suffer the hunger of a dog and a raging thirst, desiring, like the rich covetous man, one little "drop of water," (5) which yet will not be granted him in chastisement of his sins of gluttony.

v. The *touch* throughout the whole body will suffer great torments from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head,

(3) Sap. xi. 17.

(4) Jer. xxiii. 15.

(5) Luc. xvi. 24.

so that in it will be joined together the pains of the eyes, ears and teeth, of the side, of the heart, and of the gout, and of all others that torment us in this life. Now if the pain of *one sense alone* cause so great agony in this life, how much agony shall that pain cause that is made up of the pains of all the senses entering together? Oh, unhappy sensual delights, whose end is such terrible bitternesses!

2. With this consideration I must animate myself to bewail the sins which I have committed with these five senses, bewailing the liberty I have given them, and resolving to mortify and restrain them, that "death" and hell enter (6) not by them.

POINT II.

Secondly, I must consider the pain of the *fire*, which is so terrible that in comparison of it this *here* is no more than as if it were but painted, for it is an instrument of God's *justice* and *omnipotence* to chastise and torment, not only bodies, but souls also and pure spirits. The properties of this fire are,

1. First, that it is *embodied with the damned* by such a connexion, that wheresoever the devil goes, he is tormented with this fire; and we may say that he carries the fire of hell with him, because he carries the torment that he receives from it.

2. Secondly, though this fire be one and the same, yet it torments not *all* the damned *alike*; for the *greater* sinners it torments much *more*, and the *lesser less*. (7) Yea, and it will even torment one part of the body of the damned more than another when that part was a special instrument of his sin. Some it will torment more in the tongue, because they were murmurers and perjured. Others in the throat, because they were gluttons and drunkards. And all this wrought by the

(6) Hier. ix. 21.

(7) S. Th. 1 p. q. lxiv. art. 4 ad 3.

omnipotence and justice of Almighty God, who takes it for its instrument.

3. The third is, that it *wants* that which used to *refresh*, and *retains* that which is pure *torment*. For (as has been mentioned already) it burns and gives no light; it burns and consumes not; it burns perpetually and never diminishes, for it is preserved by God. And although the miserable damned (according to the saying of the prophet) are as "stubble," (8) this fire laying suddenly hold upon them without any resistance, yet this stubble never ceases to burn, and the flame that proceeds from it casts out such a smoke that it blinds but chokes not; it torments, but kills not. Then what will it be to see one of the damned steeped and overwhelmed in a pit of fire, and in an immensity of flames, with pitiful groanings, howlings and exclamations, without finding any refreshing or hope of ease? Oh, what a terrible evil is sin, seeing that Almighty God being infinitely merciful, beholding one that is His *own* creature, redeemed with the blood of the Lamb, suffering such horrible torments, yet has no compassion of him nor pulls him out of that fire; nay, rather from heaven He stands looking on him, and rejoicing that he suffers according to the statute of His justice!

Colloquy.—O my soul, hear what this our Lord says, "Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? Which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (9) If thou darest not touch the light fire of this life, why dost thou not tremble at the terrible fire of the other? Contemplate this fire with attention, that the fear of it may consume the fire of thy insatiable desires, if through thy want of fervent zeal, the fire of God's love be not sufficient to consume them.

(8) Mal. iv. 1.

(9) Isa. xxxiii. 14.

POINT III.

Thirdly, running through all the *interior faculties* of the soul, I am to consider the pains which they suffer.

1. First, the *imaginative* faculty will be tormented with horrid imaginations, (10) more terrible than those which the most melancholy suffer in dreams, or than those the Egyptians suffered, which (says the Wise man) were horrible and dreadful, with most monstrous affrighting visages of wild "beasts" and "serpents;" and with roarings and "hissings," (11) that wrought in them great terror and amazement.

2. Hereupon it is that the *appetites* will be tormented with the fury of their own passions, which will come forth in bands, and with great vehemence, namely, fears, melancholy, irksomeness, agonies, anger, desperation, envy, and rage, with such a cruel war among themselves that they will rend one another in pieces.

3. The *intellectual memory* will be tormented with a continual and fixed recollection of things *passed* that it possessed, and of the present which it *suffers*, and of those which are *to come* in eternity; so that it cannot think upon or call to mind anything which may ease it, or divert it, so as not to think upon its misery. And if it remembers the pleasures it had in the world, it is for its greater torment. Thus its memory will be like a most tumultuous sea, tossed with innumerable waves of imaginations, more bitter than gall, some going and others coming, leaving him not so much as one moment of rest.

4. The *understanding* will be darkened, without being able by reasoning to understand anything that may please it: it will be full of errors and illusions, brooding over and exaggerating his evils; and, judging with obstinacy that

(10) S. Th. in addit. q. xciv.

(11) Sap. xvii. 4, et deinceps.

Almighty God does him wrong, complaining against Him as against one unjust.

5. The *will* will be obstinate and obdurate in sin, and in the hatred of Almighty God, of His saints, and of men, without being able to be appeased, or changed, or to repent what it does; and, desiring to do his own will, he shall never be able to do it in anything that may be for his comfort; for already they have bound him hand and foot to "cast him into exterior darkness," (12) not permitting him liberty to exercise the works of light or joy. Hence a man's own will not being fulfilled shall be the hell of itself, to chastise it for those manifold times that, in this life, it did fulfil it contrary to the will of Almighty God.

6. Finally, I will consider that the *heart* of one of the damned is like a most bitter sea, into which enter the rivers of most terrible torments. Five for the five *exterior* senses, and *other* five for the five *interior* faculties; in order to chastise the sins they committed against the ten commandments of God's law, or against any *one* of them. For, as the apostle says, "Whosoever" shall "offend in one point is become guilty of all." (13)

Colloquy.—Then what greater unhappiness can there be than that those faculties which God our Lord gave me to enjoy Him, and to ennoble myself, should be converted into my cruel executioners, to torment and confound me? Immense God, aid me to mortify and subdue the faculties which Thou hast given me, and let me be their tormentor in this life rather than they should be mine in the life to come! Amen.

POINT IV.

Pain of loss.—Fourthly, I am to consider that pain which they call of *loss*, or *damnation*.

(12) Matt. xxii. 13.

(13) Jac. ii. 10.

1. This is *infinite*, because it deprives of an infinite good, which is Almighty God. (14) So that these wretches shall for ever be banished from heaven, and deprived of the blessedness and end for which they were created—of the clear vision of Almighty God—of love that beatifies, and of that river of delights which proceeds from all; all which shall give them terrible torment and grief, especially those who in this life believed in it. For although their understanding be obscured to know other things, it shall not be so to consider and esteem this, God's divine justice so ordaining it for their greater torment.

The terribleness of this pain may be considered two ways :

i. The first is; by that which *holy men feel here* who have the light of heaven, to know the greatness of the glory and the high felicity that it is to see Almighty God; who hold it for an extreme pain to want this sight, and tremble only to think on it, as is noted in the third point of the sixth meditation.

ii. The second way is, by that which the *damned themselves feel* by wanting this high felicity; not inasmuch as it is a something good, for they neither love God nor any holy thing; but inasmuch as they want that which should give them high and eternal rest, and free them from so horrible a torment. This I may come to find out by some likeness of things of this life; for if men have so much feeling to be deprived of an inheritance to which they had some right, how much more shall they feel to be deprived of the eternal inheritance of heaven, to which they might have had a right, if they had not forfeited it through sin! And if the privation of *finite* and limited goods and delights does so much grieve the heart, how much more will it be grieved with the privation of an *infinite* good, in which

(14) S. Th. 1, 2, q. lxxxvii. art. 4.

are eminently comprehended all the goods and pleasures created! And if, among terrible things, death is the most terrible—because it divides the soul from the body and from this visible world—how much more terrible will eternal death be, wherein the soul is divided from Almighty God, from His kingdom, and from the invisible world! And, as “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him,” (15) so likewise it is not possible to imagine the terribleness of the evils that are included in *wanting* for ever these goods.

Colloquy.—O infinite God, let all the other pains of sense be discharged upon me, so I be without sin, rather than Thou shouldst chastise me with this pain of loss, depriving me, through my sin, of Thy amiable presence! Amen.

2. To this pain is annexed the *wanting of the sight* and company of our Saviour Christ, of His most blessed Mother, of the nine choirs of angels, and of all those that are blessed. This will inflict much terrible torment upon those wretched souls when, in the day of judgment, they shall see part of the glory of this blessed company, and shall be divided from them—the memory of which shall perpetually remain in them with a furious envy and rage. Finally, by the terrible evils which they suffer they will gather what most excellent goods they want, because they are assured that Almighty God will be as liberal in rewarding as He is terrible in chastising; and that in that most beautiful place of heaven He has as many delights as there are torments in that most wretched place of hell; and to see themselves deprived of these great goods will exceedingly augment their evil. With these considerations I will found myself

(15) 1 Cor. ii. 9.

deep in sentiments of the fear of God, and detestation of my sins, accompanying them with a great confidence in God's mercy that He will deliver me from this extreme misery ; and so will I beg it of our Lord, saying to Him :

Colloquy.—I confess, O my God, that I am that miserable sinner who, “in the land of the saints hath done” innumerable “wicked things;” for which I deserve “not” to “see” Thy “glory,” (16) nor to be admitted into the company of those who enjoy it. I am sorry for those sins by which I have merited so great a punishment. Pardon them, O Lord, through Thy mercy, that the work of Thy hands be not destroyed, nor fail in that end for which it was created! Let me not help to people hell, nor to be fuel for that never-ending fire! Suffer me not to fall into a state in which I should curse and abhor Thee ; for who shall confess to Thee in hell? (17) No, no, O Lord, it must not be so, for I must for ever love and bless Thee ; and, after this life, Thou must place me in the other, where I may love and praise Thee, world without end! Amen.

THREE MEDITATIONS,

WITH FORMS OF PRAYER TO OBTAIN PURITY OF SOUL, AND PERFECT MORTIFICATION OF ITS VICES AND PASSIONS.

1. To obtain perfect purity of soul, which is the constant end of the purgative way, there are ordained certain forms of prayer prescribed in the ninth chapter of the introduction of this book, of which the *first* contains, for matter of meditation, the seven capital or principal vices, commonly called the seven deadly sins ; the ten commandments of the law of God ; and the three faculties and five senses of man. And it is very profitable to know more particularly the

(16) Isa. xxvi. 10.

(17) Ps. vi. 6.

multitude and greatness of our sins; and to learn how to examine the conscience, as well for sacramental confession as for the daily examination which is every night to be made; and finally, it aids much to dive deep into the knowledge of ourselves, to discover the roots of our sins, and to apply to them their remedies.

2. In the first place, I will set down the meditations of the *seven deadly sins*; for in them, as in seven heads, the other sins are virtually included, and for this reason our principal battle must be against them; for whosoever perfectly vanquishes them, vanquishes the dragon with the seven heads which makes war upon the saints, and destroys the seven nations of enemies which hinder the entrance into the land of promise, (1) not earthly, but heavenly, as Cassian largely prosecutes it in those books which he wrote upon this matter. Whence it is, that the principal end of these meditations must not be only to *know* and abhor the malice and deformity of these vices, but forthwith to begin the work, and to mortify those inordinate passions and affections that have taken deep root in our heart; for, as St. Basil (2) saith, vices are not vanquished nor virtues gained with *bare considerations*, but with *strong exercises* of mortification, for which meditation and prayer is a help, moving our will to be willing to be mortified, and obtaining of our Lord strength to that end. And although it is true that all mortal sins are taken away together and at an instant by contrition and confession, in which one mortal sin is not pardoned without another, yet vicious customs that remain in the soul, and passions of the appetite upon which they are founded, are to be mortified by *parcels*, and by little and little; for which Moses said to his people—speaking of the seven nations above-mentioned—“Ipse consumet nationes has in conspectu tuo

(1) Deut. vii. 1; item collat. v. c. 6. (2) Regula 7, exfusio.

paulatim, atque per partes, non poteris eas delere pariter ;” “He will consume these nations in thy sight by little and by degrees: thou wilt not be able to destroy them altogether.” (3) The Divine Providence so ordaining it for our exercise and humiliation; because, the war continuing longer, the victory shall be more secure and more profitable.

3. For this cause we will make a special meditation of every one of these vices, teaching the manner how to make war upon them by their contrary acts. To which end we shall consider in every one *three* things: i. In *what manner* a man may sin in every vice, setting down not only great, but also light sins, that those which are desirous of perfection may know more often what things they are to mortify. ii. What is the *loss* which *follows* such a vice, and the temporal punishments wherewith Almighty God is wont to chastise it, and the eternal, which in the other life especially correspond to it. iii. What are the great *favours* and *rewards* which they *enjoy* who courageously *mortify* it, and embrace the contrary virtue, declaring some of its acts and excellences, that fear and love may animate us to mortification.

MEDITATION XVIII.

ON PRIDE AND VAIN-GLORY.

POINT I.

1. FIRST, I am to consider *what pride is*, and in what manner a man may sin by it, pondering how contrary it is to all reason, how injurious to God, how prejudicial to our neighbour, and how hurtful to virtue; (1) for all this is discovered in every one, as the fathers have noted.

(3) Deut. vii. 22.

(1) S. Th. 2, 2, q. clixii.

Pride is an inordinate appetite of excellence, (2) and it is twofold. The one is *carnal* and *worldly*, which places its excellence in corporal goods, as wealth, parentage, beauty, honourable office, &c. The other pride is *spiritual*, which cherishes itself in the spiritual goods of sciences and virtues, and this has four acts. (3) i. The first is to attribute to oneself that which is God's, (4) as if it were his own, due to his nature or acquired by his own industry, without acknowledging God for the author of it. ii. The second is, that although one thinks that what he has is from Almighty God, yet he attributes to his own merits that which is of pure grace. iii. The third is, to think of oneself that he has much more good than in truth he has, as well in virtue as in learning and other natural or acquired gifts, and to flatter oneself with them. iv. The fourth is, to think that one is singular and excellent above all in those good parts which he has, or to desire vainly to be so, that all may yield and subject themselves to him.

2. From pride spring many other vices (5) with sundry acts of sins, which, like the seven heads of this infernal dragon, we may reduce to *seven*.

i. The first is her eldest daughter, *vain-glory*, which is an inordinate appetite to be known, esteemed and praised of men; whose acts are, to boast oneself of what one has, as if one had not received it from Almighty God; to boast of what in truth one has not, or of a thing unworthy of glory, by reason of its being wicked and most base; to desire vainly to delight men, saying or doing things that they may praise one; to rejoice vainly when one is praised, delighting to hear one's own praises, though they be false flatteries. This vain-glory is most abominable in matter of virtues, for it is

(2) Cassian lib. xii. c. 2; collat. v. c. 12.

(3) S. Greg. lib. xxxiv., mor. c. 18; S. Greg. xxv. moral. c. 7.

(4) Ps. xi. 5; Isa. x. 13.

(5) S. Th. 2, 2, q. cxxxii.

a sweet poison and a secret thief that robs and destroys them. (6)

ii. The second vice is *boasting*, whose acts are, to praise oneself, telling of those good parts which one has not, or superfluously exaggerating and blazoning those which one has, or discovering without any necessity those which one should cover. (7)

iii. The third is *ambition*, inordinately coveting honours and dignities; whose disorder consists in coveting those which one deserves not or in procuring them by evil means (8) or with overmuch affection, having no other end but worldly honour.

iv. The fourth is *presumption*, presuming great matters of oneself more than one is able to perform, and through one's vanity casting oneself inconsiderately into them.

v. The fifth is *hypocrisy*, feigning that virtue and good intention which one has not, to be accounted a holy man, and doing good works to this end with a dissembled goodness.

vi. The sixth is *stubbornness* in one's own judgment, preferring it before the judgment of others, even although they be one's superiors, in matters wherein it were good for him to subject himself to the opinion of others, not to be beguiled.

vii. The seventh is *contempt of others*, making small account of them; first of one's inferiors, and then of one's equals, and afterwards of one's superiors, until one come to despise even God himself. For pride, as David says, "ascendeth continually," (9) and begets innumerable other sins, discords, disobediences, maledictions and blasphemies.

3. As I am meditating these vices, I must consider what

(6) S. Basil de constit monast. c. xi., et orat. 17.

(7) S. Th. 2, 2, q. cxii; Jer. xlviii. 13, 30.

(8) S. Th. 2, 2, q. cxxx.

(9) Ps. lxxiii. 23.

sins I have committed in each one of them, making of them a humble confession in the presence of Almighty God, saying to Him,

Colloquy.—I accuse myself, O my God, that I am full of pride, that whatsoever I do is vain-glory; my words savour of boasting, and my actions and desires are poisoned with ambition. Oh that I had never fallen into such sins! Pardon me, O Lord, and deliver me from them!

I will also chide myself with these reprehensions, which are frequent in Holy Scripture, saying to myself,

Colloquy.—O vile, silly man, what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? Art thou “now full?” Art thou “now become rich?” Wouldst thou “reign” (10) alone, as if thou hadst no need of others? If thou thinkest so, behold, Almighty God will say to thee, as He said to another as proud, “Thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (11) “Blind,” because thou knowest not thyself; “poor” of virtues; “naked” of good works; and “miserable” with grievous sins. Why art thou “proud,” “dust and ashes?” (12) Why art thou puffed up, vile worm? Fly, fly from pride! for being “poor” and “proud,” (13) thou shalt be abhorred of Almighty God!

POINT II.

Secondly, I am to consider the *terrible punishment* which Almighty God has inflicted and does inflict upon some proud men in *this life*, and what He will inflict upon all of them in *the other*. (14) These chastisements are pointed

(10) 1 Cor. iv. 7.

(11) Apoc. iii. 17.

(12) Eccus. x. 2. (13) Eccus. xxv. 3. (14) Prov. xvi. 5, 18, 19; xviii. 12.

in that sentence so frequent in Scripture, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be humbled." (15)

1. In this are included three terrible chastisements of the proud: viz., it *deprives* them of *the excellency they have*; it *denies* them what they *desire*, and instead thereof it *gives* them baseness and confusion, which they *fear*; which is verified in many ways, and may be shown by divers examples that have happened. The angels, through pride, lost the excellences of grace, and obtained not their pre-eminences in the seats of glory, but were cast from the empyreal heaven to the abyss of hell. (16) With this example I must terrify myself, as Christ our Lord terrified His apostles, when they boasted that the devils obeyed them, saying to them, "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven." (17) As if He should say, So shall *you* fall if you be proud; for pride of angels makes devils, and will make devils of apostles. (18) Through the like chastisements passed Adam, (19) Nabuchodonosor, (20) Cyrus, (21) Herod, (22) and others, who desired to be as God, and gave Him not the glory due to Him.

2. Hence I will go on to consider that the greatest chastisement that Almighty God in this life inflicts upon one sin is, for that one to *permit many others*, and to take from them the special favours of His grace, which should preserve them from them. (23) And in this manner He chastises pride, which is the cause of those interior drynesses, discomforts and abandonments that happen to us, and through it God permits grievous fallings into luxury and infidelity. Ananias and Saphira, as St. Basil says, (24) for vain-

(15) Matt. xxiii. 12; Luc. xiv. 11; xviii. 14.

(16) Isa. xiv. 12. (17) Luc. x. 18. (18) Joan. vi. 71.

(19) Gen. iii. 17. (20) Dan. iv. 28.

(21) Ezek. xxviii. 6. (22) Act. xii. 23.

(23) S. Bern. serm. liv. in cant.; et S. Greg. lib. xi. moral. c. 8.

(24) Orat xvii. de humil. et vana gloria; Act. v. 5.

glory sold their goods, in order to be accounted for perfect ; and for this Almighty God permitted them to retain half the price, for which they died suddenly, losing with their lives the honour they desired. This struck a great fear into the whole Church, and should strike a fear into me, because the punishment of a few should be a warning for many ; and if I be proud I shall be, peradventure, one of those few punished, unless I amend.

3. Then will I consider how, at the least, I cannot escape from the punishments of the *other life*, where all the proud shall suffer special confusion, with terrible shame to see themselves so contemned. And those who here aimed at the highest place shall there have the lowest, at the feet of Lucifer the king of the proud, and even the devils themselves shall scoff at him, using in mockery that of the prophet Isaiah, "Et tu vulneratus es sicut et nos, nostri similis effectus es, detracta est ad inferos superbia tua;" (25) "Thou also art wounded like as we; thou art become like unto us" in punishment as thou hast been in sin; "thy pride is brought down to hell," and to the deepest lakes thereof. Now, what greater madness can there be than to seek with pride that excellency whose end is eternal confusion? and what greater folly than for a glory which passes like the wind to cast myself into an ignominy that shall never have end?

Colloquy.—O pride, what a great "beam" (26) art thou in the "eye," foolishly blinding it, that it cannot see its own hurt! O humble Jesus, take from my eyes this great beam, that I fall not by reason of it into these so exceeding great losses! Amen.

POINT III.

The third point is to consider the great *good* that I shall

(25) Isa. xiv. 10.

(26) Matt. vii. 3; S. Bern. in Apol. ad Guliel. Abbat.

get if I mortify pride and embrace humility, especially for the end that I seek, which is to purify my soul.

1. These benefits are comprehended in our Saviour Christ's promise, when He said, "He that shall humble himself shall be exalted," (27) in which He sets down *three* great benefits which He does to those who truly humble themselves—freeing them from the miseries into which they have fallen, preserving in them the graces and excellences which they have received, and exalting anew to others that are greater; so that those who humble themselves with a contrite heart for having sinned, are exalted by Christ in the very same respect in which they humble themselves. For He pardons them their sins, frees them from the punishment they deserved, gives them His grace and charity, exalts them to the dignity of the sons of God, hears their prayers, and fills them with great gifts. For "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (28) King Achab, because he humbled himself before Almighty God, was delivered from the chastisement that was menaced him. (29) The Publican was justified for his humility, the Pharisee being reproved for his pride. (30)

2. In like manner the just, by humbling themselves, are *exalted* by God *in justice itself*, augmenting their sanctity, and the gifts of grace and the honour and glory which they merit by it. And hereupon says the Wise man, "The greater thou art the more humble thyself in all things, and thou shalt find grace before God;" (31) as our blessed Lady the Virgin did, and was exalted to be the mother of Almighty God; (32) and the Son of God Himself became man to destroy pride, and to give example of humility; and because He humbled Himself more than all men He was exalted above all the heavens. (33)

(27) Mat. xxiii. 12; Luc. xiv. 11; xviii. 24.

(28) Jac. iv. 6.

(29) 3 Reg. xxi. 29.

(30) Luc. xviii. 10.

(31) Eccles. iii. 20.

(32) Luc. i. 48.

(33) Phil. ii. 9.

Colloquy.—Therefore, O my soul, fly from pride, if it be but to avoid thy damage, and embrace humility, though it but for thy own profit. For it is a general law, from which thou shalt not be excepted, that whosoever is proud shall be humbled, and that “whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Comply with that which belongs to *thee*, humbling thyself for thy sins, and God will perform what belongs to *Him*, exalting thee with His gifts.

3. Lastly, I will examine what *degree* of pride *predominates* in my heart, and *which* of those vices above mentioned holds it in subjection, and *that* I will manfully endeavour to mortify, exercising the contrary *acts*, taking away the occasions of stumbling, and applying that *particular examen* which we shall hereafter set down, beginning by mortification and humiliation in *exterior* things, which is the most easy; for, as glorious St. Bernard says, “Nihil facilius est volenti, quam humiliare semetipsum;” (34) “There is nothing more easy to him that hath a will than to humble himself;” for if I would make myself great, many will contradict me, but if I humble myself there will be none to contradict me, and by humbling myself I shall come to be humble; for humiliation is the only means to estrange me from pride, and to obtain the virtue of humility.

MEDITATION XIX.

ON GLUTTONY AND TEMPERANCE.

POINT I.

1. GLUTTONY is an inordinate appetite of eating and drinking, and we may sin by it five different ways. (1) i. By eating meats *prohibited* by the Church, or by *breaking fasts*,

(34) Serm. ii. in quadrag.; S. Bernard, epist. 78.

(1) S. Th. 2, 2, q. cxlviii.

either those which I am obliged to observe by special vow or by the obligation of a regular state. ii. By taking meat or drink in too great *quantity*, or to the danger of my corporal or spiritual health, (2) which is hindered by it; or in drinking until I lose or trouble my judgment. iii. By procuring meats and drinks of such *quality* as are much more delicate and precious than my person and state require, for the sake of pampering and sensuality. iv. By eating *oftener* than is convenient, out of season, and upon an occasion that may do me harm, or in an unsuitable place, or contrary to the prohibition and rule of my religion. v. By eating with *too great affection*, relishing what I eat only for pleasure, and after an unbecoming and hasty manner, wholly absorbed in what I am doing with thoughts and words of sensuality.

2. Upon these five acts I must examine and accuse myself before Almighty God, bewailing my frailties, and saying,

Colloquy.—Woe to me that do always in a manner sin even in eating and drinking, serving rather my own sensuality than my necessity, and seeking rather the delight of my flesh than the preservation of my life; so that when I pay that debt to my body I pay the tribute of sin to the devil. Have compassion, O God, on my weakness, and succour me with Thy grace, that gluttony may not drag me after it!

3. With this feeling I am to make great resolutions, to *mortify* this vice, observing the rules of temperance in the five things above mentioned, (3) namely, in the *precept, quantity, quality, time, and manner*, endeavouring to take that *quantity* of meat and drink which suffices, shunning the two extremes, that it be neither so much as to overload me nor so little as not to support me. And in the *quality* contenting myself with ordinary meats, rather coarse than delicate,

(2) S. Greg. lib. xxx. moral. cap. 26.

(3) S. Basil, lib. de vera virg.

avoiding all singularity, if it be not in a case of manifest necessity. (4) In the *manner*, I am to aim at that which the Holy Ghost advises, not to suffer myself to be drawn by my appetite; "Be not greedy in any feasting, and pour not out thyself upon any meat;" (5) so that when the body is eating the spirit be not consumed and swallowed up with the meat: but rather with a controlling heart, to give some food to the spirit that may moderate the covetous desires of the flesh. The consideration of the points here ensuing will much help to move me to this.

POINT II.

Secondly, I must consider the *punishments* of this vice, reducing them to *three* classes. Some proceed from gluttony *itself*, as from an evil tree; others God our Lord has added, and does add in *this life*, to discover how displeasing this vice is to Him; and others He has reserved for the *other life*.

1. Gluttony is a chastisement of *itself*, and pays in ready money with pain the delight of the sin; for it over-charges the *body*, takes away health, shortens the life, and hastens death. "Watching, and choler and gripes are with an intemperate man." (6) "Who hath wo? Whose father hath wo? Who hath contentions? Who falleth into pits? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? Surely they that pass their time in wine, and study to drink off their cups." (7) "Take heed," says Christ, "lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life." (8) Again, it afflicts the *spirit*, dulls the understanding, disables for prayer and conversation with Almighty God, and makes the soul incapable

(4) S. Bern. serm. xxx. in cantica, et ad. fratres de monte Dei.

(5) Ecclus. xxxvii. 33.

(6) Ecclus. xxxi. 23.

(7) Prov. xxxii. 29, 30.

(8) Luc. xxi. 34.

of spiritual comforts, because it suffers itself to be filled with carnal pleasures; and it enfeebles the heart for great things in God's service, because he that is subjected to this enemy that is the weakest has no courage to combat others that are more strong. (9)

2. Besides this, on gluttony *Almighty God* has inflicted terrible punishments. For the eating of an apple against the precept of God, Adam and Eve lost their state of innocence and were cast out of paradise. (10) The Israelites inordinately desired to eat flesh in the desert, of whom it is said, "As yet the flesh was between their teeth, neither had that kind of meat failed: when, behold, the wrath of God being provoked against the people, struck them with an exceeding great plague. And that place was called The graves of lust: for there they buried the people that had lusted." (11) Another time the same Israelites from eating and drinking "rose up" to idolatry, God's justice permitting that those should adore a calf who took their belly for their god; for which thirty-three thousand of them were put to the sword. (12) And that which is most astonishing, a holy prophet, for eating in a place that God had prohibited him, was slain by a lion; (13) and nothing excused him, neither the miracles he had done nor the obedience that he first had, nor the necessity that he suffered, nor that he had been beguiled by another who seemed of the same profession.

3. Finally, in *the other life*, gluttons shall suffer particular torment in their tongue, (14) as the covetous rich man who fared very delicately came into hell to suffer such thirst, that he begged to be refreshed by "Lazarus" with "the tip of his finger" only dipped "in water," (15)

(9) Cas. lib. v. c. 13 et 20; et coll. 5.

(10) Gen. iii. 17.

(11) Ps. lxxvii. 30; Num. xi. 33.

(12) Exod. xxxii. 6, 27, 28.

(13) 3 Reg. xiii. 24.

(14) S. Basil, ser. de abdicacione rerum.

(15) Luc. xvi. 24.

and it was not granted him. Thus shall all three suffer the hunger of dogs, raging thirst, pangs, and bitterness of eternal galls, according to the sentence pronounced against Babylon: "As much as she hath glorified herself and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her." (16)

Colloquy.—Then what art thou doing, O my soul? Why not bewail thy gluttonies? why dost thou not amend thyself of them? Behold that temporal fullness and drunkenness shall be chastised with eternal hunger and thirst; and if, like Esau, for a vile dish of meat thou sellest the inheritance (17) of heaven, thou shalt peradventure have no time to recover it. (18) Consider how many have been chastised for this vice, and beware by other men's evils, lest torment light upon thee for thine own!

POINT III.

Of temperance and fasting.—Thirdly, I am to consider the great benefits and rewards that I shall receive of Almighty God, if I mortify gluttony and perfectly embrace temperance and fasting, reducing them also to three classes, opposite to the three punishments of gluttony. Some are proper to themselves, like good fruits of a good tree; others our Lord adds, to show how much this virtue pleases Him; others are rewards of heaven, with which He rewards it.

1. For, first, abstinence pays in ready money the pain which it has in the beginning; for it tempers the body—it preserves from infirmities—it preserves health—it prolongs the life—it recreates the soul, it renders it fit for prayer and receiving celestial comforts—it takes away the arms of its enemy the flesh, and subjects it to the spirit, to encourage it to undertake glorious enterprises in the service of God.

(16) Apoc. xviii. 7.

(17) Gen. xxv. 33.

(18) Heb. xii. 17.

2. Besides this, Almighty God being so liberal and compassionate as He is, does not command that we should live void of some pleasures ; (19) and therefore those who abstain from *bodily* food He refreshes with the food of the *soul*, and for *sensual* consolations He gives them *spiritual*. So that they lose no consolation, but rather increase it, changing it from the flesh to the spirit. To these He communicates celestial illuminations, as He did to Daniel—gives them notable victories, as He did to His three companions against Nabuchodonosor—and exalts them to very high contemplation, as He did Moses and Elias, giving them part in His glorious transfiguration, (20) in reward of their fasting and mortification.

3. Finally, Almighty God *rewards* them in *heaven* with a spiritual fulness, setting them with Christ at His table, that they may eat and drink in His kingdom of that food which God Himself eats. Therefore, O my soul, if thou desirest to attain to great sanctity upon earth, and to obtain great rewards in heaven, begin with temperance and fasting, in reward of which God is said to “repress vices, exalt the spirit, grant virtues, and crown with rewards.” (21)

Colloquy.—O sweet Jesus, seeing all who are on Thy side ought to “have crucified the flesh with its vices and concupiscences,” (22) grant me that I may mortify mine as Thou didst mortify Thine! By that thirst which Thou sufferedst on the cross, and by the gall and vinegar which they gave Thee to drink, grant me, I beseech Thee, a temperance so perfect that in eating and drinking I may satisfy my necessity, and not serve my delight; and a fasting so strict that, like the Ninevites, (23) I may appease Thy wrath, satisfy for my sins, terrify the devils, give joy to the angels, and be made partaker of Thy gifts, world without end. Amen.

(19) S. Bern. ad fratres de monte Dei.

(20) Matt. xvii. 3.

(21) Ecclesia in præfat. quadrag. (22) Gal. v. 24. (23) Jonæ ii. 10; iii. 11.

MEDITATION XX.

ON LUXURY AND CHASTITY.

POINT I.

LUXURY is an inordinate appetite of sensual pleasures, contrary to the order that Almighty God has appointed therein. In this vice we may sin :

1. By *thought*—consenting with the will to commit this sin, or taking pleasure to think upon immodest things, with that delectation called by the schoolmen “*morosa*,” (1) “dwelling” or “tarrying”—detaining ourselves voluntarily in this delight, or weakly resisting it, or not removing the occasion whence it arises.

2. Secondly, we may sin by *word*, speaking filthy things ; by the *ear*, delighting to hear them, or to hear music and indecent songs ; by the *eye*, beholding things that excite to immodesty, or looking at such representations or reading books that treat of such things ; by the *smell* and *taste*, smelling or eating and drinking things that excite to luxury—having in all this sensual delight for the end.

3. Thirdly, we sin by the *act* committed many ways. If by one's-self alone, it is pollution ; if with a single woman, it is fornication ; if with a married woman, adultery ; if with a virgin, deflowering ; if with a kinswoman, incest ; if with a religious woman, or contrary to the vow of chastity, it is sacrilege ; if with one of the same sex, it is sodomy ; if with a beast, beastly brutishness. Touching by one's-self, or by others, for the same end of delight, is reduced to the sin of the act consummated. In this point we are not in prayer to make much pause, reckoning the

(1) S. Th. 2, 2, q. cliii.

particular circumstances of these sins, lest they should be an occasion of new temptations, and therefore they are more to be bewailed than thought upon, saying :

Colloquy.—Wretch that I am! my life is so bestial and filthy that I am ashamed to consider it and afraid to look back on it, lest I should anew be infected with the evil odour thereof. Look on it, O my God, with Thine eyes of mercy, that from my eyes may issue fountains of tears, with which I may purify myself from so great uncleanness! Amen.

POINT II.

Secondly, I will consider three other *sorts* of punishment corresponding to luxury, as before we have said of gluttony, but much greater, because it is a greater sin.

1. The first punishment is *innumerable miseries* which this vice draws with it, our Lord permitting that an “angel of Satan,” who with the “sting of the flesh” overthrows sinners, should cruelly “buffet” them, (2) tormenting their bodies with a thousand crosses—with painful, loathsome, and shameful diseases—with infamies, and a thousand other torments, until they have consumed their wealth, their health, their content and their life. And as St. Paul delivered over to Satan an incestuous Christian (3) to be bodily tormented, so whosoever gives himself over to this vice delivers both his body and soul to this cruel tormentor, who, though he begin with pleasure, yet “in the end he will bite like a snake, and will spread abroad poison like a basilisk.” (4)

2. Besides this, *Almighty God*, to show the hatred He bears to this vice, has *inflicted* upon it *terrible chastisements*. On account of this vice principally came the Deluge that

(2) 2 Cor. xii. 7. (3) 1 Cor. v. 5. (4) Prov. xxiii. 32.

drowned the world, (5) and the fire that burned Sodom, (6) and the great slaughter that Moses made of his Israelites—putting, in one day, twenty-four thousand to the sword. (7) And when Phineas, full of great zeal, publicly slew a public fornicator, Almighty God was so much pleased with this chastisement that He forthwith ceased the slaughter. (8) For the sin of pollution God killed a grandchild of the patriarch Jacob; (9) and the sons of Eli the high priest, for their carnalities, died disastrously. (10) It is as well known how dear it cost Samson his sinning with Dalilah; (11) and David his adultery with Bethsabe; (12) and Solomon his over-great affection to strange women. (13) Then if such men were vanquished by luxury, and suffered for that cause so terrible punishments, how is it that thou flyest not from it? Art thou peradventure more strong than Sampson, or more wise than Solomon, or more holy than David, or more privileged than they, that thou shouldst not fall as they fell, nor be chastised as they were? (14)

3. But in *hell* the luxurious shall suffer *excessive torments*—the fire of hell with special torment burning those parts of the body which were the instruments of sin. The imagination which was delighted in thinking upon these carnalities will suffer horrid representations; and the five senses, which were five fountains of delight, will be five pools of incredible torment. Finally, from head to foot they will be drenched in the lake of fire and brimstone, because during their life they yielded to the odours and allurements of the flesh.

Colloquy.—O my soul, to eschew the flames of this carnal fire, consider well the flames of hell fire! As

- (5) Gen. vi. 12. (6) Gen. xix. (7) Num. xxv. 9.
 (8) Num. v. 8. (9) Gen. xxxviii. 7. (10) 1 Reg. ii. 22; iv. 17.
 (11) Judic. xvi. 21. (12) 2 Reg. xii. (13) 3 Reg. xi. 11.
 (14) S. Hier. in reg. mona. c. de castit.

one nail drives out another, so the fear of the one fire shall expel out of thee the love of the other.

4. Hence I must draw so firm a *resolution to fly this vice* (15)—which is not vanquished but by flight—that I may avoid even in my mouth taking the *name* of it, according to that of St. Paul to the Ephesians, speaking of uncleanness and fornication, “Nec nominetur in vobis;” (16) “Let it not so much as be named among you;” lest the name bring to your remembrance the thing that is signified.

And as there are two ways to vanquish this vice, one by contenting one’s-self with the lawful delights of matrimony, the other much more perfect, abstaining also from them, the point that follows will be principally concerning this second way.

POINT III.

Thirdly, we are to consider *six acts* comprehended in the perfect mortification of luxury, and in the sovereign virtue of chastity, when it has attained to its due perfection; and other *six favours* and rewards that Almighty God grants for them. (17) By reason of which chastity in Scripture is compared to the “lily,” which has six very white and soft leaves, within which are six little offshoots with their little heads gilded and sparkling like fire, signifying by the six leaves the six acts or degrees of purity, and by the offshoots the *six favours*—all founded upon the gold and fire of charity, by which this virtue is most amiable and the mortification most sweet; and to this end we are to consider them.

1. *Acts of perfect chastity.*—i. The first act of chastity is to keep purity in the *eye* and *ear*, (18) locking up the doors of these senses, that nothing may enter thereby to awake

(15) 1 Cor. vi. 18.

(16) Eph. v. 3.

(17) S. Bona. in dieta salut. iv. c. 4.

(18) Job xxxi. 1.

any evil thought or filthy imagination, in such a manner that my eye must be chaste and my ear chaste, preserving these senses chaste that they may be the guardians of chastity.

ii. The second act is purity in things *delectable* to the senses of *smelling*, *tasting*, and *touching*, (19) separating myself with great rigour from all those sweet and pleasant things that are any impediment to chastity—labouring to be chaste in my meat and drink, in my apparel and bed—and chaste in all my touchings, flying, as from fire, all things that are otherwise.

iii. The third act is purity in *words*, *speech*, and “*conversation*” (20)—in looks, laughter, and gestures of the body, and in exterior grace and manner, observing in all this such chastity that Christian modesty and decency may be resplendent in all—cutting off whatever may be contrary to it.

iv. The fourth act is purity in *friendship*, and in loving and familiar commerce or conversation with creatures—carefully avoiding any over-great familiarity with any one that may be any occasion of blemishing chastity—neither giving nor receiving any presents or gifts that may be snares or stumbling-blocks to this virtue.

v. The fifth act is purity in *separating ourselves* from all occasions, as well *exterior* as *interior*, which excite to anything that may tarnish or overthrow chastity. And therefore he that is perfectly chaste shuns secret *pride*, by which Almighty God permits man to fall into manifest luxury (21)—he shuns *anger*, for it inflames the blood and perturbs the flesh—he shuns *idleness*, because it opens the gate to fleshly lust—and finally, he shuns all places and persons by whose company he may endanger his chastity; for “he that loveth danger shall perish in it.” (22)

(19) S. Basil, lib. de vera virg.

(20) 1 Pet. iii. 2.

(21) S. Greg. lib. xi. mor. c. 8.

(22) Eccles. iii. 27.

vi. The sixth and last degree of chastity is purity in all the *thoughts* of the *heart*, and in the motions and pruriency of the *flesh*—keeping it low and subjected to *reason*, not only in waking, but as much as in us lies even in our sleeping—endeavouring to give no occasion that the devil should therein delude us with filthy representations or perturbations. (23)

And these are the six pure white leaves of this celestial “lily,” which, although it grows among the “thorns” (24) of many temptations and tribulations which the continent man suffers before he comes to be perfectly chaste, yet, if I trust in God’s omnipotence and mercy, I may obtain it, (25) in which I shall be furthered by a profound consideration of the six favours and rewards of which we shall now discourse.

2. *The favours and rewards of perfect chastity.*—i. The *first favour* that God our Lord will do me, if with a generous mind I resolve to fight against the rebellions of the flesh and to embrace perfect chastity, is to *send angels* to *assist* and aid me in this war, that I may overcome and get the victory. For the purer a man is, says St. Ambrose, (26) the more he is guarded and encompassed with angels, who delight to converse with virgins and chaste men, on account of the likeness that is between them. And as when the three chaste young men were in the fiery furnace of Babylon, “the angel went down” among them who divided the flame, and with a dewy wind assuaged “the furnace,” (27) so to those who are in the midst of the furnace of sensual temptations, with a purpose to give no consent to them, do angels favourably repair, so that these flames may not burn them nor touch them in the superior

(23) Cas. col. xii. c. 8.

(24) Cant. ii. 2.

(25) Cas. cit. c. xi. ; S. Th. 2, 2, q. clv.

(26) Lib. i. de virg. ad sororem.

(27) Dan. iii. 49.

part of their soul; and with the "wind" and "dew" of heaven they quench the heat of the flesh, exciting them to glorify God, for the victory He has given them against it. And therefore, when I shall see myself assaulted with these temptations, I am to call to them, saying :

Colloquy.—O ye glorious angels, guardians of virgins, protectors of the chaste, friends and companions of men that are pure, come and favour me, that the fire that encircleth me may not burn me. Disperse the flame that burneth within my flesh, that it may neither touch nor hurt my spirit; and purchase for me the gentle wind of God's spirit, that it may cool and refresh the heats of my flesh!

ii. The second favour is, that *God Himself*, by a *particular* protection, comes to guard such as are chaste, who by their purity make themselves like not only angels, but even the Lord of angels Himself, the fountain of all purity, who is delighted to converse familiarly with the chaste, and to admit them to His friendship. (28)

O eternal God, who feedest "among the lilies," (29) for it is Thy food and Thy pleasure to converse with chaste souls, endue mine with chastity, that Thou mayest deign to inhabit and to converse with it! Amen. (30)

From these two favours I am to gather a most effectual means to vanquish temptations when they assail me on a sudden and alone, by instantly lifting up the eyes of my soul to the angel who is present, but much more to the presence of God Himself—shaming to do before them what I would not do before men; (31) and with this consideration I shall answer the temptations as chaste Susanna

(28) S. Basil in lib. de vera virg. (29) Cant. ii. 16.

(30) S. Greg. ibid., et S. Hier. epist. ad Demetriadem.

(31) Cas. collat. xii. c. 8, et lib. vi. c. 9.

did the shameless old men that solicited her, saying, "It is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it than to sin in the sight of the Lord." (32)

iii. The *third* favour is, for the *carnal* marriage which I renounce to admit me to a *spiritual*; espousing *Himself* spiritually with my *soul*, with the espousal of "justice and judgment," "mercy" and "faith," (33) and communicating to me such sovereign delights of the spirit that I shall forget those of the flesh, proving in this His word which He gave when He said that whosoever should leave a wife for His love, renouncing that choice that he had to be married, "shall receive a hundredfold" in this life, that is, a delight so great that should "a hundredfold" exceed the delight he would have had in marriage; (34) for so excellent is the sweetness of chastity that it is impossible to know it but by proving it.

Colloquy.—O Spouse of chaste souls, grant me such virtue that thereby mine may be Thy spouse! O my soul, seeing thou art such a lover of delights, renounce liberally the vile delights of the flesh, that thou mayest enjoy the most sweet delights of the spirit! Amen.

iv. The *fourth* favour is, for those *carnal children* which I might have had to give me *abundance* of *spiritual* children incomparably better, filling me with good works, with rich merits and with many souls gained to Christ by my example and word, of which I may be the spiritual father and mother, fulfilling that which He promised by His prophet when He said, "Let not the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord to the eunuchs," "I will give to them in my house and within my walls a place and a name

(32) Dan. xiii. 23.

(33) Osee ii. 19.

(34) Matt. xix.; ita Cas. coll. xii. c. 12, 13.

better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which shall never perish." (35)

O happy chaste man, to whom Almighty God grants the sovereign dignity both of a son and of a father; of a son by the singular grace of adoption, and of a father in spirit by the copious fruits of benediction!

v. The *fifth* favour comprehends many very *singular* *graces* and *privileges*, which He grants them in testimony of the great love He bears to chastity; for as the chaste elevate themselves above the ordinary laws of nature, living in flesh as if they had no flesh; so God will sometimes exalt them above the ordinary laws of grace in honour of their chastity. The Virgin, our blessed Lady, through the rare vow she made of virginity, was exalted to the dignity of the mother of God Himself. The evangelist St. John, for his purity, was much beloved by our Saviour Christ, from whom he received extraordinary favours in the supper and on the cross, and great revelations; in which also, for this reason, Elias, Eliseus, Daniel, and other sons of the prophets were very famous; and the fire of Babylon touched not the three children, because they had vanquished the fire of luxury.

vi. The last favour is that singular privilege to "*follow the Lamb*" in glory "*whithersoever He goeth*;" (36) for whosoever imitates Him in this life, embracing His virginity and purity, shall also imitate Him in the other, participating in His most excellent glory, united to His sweet company with particular joy. (37)

Colloquy.—O most pure and immaculate Lamb, grant me that I may follow Thy purity both in body and spirit, that in issuing out of this strait prison of the world I may with Thee in Thy spacious heaven dilate myself and rejoice! Amen.

(35) Isa. lvi. 3.

(36) Apoc. xiv. 4.

(37) S. Aug. lib. de vera virg. c. xxvii.; S. Hier. lib. de laude virginit.

3. With the consideration of these six favours I am to arm myself to resist those combats which may happen to me against chastity, saying as chaste Joseph said to the woman who solicited him—God having done me so many benefits and promising me such favours if I live chaste—“Quomodo possum hoc malum facere, et peccare in Deum meum?” “How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?” (38)

Colloquy.—O Lord of heaven and of earth, I will leave, not only my cloak, like Joseph, but my honour, wealth and life, rather than offend Thee. For Thou madest Joseph, for his chastity and loyalty, viceroy of Egypt; but me, for mine, thou wilt make a king in Thy kingdom of heaven.

MEDITATION XXI.

ON AVARICE.

POINT I.

I. AVARICE is an *inordinate desire* of riches and temporal goods, in which we may sin many ways.

i. In *desiring to take* that which is *another man's*, contrary to the tenth commandment of the law of God; or *taking in the deed*, or retaining it contrary to the seventh, which is, “not to steal.”

ii. With *niggardliness abusing* that which is *our own*, not sharing it, when the law of justice or of charity and mercy obliges us, amongst the needy, but being hard-hearted against them.

iii. In seeking after these goods with *too great care*, setting our whole heart upon them, treading underfoot for

(38) Gen. xxxix. 9.

this reason the commandments of Almighty God and of His Church, and the obligations of our state. Hence spring many sins that are the daughters of avarice; viz., lies, frauds, perjuries, violence, tyrannies, cruelties, suits, discords and innumerable others; upon which the apostle said that "the desire of money is the root of all evils." (1)

iv. Whoever has made a *vow of poverty* sins against it in usurping to *himself* (without leave of his superior) what is given him by *others*, or in alienating what is given him, or in hiding it; or in employing what he has to a prohibited use, or after an appropriating manner, that is, with an affection so inordinate, as if it were *his own*, being sad or complaining when by just title they deprive him of it.

v. We may sin by doing good works *principally* for *temporal interest*, or by omitting obligatory works for the same end, treading under foot the rules of our state and office.

2. This examination being made, I will consider whether I have anything that may be an idol for my avarice to adore; seeing (as St. Paul says) avarice "is the service" and adoration "of idols." (2) And if I find any such thing in my possession, or in my heart any such affection and desire of it, I will confess these sins before God our Lord, with great shame that I have coveted anything against Him, resolving to root out this affection, and if I can also, to divest myself of that which is its cause. To this end I shall be aided with these considerations ensuing.

POINT II.

Secondly, I am to consider the evils and chastisements of avarice, reducing them to the *three* kinds that have been spoken of.

1. First, I will ponder that avarice (as St. Paul says)

(1) 1 Tim. vi. 10.

(2) Eph. v. 5; Col. iii. 5.

“is the root of” two sorts of “evil,” (3) in which are summed all the evils of *this life*, to wit—transgressions and pains, sins and sorrows; which are joined together to chastise the mother that engenders and sustains them; so that she is the tormenter of herself, putting the covetous man in great vexations and afflictions to gain or preserve riches with a miserable servitude and slavery of them. It is likewise a snare of Satan, with which he drags him through thorns and prickly shrubs of temptations, obscurities of faith, remorse of conscience, and of cares that sting him; and in the end he hangs him, like Judas, between heaven and earth, neither permitting him to enjoy the goods of the earth nor to attain to those of heaven.

2. To these chastisements *Almighty God* sometimes adds others, to show how much He abhors this vice, and such as sin therein in any of the five ways before-mentioned, of each of which I will set down an example.

Achan, because he took certain things of Jericho, contrary to the precept of Josue, was by God's commandment stoned to death, and all his wealth consumed with fire. (4) Nabal, overwhelmed with avarice, denied David the alms he asked; and because he was hard-hearted to him who was needy, he died with his heart as hard as “a stone.” (5) Jezabel, with an inordinate desire to have Naboth's vineyard, in order to get possession of it caused him to be put to death; and she was thrown out of a window, and eaten by “dogs.” (6) Ananias and Sapphira, because, when they had vowed poverty, they reserved to themselves “part of the price of” the sale of their “land,” died disastrously. (7) Giezi, vanquished by covetousness, demanded money of Naaman, for the health that Eliseus the prophet had given

(3) 1 Tim. vi. 9. (4) Jos. vii. 25. (5) 1 Reg. xxv. 27.

(6) 3 Reg. xxi. 23; 4 Reg. ix. 36.

(7) Act. v. 1; Aug. serm. xxvii., de verbis apost.; Belar. tom. 1, lib. ii. de monach., c. 20.

him, and was therefore struck with a "leprosy." (8) Finally, Judas, solicited and drawn by his avarice, admitted Satan to enter into him; and not content with stealing what was given to His master, sold Him, and hanged himself. (9)

Colloquy.—O my soul, how is it that thou art not afraid of so fierce a vice that assails and overthrows kings and plebeians, rich and poor, secular and religious, servants of the prophets and primitive Christians, and one of the twelve Apostles?

3. After these chastisements come the *eternal punishments of hell*, where the covetous shall suffer very great anguish with the knowledge of their terrible necessity, seeing they want all that their avarice desired; and the richer and more covetous they were *here*, so much the more they shall there be tormented: like the rich covetous man whose abundance ended in horrible misery.

Colloquy.—O omnipotent God, rich in doing mercy, deliver me from this avarice, out of which spring so many miseries, for I had rather without it suffer temporal necessity than with it fall into eternal!

POINT III.

1. Thirdly, I am to consider the *great benefits* that are included in the perfect *mortification* of avarice. And as there are two ways of mortifying it—one, keeping still the *dominion* of my riches, and mortifying only the inordinate *affection* to them; (in which consists the first degree of poverty of spirit, including the virtue of liberality, which distributes its goods when and as it is convenient, and the virtue of mercy, which remedies the necessities of the poor;) the other, *forsaking* all the riches that I *have* or

(8) 4 Reg. v. 27.

(9) Joan. xii. 6; Act. i. 18.

might have, the more to uproot my affections from them (in which consists the voluntary poverty of *religion*).

i. In both ways are included great benefits. For generally, to all the poor of spirit Christ our Lord promised the kingdom of heaven; as well the kingdom of the other life (10) as that which is enjoyed in this life, which is "justice, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." (11) So that if I mortify and vanquish avarice I shall enjoy *three* benefits—justice, with abundance of good works; *peace*, without any noise of disturbance; and spiritual *joy*, free from gloominess and vexation, because I shall have taken away the root of the evils that hinder this good.

ii. Besides this, avarice being vanquished, if *I* am liberal towards God, in giving for His sake what I have, *God* will be most liberal towards *me* in giving me His benefits, as well temporal, which shall be expedient for me, as also spiritual, both in this life and in the other. For it is He who said, "Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over shall they give into your bosom," (12) where it will be very secure and much esteemed. He says, "Dabunt," "they shall give," to signify that our gifts are the *cause* why Almighty God gives us this measure with those four conditions, which, when it is most abundant, it may have. And He adds, that "with the same measure" we "shall mete, it shall be measured to" us "again;" for our liberality increasing towards our neighbours, the liberality of God will increase towards us, so that he that sows much shall reap much.

Colloquy.—Therefore, O my soul, be liberal towards God and for His love towards others, and God in Himself and in others will be liberal towards thee! For "the soul which blesseth shall be made fat;" that which giveth shall be enriched, and "he that in-

(10) Matt. v. 3.

(11) Rom. xiv. 17.

(12) Luc. vi. 38.

ebriateth, also shall be inebriated himself," (13) receiving much because it gives much.

iii. Hence I will ascend to consider the great benefits that I shall receive if I embrace the *second way* of mortifying avarice, *forsaking* all things for Christ, and giving them to the poor; because as this is a much greater liberality towards God, so God will be much more liberal towards me, fulfilling the promise which He made to give in this life "a hundred-fold" for what we give Him, and afterwards "life everlasting;" (14) with a special promise to give us at the day of judgment thrones of great glory, to judge the tribes of Israel and the nations of the world.

Colloquy.—O happy poverty, which is rewarded with so great riches! O blessed liberality, whose guerdon is a measure so abundant! Oh that I could mortify the love of earthy riches to obtain divine, possessing all things in Almighty God! O most sweet Jesus, who camest from heaven to earth to give us an example of poverty, by which we may mount from earth to heaven, and chocest to die naked upon a cross, quitting the world without possessing anything of the world, grant me to abhor temporal riches, that I may serve Thee with perfection, and obtain riches everlasting! Amen.

2. From these considerations I must draw a very *firm resolution* to mortify avarice in all the things which have been spoken of in the first point, observing some sort of poverty conformable to my estate. i. Living content with my estate, though it be but mean, without coveting what is superfluous or what belongs to others. ii. In employing well what I have, and being liberal to those that want. iii. In taking away the too great love of it, possessing it as though I "possessed it not." (15) iv. In delighting some-

(13) Prov. xi. 25.

(14) Matt. xix. 28.

(15) 1 Cor. vii. 30.

times to suffer want of something ; to imitate in something the poverty of my Redeemer. v. Endeavouring to serve Him, not in order that He may give me temporal goods, but because He is worthy to be served, with a hope that He will give me goods everlasting. Amen.

MEDITATION XXII.

ON ANGER AND IMPATIENCE.

POINT I.

1. ANGER is an *inordinate appetite* of *revenging injuries*, and an inordinate inflaming of the heart on account of things that happen against our liking, whence proceed three sorts of sins. (1)

i. Some of *thought*, as the hatred of our neighbour, the determination to be revenged of him, desiring some misfortune to him, rejoicing at his mishaps, sorrowing for his good fortune, and taking delight in revenge.

ii. Some sins are of the *tongue* ; to wit, vindictive and injurious words in presence, or murmuring in absence, maledictions, high and harsh words indicating choler, contention and perverseness in order to maintain one's own opinion, and the like.

iii. Other sins there are of *deed*, contrary to the fifth commandment ; as to kill, to strike, or evilly to treat our neighbour against reason and justice, or to do some act only for the sake of revenging an injury, or to require this revenge of the judges not for love of justice but out of rancour and hatred, not to pardon him who has done the injury when he asks pardon, but giving exterior demonstra-

(1) S. Th. 2, 2, q. clviii., et 1, 2, q. xlviij.

tions of enmity against him. Also discords, processes, brawlings, schisms, factions, and wars proceed from anger, with many other sins that accompany them.

2. Finally, with wrath is joined *impatience* at the evils that happen to us against our health, honour, or wealth—overcharging ourselves with grief through a vehement and inordinate desire to be delivered from them, from whence are wont to proceed many sins against Almighty God, against our neighbour and against ourselves. Such as are complaints against our Lord, because He afflicts us, with a tendency to blasphemy, want of conformity to His will, distrusts, irksomeness of life, impatient desires of death, and with rage laying violent hands upon ourself; to be ill-tempered, rough, and intractable towards others, giving them occasion of indignation, and living at discord with those of one's own house, being angry even with the beasts and insensible things, as Jonas was angry with the "ivy" that "withered," when the sun oppressed it with heat. (2) Considering these sins, and finding myself culpable of them before God, I will turn my wrath against myself only, because I have sinned, (3) beseeching our Lord that He will assist me to vanquish it.

Colloquy.—O infinite God, whose wrath is terrible, but yet just, against those who are angry without measure, clear the eyes of my soul, that, considering the terrible chastisements that proceed from Thy sacred indignation, I may restrain those evil and vehement passions that proceed from mine! Amen.

POINT II.

1. Secondly, I will consider the evils and chastisements of this vice, as well those it brings with it as those which God of His justice adds in *this* life and in the life *to come*.

(2) Jonæ iv. 9.

(3) Ps. iv. 5.

i. Anger destroys our *likeness to Almighty God*, (4) whose works are full of great tranquillity. It disquiets the conscience, it stops the fountain of God's mercy, it strangles the spirit of devotion and the consolations of the Holy Ghost, who dwells and reposes in the humble and meek-hearted, and flies from the wrathful, whom the evil spirit inhabits. For furious wrath is a frenzy of the soul, a short madness, (5) and a voluntary devil, which possesses the spirit with such agitations as the devil makes when he possesses the body.

ii. Besides this, as our Lord is the God of vengeance, *He exercises it with rigorous justice against those* that angrily revenge themselves by killing or oppressing their neighbours. For which sentence was given against the first two malicious homicides that were in the world, Cain and Lamech; that of Cain vengeance should be taken "sevenfold," and of Lamech, that was not warned by Cain, "seventy times seven," (6) that is, a vengeance so complete that it comprehends all the kinds of torments that are in this life.

iii. But, above all, I will consider what Christ our Lord said in His gospel against this vice, "Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council, and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire." (7) Thus anger no sooner begins to govern the heart but the tribunal and "council" of the most sacred Trinity begins to treat of vengeance, the rigour of the punishment increasing as the sin grows greater. If anger remains but in the heart the punishment shall be the lesser; if it issue out, giving *open signs*, with scorn or exterior gestures, upon further deliberation, the punishment shall be

(4) S. Greg. lib. v. mor. c. 30, circa illud Job. v. 2; "*stultum interficit iracundia.*"

(5) S. Basil, hom. de ira.

(6) Gen. iv. 15, 24.

(7) Matt. v. 22.

the greater; but if it comes to the uttering of grievous and injurious words, and much more if it mounts to an *actual revenge*, the sentence of eternal *fire* is already given against it, with which in hell is joined the fire of wrath itself, to be a most cruel tormentor of the soul, for that which there most torments is anger, impatience and rage. And although the fire of purgatory and of hell be all one, yet *that* is sufferable with patience, but *this* insufferable with anger. And therefore the wrathful and impatient have two hells; one in this life by their lack of patience in temporal afflictions, and another afterwards by their rage in the eternal.

Colloquy.—O most patient Jesus, deliver me from anger and impatience, seeing there is no greater hell than to live subjected to it! Amen.

2. From these considerations I will draw two resolutions of very much importance for the perfect mortification of this vice. i. To avoid any motion of anger whatsoever, (8) though it come covered with the cloak of justice and zeal, fearing lest with the zeal of correcting or chastising other men's vices I mingle an affection of my own revenge. ii. Speedily to repress the first rising of anger before it increases, (9) for "of one spark," says the Holy Spirit, "cometh a great fire;" (10) but in the beginning it is an easy thing to appease it, and appeased it will be if I repress the words and exterior signs of anger, (11) our Lord rewarding the mortification of that exterior by giving me victory over the interior.

POINT III.

Thirdly, I will consider the *great benefits* obtained by the perfect mortification of anger, comprehending the two virtues which oppose it—meekness and patience.

(8) S. Aug. in Ps. cxlix.

(9) S. Dorothe. serm. viii.

(10) Ecclus. xi. 34.

(11) Ps. xxxviii. 2.

For the first *restrains* anger from aggravating anyone; the second *tolerates* the grievances it received. The first serves to make us *affable to all*—the second, to *suffer all*; hence proceed three great benefits, to make us perfect in all that pertains to *ourselves*, to our *neighbours* and to *God*.

1. First, meekness and patience give us quiet and peaceable *rule*, and *possession* of *ourselves* and of our passions. For “the meek possess the land” (12) of their heart; and “in patience” we “possess” our “souls,” (13) and obtain peace of conscience with cordial alacrity of spirit.

2. Meekness also makes us *amiable*, and patience *admirable*. For (says the Wise man) “do thy works in meekness, and thou shalt be beloved above the glory of men;” (14) and he that has courage to repress his anger and to suffer wrong, acquires credit to his own person and edifies his neighbours; for “the patient man is better than the valiant; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh cities.” (15) It is in some sort a greater miracle to suffer injuries joyfully than to raise dead men to life. (16)

3. Likewise, meekness and patience make us amiable to *Almighty God*, and give us entrance to a familiar conversation with His majesty, whereas the want of them bars the gate against us. Moses, for his great meekness, had very inward familiarity with Almighty God; and (as Dionysius (17) says) for failing a little therein the spirit decreased that he had received. And if I will “pray” to God “in every place,” and “lift up pure hands” to heaven, it must be “without anger and contention,” (18) easing myself with the wings of meekness and patience.

4. Finally, if I be meek and patient, I shall *partake eminently the spirit of Christ Jesus* our Saviour, who

(12) Matt. v. 4. (13) Luc. xxi. 19. (14) Ecclus. iii. 19.

(15) Prov. xvi. 32. (16) Cass. collat. xii. c. 13.

(17) Epist. viii. ad Demophi. (18) 1 Tim. ii. 8.

excelled in these two virtues, giving us a rare example of them in His life and passion, like a most meek and patient lamb, that we might imitate Him in them. And to the two apostles who, with a spirit of anger and revenge, cloaked with zeal, desired "fire to come down from heaven" and consume the Samaritans, He said, "You know not of what spirit you are." (19) As if He should say, The spirit of my disciples must not be of anger, but of meekness; not of vengeance, but of sufferance.

Colloquy.—O meek and patient Jesus, who, when "reviled," didst not "revile;" and, suffering injuries, didst not "threaten;" (20) and receiving most grievous contempt, either didst answer with divine meekness or didst hold Thy peace with admirable silence, aid me, that in imitation of Thee I may vanquish anger, repress impatience, embrace meekness, and, armed with patience, may suffer afflictions willingly, that I may attain to enjoy with Thee eternal repose! Amen.

MEDITATION XXIII.

ON ENVY.

POINT I.

ENVY is an *inordinate sadness* on account of our neighbour's good, when it excels and obscures our own. (1) It springs from pride and is accompanied with anger, so that the *acts* of these vices accompany it. The most ordinary are to abhor my neighbour because his prosperity makes me sad, to rejoice at his fall, to grieve at his exaltation, to hear his praise with pain, and dispraise with delight, to murmur at

(19) Luc. ix. 55.

(20) 1 Pet. ii. 23.

(1) S. Th. 2, 2, q. xxxvi.

him and his affairs, endeavouring to drown and undervalue them, and using means to attain this end. Envy feeds itself on all kinds, both of good and evil; whence we may collect four sorts of envy.

1. The first and grossest envy is, to *see others surpass me* in *temporal* goods of wealth, honour, and dignity, favour with princes, beauty of body, and other such excellences. This is proper to worldlings, and springs from that pride which in the eighth meditation we called worldly pride.

2. Another greater envy is fed on *literature*, sciences, ability and arts, and in those excellences which touch the *understanding*. This envy assails those that profess study, and is mixed with obstinacy, contentions, and other unlawful means of a man's exalting his own honour, and abasing and dishonouring that of another.

3. Another envy, much greater, feeds on *spiritual virtues* and goods, being sad that any other should have excellence in them, or should be honoured and praised as holy men. This proceeds from that pride which we call spiritual pride, and attacks those whose minds are set upon virtue, and is most familiar to beginners and hypocrites.

4. Finally, when this increases, it arrives at the last degree, which is called *envy of grace*, (2) and brotherly charity, and is one of those sins which are against the Holy Ghost; being sad and grieved that our neighbour should be virtuous, and should have the graces and gifts of the Holy Ghost, wishing that he had them not; whence proceeds the grievous sin of scandal, *i. e.*, to do something to cause our neighbour to lose grace and charity. Such was the envy of the devil against man, by which, says the Wise man, (3) "death came into the world," whom they all imitate who are of his faction.

This might suffice for abhorring so abominable a vice

(2) S. Th. 2, 2, q. xxxvi. art. 4, ad. 2, et q. xiv. art. 1. (3) Sap. ii. 24.

which makes me an imitator of Satan. Confounding myself, therefore, for the sin which I have committed in this matter, I will say to myself.

Colloquy.—Seeing that thou wert called to imitate Christ, imitate not His enemy; for if thou imitate him in envy, thou shalt be partaker of the death that entered by it.

POINT II.

Secondly, I will consider the *innumerable evils* of *sin* and *pain* that spring from envy, by God's just punishment, that itself might be the most cruel tormentor of him that is subject to it, as well in *this* life as in the *other*.

1. Envy is a venomous breath of the infernal serpent, by the which he casteth out all his poison together, *seducing* to most grievous *sins*, obscuring reason, enraging the soul, corrupting the body, and "is the rottenness of bones;" (4) and, still more, destroying the strong virtues of the heart.

2. On the other side, it is like a disease *incurable*, or very difficult to be cured: for, as it is a vice infamous, and belonging only to base and servile minds, so we are ashamed to manifest it to the spiritual physician; and whatever success there be, whether prosperous or adverse, it is nourished and increased by it.

All this may be pondered in certain examples of Holy Scripture, in all states of persons, according to the degree of the envy that we speak of. It was through *envy*, conceived because Almighty God had accepted his brother Abel's sacrifice, that Cain killed him by deceit and cruelty, (5) and even would have covered his sin from Almighty God, and despaired of mercy and remedy. It was through envy that the brethren of Joseph put him in a well, and sold him for a slave; (6) and though he humbled himself they were not appeased. It was envying Aaron and Moses,

(4) Prov. xiv. 30.

(5) Gen. iv. 8.

(6) Gen. xxxvii. 24.

that Core, Dathan, and Abiram would have usurped their dignity, and have put the people in a tumult, for which the earth opened and swallowed them alive. (7) It was through envy that Saul persecuted David with such obstinacy, that he lived as if he were possessed with a devil, and killed himself like a man in despair. (8) Finally, it was through envy they bore against our Saviour Christ that the Jews committed the greatest sins, and suffered the greatest punishments, that have happened in the world.

3. From this I will pass on to the punishments of *hell*, where the envious shall turn with incredible rage against themselves, biting their own flesh, and that cruel worm that gnaws their conscience shall whet their teeth with envy, in remembering what goods they themselves and others have gained; especially when they shall see, after the day of judgment, the glory of the righteous whom they have despised.

4. Finally, envy is so malignant and cruel, that it *turns all things to its own hurt*. From other men's goods it draws a spirit of grief that "drieth up the bones," (9) and from other men's harm it draws a kind of joy that, with the sin, it makes itself partaker of them. And therefore the good and evil of others will be the proper torments of the envious. This being so, why do I not tremble at this malignant beast? How dare I dwell with this basilisk that kills, and torments me with his eye? Oh, how truly may I apply to myself those words of the Apostle,

Colloquy.—"Woe to me, that have gone in the way of Cain," persecuting for envy my brethren, "and, after the error of Balaam," have given them evil counsel to overthrow them in sin; and like "Core" have sought to exalt myself by debasing them! (10) I have deserved, O my God, that the earth should swallow

(7) Numb. xvi. 31.

(8) 1 Reg. xxxi. 6.

(9) Prov. xvii. 22.

(10) Judæ 11.

me as it did Core; that I should "perish" miserably like Balaam; and that Thou shouldst cast me out of Thy presence for ever like Cain, imitating in pain those whom I imitated in sin. But by Thy grace I differ from Cain in this, that, confessing Thy mercy is greater than my wickedness, I hope to obtain entire pardon of it! Amen.

POINT III.

Thirdly, I will consider the *great benefits* which are included in the mortification of envy, and in embracing brotherly charity; (11) pondering first the acts of *charity* as they are contrary to envy. i. The first is to *resist evil* motions, in such a manner that though I feel myself to be assailed with grief for the prosperity of my neighbour, yet I give not consent to it. ii. That it is better to *rejoice* at his *good*, as if it were my own, and to congratulate him upon them. iii. The third and most *perfect* is to wish that *many* had the same *excellences* that *I* have, and even greater, if it should so please God, rejoicing for this cause as if it were my own.

1. To move me to such excellent acts, I am to ponder that it is the *generosity of a Christian mind* to seek more God's pleasure than its own; and that it may be spread among many, and that in many respects. And if it be His will and for His glory that others should have greater natural or supernatural gifts than myself, it is *just* that my will also should condescend to it. I must not be like Josue the servant of Moses, who was envious that others should prophesy, but like Moses himself, who said, "Oh that all the people might prophesy, and that the Lord would give them His spirit," (12) that all were wise, were prudent and holy, and all served and glorified Almighty God. I must not

(11) S. Bern. serm. xlii. in cant.

(12) Numb. xi. 27, 29.

be like the disciples of John the Baptist, who were envious that Christ should baptise, and that all should follow Him; but rather as the Baptist himself, who said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (13) I rejoice that my neighbour is exalted and I humbled, and so it is fitting when Almighty God will have it so.

2. Besides this, brotherly charity, contrarily to envy, *draws* out of all things *good to itself*; for in rejoicing at the good of my neighbour I make it *my own*, and in grieving at his evil I shall free myself from it; for by such acts I dispose myself so that Almighty God may give me the one and deliver me from the other, in such a manner as shall be most convenient for me.

3. Finally, with this charity whose fruit is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, I shall begin even from earth to taste what is in heaven, where all the blessed are contented, and the least are partakers of their glory that have most, through the joy they receive thereby. And so I shall be partaker of the prosperity and joy of all my neighbours, having so many motives of joyfulness as I shall see good fortunes happen to them.

Colloquy.—O my soul, begin forthwith to exercise upon earth the life that thou hopest to enjoy in heaven. If thou wilt needs have envy, let it "be zealous for that which is good in a good thing always," (14) endeavouring to excel all not for the sake of being more honoured, but that Almighty God may be more glorified, world without end. Amen.

(13) Joan. iii. 26.

(14) Gal. iv. 18.

MEDITATION XXIV.

ON SLOTH.

POINT I.

THE vice which we commonly call by the name of sloth, is an inordinate heaviness and fastidious *disgust for virtuous exertion*. (1) In this we may sin in many ways, through the many vices which accompany it.

i. The first is an over-great *apprehension* of the labour and the difficulty of *virtue*, flying from it for that reason; from which proceed faintness and weariness in the exercises of it, so that one performs them with disgust.

ii. The second is *pusillanimity* and cowardice in undertaking difficult things in God's service, (2) hiding for that reason the talents that Almighty God has given, and not using them when the law of justice or charity obliges me.

iii. The third is *sloth* and negligence in fulfilling and observing the *law of God*, the evangelical counsels, the statutes and rules of my state of life and office. So that I do the things by fits, with delays and repugnance, out of fear, and, when I cannot otherwise leave them *undone*, with base and servile ends and sinister intentions.

iv. The fourth is *inconstancy* in *prosecuting* the acts of virtue, and carrying them on to the end with unsteadiness in them; hastily quitting one for another to get rid of tediousness, until I leave off the good I have begun, returning back like a dog to his vomit.

v. The fifth is *timidity* and *distrust of succeeding* in endeavours for virtue, or of becoming victorious against temptations, until we fall into the pit of despair.

(1) S. Th. 2, 2, q. xxxv.

(2) S. Th. 2, 2, 25, q. cxxxiii.

vi. The sixth is *rancour* and *jealousy of spiritual persons* on account of their *virtues* (3) and good example, which upbraid me; or because I am offended with the advice and correction I receive from them.

vii. The seventh is idleness *in losing* that precious *time* which Almighty God has given me to labour; as also overmuch sleep and drowsiness in good works, especially in the spiritual works of prayer, reading, mass, sermons, and discourse concerning Almighty God, through the small delight I take in it.

viii. The eighth is *wandering* amid divers unlawful and vain things to entertain myself; (4) as are voluntary distractions of thought and imagination, gossiping and looseness of tongue in idle words, vain sports, witnessing profane spectacles, curiosity of the senses, lounging of the body, walking up and down the public places here and there for pastime and recreation, and desiring change, being constant in nothing but inconstancy.

ix. Finally, to this vice belong all *sins of omission* and negligence in *God's service*, which are innumerable. Nor will you easily find a good work but it has some of these defects, either at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end. Wherefore I should greatly accuse myself before our Lord, saying to Him,

Colloquy.—I confess, O my God, that in this vice alone I have sinned so often that my sins are numberless, and therefore I throw them altogether into the numberless multitude of Thy infinite mercies, that Thou mayest remedy the numberless multitude of my miseries. Amen.

POINT II.

Secondly, I am to consider the most grievous *injuries* proceeding from *sloth*, some that spring from itself, others

(3) S. Greg. lib. xxxi. moral. c. 31.

(4) Cass. lib. xx. c. 2.

added by the just chastisement of Almighty God, both in this life and in the other.

1. The first are the most grievous. For *lukewarmness* is painful, perilous, the shadow of death and near neighbour to hell. It empties the heart of spiritual consolations, fills it with heaviness, and opens the gate to innumerable temptations of the devil, who comes to dwell and settle himself in that soul which he finds idle (5) and vacant, bringing "with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself," (6) which are the multitude of sins; for all gather themselves to the slothful and idle soul, which, as Solomon says, like a "vineyard" or farm which is not cultivated and has no trench nor inclosure, is filled with the "nettles" of sins and the "thorns" (7) of passions and bitterness. It is trodden and trampled upon by the devils and by divers unquiet thoughts, which, like passengers, enter in and issue out by it. Thence proceed a wonderful poverty of spiritual goods and an unprofitable beggary; for he that has not in the winter of this life "ploughed" nor laboured "shall beg in the summer" (8) of death, and shall find none to give him what he begs, like "the five foolish virgins" who, through sloth, falling asleep, begged oil for their lamps, and none would be given to them. (9)

2. Besides this, the *just* sustain very great *loss* by this lukewarmness, which is, as it were, the canker of virtues, the moth of good works, the ruin of consciences, the banisher of divine consolations, the diminisher of merits, and the augmentor of their labours; for the lukewarm in virtue walk full of fear and desires. "Fear casteth down the slothful" and "desires kill" (10) them. They labour much and thrive but little; for "the burden" (11) of God's laws

(5) S. Bern. 3 et 5 de ascens.

(6) Luc. xi. 25.

(7) Prov. xxiv. 30; Eccles. xxxiii. 29.

(8) Prov. xx. 4.

(9) Matt. xxv. 8.

(10) Prov. xviii. 8; xxi. 25.

(11) Matt. xx. 12.

lies heavy upon them, and they merit but little in bearing it, because of the great repugnance and disgust with which they bear it; so that they live in danger of forsaking it, and of falling into the malediction of Jeremias, which says, "Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully;" (12) and into that most terrible one with which our Lord threatened a tepid bishop, saying to him, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth;" (13) and cast him both from Himself and out of the mystical body of His Church.

3. Finally, as the "slothful servant," who "hid the talent" of his Lord, lost what he had, and was "cast" "into the exterior darkness," where there is perpetual "weeping and gnashing of teeth;" (14) so the slothful shall be *punished in torment* proportioned to his sloth, taking from him "the talent" of faith and hope which he had buried. And because he lived in idleness and trembled at labour, he shall live in perpetual darkness, not working, but suffering, trembling, and gnashing his teeth for the dreadfulness of the torments which he suffers.

Colloquy.—O eternal God, by whose sentence the fainthearted and slothful perished in the desert without entering into "the land" (15) which Thou hadst promised them, I confess that for my sloth I deserve to be cast out of Thy house, to be excluded from Thy kingdom, and being bound hand and foot, to be cast into "exterior" darkness. I am grieved, O Lord, for my former remissness, deliver me from it for Thy mercy, that I may merit to enter into "the land" of eternal promise! Amen.

POINT III.

Thirdly, I will consider the great *benefits* that I shall obtain

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| (12) Jer. xlviii. 10. | (13) Apoc. xii. 16. |
| (14) Matt. xxv. | (15) Numb. xiv. 23—30. |

by *vanquishing* my sloth, and embracing spiritual alacrity and fervour in the service of God.

1. For the *works* of virtue will be *easy* and *sweet* to me; I shall labour little and thrive much in a little time, like those workmen who, coming late into the vineyard, laboured so fervently that they deserved as much in "one hour" as the remiss did that had laboured many hours, bearing "the burden of the day, and the heat," (16) which they would not have felt if they had fervently laboured; for the fervour of the spirit makes the burden of the law easy, and the yoke of it very sweet. And, besides this, it augments merit, it doubles the talents received, it causes great peace in the soul, and much confirms perseverance to the obtaining of glory.

2. I may also consider how *God* our Lord exceedingly *delights* in being *served* with *zeal* and readiness, for as He is essentially alacrity itself, and as all the works He does and the rewards He gives us are done with great joy and fervour, rejoicing (17) to do us good, most justly does He command me to serve Him, and give Him what He requires, not with disgust and sadness, not by force and with repugnance, but with fervency and "exceeding great joy" of heart. (18) "Hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus;" "For God loveth a cheerful giver." (19) To such an one He does great favours, and hears the petitions and "requests" of his "heart." (20) And finally He gives him a taste of that alacrity that is enjoyed in heaven, because he fulfils God's will upon earth. And therefore I will most earnestly beg of God our Lord this most noble spirit of joyful fervour in His service, saying to Him with David,

Colloquy.—"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation," and "take not Thy Holy Spirit from me," (21) O Saviour of the world, that rejoicedst as "a giant to

(16) Matt. xx. 12.

(17) Ps. ciii. 31.

(18) Ps. xcix. 2.

(19) 2 Cor. ix. 7.

(20) Ps. xxxvi. 4.

(21) Ps. l. 13, 14.

run" Thy "way," (22) though it was very rough, grant me that health and alacrity of spirit that Thou gainedst for me, that I may in such manner run my way as to merit to gain an eternal crown! Amen.

MEDITATION XXV.

ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF THE DIVINE LAW. (1)

i. For the end of this meditation, it will much help to form in the imagination a figure like the vision which the prophet Zacharias (2) had, in which he "saw" "a volume" or parchment extended which was "ten cubits" in breadth and "twenty" in "length," in which were written the sins of him that steals, and "of him that sweareth falsely," and the malediction that shall therefore light upon him, which volume came flying to his house, and destroyed it, until it had consumed all "the timber" and "the stones." In the same manner I will imagine before me a great book or parchment, very broad and long, and on one side of it I will look at the oaths, thefts, murmurings, and all other sins that I have committed against the ten commandments of the law of God; for as I go on writing them in the book of my conscience, God goes on writing them in the book of His justice, to chastise them in His own time. And on the other side I will behold written all the maledictions and punishments that Almighty God threatens against such as break these ten commandments, or any of them, making comparison between the sins and the punishments, in grievousness and continuance. For if my sins are many the punishments will be many, if they be grievous the punish-

(22) Ps. xviii. 6.

(1) S. Th. 1, 2, q. c. art. 4, et 5 seq.

(2) Zach. v.

ments will be very grievous, and of so long a continuance as to be eternal. Seeing, also, that chastisements, when beheld very far distant, terrify but little, I will imagine that this book of God's justice comes flying very swiftly upon the house of my soul: and it may be that it is already very near, and that it will this day light upon it, death or chastisement seizing suddenly upon it. For if I hasten to sin, God will likewise hasten His punishments, and make desolate my body, soul, honour, wealth, and all that I have. With this wholesome apprehension, I will beseech our Lord to illuminate my soul that I may know the sins that are written in this book, and the chastisements that I have deserved, aiding me with His grace to bewail them bitterly, that by my penance I may blot out my sins, and that His mercy may likewise blot out the maledictions that He had written against them.

ii. This being premised, I will begin the meditation discoursing upon the ten commandments of the divine law, remembering that the commandments of God have, as Cassian says, (3) two senses, the one literal and the other spiritual. The first serves for ordinary people, that intend no more than to save themselves; the second for those that desire greater perfection, who are not content to avoid only mortal and venial sin, but whatsoever imperfection is contrary to the end of the precept. And, according to the second end, I will declare in what manner we sin against every commandment.

POINT I.

1. First, I shall consider what Almighty God *commands* and *prohibits* (4) in His holy law; and in what manner we *sin against* it, running through the ten commandments, and through that which they *spiritually* include in them.

(3) Collat. xiv. c. 11, et S. Bonav. opusc. de dicta sal. lib. iii., et serm. de decem preceptis, tom. ii.

(4) Ex. xx. 3.

i. The first commandment commands the principal works that appertain to the virtue of *faith, hope, charity* and religion; *i.e.*, to adore one only God, to believe firmly all such things as He has revealed to His church, to hope for those which He has promised, and to love Him more than all things that are created. Against this I may sin, i. By idolatry or infidelity, adoring false gods, or denying that which He has revealed, or doubting of it. I may also sin, as the Scripture says, in adoring the idols of my own judgment and will, (5) rebelling against the will of Almighty God, or holding as my "God" my "belly" or money; (6) or denying God by my works, or not observing due loyalty towards Him. ii. I sin in *despairing* to obtain heaven, or pardon for my sins, or that Almighty God will hear my prayers according to His promise; and, on the other hand, presuming to obtain this without using the means that God has ordained for that purpose. iii. Through *hatred*, or want of love, loving some creature more than Almighty God, or rejecting the will of God to fulfil that of the creature; or in being remiss in loving Him with all my heart, mind, and soul, and with all my strength, much forgetting both Him and His benefits.

ii. The second commandment prohibits every *defect* whatsoever in the *truth, justice, reverence, and necessity* of an *oath*, so that I may not, by swearing, affirm anything contrary to my belief, or promise anything without an intention to fulfil it, or anything that is evil, or not fulfil that which is good; nor swear without necessity or utility, nor without considering well what I say; nor without that reverence which is due to the sovereign name of Almighty God, whenever I take it in my mouth. I may also sin in breaking my vow, or in deferring without cause to fulfil it,

(5) 1 Reg. xv. 23.

(6) Phil. iii. 19; Tit. i. 16.

or in being remiss in the observation of it, so as to diminish the perfection I profess.

iii. In the third, of *keeping holy the feasts*, I may sin by doing upon them any servile work that is prohibited, or in not hearing a whole mass, or in not assisting at it with due reverence and attention; or by wasting such days in things unworthy of the feasts and of the end for which they were instituted, which is to pray and to glorify God.

iv. The fourth commandment is to *honour our parents* according to the flesh, to support them in their necessities, and to obey them in their just commands; and in like manner our spiritual fathers, prelates, and other superiors, obeying their ordinance without contradiction, or without perverseness of judgment, without repugnance of will and without delay in the execution. And to carry this out more at large, I am humbly to "esteem others better than" myself,(7) honouring all, and subjecting myself "to every human creature for God's sake." (8)

v. The fifth, *not to kill*, prohibits all that has been declared in the 22nd meditation, on *anger*; and (to spiritualise the several ways of killing), i. I may kill my *soul* by sin, taking away from it the life of grace; ii. I "*extinguish*" "the *spirit*," (9) that is, the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, by rejecting those good desires with which He inspires me; iii. I *crucify* Christ (10) within me, and trample upon His blood, by doing the works for which He might again be crucified if the first crucifixion had not sufficed; iv. I kill the *souls* of my *neighbours* by scandal, in being to them a stumbling-block by my *evil example*, or by not helping them with correction, or counsel, or spiritual alms, when charity obliges me to it: so we call it killing the poor when we succour them not by the corporal works of mercy. (11)

(7) Phil. ii. 3. (8) 1 Pet. ii. 13. (9) 1 Thess. v. 19. (10) Heb. vi. 6.
 (11) S. Ambrose, dic. 16, "pascere fame morientem; si non pavisti, occidisti."

vi. The sixth, not to *commit adultery*, prohibits all that which is declared in the 20th meditation on *luxury*. But yet there are other sorts of spiritual adultery and fornication, in forsaking God, who is the true spouse of our souls, to *join* myself by inordinate love to *some creature*; or in defiling the works and "words of" Almighty "God," (12) and saying them not to please Him, or to beget spiritual children that may be pleasing to Him, but for my own pleasure or temporal profit; (13) or, finally, by being altogether forgetful of God, and diverting myself with idle occupations.

vii. The seventh, *not to steal*, prohibits all that has been spoken of in the 21st meditation on *avarice*; and, besides this, I commit theft, in a *spiritual* manner, and destroy many things belonging to others, contrary to the will of their owners. For I rob God of His glory, and play the spendthrift with His gifts; I am prodigal of the time that I had to spend in His service; I pay Him not the debts I owe Him on account of my sins, or of His benefits, by satisfying for those, and being thankful for these. I rob Him of my will, which I delivered to Him by my vow of obedience; and I usurp His authority by arrogating to myself to judge of the secret acts of my neighbours which belong to His tribunal. And, in like manner, I destroy the charity and spiritual riches of my neighbours, aiding the captain of thieves, the devil, who is continually busied in robbing them.

viii. The eighth, *not to bear false witness*, prohibits all *sins* of the *tongue* that are against the honour and fame of our neighbour, of which mention was made in the 22nd meditation, on anger. Also, to judge rashly of his affairs, or to suspect evil of them, taking them in the worst part without a sufficient foundation; or to deceive him by any manner of lie or fiction, as is that of hypocrisy, flattery,

(12) 2 Cor. ii. 17.

(13) Cass. collat. xiv. c. 11.

worldly compliments and offers, having no purpose to fulfil them. And spiritualising this precept, I bear false witness against Almighty God when I think basely of His goodness and mercy, of His justice and providence, and when by my evil works I defame and discredit His law and His doctrine, and am a cause that His holy "name" is "blasphemed among the Gentiles," (14) or *less* esteemed and revered among the faithful. I also *lie* to Almighty God when I fulfil not my word, having given it to Him, nor the resolution that I made to do something in His service.

ix., x. The ninth and tenth commandments are declared in the sixth and seventh.

2. After I have considered these sins, I am to *charge myself* with them before our Lord with great sorrow and shame for having committed them. And although I had broken but one commandment only, I may esteem myself, as the apostle St. James says, "guilty of all;" (15) for in every sin I shall find that which is *spiritually* prohibited in all: for one mortal sin only in the form that has been declared is as idolatry, infidelity, hatred, adultery, theft, infamy, and homicide. And therefore, reprehending myself, I may call myself by these infamous names, saying:

Colloquy.—Idolater, infidel, adulterer, thief, hypocrite and homicide! how hast thou dared to do injury in so many ways to a God of so infinite majesty? Why dost thou not break thy heart with grief for having broken the just commandments of thy Lord? O God of my soul, that I might say to Thee with David, "My eyes have sent forth springs of waters, because they have not kept Thy law." (16) Grant unto me these tears so abundant that I may wash with them my innumerable sins!

(14) Isa. lii. 5; Rom. ii. 24.

(15) Jac. ii. 10.

(16) Ps. cxviii. 136.

POINT II.

Secondly, I am to consider the *maledictions* that Almighty God pours out upon the *breakers* of His law, and the terrible *punishments* that He threatens to them both in this life and in the other.

1. This I may ponder, discoursing first of the terrible catalogue that Moses makes of these *maledictions* in two chapters of Deuteronomy, saying to the people that if they broke the law of Almighty God these maledictions should "*come upon*" them "*and overtake*" them. (17) "Cursed shalt thou be in the city, cursed in the field." "Cursed shall be the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy ground, the herds of thy oxen, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be in coming in, and cursed going out. The Lord shall send upon thee famine and hunger, and a rebuke upon all the works that thou shalt do: until He consume and destroy thee quickly, for thy most wicked inventions by which thou hast forsaken me. May the Lord send the pestilence upon thee until He consume thee out of the land which thou shalt go in to possess. May the Lord afflict thee with miserable want, with the fever and with cold, with burning and with heat, and with corrupted air, and with blasting, and pursue thee till thou perish. Be the heaven that is over thee of brass, and the ground thou treadest on of iron. The Lord give thee dust for rain upon thy land, and let ashes come down from heaven upon thee till thou be consumed. The Lord make thee to fall down before thine enemies," "*and be thy carcase meat for all the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the earth, and be there none to drive them away.*" (17) And in this manner he goes on with other horrible maledictions, which, after he has reckoned up, as

(17) Dent. xxvii. 15 ; et xxviii. 16, et seq.

if they were but little ones, he says, "God shall increase thy plagues," (18) adding others that are greater. And because the curse of God is not only in word but in deed, there is none of those that infringe His law that will be able to escape what Almighty God will inflict upon him, and finally all be overtaken with that last which Christ our Saviour shall pronounce at the day of judgment, (19) the terribleness of which has already been declared. The effects of these maledictions, the miserable people of the Jews had had experience of in their time, and many of them we experience in ours, which are all admonitions for our amendment; for the desire of this divine Lawgiver is not to entangle us in these maledictions, but to terrify us that we may keep His law, and be delivered from them.

Colloquy.—O most just Lawgiver, I confess that in very great justice "the heaven" should "be to me" of brass, and the ground "of iron," and that I deserve neither the favour of earth nor heaven! I deserve that Thou shouldst "stop" Thy "ears against" (20) my prayer, because I stopped mine against Thy law. I have drunk "iniquity like water," (21) and therefore it is right that malediction should enter "like water into" my "entrails." (22) But remember, O Lord, that Thou didst subject Thyself to the curses which the law cast upon Him who died crucified, (23) to deliver us from the curses that are threatened by the law. Apply to me, then, the fruit of Thy death, pardoning me the sins that I have committed against the law, and freeing me from the maledictions that I have deserved for them! Amen.

2. I may likewise consider the chastisements that Almighty God *inflicts* upon those that break the ten commandments of His law, as they are represented in the *ten plagues of Egypt*, (24) with which they are many times

(18) Deut. xxviii. 59. (19) Matt. xxv. 41. (20) Prov. xxi. 13. (21) Job xv. 16.

(22) Ps. cviii. 18.

(23) Gal. iii. 13.

(24) Ex. vii. 20.

punished that rebel against the commandments of Almighty God, as Pharaoh and his vassals did, there coming upon them frogs (25), flies, sciniphs (26), murrain (27), boils (28), locusts, thunders, lightnings, hail, and thick darkness; yea, and the Angel of God, with his sword drawn, entered their houses, killing their first-begotten (29), and destroying what they loved most, until at last the sea of tribulations, which gives free passage to the just, drowns (30) and stifles them for their sins, sinking them like lead to the bottom of hell, where they will be burned and tormented in that fire everlasting.

3. And that we may not imagine that these plagues touched only the ancients before the coming of Christ, when our Lord was called the God of vengeance, there is mention also made of them in the Apocalypse. For God's providence, which is benign to the observers of His law, is rigorous against those that infringe it, wherefore He has in readiness "seven angels" with "seven" dreadful "trumpets," and "seven" other, with "seven phials," full of His "wrath" and indignation, which they pour out "upon the earth," (31) striking sinners with dreadful plagues.

Colloquy.—O my soul, why dost not thou tremble to trespass against that law which has such terrible and zealous avengers? How is it that thou art not terrified with the sound of these trumpets? How is it that horror is not caused in thee with the horrible wine of these "phials?" How art thou not affrighted with the dreadfulness of these "plagues?" O most merciful Jesus, who receivedst five wounds on the Cross, and wast wounded on it from head to foot, cure with this precious blood the wounds of my sins, that I may be free from such horrible plagues! Amen.

(25) Ex. viii. 6. (26) Ex. viii. 17, 24. (27) Ex. ix. 3, 6.

(28) Ex. ix. 10, 23; x. 13, 22. (29) Ex. xii. 29. (30) Ex. xiv. 24.

(31) Apoc. viii. 2; xv. 6; xvi. 1.

4. Lastly, I will consider some *particular chastisements* that Almighty God threatens in Scripture against such as break any special commandments; that is to say, "A man that sweareth much shall be filled with iniquity, and a scourge shall not depart from his house." (32) In this are set down two most grievous evil consequences of this vice, which are, to fill the house of a man with sins and punishments, with spiritual and corporeal wounds, and so lay it even with the foundations, as it is manifest by the malediction of the volume, (33) which we put in the beginning of this meditation. "The eye," also, "that mocketh at his father, and that despiseth the labour of his mother in bearing him, let the ravens of the brooks pick it out, and the young eagles eat it:" (34) for such an one is not worthy of long life, but of an infamous death; and in the other life the infernal ravens and eagles shall pluck out his eyes, blinding him with obstinacy, and eating his bowels with torture.

And in this manner we may consider other chastisements, collected from what has been declared in the seven preceding meditations.

POINT III.

1. Thirdly, I am to consider the *blessings* that Almighty God pours out upon those that observe His law, as well *corporeal* as *spiritual*, and as well *temporal* as *eternal*.

i. This I may consider, first running through the catalogue that Moses makes of them in the same book of Deuteronomy, saying to his people, that if they observed the law of God, all these blessings should "come upon" them and "overtake" them. "Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy

(32) Eccus. xxiii. 12.

(33) Zach. v. 1.

(34) Prov. xxx. 17.

cattle. Blessed shall be thy barns, and blessed thy stores. Blessed shalt thou be coming in and going out, and in all the works of thy hands." "The Lord will open His excellent treasure, the heaven, that it may give thee rain in due season. And the Lord shall make thee the head and not the tail; and thou shalt be always above and not beneath." "The Lord shall cause thy enemies that rise up against thee to fall down before thy face." "The Lord will raise thee up to be a holy people to Himself." "And all the people of the earth shall see that the name of the Lord is invocated upon thee, and they shall fear thee." (35)

These and other blessings Moses foretold; and although they are *temporal* and accommodated to the imperfect state and condition of that people, yet they are a sign of others—much greater spiritual things, which Almighty God gives to Christian people (who, besides, want not these temporal), after a most excellent manner; for the providence of our heavenly Father (as His Son Himself promised us) is careful to provide for us those things that are meet, giving them for an *addition* to those that observe His law. (36) For He that "opens His hand," (37) and fills "with His blessing every living creature," will open it much more to replenish his *children*.

ii. Hence I will ascend to consider the *spiritual* blessings which Almighty God gives to those that keep His law, in the keeping of which He has most excellently included three kinds of good, viz. *beautiful*, *profitable*, and *delightful* good, of which David in the eighteenth Psalm makes another sweet catalogue. For, first, "the law of the Lord is *unspotted*, converting souls," (38) replenishing them with wisdom and all virtues. It is also most *profitable* to obtain all good that may be desired, not only for the soul,

(35) Deut. xxviii. 3.

(36) Matt. vi. 26.

(37) Ps. cxliv. 16.

(38) Ps. xviii. 8.

but for the body, as "length of days, and years of life and peace." (39) And therefore it is "more to be desired than gold and many precious stones," (40) or more than all the treasures of the earth. It is also *delightful*, "sweet above honey and the honeycomb," (41) and cheers men's hearts with a greater alacrity than any that can be given by all the sweet things of this life. Hence it is that Almighty God "prevents" beginners with "blessings of sweetness," (42) that they may cheerfully begin the way of His commandments. To those who are *proficients*, this divine lawgiver gives His blessing, that they may "go from virtue to virtue," (43) until they arrive to the height of perfection. And "upon the head of the just" (44) that are perfect He pours His "blessing" in great abundance, giving them some taste of what they shall enjoy in glory. And, finally, in the day of judgment, He will give them the supreme benediction, saying unto them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you;" (45) as we have meditated already.

2. Considering these blessings, and comparing them with the curses which were declared in the preceding point, I am principally to *collect three affections* of very great importance.

i. The first is a great *sorrow* for having broken a law so holy, so profitable, and so sweet, making myself unworthy of its celestial blessing, and incurring the three *evils*, contrary to the three goods that have been spoken of; for together with the breach of the law go those vices that pollute both body and spirit, all the temporal and eternal woes that body and soul suffer, and all the griefs and bitterness with which our heart is afflicted.

(39) Prov. iii. 2.

(40) Ps. xviii. 11.

(41) Ecclus. xxiv. 27.

(42) Ps. xx. 4.

(43) Ps. lxxxiii. 8.

(44) Prov. x. 6; Ps. xxiii. 5.

(45) Matt. xxv. 34.

ii. The *second affection* is of *confidence*, assuredly hoping that, if I observe the law of Almighty God, I shall obtain the blessings which He promises me, calling to mind those memorable words of Ecclesiasticus, who says, "Homo sensatus credit legi, et lex illi fidelis;" "A man of understanding is faithful to the law of God, and the law is faithful to him;" (46) which is to say, the just man and the law are faithful one to another. The just is faithful in obeying the law, and the law is faithful in *rewarding* the just. It defends him in perils; it comforts him in his adversities; it directs him in his prosperity; it counsels him in his doubts; it favours him in his business; it makes his prayers to be heard; it aids him in life; it protects him in death; and, finally, it crowns him in glory.

Colloquy.—O my soul, be "faithful to the law of" Almighty "God," and "the law" shall "be" very "faithful to" thee! Fail not thou in doing what it commands thee, and it will not fail to do what it promises thee! Praise thy sovereign Lawgiver with the "psaltery" (47) of ten strings, keeping His ten commandments, and thou shalt forthwith be partaker of His promises! Say not with the wicked Israelites, "He laboureth in vain that serveth God, and what profit is it that I have kept His ordinances?" (48) Convert thyself truly to our Lord, with a contrite heart for having broken them, and thou shalt see by experience the difference between the just and the sinner, between those that observe His law and those that infringe it!

iii. The *third affection* must be *great love* and *esteem* of the law of God, endeavouring, as Solomon says, to "write" it "in the tables of" my "heart," (49) which are

(46) Eccclus. xxxiii. 3.

(47) Ps. xxxii. 2.

(48) Mal. iii. 14.

(49) Prov. iii. et vii.

the three faculties of my soul. In my memory, to be always mindful of it; in my understanding, to meditate continually upon it; and in my will, to love it, and, if need were, to lay down my life for it, saying, as Moses to his people, I will "meditate upon them sitting in my house, and walking on" my "journey, sleeping and rising." (50) I will "bind them as a sign on" my "hand," to work after their pattern, and they shall be and move "between" my "eyes," by which to guide myself, saying with David, "Oh, how have I loved thy law, O Lord, it is my meditation all the day." (51)

Colloquy.—O most sweet lawgiver, who, when Thou becamest man, didst forthwith put this "law" in "the midst of" Thy heart, "and by Thy grace" dost write it "in" the "heart" (52) of Thy elect, write it also in my heart, in such a manner as it may never be blotted out, that I may be worthy to be written in the book of life, without ever being blotted out of it, world without end! Amen.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE FOREGOING.

Of all that has been said in this meditation I will collect a brief summary of the chief motives in it, as well to procure great contrition for having broken the law of Almighty God as to animate myself to keep it with perfection.

i. Because it is *just* and *holy*, and with great excellence embraces *all kind of good*. ii. To *deliver* myself from the *maledictions* and plagues, both temporal and eternal, which it threatens. iii. To *enjoy* the innumerable *benedictions* which it promises in this life and in that to come. iv. And principally for the sake of the Lawgiver who gave it, viz., Almighty God, infinitely good, wise, and powerful; and

(50) Deut. vi. 7.

(51) Ps. cxviii. 97.

(52) Ps. xxxvi. 31; Jer. xxxi. 33.

my infinite benefactor, upon whom depends all my good, both temporal and eternal. And this reason only shall suffice to move me to love a law given by such a Father, and to be infinitely sorry for having broken it.

v. The fifth motive is, that the lawmaker Himself, becoming man, put it in the midst of His heart, and came to fulfil it entirely, without omitting any jot or tittle, to move me, by His example, to its perfect accomplishment.

vi. The sixth is, the fidelity of the law to those that observe it; and the experience that I myself have of the great good I shall get by observing it, feeling great peace and serenity of conscience, and great alacrity and confidence in Almighty God. And, on the other hand, of the great evil that befalls me when I break it, having my heart broken with sins, excessive fears, remorse of conscience, and many other miseries.

vii. And, finally, because at the hour of death nothing will more torment me than to have broken the law of Almighty God, nor anything more content me than to have observed it; since upon this depends my damnation or salvation. Upon this I will conclude, as Ecclesiastes (53) concluded his book, saying, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is all man;" that is to say, in this consists the whole being of man, and the accomplishment of the obligations of the whole man; and whosoever fails in this fails in the integrity and perfection of a man, and acts like a beast.

(53) Eccles. xii. 13.

MEDITATION XXVI.

ON THE FIVE SENSES AND EXTERIOR FACULTIES.

POINT I.

1. THE first point shall be to recall to my remembrance the sins that I have committed by my *five senses* and exterior faculties of my body, accusing myself of them before our Lord.

i. First, with my *eyes* I have sinned, in delighting to see beautiful, vain, curious, or hurtful things, only for vanity, or curiosity, or sensuality, with immodesty and wantonness of flesh, and disedification of others; so that I often sin in the things that I behold, or in the *intention* with which I behold them, or in the manner of beholding them, carrying lofty eyes, and lightly allowing them to wander on all sides.

ii. My *ears* I have had open to hear vain and curious talk, impertinent novelties, flattery and praises of myself, murmurings and detractions of others, without reprehending them or stopping them, or so much as showing displeasure of them, when I was obliged to it. And having so much relish in hearing these things, I have been disgusted in hearing good talk, and displeased to hear sermons, and the advice and corrections of those that were obliged to give me them.

iii. With the *smell, taste, and touch*, I have in many ways sinned in gluttony and luxury, as has been declared in the meditations of these vices.

iv. But what shall I say of the sins of the *tongue*? For some words I have spoken against the due respect to the

name of God, some against the honour and fame of my neighbour, and to the great injury of my own soul, as appears by what has been set down in the first points of the preceding meditations. Other words have been vicious, by failing in the due circumstances, speaking things unbecoming my state and profession, or in places and times prohibited, as it is to talk much in the church, at mass or at sermon-time, to the scandal of others; or when, by my rules, if I be a religious, I am obliged to keep silence; or when I speak in an improper manner, hastily, inconsiderately, very affectedly and harshly. In such a manner that, considering the sins of my words, I may affirm with the apostle St. James that my tongue has been "universitas iniquitatis," "a world of iniquity," where every sort has been assembled, and a fire that has inflamed and burned "the wheel of" my "nativity" (1) throughout the whole course of my life.

v. With these sins I may join others of *immodesty* and disorder in the use of the rest of the members and exterior faculties, as are immoderate laughter, sneering, mocking, and light gestures of the head, feet, or hands; or walking in an affected, disorderly, and too hasty manner, and the like, which show but little gravity. Of which the Wise man says, that "the attire of the body, the laughing of the teeth, and the gait of the man, show what he is," (2) and what virtue he has.

2. Considering these sins, I must greatly confound myself for having so much abused the faculties that God Almighty gave me, using them for my own pleasure, pampering and honour.

Colloquy.—O great God, how hast Thou suffered in me so great disorder! O miserable man, how is

(1) Jac. iii. 6.

(2) Ecclus. xix. 27.

it that thou hast dared thus to denounce war against Almighty God !

POINT II.

I will next consider the great injury that comes to *me* by these senses, ill-guarded and unmortified.

1. For, first, they are the gates and windows by which, as the prophet Jeremias says, the *death* of sin "is entered into" (3) the house of my soul, destroys the life of grace, and suffocates the vital heat of charity; for by them enter the temptations of the devils, who, like thieves, rob the house of my conscience; spoiling it of the gifts of Almighty God and of all virtue. Whereupon says the same prophet, "My eye hath wasted my soul;" (4) for, as the eye robbed Eve of her original justice, Dinah of her virginity, and David of his chastity and justice, so it robs me sometimes of my temperance, sometimes of my devotion, and the like does the ear and tongue. For as a city "that lieth open, and is not compassed with walls," (5) when besieged by enemies, is entered, sacked and destroyed, so is the soul that has no guard over its senses.

2. These also *give entrance* to the images and figures of *visible things* which disquiet the imagination and memory with distractions and wanderings, these pervert the appetites with disorder of passions, and disturb the heart, casting us out of it. And for this cause likewise it is true that my eye wastes my soul, because it wastes my attention, my thought and affection, causing my soul not to be so much within me as out of me, in the thing that it meditates and loves. And I myself likewise, by these gates, issue out of myself to wander through the whole world, and after me issues out the spirit of devotion, prayer and contemplation. So that when I would return to enter into myself I hit not

(3) Jer. ix. 21.

(4) Thren. iii. 51.

(5) Prov. xxv. 28.

the right way, nor find any quiet in my own house because of the tumults that I experience in it. And hence proceed innumerable defects and damages in prayer and the privation of the favours of heaven; for God is not pleased to put the liquor of his gifts in a vessel that has no cover, and that in five parts is full of "holes." (6)

3. Finally, great are the chastisements that Almighty God has inflicted upon those that have been notably reckless in the guard of their senses and tongue, giving them liberty against the precepts and councils of God's law; as may appear by what has been related in the preceding meditation. Upon which says Ecclesiasticus, (7) "Hedge in thy ears with thorns, hear not a wicked tongue, and make doors and bars to thy mouth. And take heed lest thou slip with thy tongue, and fall in the sight of thy enemies, who lie in wait for thee, and thy fall be incurable unto death." Sometimes to thy temporal death, and sometimes to thy eternal, in hell; where the five senses (as has been noted already) shall suffer incredible torments in chastisement of their unbridled appetites.

Colloquy.—Therefore, O my soul, shut the doors and windows of thy senses, if thou wilt not have death and disorder enter in thereat. Stop, and bridle thy mouth, that thy own tongue do not kill thee. "Hedge in thy ears with thorns," that other men's tongues do not prick thee, drawing from what thou hearest sins of thy own.

POINT III.

1. *Mortification of the Senses.*—The third point shall be to consider the great *good* which the holy curbing and *mortification* of the senses *brings* with it.

i. Because, besides shutting the door against so many

(6) Hag. i. 6.

(7) Ecclus. xxviii. 28, 30.

evils as have been spoken of, it *opens* it for the *Spirit* of *Almighty God* to enter into the soul, who willingly inhabits souls mortified to the flesh and to the delights of the senses. It likewise opens it to let in the spirit of prayer, devotion and contemplation; for our Lord loves to converse with souls that are inclosed gardens, and there He speaks to their heart, consorting and communicating unto them His gifts. And for this cause, when we pray, He commands us to "enter into" the "chamber" of our heart, and to "shut the door" (8) of our senses, that nothing may enter in to disturb our prayer and to interrupt the conversation we have with our heavenly Father.

ii. Besides this, the senses, when they perform their acts according to the will of Almighty God, which is the end of their mortification, are the doors and windows by which *life enters*; and what they see and hear, taste and speak, assists them to obtain the spiritual life of grace and augmentation of it. Hence I am to infer what St. James the apostle says, that as "a fountain" sends not "forth" out of the same hole sweet and bitter water, (9) so from the self-same mouth ought not to proceed "blessing and cursing," *good* words to bless Almighty God, and *evil* words to curse our neighbour; but all ought to be good words, pleasing to God, profitable to my neighbour, and agreeable to my own conscience. And in like manner, in at the self-same eyes and ears ought not to enter life and death, but they ought always to be shut to all that is an occasion of death, and open to that which should give me life; and in this consists their true abnegation.

iii. To this I should add, that the modesty and mortification of the senses is a sign and testimony of the interior virtues; it much *edifies* our *neighbours*, and casts from it such a fragrance that it fills the house of the Church and

(8) Matt. ix. 6.

(9) Jac. iii. 11.

religion with a good name. For as a good portal honours the house, and causes a desire to enter in to see what is within, so the modesty and composedness of the senses and exterior members is the most beautiful portal of virtue and religious life, making it so amiable that it excites a desire to enter in, (10) to enjoy what interiorly is inclosed within it; upon which St. Paul said, that our "modesty" should "be known to all men," for that "the Lord is nigh" (11) and present with us; and in the presence of so potent a king all we His servants ought to carry ourselves very modestly.

iv. Finally, the five senses shall *receive* in heaven, as afterwards will be seen, *particular crowns of glory*, with great pleasure in recompensing the mortification that they suffered on earth. And so, with the hope of all these benefits, I will encourage myself to mortify them with great fervour.

2. I will conclude this meditation with a sweet colloquy with our Lord Christ crucified, considering the mortification of His five senses which He suffered on the cross. This, on one hand, was most holy, casting forth resplendent rays of admirable virtues; and, on the other hand, was most painful, with the mixture of terrible agonies which He suffered for the sins that I have committed with my five senses. And considering how His eyes were obscured with spittle, His ears tormented with blasphemies, His smelling with the smell of Mount Calvary, His taste with gall and vinegar, and His feeling with whips, thorns and nails—compassionating all this, I will say to Him,

Colloquy.—It grieves me, O sweet Saviour, for the sins that I have committed with my five senses, for which Thine were so cruelly tormented! By the pains of which, pardon, I beseech Thee, the many sins of

(10) S. Ambr. lib. ii. de virginibus.

(11) Phil. iv. 5.

mine! With the blood which issued out of Thy five precious wounds wash the stains that have issued from those my five ulcerous fountains! Stop, now, O Lord, their abominable current, and aid me with Thy grace to restrain it, that, imitating the mortification that Thou didst exercise in Thy life and sufferedst in Thy death, I may merit to obtain Thy glory! Amen.

MEDITATION XXVII.

ON THE INTERIOR FACULTIES OF THE SOUL.

POINT I.

1. THE first shall be to consider the vices and sins that have their particular seat in the *understanding*, and the injuries that proceed from them; examining that part which appertains to me in every one of them, which may in all be reduced to seven.

i. The first is *ignorance* of those things that I ought to know, such as those which I ought to believe, to ask, to receive and to do; which are included in the creed and prayer of the "Our Father," in the sacraments, and in the commandments of Almighty God, and in the other obligations proper to every man's state or office, (1) for I can but ill accomplish them not understanding them. And, as St. Paul says, "If any man know not he shall not be known," (2) God saying to him, "I know thee not." With this vice agrees much the culpable *forgetfulness* of Almighty God, and of His law, and of such things as I may and ought to remember, of which we may likewise say, that whosoever forgets shall be *forgotten*; for if I sinfully forget

(1) S. Th. 2, 2, q. lxxvii.

(2) 1 Cor. xiv. 38.

Almighty God and *His* things, God Almighty will be forgetful of *me* and mine.

ii. The second vice is *imprudence*, or precipitation and want of consideration in those things that I *have* to do or say, casting myself into them with violence of passion, without first considering whether they be lawful or unlawful, or without taking convenient counsel concerning them, (3) whence proceed innumerable errors and defects in all matters of virtue.

iii. The third vice is *rashness* in *judging* the sayings and doings of my *neighbours*, condemning them or suspecting amiss of them without sufficient foundation, (4) in which I do injury to Almighty God our Lord by usurping His authority, and interposing myself to judge that secret that is proper to His tribunal. I likewise do injury to my neighbour, in condemning him without sufficient reason; and I do hurt to myself, for ordinarily I come to fall into that which I would rashly judge of.

iv. The fourth vice is *inconstancy and changeableness* in the *good* (5) that I have *determined*, easily altering my opinion; whence proceeds failure in the good resolutions that I had purposed, that I do not keep my word with Almighty God and with men, and the easy giving credit to the temptations of the devil and to the flattering deceits of the flesh; and with this inconstancy is joined changeableness of thoughts, suffering myself to be carried by foolish imagination, which blunts the understanding and renders it wild and inconsiderate in thinking upon divers things without any order. Hence also proceeds mutability in good exercises, skipping from one to another only to satisfy my own pleasure, and by the novelty of them to take away their tediousness.

(3) S. Th. 2, 2, q. liii.

(4) S. Th. 2, 2, q. lx. art. 3.

(5) S. Th. 2, 2, q. liii. art. 5.

v. The fifth vice is *perverseness* and obstinacy in my own *judgment* and opinion, being unwilling to yield or submit it to the judgment of my superiors (6) or those that are more wise, whom I ought to obey and give credit to. This is the idol of discords, whence spring many sins of disobedience and rebellion against our superiors, many brawlings and contentions in disputations, and great errors and illusions of the devil; for, as it is said in Job, "My own counsel shall cast" me "down headlong." (7)

vi. The sixth vice is *cunning*, or carnal prudence and worldly wisdom, craftily inventing means to accomplish my carnal and worldly intentions, (8) whence spring frauds and deceits in words and deeds, and hypocrisies. This vice is wont to go accompanied with foolishness, silliness, or dullness of understanding in judging and discerning the things of Almighty God and the spiritual good of our souls, estimating them meanly, measuring them by the vain rules of the world and not by those of Almighty God; for, as the apostle says, the sensual man perceives not "those things that are of the Spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him;" and because "he cannot understand them" (9) he "blasphemes them." (10)

vii. The seventh vice is *curiosity*, desiring inordinately to know that which is *not meet* for me; (11) as to desire to know things hurtful to my soul or which exceed my capacity, by evil means; or things that are unprofitable and vain, and unsuitable to my state and profession; or, if they are suitable, to desire to know them with an inordinate affection, and only out of curiosity or vanity, contrary to that of the apostle: "Desire not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise, but be wise unto sobriety." (12)

(6) Cass. collat. xxvii. c. 5 et 27.

(7) Job xviii. 7.

(8) S. Th. q. lv. art. 3.

(9) 1 Cor. ii. 14.

(10) Judæ in Epist. canon. v. 2.

(11) S. Th. 2, 2, q. clxvii.

(12) Rom. xii. 3.

2. These are the seven vices of the understanding, in which, if I examine myself, I shall find myself very culpable; and of that I am to accuse myself humbly before Almighty God, gathering hence what a state my poor soul is in if her understanding, which is that which guides her, be so miserable. For, as our Saviour Christ says, "If thy eye be evil thy whole body shall be darksome;" (13) and "If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit," (14) falling from the internal darkness into the eternal of hell. And therefore I should very carefully endeavour, partly by penance, partly by mortification, to purify myself of these seven vices, that my understanding may be like "silver" "refined" seven times, (15) beseeching the Holy Ghost, with His seven gifts, (16) to purify me from them.

Colloquy.—O most divine Spirit, illustrate my soul with the gift of "wisdom," against my ignorance and dulness! Give me the gift of "counsel," against my imprudence; the gift of "understanding," against my "rashness;" the gift of "knowledge," against the perverseness of my judgment; the gift of "fortitude," against my mutability; the gift of "godliness," against carnal prudence; and the gift of "fear," to oppose to my curiosity; that being free from these vices and illuminated with these gifts, I may begin a new (17) spiritual and perfect life, following Thy divine inspiration, without ever dividing myself from it! Amen.

POINT II.

1. The second point shall be to consider the *sins* that spring from my own *will*, and what *injury* I receive by following it, considering well,

i. That it is *my own* will; for this alone is sufficient to abhor it. My own will is that which tends only to the

(13) Matt. vi. 25.

(14) Matt. xv. 14.

(15) Ps. xi. 7.

(16) Isa. xi. 2.

(17) Rom. xi. 20; vi. 4; vii. 6.

seeking my own pleasure, omitting that of Almighty God and of my neighbours; and it is called *my own* because my will being the workmanship of Almighty God, created to conform itself with His divine will, I rebel against this, and appropriate it to myself alone, as if it were my own, and use it to seek only that which is to my own liking. For what theft is more unjust and what robbery more tyrannical than to steal and rob from Almighty God the will that He gave me, and by that means to rebel, always contradicting His will? And what wickedness is there more horrible than that my will, entering into conflict with the will of God, mine should remain vanquisher and God's will be vanquished, treading His will under foot in regard of my own? (18)

Colloquy.—O omnipotent God, by Thy infinite mercy, permit not in me such injustice!

2. Then consider how self-will is the *root of all the vices and sins* that I commit and of all that are committed in the world; all which we may reduce to three heads. i. The first is, a general disobedience to all that Almighty God commands by Himself or by His ministers, so that our own will is the capital enemy of all laws, both divine and human, but especially of religious laws; for all religion is founded upon the mortification of self-will, which if it lives religion dies, and if religion is to live self-will must die. ii. The second vice is, to wrest and make abortive the intention, in the good that it does; doing it, not because it is the will of Almighty God, but for other ends of its own vain, interested, and sensual pleasures, by which the good is converted into evil, and that which might have been pleasing to Almighty God becomes displeasing (19) to Him. As our Lord Himself said by the prophet Isaias, "In the day of your fast your own will is found." iii. The third vice is, to appro-

(18) Cass. collat. xix. c. 8. (19) S. Bern. serm. lxxi. in cant.; Isa. lviii. 3.

appropriate all things to ourselves that we may, without considering what injury may follow from it to others. Whence spring innumerable acts of injustice, avarice, cruelty, contention, processes, oppressions and discords ; treading under foot all the laws of justice and of mercy towards our neighbours, as also the laws of charity, which, as St. Paul says, "seeketh not her own ;" (20) and therefore self-will is the poison and total destruction of charity.

3. Whence it is, that as self-will is the queen and mistress of all vices and sins, so it is that which *peoples hell* and is the fuel of those eternal fires. Upon which says St. Bernard, (21) "Let self-will cease and there will be no sins, and then what need is there of hell?" And besides this, if there be any hell in this life, our own will is a hell to itself, for all the miseries of this life so far are the causes of extreme affliction and heaviness as they are *contrary to our own will*, which if it cease, by conforming ourselves to God's holy will, that which is hell is turned into purgatory and into augmentation of merit and of crowning in heaven. Upon which says St. Ambrose, "Our own will is blind in desires, puffed up in honours, full of anguish in cares, and restless in suspicions ; more careful of glory than of virtue, a greater lover of fame than of a good conscience, and much more miserable enjoying the things that it loves than when it wants them, for experience augments her misery." (22) From all this I will conclude how great my misery has been in having subjected myself to my own will, contrary to the will of Almighty God, bewailing my blindness, and purposing firmly to abhor it and to deny it, in imitation of our Lord Christ, "who came down from heaven, not to do" His "own will, but the will of Him that sent" (23) Him. And being in the heaviness and agonies

(20) 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

(21) S. Bern. serm. de resurrect.

(22) S. Amb. lib. i. de vocatione gentium, c. 8.

(23) Joan. vi. 38.

of death, He said to His father, "Not my will, but Thine be done." (24)

Colloquy.—O Sovereign Master, I confess that I am not worthy to be called Thy disciple, because I have not profited by Thy example. May the sorrows and agony of death come upon me for the times that I have said against Thee, "Not Thy will, but mine be done!" Separate, O my Saviour, from my mouth so cursed a word, and favour me with Thy grace to mortify my own will, that I may entirely accomplish Thine. May I henceforth seek not that which is mine, but what is Thine and my neighbour's; (25) seeking their profit and Thy glory, world without end! Amen.

POINT III.

1. The third point shall be to consider the sins and disorders of the *other interior faculties* of the soul, which are the *imagination* and *sensitive appetites*, with the evil that proceeds from them.

i. I will consider that my *imaginative* faculty is like a hall painted with many images and figures; some foul, some profane, and others ridiculous, monstrous and deformed, entertaining itself in painting them, taking pleasure in beholding them, soliciting the understanding to gaze upon them, and oftentimes drawing it after it to cogitate upon them; whence originally spring many sins, which they call "*delectatio morosa*," a continuing or "*lingering delight*," in matter of carnality, revenge, ambition and avarice, delighting myself with the imagination of these things as if they were present.

ii. Then will I consider how my *appetitive* faculties are like a rough, troubled sea, combated with eleven waves of passions encountering one with another; (26) that is to say,

(24) Luc. xxii. 42. (25) 1 Cor. x. (26) S. Th. 2, 2, q. xiii. art. 4.

love and hatred, desiring and shunning, grief and joy, hope and despair, fear and audacity, and anger. All which, for the most part, I apply to evil, with great disorder; for I love that which I ought to abhor, and I abhor that which I ought to love; I desire that which I ought to shun, and I shun that which I ought to desire; I rejoice in that for which I ought to be sorrowful, and I am sorry for that in which I ought to rejoice. Whence grievous sins arise; for the appetites, with these affections, solicit the will, and carry it after them, that with them it may give its consent.

2. On this account it is that these passions are the arms and snares of the devils to combat us, and to entangle us in great sins; (27) for in seeing any passion rise up they are joyful to see it, and presently make use of it to frame their temptation; so that I myself give to my enemy the principal arms with which he combats, persecutes, and destroys me. Besides this, these passions are my torturers and tormentors, for they make war within me against the poor spirit, molesting me, to make me will what I would not, (28) to do according to the desires of my flesh. And so likewise they are one contrary to another; for the passion of delight makes me desire that which the desire of honour abhors, and the desire of honour that which the passion of avarice shuns. For I am one who (as the Wise man says) always "willeth and willeth not." (29) I will virtue because it is good; and I will it *not* because it is laborious; I will vice because it is delectable; and I will it *not* because it is dishonest. And these willings and not willings of my passions are the tormentors of my miserable heart.

Colloquy.—Oh, with what great reason may I lament to myself, saying to our Lord, "Why hast Thou set

(27) S. Amb. lib. i. offic. cap. 4.

(28) Rom. vii. 15.

(29) Prov. xiii. 4.

me opposite to Thee, and I am become burdensome to myself?" (30) Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (31) Let Thy grace, O Lord, favour me, to deliver me from so great a misery!

3. From this consideration I should draw a very resolute determination, together with my own will, to *mortify these passions*; for this gives life to my passions, and my passions give life to it; and therefore they must die together, in order to be vanquished, according to the counsel of Ecclesiasticus, who says, "Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will." For "if thou give to thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to thy enemies." (32)

(To put this in execution, we shall be assisted with the examinations that shall be set down in the meditations ensuing.)

MEDITATION XXVIII.

ON THE FORM OF PRAYER BY MAKING EVERY NIGHT AN EXAMINATION OF THE CONSCIENCE.

ONE of the most effectual means to purify the soul is, the continual use of *examining the conscience* every day, before we go to bed, which the holy fathers and spiritual masters very earnestly recommend to us. (1) That form of making this examination which was taught us in five points by our glorious father St. Ignatius is the most profitable of all I have seen, since it contains a most excellent form of prayer for all sorts of persons.

1. For the understanding of which, I briefly premise

(30) Job vii. 20. (31) Rom. vii. 24. (32) Ecclus. xviii. 30.

(1) S. Basil. serm. 1, de instit. monach.; S. Chrys. hom. in Ps. iv.; S. Bern. et alii.

that every day we newly charge ourselves with *two debts* to our Lord, although very different, and for very diverse respects. i. The *first* debt is for the innumerable *benefits* we receive of Him. ii. The *second*, for the innumerable *sins* we commit against Him. The first is paid with thanksgiving, the second with sorrow. And it is reason that in the end of every day we should pay them both, beginning with the first debt, as well because it disposes to pay well the second, as also because (as St. Basil (2) says), when we go to prayer, we are not always to enter begging immediately for our own profit; for in that it seems that we give it to be understood that we seek in it principally our own interest; but sometimes we must begin with the praises of Almighty God, giving Him thanks for the favours He has done us; for hereby we give it to be understood that we principally seek the glory of God, and that we esteem it more than all other things. The same thanksgiving will also serve us (as St. Thomas says) (3) for a means to obtain our petitions, for Almighty God willingly gives us what we ask Him, when He sees that we are thankful to Him for what He has given us.

2. Besides this, since I am about to stir up the offensive sink of my sins, lest they should cause me such despair and grief as should swallow and consume me, it is good (as St. Bernard says) (4) to foreguard myself with the remembrance of God's benefits, praising Him for them, taking (as Isaiah says) this "bridle" of "praise" which He puts in my mouth, "lest" I be thrown down headlong and "perish." (5) And although it is true (as St. Bonaventure says) (6) that it is not always necessary to observe this order in the beginning of prayer, yet in this present exercise it comes much to the purpose for the reasons declared.

(2) De const. monast.

(3) S. Th. 2, 2, q. lxxxiii. art. 17.

(4) Serm. 11, in cant. c. 48, 9. (5) Is. xlvi. 9. (6) In speculo disciplinæ, p. 2, c. 6.

POINT I.

The first point shall be briefly to *call to memory* the *benefits* I have received of our Lord, as well *general as special*, and particularly those that He has done me this very day, giving Him very hearty thanks for them all, acknowledging how great they are, as well for the greatness of Him that bestows them with so great love, as for the baseness of him that receives them without meriting them. And reckoning them one by one, I may say, "I give Thee thanks, O my God, that Thou createdst me of nothing, and hast to this day preserved my life! I thank Thee that Thou redeemedst me with Thy precious blood, and madest me a Christian and a member of Thy Church! Blessed be Thou, that Thou hast this present day fed me and clothed me, and delivered me from great perils of body and soul, and given me many good inspirations, aiding me to fulfil some works of obligation, &c. All the good that is in me is Thine, and to Thee belongs the glory of it; and for it all the thanks that I can I render to Thee with the whole affection of my heart. And I beseech the choirs of angels, and all the blessed spirits, to praise Thee for me, and to give Thee thanks for the favours Thou hast done me!

(Of this point we shall speak largely in the sixth part.)

POINT II.

The second point shall be to *ask* of our Lord, with great earnestness, *light to know my sins*, and *grace to be contrite* for them; alleging to Him three pleas of my great necessity and misery in this behalf. i. The first is, the great forgetfulness of my *memory*. ii. The second, the great blindness of my *understanding*. iii. The third, the great coldness of my *will*. Whence it proceeds that the devil holds me strongly tied with a threefold cord of my sins,

which I can hardly break, because some sins I forget with the same facility that I commit them; others, through ignorance, I know not; and those which I do know, through my great coldness I deplore not as I ought.

Colloquy.—Therefore, O my God, by Thy inspiration remedy my forgetfulness; with Thy light illuminate my darkness; and with Thy fire of love chase away my coldness, that I may know my sins, and in such manner bewail them that I may obtain pardon of them! Amen.

POINT III.

1. This petition being made, I will lift up my heart to Almighty God, beholding Him as a Judge that is to judge me with great rigour, searching (as Sophonias says) the corners of "Jerusalem," (which is my soul and its faculties,) "with lamps," (7) discovering all the sins that are therein, be they never so small; *examining* (as David says) not only my *injustice*, but also my "justices" (8) and good works, with which evil circumstances are wont to be mixed.

2. With this consideration, full of a holy fear in the presence of God, I will begin to *examine* all the *sins* which I have committed in that day by *thought*, *word*, and *deed*, and by *omission* or negligence; and I will very attentively endeavour to find out whether I have any of those which David calls "hidden sins," (9) having committed them through ignorance or culpable inconsiderateness, or by the illusion and deceit of the devil, holding them for works of virtue, as if I should hold for zeal that which is anger. To this examination, that will help much which has been said in the first points of the meditations upon the seven deadly sins, and upon the commandments, senses, and faculties of

(7) Sophon. i. 12.

(8) Ps. lxxiv. 3.

(9) Ps. xviii. 13.

the soul; for in them all that may be matter for a very frequent and diligent examination is set down.

3. The *manner* of making this examination shall be, *dividing the day into parts*, and considering what I did in the two first hours of the day; then, in the other two, separating the precious from the vile; and if I find any good, I will with thanks attribute the same to Almighty God; and the evil I will attribute to my corrupted liberty; and of all together, with a very deep shame and confusion, I will make an humble confession before Almighty God, fulfilling that of David, "I said, I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord;" (10) that is to say, I have determined to confess my sins before Almighty God, not to excuse, but to accuse myself; not lightening, but aggravating my sins, and pondering much the injustice I did against Almighty God in committing them; for this is the way to obtain pardon of them.

POINT IV.

1. The fourth point shall be, to *procure* so great a *sorrow* for my sins that it may come to be contrition, sorrowing for them principally for being offences against Almighty God, my "*summum bonum*," "*chief good*," whom I desire to love, and do love, above all things; for with this so perfect sorrow sins are remitted, if there is a purpose in fit time to confess them; as it happened to David himself, who, in saying "I will confess against myself my injustice," (11) he presently added, "And Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin." And hardly had he pronounced this word before Nathan the prophet, "I have sinned against the Lord," when the prophet answered him, "The Lord also hath taken away thy sins." (12) So that if in the examination at night I say to Almighty God with all my heart,

(10) Ps. xxxi. 5.

(11) Ps. xxxi. 5.

(12) 2 Reg. xii. 13.

“It grieveth me, O my God, that I have offended Thee, because I love Thee above all created things, and would willingly have lost them all rather than have sinned; and with Thy grace I purpose to confess all my sins, with a determination never more to return to them,” at that very instant I remain justified. And if that night I should die suddenly, without being able to confess myself, although I had committed many mortal sins, I should not be condemned for them. From which is seen the importance of this sorrow before my going to bed; for if I have sinned mortally, and death assault me in my sleep, (as it has assaulted many,) with this sorrow I shall be saved, and without it I shall be damned.

2. To excite myself to this contrition, it is very available to *compare* that of the first point with that of the third, that is, the great *benefits* that in this day *Almighty God* has *done me* with the *sins* that *I have committed*, (13) being ashamed of myself for having offended so good a God and so liberal a benefactor, and grieving that I have answered such benefits with such offences.

(To this end the meditation of sins which we have set down, especially the fifth, will conduce; and that which will be declared in the thirty-first meditation.)

POINT V.

The fifth point is, to make a very effectual *purpose*, by God's grace, to *amend* the day following, and not to fall into the like sins, with that earnestness with which the Prophet David says, “I have sworn, and am determined to keep the judgments of Thy justice” (14) eternally; not for a day, nor for two, but throughout all my life and all eternity. And that this purpose may be such, it is necessary, besides that which will be declared in the meditation

(13) S. Greg. lib. xxv., mor. c. 26.

(14) Ps. cxviii. 106.

following, to examine the *occasions* that I had of falling, by reason of such a *place*, or such a *person*, or such a *business*; and, besides, to determine to separate myself from this occasion, if I can leave it; and, if not, to resolve to use greater circumspection, and to enter into it with precaution. But since our resolutions are very weak and mutable, if our Lord with His grace do not fortify and establish them, I must beseech Him that, seeing He gave me "to will," He will likewise give me grace to accomplish it; (15) and so I will conclude with the prayer of the "Our Father," making a pause with affection, in the three last petitions of it, forming, in this manner, an amorous colloquy.

Colloquy.—I acknowledge, O my God, the two debts with which I am charged for Thy benefits, and for my sins. All that I have here done is but little to satisfy for them; for that which is wanting I offer to Thee the most precious blood of Thy Son, shed with infinite love and thankfulness, and with excessive sorrow and pain. For which, I beseech Thee, pardon the debts of my sins, and aid me that I may no more return to them. Permit me not to fall into the temptations that shall assail me, but deliver me from all evil for the glory of Thy holy name! Amen.

MEDITATION XXIX.

ON ANOTHER FORM OF PRAYER, BY MAKING, THREE TIMES A-DAY, A PARTICULAR EXAMINATION OF SOME ONE VICE, IN ORDER TO UPROOT IT.

·*BESIDES* the *general* care which we ought to have to cleanse the soul of all her vices and sins, it is very convenient (as the holy fathers say, and especially Cassian (1)) to employ a *particular* study to eradicate *some one vice* of

(15) Phil. ii. 13.

(1) Collat. v. c. 14.

those that tend most to endanger us; for with this so special care it will be the more easily vanquished, and this vanquished, we may take heart to get the victory over another, until we have vanquished them all, as the seven nations that were enemies to the Israelites were vanquished by little and little, and by degrees. (2) To this end our glorious father Ignatius taught us a form of making a particular examination of one vice, in which is included another very profitable form of prayer, divided into three times of the day, viz., morning, noon, and night, which are much celebrated in sacred Scripture by that which David says of himself: "Evening, and morning, and at noon, I will speak and declare my miseries; and He shall hear my voice. He shall redeem my soul from them." (3) And of Daniel the Scripture says: "He knelt down three times a-day, and adored, and gave thanks before his God," (4) making acknowledgment before Him of His divine praises and his own sins. According to this, we will divide this form of prayer into three points, which may serve for the three times aforesaid.

POINT I.

1. First, in the *morning*, in dressing myself, kneeling on my knees like Daniel, and putting myself in the presence of Almighty God, I will *adore* Him, giving Him thanks for my life, rest and sleep, which He has given me the night passed, and for the perils from which He has delivered me; and, by the way, I will likewise examine if, since I lay down, sleeping or waking, anything that might be a sin has happened to me, and with all my heart to be sorry for it.

2. Then I will make an *offer* to our Lord of *all things* whatsoever that I shall do that day, ordaining them purely to His honour and glory; begging of Him perseverance in

(2) Deut. vii. 22.

(3) Ps. liv. 18.

(4) Dan. vi. 10.

this pure intention till the end of the day, and of my life; and beseeching Him to accept my works, in union with those which His only-begotten Son offered to Him for me in this life.

3. This done, I will make a courageous and determined *resolution* that day, by God's holy grace, to separate myself from *all kind of sin*, after the manner that David did, when he said that "in the morning" he "put to death all the wicked of the land;" (5) not with a sword of steel, but with a very steeled and courageous resolution to destroy them all, in so far as they were adversaries to Almighty God, desiring that in the city of my soul there may live nothing to offend Him. But, particularly, I must most resolutely determine to depart from that vice which I desire to eradicate from my heart, conceiving against it a holy hatred for the injury that it does me.

4. That this purpose may be effectual, it will help me much not to take things in the gross, being ignorant of their difficulties, but to *provide* against them with the eyes of prudence, and in the morning to *imagine* all the *difficulties*, vexations, *contempts*, and occasions of stumbling that probably may be offered to me *that day*, considering the quality of my person, state, and office, and the affairs and persons with whom I am to converse. Having considered this, I will endeavour willingly to accept, for the love of our Lord God, whatsoever shall happen against my liking, determining, by God's grace, for no such occasions to fail in humility and patience; nor to admit anything that may be a sin, founding this purpose not upon my own strength, but upon the strength that Almighty God shall give me, and upon some strong reasons that may convince me and make me prompt in heart to execute it; as Christ our Redeemer, in the garden of Gethsemane, set before His eyes all the tor-

(5) Ps. c. 8.

ments He was to suffer the day following, and accepting them with great love, wrestled against fears and sorrows with reasonings and prayers, as we shall see hereafter in its place. (6)

5. And if those who are very zealous will yet pass farther and excel more in virtue, they may take the counsel that a holy abbot (as Cassian (7) reports), gave to those who by living solitary have no occasions to exercise humility and patience, that they should *imagine* terrible sorrows, injuries, contempts, and torments to come upon them by the hands of their enemies, or of their companions, under the pretext of piety, such as were those which the martyrs and holy confessors have suffered, and to accept them all very heartily, and even to *desire* that they might be offered them, and to beg them of our celestial Father with those words of David, "Prove me, O Lord, and try me; burn my reins and my heart, for Thy great mercy is before my eyes," (8) and therein I trust thou wilt aid me; and with this confidence I may say to Him,

Colloquy.—Oh, if in this day somebody would strike me upon one cheek, how willingly for Thy love would I offer Him the other! Or if anyone would speak to me any injurious word, or bear false witness against me, how heartily would I be silent, and suffer it for Thy love! Oh that my superiors would command me some very hard and difficult thing, that in accomplishing it I might show the love that I bear Thee!

With such purposes as these virtues are much augmented, and the heart becomes strong to resist vices; but yet the imperfect and lukewarm must walk warily in such meditations, lest, perhaps, through their imbecility, that which should have been a means of their good turn into a snare of temptation.

(6) In meditatione xxii. part 4. (7) Cass. collat. xix. c. 14. (8) Ps. xxv. 2, 3.

POINT II.

1. Secondly, at *noon*, before dinner, setting myself in the presence of Almighty God, and having asked of Him light to come to the knowledge of my sins, I will *examine* those which I have committed that morning in that *particular vice*, which, if they were many, I should be ashamed that I have not fulfilled the resolution that I made, nor kept my word which I gave to Almighty God, accusing myself of infidelity, inconstancy, and mutability, and being sorrowful for my transgressions in this, on account of their being against a God that is so faithful and constant in benefiting me, and in accomplishing whatsoever He purposes to do for my good. I must reprehend myself (as Cassian (9) says), saying to myself, "Art thou he that this morning didst purpose such great matters, and offered thyself to suffer very terrible things? Then how comes it that so light an occasion has overthrown thee? Thou didst purpose to kill all the enemies of Almighty God, and thou hast surrendered thyself to the least of them! Be ashamed of thy cowardice, humble thyself before Almighty God, and turn anew to resolve, trusting with more liveliness in His mercy, that it may aid thy great imbecility!" I will likewise examine the cause and occasion of having failed in order to avoid it or to prevent it, wholly resolving upon amendment the rest of the day.

2. I may likewise at this time remember that Christ our Lord was crucified at midday, and continued a great part of the evening, suffering most grievous pains upon the cross with constancy, until He gave up the ghost. And in thankfulness for this benefit I must *purpose* to be very *constant* in not yielding to the appetite of my flesh, nor to my own will in that vice, that it may die in me, or I may die

(9) Collat. xix. c. 14.

fighting against it, until I vanquish it. Again, sometimes I may call to mind that it was likewise at midday that Christ our Lord ascended above all the heavens to enjoy the fruit of His labours.

And with this consideration I may animate myself to fight anew against my passions; and with both considerations I may say to Him that of the Canticles:

Colloquy.—“Show me, O Thou whom my soul loveth,” with Thy celestial light, “where Thou feedest” Thy sheep, “where Thou liest in the midday,” (10) that I may there fix my heart and my desires, and not go wandering any more to seek after vices!

POINT III.

1. At *night*, before I sleep, I will make another examination like that which I made before dinner, *comparing the times* that I sinned in the morning with those that I sinned in the evening; and if they were fewer I will give thanks to Almighty God for this amendment, because it has come from His hand; but if they were more, I am to confound myself to see that, instead of going forward, I turn back. But yet I am not to be dismayed, but purpose anew a very hearty amendment; for with such a battle the victory is obtained. For upon this, said the Holy Ghost, “a just man shall fall seven times, and shall rise again.” (11) Giving it to be understood that, falling and yet rising again, he shall come by God’s favour to stand upright. The same comparison I should make between the sins of one day and those of another, according to the counsel of St. Basil; (12) and between those of one week and those of another, according to the counsel of St. Dorotheus, helping my memory by noting them with two lines or strokes for every day in the week, putting in the one line as many dots as I

(10) Cant. i. (11) Prov. xxiv. 16. (12) Serm. de abdic. rerum ser. x.

have sinned times in the morning, and in the other those of the evening.

2. It will likewise help me to give myself *a stroke* on the *breast* when I fall into this sin, both to remember the *times* that I have sinned by the *times* that I have stricken my breast, and also forthwith to *move* me to *contrition* for my sin, and to obtain pardon of it. For in this sense also said the Holy Ghost, "A just man shall fall seven times, and shall rise again." (13) Giving it to be understood, that when he falls he has light to know that he has fallen; and if he falls while it is day, he stays not to rise up at night; rather if he fall "seven times," he rises seven times as soon as he has fallen, sorrowing for his fall, and purposing amendment; and in this manner his frequent falling will be turned into frequent praying, and into good affections and purposes, which, with new grace, repair the injury of the fall.

(Other means of examining and reflecting upon our works shall be inserted in the sixth part in the meditation of what Almighty God said when having finished the work of the creation of the world.)

MEDITATIONS IN PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION AND COMMUNION.

As the purity of the soul (which is the end of the purgative way) is perfectly obtained with the use of the two sacraments of Confession and Communion, it will not be amiss here to insert certain meditations by which we may prepare ourselves worthily to receive them; and by the way to teach beginners the manner how to make this preparation, causing them to hold in estimation the frequency of these two remedies that Almighty God has left us for our salvation.

(13) Prov. xxiv. 16.

MEDITATION XXX.

ON THE EXCELLENCES OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION ; ON THE VIRTUES EXERCISED IN IT ; AND ON THE GRACES THAT ARE RECEIVED.

POINT I.

FIRST, I must consider the *great favour* that Almighty God has done to His Church, and to me as a member of it, in having instituted the *holy sacrament of Penance*, (1) pondering some things that discover the greatness of this benefit, and animate me to the use of it.

1. It being proper to God alone to *pardon sins*, according to that of Isaiah, "I am, I am He that blot out thy iniquities for my own sake, and I will not remember thy sins," (2) He would *put this power* in the hands of *priests*, assuring us that He would approve in heaven the sentence that they should give upon earth. (3) And He ordained that these priests should be men subject likewise to sin, and in need of the self-same remedy, that they might be the more compassionate of sinners. And the power that He gave them was so ample that He reserved to Himself alone no sin, how great soever, nor limited to them the number of sins, nor how often they were to pardon them ; for He said to St. Peter that pardon should be given not only "seven times, but seventy times seven times;" (4) that is, without number or limitation. In all which is apparent the goodness of this great and sovereign God, and the desire that He has to pardon us.

Colloquy.—O merciful Father, "seventy and seven times," and thousands of times more, may the angels of heaven praise Thee for the favour Thou doest to

(1) S. Th. 3, p. q. lxxxiv. ars. 6 et 7.

(2) Isa. xliii. 25.

(3) Joan. xx. 23.

(4) Matt. xviii. 22.

us sinners that live upon earth. As often as we can sin, so often, if we ask pardon of Thee, Thou wilt pardon us, for Thy mercy is greater than our misery. I will confidently approach to ask pardon for the injury, seeing He Himself that is injured so liberally offers it to me!

2. Secondly, I will ponder how this sovereign Judge, being about to make a most strict judgment of our lives at the end of them and at the end of the world, would mercifully change *this rigorous judgment* of our sins into the merciful judgment that we shall make of them in this sacrament; so that (as the Apostle says) if we would judge ourselves, and be absolved, we should not be judged (5) and condemned for those sins; for to this end the Scripture says that "there shall not rise a double affliction." (6)

3. Finally, this sacrament, according to the prophecy of Zacharias, is a *fountain of living water*, that Almighty God has in His Church "for the washing of" (7) the uncleanness of our sins, to heal the infirmities and wounds of our vices, to restore to us the life of grace, the beauty of charity and the splendour of virtues; to repair lost merits, and to remedy the other evils of our sins. And it is a continual and open fountain, for it is never dry, nor does Almighty God ever shut it so long as we live; but rather desires that as soon as ever we have sinned we should approach to wash ourselves therein.

Colloquy.—Oh, blessed be the fountain of God's goodness, whence springeth this fountain of so great mercy! Come, O my soul, for "waters out of thy Saviour's fountains!" (8) Come with grief by reason of thy sin, but with joy through hope to wash thyself therein!

(This point shall be handled more largely in the fifth part.)

(5) 1 Cor. xi. 31; S. Cypr. serm. de passione.

(6) Nahum i. 9.

(7) Zach. xiii. 1.

(8) Isa. xii. 3.

POINT II.

Secondly, I am to consider what an *excellent* work the act of confession is, to induce us the more to exercise and frequent it; pondering how Christ our Lord instituted this sacrament in His Church, that the faithful might take occasion by their own sins to exercise excellent acts of virtues, with which they might not only repair the losses they received by them, but also might gain new advantages.

1. The acts are principally seven.

i. The first is of *faith*, believing firmly that the pardoning of sins, which is proper to Almighty God alone, has been communicated to priests, (9) putting in their hands the keys of heaven, with which they shall open the gates of it, that from thence may descend the heavenly gifts and graces that justify sinners; and that sinners may enter into it to enjoy the kingdom which is promised to the just.

ii. The second act is of *hope*, above all human hope; for the confession of our own crime, which in the tribunals of the world is a means to condemn the guilty, in this tribunal of heaven is a means to absolve him.

iii. The third act is of *charity*, to which it pertains to be greatly sorry for having offended the infinite goodness of Almighty God, and lost His grace and friendship, desiring to repair it by loving and serving Him with all our hearts.

iv. The fourth is of heroic *humility*, by which we humble ourselves, not only before Almighty God but before men; discovering unto His ministers the secret things that are to humble us, and to cause in us great shame and confusion, embracing this contempt for the love of Almighty God, and delighting that others should hold us in that opinion that we hold ourselves in.

v. The fifth is of excellent *obedience* in a matter, as has

(9) Matt. xviii. 18.

been said, that is so hard and difficult, and in subjecting ourselves to our confessors as to our superiors, with a mind to obey them in whatsoever they shall ordain to this end.

vi. The sixth is of *justice* highly elevated, of which we exercise the acts as accuser, culprit, witness, judge, executioner: and subjecting ourselves to God's minister, not perforce but willingly, with a mind to undergo His sentence, and with a zeal to revenge on ourselves the injuries we have done against Almighty God, and to repair and restore the injuries that we have done to our neighbour.

vii. The seventh is of admirable *fortitude* in which we vanquish ourselves, and the vehement inclination that men have to cover their sins, to defend and excuse them like Adam, from whom all men inherit it. On this account, whosoever vanquisheth himself in this is more than a man; as holy Job implies when he says, "If, as a man, I have hid my sin, and have concealed my iniquity in my bosom." (10) And sometimes we had need of no less fortitude to confess with humility the sin committed than not to commit it. For, as St. Gregory says, (11) we generally suffer a greater *conflict in manifesting* the sin committed than would have been suffered in resisting the committing it. And therefore he is no less to be admired that with humility confesses well his sins than he that exercises other virtues.

2. These seven acts, so heroic, accompany confession, and make it of great merit before Almighty God, and of great glory before the angels and before discreet and prudent confessors; and therefore I must endeavour to exercise them with great spirit, that the fruit and the grace may be more abundant, saying to myself that of Ecclesiasticus, "Give and take, and justify thy soul." (12) And seeing Almighty God is willing to give thee pardon of the seven deadly sins, and grace with the seven gifts thereof, give

(10) Job xxxi. 33. (11) Lib. xxi. mor. c. 12. (12) Eccclus. xiv. 16.

thou to Him these seven acts, with which thou mayest dispose thyself to receive them, gape "seven times" like "the child" (13) whom the prophet Eliseus raised from death, eliciting these seven affections, that Almighty God may exalt thee to a new life, and exalt thee even to its height.

POINT III.

1. Thirdly, I am to consider the *graces* and favours that Almighty God *does* to those that *confess* themselves, receiving the sacrament with that disposition which is requisite, which we may reduce to three, in which St. Paul puts "the kingdom of God," saying that it is "justice and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," (14) which kingdom is promised to those that truly "do penance." (15)

i. He grants them "*justice*," which is the grace of justification, justifying them of all their sins, making them His friends and adopted children, and inheritors of His heaven. And with this grace He gives them charity, and virtues infused, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the true beauty of the soul, which goes together with humble confession. (16) And if they come to confession with justice, there it is augmented, communicating to them greater grace, and fulfilling that which is said in the Apocalypse: "He that is just, let him be justified still," (17) endeavouring not to cease, but more and more "to be justified, even to death." (18)

ii. Secondly, He grants them "*peace*" supernatural, not only because He reconciles them to Himself, but also because, in reward of the glorious victory which they obtain of themselves in vanquishing the difficulties of confession, He gives them *three* victories over their enemies, destroy-

(13) 4 Reg. iv. 35.

(14) Rom. xiv. 17.

(15) Matt. iii. 2.

(16) S. Aug. in illud Ps. xcix.; "Confessio et pulchritudo in conspectu ejus."

(17) Apoc. xxii. 11.

(18) Ecclus. xviii. 22.

ing some, putting others to flight, and subjecting the rest to them. (a) He *destroys sins*, since "He will cast them all into the bottom of the sea." (19) (b) The *devils* with their temptation *fly away*, for there is nothing that more terrifies them than to manifest the wounds of the conscience to the physician that is to cure them. (c) And the *passions* of the flesh begin to *yield* themselves to the spirit; for "when the ways of man shall please the Lord, He will convert even his enemies to peace." (20) And therefore it is a great means of vanquishing temptations and passions to manifest them to the confessor and spiritual father; for, while they remain concealed, the devil is in peace and we in a terrible conflict; but in discovering them he flies, and we remain in peace. (21)

iii. Thirdly, He grants "*joy in the Holy Ghost*," banishing the fears and heaviness that spring from an evil conscience, replenishing them with alacrity, with the news of pardon, according to that of the prophet David: "To my hearing Thou shalt give joy and gladness, and the bones that have been humbled shall rejoice." (22) For, taking from them the most heavy burden of their sins, which weighs them down like lead, and the spirit of sadness, which withered and consumed them, they grow green again, and lift up their head with the hope of pardon, and with the pledge they receive of life everlasting.

2. With this consideration, I am to resolve myself to execute all that is necessary for confession, how painful, shameful, and troublesome soever it seem, remembering that all is but little in comparison of the great good that Almighty God promises me, and of the eternal evil from which He delivers me. And if I consider what Christ

(19) Mich. vii. 19.

(20) Prov. xvi. 7.

(21) Cas. col. ii. c. 10 et 11; S. Bona. in speculo disciplinæ, p. 2, c. 3.

(22) Ps. l. 10.

our Saviour did for the pardon of my sins, what sorrows, what ignominies, and what pains He suffered for them, that will soon appear but little to me which God requires for their pardon. And again, if I ponder how much Almighty God might require of me if He would extend His rigour, seeing I merited sorrow, ignominy, and eternal torments, I shall presently see that He requires of me but very little. And therefore I may imagine that the same words are spoken to me which were spoken to leprous Naaman by his servants, "Father, if the prophet" Elizeus had "bid thee do some great thing" to cure thy leprosy, "thou surely shouldst have done it; how much rather what he now hath said to thee, Wash and thou shalt be clean?" (23)

Colloquy.—O my soul, if Almighty God should command thee many things very hard and heavy to heal the leprosy of thy sins, it were reason thou shouldst do them with great promptness and speed: how much more bidding thee do a thing so easy to do as is, Confess thy sins, and thou shalt be healed: "wash seven times in the Jordan" of penance, accompanying thy confession with the seven affections above named, and thou shalt be cleansed of the leprosy of thy sins. Glory, like Job, in not hiding thy sin "as a" frail "man," nor concealing "thy iniquity" in thy bosom. (24) Take the counsel of the Wise man, who says, "For thy soul, be not ashamed to say the truth: for there is a shame that bringeth sin, and there is a shame that bringeth glory and grace." (25) If, vanquished by shame, thou concealest thy sin, thou increasest it; but if with shame thou confessest it, thou shalt obtain a crown of great glory, for the victory thou gainest by confessing thy sins.

(23) 4 Reg. v. 13.

(24) Job xxxi. 33.

(25) Eccclus. iv. 24.

MEDITATION XXXI.

ON PREPARATION TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

THE end of this meditation is, before my confession to make so perfect a judgment of myself as may make plain all the difficulties that may happen in the sacramental judgment to be made by the confessor, that I may be secure in the last judgment which the Supreme Judge is to make of me. In this judgment I myself must execute the office of the accuser, the witness, the judge and the tormentor. And upon this St. Gregory says, that "*conscientia accusat, ratio judicat, timor ligat, dolor excruciat*;" (1) my *conscience* is to accuse me of all my sins without omitting any one. My *reason* is to judge what I merit for them, sentencing me to be worthy of great punishment for having committed them. The *fear* of Almighty God and of His rigorous judgment is to bind me, and to oblige me humbly to undergo what penance soever reason shall dictate and the confessor shall impose upon me. And *sorrow*, as an executioner, is to torment me, breaking and shivering my heart for the offences I have done to my Creator. These four judicial acts am I to do within the hall of my heart, quickening them with the considerations which are ordained to this end; and much more with the remembrance of the presence of Almighty God, the judge of the living and of the dead, whom I must behold seated in the "throne" of His majesty, as has been declared in the ninth meditation, because the view of this most righteous Judge will be a motive to make me do it with greater diligence. (2)

(1) Lib. xxv. mor. c. 26.

(2) Job xxiii. 4, et xxxv. 14; Isa. xlili. 26.

POINT I.

First, I am to consider that our Lord Christ would that our own acts should be *part of this sacrament*, viz., contrition, confession, and satisfaction, (3) which answer to the three sorts of sinning by thought, word, and deed, that I myself might concur to the grace of my justification; and that, seeing I sinned with my acts, with the same I might dispose myself to receive my pardon. And now that it has been the good pleasure of our Lord to ennoble my acts, making them the instruments of His grace, it is reason that I should exercise them with the greatest excellency possible, that I may "in all my works" (as the Wise man says) "keep the pre-eminence," (4) begging of the three Persons of the Godhead particular favour for every one of them. Of the Holy Ghost, to whom is attributed *charity*, I will beg contrition of heart, beseeching Him that He will kindle in my soul the fire of His love, from which may proceed such a sorrow as may consume all the dross of my sins. Of the *Son* of Almighty God, who is the Word of the eternal Father, to whom is attributed *wisdom*, I will beg light to know my sins, and such humble words to confess them, that I may be purified and cleansed of them. Of the *eternal Father*, to whom is attributed *power*, I will beg force for the works of satisfaction, with perseverance until I have paid all the pains that I owe for my sins.

Colloquy.—O most blessed Trinity, assist my heart and my lips, that I may worthily confess all my sins, and obtain complete remission of them! Amen.

Then I must consider all that is necessary to exercise these three acts with great perfection, reasoning on every one of them.

POINT II.

Of contrition.—As concerning the *first* act, which is *sorrow*

(3) S. Th. 3, p. q. xc. art. 2.

(4) Ecclus. xxxiii. 23.

for sins, I am to procure to have it the most perfect that may be, not contenting myself with an imperfect sorrow which is called *attrition*, proceeding from *fear* of the pains of *hell*, but procuring the perfect sorrow which is called *contrition*, and proceeds from the *love* of *Almighty God* above all things, as has been before said. And this sorrow must be the greatest that possibly may be, because it is the measure of the grace that is given in this sacrament. So that if the sorrow be imperfect and little, the grace likewise will be little; if it be perfect and great, the grace will be great which is given in it; for observe, as sorrow increases so shall grace, and if there be no sorrow no grace shall be given. And therefore the principal part of this preparation consists in the perfection of sorrow; to which I must move myself with the considerations that were set down in the fifth meditation, and with some similitudes deduced out of holy Scripture, to move us to the tears of love.

1. Sometimes it tells me that I should weep bitterly, as a mother makes "mourning for the death of an only son," (5) upon whom she had laid all her love and repose; so will I weep for the *spiritual death* of *my soul*, which is my "only" one, and by reason is much to be loved; yet I myself have cruelly slain her by sin, and subjected her to death everlasting. And seeing I have so great a feeling of the loss of those things that I love, a much greater feeling am I to have of this, because it is the greatest of all: and in this tears are well employed. For a mother, let her weep never so much, she shall not give life to her son that is dead; but with tears of contrition I shall obtain life for my dead soul.

Colloquy.—O infinite God, I am very much grieved for the injury I have done Thee, by killing with sin the soul that Thou gavest me, and seeing it is more Thine than mine, have mercy upon it! Deliver my

(5) Jer. vi. 26.

soul from the sword of death, and mine only one "from the hand of the dog" (6) of hell, that I may live to Thee and confess Thy holy name! Amen.

2. I will likewise weep for my sins, because with them I have "pierced" (7) the *only-begotten Son*, who through excellence merits this name, Christ Jesus my Lord—within myself crucifying again "the Son of God;" (8) and having, as much as lieth in me, given occasion for Him to die.

Colloquy.—O only-begotten Son of the Father, I am exceedingly sorrowful for my sins, for having been thereby a cause of Thy death; return, O Lord, to live in my soul with Thy grace, seeing Thou didst die to give it life.

3. At other times it tells me that I should weep like a bride that has by death lost her beloved spouse, upon whom depended her whole solace, thereby remaining a widow, poor and abandoned. And so will I weep for my sins, by which I have *lost Almighty God*, the spouse of my soul, and with Him have lost the jewels of His grace and charity, and the gifts that He had given me, remaining, like a widow, not able to engender children of good works, merits of life everlasting, but abandoned and left desolate, without the protection of so sweet a spouse.

Colloquy.—Oh that my heart would shiver, and break with the force of sorrow, for having lost such a spouse, such jewels, and such amiable protection!

4. And yet, notwithstanding, if I perceive that my heart is still hardened, and melts not with the considerations of love, I will make use of those of fear before mentioned, that fear (as St. Bernard (9) says) may quicken me, and open the door to love. *Excitetur ut excitet.* Let fear be awakened

(6) Ps. xxi. 21.

(7) Zach. xii. 10.

(8) Heb. vi. 6.

(9) S. Bern. serm. xvi. in cant.

that it may awake me. Fear, O my soul, the face of the Judge, whom the powers of heaven fear, the *wrath* of the *Omnipotent*, the face of His fury, the noise of the world that will perish, the fire that will burn it, the voice of the Archangel, and the most rigorous words of the final sentence. Fear the teeth of the dragon, the belly of hell, the roaring of fierce beasts that stand ready to devour, the worm that ever gnaws, the fire that always burns, the smoke, the brimstone, the whirlwind, and the exterior darkness.

Colloquy.—Oh, “who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes,” (10) that I may therewith prevent the eternal lamentation, the gnashing of teeth, the binding of hands and feet, the weight of the fiery chains that oppress, that gripe, that burn, and that never consume.

5. With these tears of fear I must dispose myself to pass on to those of love. For (as St. Augustine (11) says) “fear must be like the needle that enters through the cloth, not to remain within itself, but to make the thread enter, wherewith to join the parts that are disjoined.” So fear must serve to make charity enter, and to join together the affection of the soul, employing them in loving Almighty God and bewailing the offence that it has done Him.

POINT III.

Of confession.—1. In order to the *second act*, which is *confession*, pre-supposing the examination and averring of sins in that manner that has been described in the third point of the 30th meditation, the *first purpose* must be to *confess them all entirely*, how ignominious soever they be, vanquishing the shame that may disturb me with those considerations that were set down in the end of the last meditation,

(10) Jer. ix. 1.

(11) Tract. in illud 1 Joan. iv. 18. “Charitas perfecta foras mittit timorem.”

saying to myself, Better is shame in the face than a spot in the heart! If thou sufferest not now this little confusion, thou wilt suffer a greater in the day of judgment. And seeing that Almighty God knoweth well all thy iniquities, what is it for His minister to know them, who in His name is to pardon them? Courage, then! Give glory to Almighty God and confess thyself, for thy confession shall not be like that of Achan, (12) to die, but like that of David, (13) to live. Having thus resolved, it is good (as S. Bonaventure (14) advises us) to begin confession with that which causes me most shame; because vanquishing the greatest of my enemies it will be easy to vanquish the rest, as, the giant Goliath being vanquished, the Philistines fled.

2. The *second* purpose must be to manifest my sins, not only with integrity but with all the *humility* (15) that I may, making of all a clear, pure, sincere, naked, and well-intentioned confession; not excusing nor extenuating my sins, not casting the fault upon my neighbour, like Adam, nor upon the devil, like Eve, but upon *myself*, like David; confessing my iniquity against myself, and saying that "it is" exceeding "great." (16) But yet I must avoid another extremity, of so much exaggerating my sins that it may seem to be a feigned confession, to be honoured and esteemed for humble; for vain-glory uses many ways to assail these works of humility, seeking in them her own honour. (17)

3. The *third* purpose must be to hear the reprehension of the confessor with great *silence* and humility, without interrupting him, though it be very rigorous, as the holy King David heard the terrible reprehension of the Prophet Nathan, acknowledging his fault, and saying, "I have sinned

(12) Josue vii.

(13) 2 Reg. xii. 13.

(14) De puritate conscientie, c. 1.

(15) S. Th. q. ix., addit. art. tit. 4.

(16) Ps. xxxiv. 5; xxi. 11.

(17) S. Bern. de grad. humil. simulata confes.; S. Bonavent. ubi supra, c. 3.

against the Lord." (18) For in this will be verified that of Ecclesiasticus, "Hear in silence; and for thy reverence" that herein thou showest, "accedet tibi bona gratia"—"good grace shall come to thee;" (19) and what better "grace" than that which is here given, which is the grace of God Himself?

4. In all this it will be a great aid to me not to regard the priest as he is a man, but as he is the *minister* of *Almighty God*, (20) or rather as God Himself is in him, respecting with internal and external reverence; for that His divine Majesty would that the confessor should absolve, not praying for pardon, but commanding, and sentencing as Almighty God, saying, "I absolve thee."

Colloquy.—O my soul, seeing thou hopest to hear this word of eternal life, what matter is it to suffer some temporal shame? "When thou art reproved," "show repentance," for so thou shalt escape wilful sin. (21) Discover once all thy sins, seeing Almighty God hath promised thee to forget them all. (22)

POINT IV.

Of satisfaction.—1. In order to the *third* act of *satisfaction*, I must make a most effectual determination to *obey my confessor* in whatsoever convenient thing he shall command me, as well for the medicine of my spiritual infirmities as to satisfy for the injuries I have done against Almighty God; for it is reason that the sick should obey the physician in things that are necessary for the obtaining of his health, and the escaping the peril and occasion near at hand to destroy it; and it is likewise just that the debtor should pay that which he owes to his creditor. And seeing Almighty God is will-

(18) 2 Reg. xii. 13.

(19) Ecclus. xxxiii. 9.

(20) S. Bonavent. in specu. par. ii. c. 3; et de informati. novit. c. 12.

(21) Ecclus. xx. 4.

(22) Ezech. xviii. 23.

ing to pardon me the sin, and to change the eternal into temporal punishment, it is reasonable to animate myself to receive with a good will that penance which my confessor shall assign me to perform, saying with David, "Ego in flagella paratus sum," "I am ready for the scourges" that my sins deserve, and "my sorrow is continually before me, for I will declare my iniquity;" "et cogitabo pro peccato meo," "and I will think for my sin," (23) endeavouring that neither my memory may forget it, nor my eyes cease to bewail it, nor my hands to chastise it, until it be wholly blotted out.

2. To this end it will help me to consider —

i. The terrible *penance* that Christ our Saviour *did in satisfaction* of my *sins*. What more rigorous discipline could there be than that of His whippings? What rougher hair-cloth than the prickles of the thorns of His passion? What bed harder than that of His cross? And what fast more terrible than all day to suffer hunger and thirst, and to break His fast with gall and vinegar?

Colloquy.—O my soul, seeing Christ suffered so much for the sins that He committed not, suffer somewhat for those that thou hast committed. "Bring forth" "fruit worthy of penance," (24) for the tree that bears not such fruit as Christ shall have no part with Christ!

ii. It will much help me likewise to consider the *pains of purgatory*, of which soon after we shall speak. For it is a great folly not to be willing to pay the debt until the creditor lay his execution upon me, and cast me into prison with costs and charges; paying in purgatory, with terrible pains, that which in this life I may pay with my short satisfaction and great profit. For such is the liberality of Almighty God, that He rewards with new pay the work that

(23) Ps. xxxvii. 18.

(24) Matt. iii. 8.

I do to pay the debt, recompensing it with augmentation of grace and glory.

3. Finally, I am to make another most effectual resolution to amend *my life*, and no more to return to the sins that I have committed ; for if this purpose be wanting, the contrition is feigned, the confession sacrilegious, the satisfaction little available, and the absolution of no effect ; for his sins are not remitted to him that has a purpose to return to them ; and though it were but a venial sin, it cannot be pardoned unless there be purpose of amending it.

4. With this preparation, preserving these holy affections and purposes, I may securely come to this holy sacrament, putting in practice what I have determined with a desire to renew my life, and to make a great change in it, imagining that of the prophet Jeremias is spoken to me : “ Set thee up a watch-tower, make to thee bitterness,” bewailing bitterly thy sins ; “ direct thy heart into the right way, wherein thou hast walked.” (25) “ Et da cor tuum super humeros tuos,” “ And put thy heart upon thy shoulders,” (26) undertaking with love the yoke of obedience to fulfil what Almighty God and His ministers may command me.

MEDITATION XXXII.

ON THANKSGIVING AFTER CONFESSION.

1. Having ended the confession of my sins, and received absolution, it is very convenient to give some little time to the confession of praises for the favour that Almighty God has done me ; for both confessions our Lord exacts of us, according to the saying of the prophet Hoseas, “ Return, O Israel, to the Lord thy God ; for thou hast fallen down by (25) Jer. xxxi. 21 juxta Septuag. (26) S. Jer. “ Ibi cogitationes operibus junge.”

thine iniquity. Take with you words, and return to the Lord, and say to him, Take away all iniquity, and receive the good ; and we will render the calves of our lips ;" (1) that is, instead of the victims which of old they offered Thee in sacrifice, (2) we offer unto Thee now the victims of words ; confessing our sins that Thou mayest remit them, and confessing Thy mercies when Thou hast remitted them. This " sacrifice of praise," as David says, shall glorify God ; " and there is the way by which I will show him," says the Lord, " the salvation of God," (3) which is confirmed thereby to the grateful. To this end it will help to consider how much our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased with the leprous Samaritan, who going to present himself to the priest, was cured as he went of his leprosy, and forthwith returned back to give thanks for the health that was given him ; (4) and contrariwise, how much he was displeased with his other nine companions, who having received the like benefit, returned not to acknowledge it and to give to God the glory which they owed him, as we shall further consider in the meditation of this miracle.

2. Therefore, having ended my confession, I will recollect myself in the church before the blessed sacrament, or in some other convenient place, where being set in the presence of the ever-living God, I will revive the faith of the favour He has done me, in which with my bodily ears I have heard that favourable sentence and most sweet word, " I absolve thee," a word powerful to *do* what it *signifies*, to give joy to my ears and " gladness " to my " humbled bones ;" (5) and so, trusting in the goodness and mercy of Almighty God, that He has made good and ratified this sentence, I will endeavour to exercise three acts of thanksgiving ; which are,

(1) Osee xiv. 3.

(2) Ps. xlix. 13.

(3) Ps. xlix. 23.

(4) Luc. xvii. 15, 16.

(5) Ps. l. 10.

to acknowledge the benefit, to praise God for it, and to offer to Him some service. (6)

POINT I.

First, I will ponder in my heart the manifold *benefits* that I have received in this holy sacrament; of which the prophet David made a brief catalogue by way of praise in the 102nd Psalm, and they may be reduced to six:—

i. The first is, to *pardon* me all my *sins*, not only confessed, but also the forgotten sins, and those which without my fault I could not have knowledge of.

ii. The second is to *heal* the *spiritual* “*diseases*” of my soul, as are vices and passions, dejections and fears, and other afflictions, putting a moderation in all, according to reason.

iii. The third is to “*redeem*” my “*life from destruction*,” to which I was condemned by my sin, and from the most bitter death, which the privation of God’s grace brings with it.

iv. The fourth is to *crown* me “*with mercy*” and the works of mercy, favouring me to *gain the victory of temptations* with which I have been and shall be assaulted; delivering me from other innumerable miseries, and offering me His aid that I may no more return to them.

v. The fifth is to *satisfy* my “*desire with good things*,” giving me His grace and charity with the rest of the virtues, or new augmentation of them.

vi. The sixth is to *renew my* “*youth like the eagle’s*,” un-clothing me of the works and customs of “*the old man*,” and clothing me with those of “*the new man*,” and restoring unto me the first fervour of spirit, with new gladness of heart, to execute new works of virtue with great perfection. These benefits our Lord for His part grants to those that confess

(6) S. Th. 2, 2, q. cvii. art. 2.

themselves as they ought, and so much the greater are the benefits as they are given without any merit of ours; and on this account the true penitent ought to be the more grateful. With this spirit I will greatly extol the infinite liberality of Almighty God towards me, and with a silent admiration I will yield myself vanquished by it. (7)

POINT II.

Then will I break out into a canticle of *praise* with great affection, saying the words of this Psalm, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all He hath done for thee. He remitteth all thy sins and healeth all thy infirmities. He redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and compassion. He satisfieth thy desire with good things, and reneweth thy youth like the eagle's. He hath not dealt with me according to my sins, nor rewarded me according to mine iniquities. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed mine iniquities from me. As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on those that fear Him, for He knoweth our weakness, and He remembereth that we are dust." (8.)

Colloquy.—O God of my soul, if the mercies are so great which Thou hast done me, what shall I do not to be remiss in thanksgivings? I desire to procure with Thy aid that which Thou hast begun in me by Thy mercy; and seeing Thou hast pardoned my sins, I will never more return to them; seeing Thou hast delivered me from death, I will not again subject myself to it; seeing Thou hast crowned me with mercies, I will give Thee the glory of all my crowns. Add, O Lord, this mercy to the former, to fill my desire with Thy good things of heaven, giving me grace to ac-

(7) S. Th. 1, 2, q. cvi. art. 2.

(8) Ps. cii.

comply what I offer to Thee, changing my fortitude in such manner that with great fervour I may walk, run, and fly like a renewed eagle, (9) until I obtain the eternal crown of Thy glory! Amen.

After this manner we may make other canticles of praise, inviting those saints that were great sinners to glorify Almighty God in return for having pardoned my sins.

POINT III.

Finally, in order to the third act of thanksgiving, I am to do three things.

1. First, to *confirm* myself much in my *intentions* of *amendment*, imagining that Christ our Lord says to me, as He said to that other sick man in the Temple, who was giving thanks for the health that he had received, "Ecce sanus factus es, jam noli peccare, ne tibi aliquid deterius contingat;" "Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more, lest some other worse thing happen to thee;" (10) the relapse is usually worse than the fall. But if "as a dog" I return to eat the "vomit," (11) after this eating the first devil will enter with "seven other spirits more wicked than himself;" and this second entrance shall be much "worse than the first." (12) And, at least, I am much to be afraid of falling soon after my confession. For if the same day I fall into the same sins, it will be a sign that my conversion was cold and imperfect, though it were true; and that of Ecclesiasticus may be said to me, "He that washeth himself after touching the dead, if he toucheth him again what doth his washing avail?" And so a man that fasteth for his sins, and doth the same again, what doth his "humbling himself profit him? who will hear his prayer?" (13) But this I am to consider to move me to fear, not to dis-

(9) Isa. xl. 31. (10) Joan. v. 14. (11) Prov. xxvi. 11; 2 Pet. ii. 22.

(12) Luc. xi. 26.

(13) Eccclus. xxxiv. 30.

trust, for it is not strange for a man to "fall seven times," and to "rise again" (14) as often.

2. The second thing that I ought to do is, forthwith to *perform all my penance*, if it can be performed, and if not some part of it, with a spirit and affection of obedience and love, to pay somewhat of the great debt that I owe to Almighty God, wishing that I had ability to do much more for Him that has done me so many benefits, and saying that of the other servant, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." (15)

3. The third thing is, in thankfulness of the benefit received in this sacrament of Penance, to *dispose myself* with great fervour to *receive* that of the sacred *Communion*; because for this end it is ordained, according to that of the Prophet David, "What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord." (16)

MEDITATION XXXIII.

MEDITATION ON THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR BEFORE COMMUNION.

OF the excellences and fruits of this most blessed sacrament of the Altar we shall speak in the fourth part among the mysteries of the Supper, but *more largely* in the sixth part among the divine benefits. In this meditation I will only point out certain considerations to communicate with reverence and devotion, in which I am to fix my eyes upon these four things, viz.: i. The excellences of our Lord that comes to visit us; ii. The vileness of man whom He comes to visit; iii. The amiable guise in which He comes;

(14) Prov. xxiv. 16.

(15) Matt. xviii. 26.

(16) Ps. cxv. 12.

iv. And the ends of His coming, making comparison between the one and the other, the better to show the greater splendour of this sovereign benefit.

POINT I.

First, I am to consider the *excellences* of this Lord, who is inclosed in this blessed sacrament, exercising a lively faith on them all, as well on those that He has as Almighty God as on those which He has as *man*.

1. First, I will discourse on the *excellences* of His *Godhead*, and of the works that He does *as Almighty God*, pondering that He that is there is the very "only-begotten" Son, (1) which is in the bosom "of the eternal Father," "the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance," (2) as eternal, immense, infinite and omnipotent as the Father, the very wisdom, goodness, and fortitude by whom all things were created and are preserved. There also is the governor of the world, the sanctifier and glorifier of souls, He that is the first beginning and the final end of all creatures. And though He be a Lord of so great majesty that neither heaven nor earth can contain Him, yet He was not content to have made Himself man for our remedy, but would yet humble and restrain Himself more, remaining with us in this visible sacrament to comfort and protect us with His presence, that we might have upon earth some visible "throne of grace," to which to approach, as the apostle says, "with great confidence to obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid." (3)

Colloquy.—O divine Word, who art in the immense bosom of Thy eternal Father, how is it that Thou comest to dwell in the confined bosom of a foolish man? O King of Glory, who art in Thy heaven seated in a throne of infinite majesty, how is it that Thou humblest Thyself to be on earth in a throne of such

(1) Joan. i. 14.

(2) Heb. i. 3.

(3) Heb. iv. 16.

baseness? Thy infinite charity hath been the cause of this humiliation to exalt me, and to excite me to love Thee for a work of so great love. Oh that I could love Thee as Thou lovest me! Oh that I could humble me as Thou didst humble Thyself, to be able to honour and serve Thee as Thou deservest! To this throne will I approach for the remedy of my evils "with confidence," that Thou mayest fill my desire with Thy good things.

2. Secondly, I will consider the mysteries of His most *sacred humanity*, and of the marvellous works that He did in it, and of the offices that He exercised, pondering how He Himself is in this sacrament that was nine months in the womb of our Blessed Lady the Virgin, enriching her with admirable gifts of His grace; and from thence in the house of Zacharias sanctified the Baptist, and replenished with the Holy Ghost both the son and the mother; and seeing He has in this sacrament the same goodness and omnipotence, He may work the same effects in my soul. Moreover, He that is there is the very same that was laid in a manger, and was adored by the shepherds and Magi, paying them for this service with an abundant reward. And if I do adore Him with the same lively faith, I shall receive the same grace. Again, there is He that went through the world teaching and preaching, curing the sick, raising the dead, and doing good to all with innumerable miracles. And especially I will ponder that it is He Himself who for my sake was taken, scourged, crowned with thorns, scorned and crucified—who, being nailed on the cross, prayed for His enemies, pardoned the thief and promised him paradise. And since He Himself in person is in the most blessed sacrament, representing His passion, and with the same blood that He shed therein, He likewise both may and will work in me the same effects. Finally, He that despoiled hell, rose again in glory, and

sitteth on the right hand of His eternal Father, and shall afterwards come to judge the whole world, even He Himself. with the same glory, is in this holy sacrament; for, not content to have His court and throne in heaven, He will also have another throne on earth, for the comfort of us that live in it. And there He does to us the offices that He was wont to do in the world, of our Master, Physician, Redeemer, Pastor, and High Priest, desiring that we should come unto Him with the same faith and confidence, as if we saw Him in His mortal and visible flesh, seeing He Himself is really there, though covered under the accidents of bread and wine.

Colloquy.—O my sweet Redeemer, what thanks may I give Thee for Thy works of mercy, with which Thou comest every day to visit us from on high? Why shall not I confidently come to Thee, seeing Thou comest from heaven for me? I adore Thee, and glorify Thee in this venerable sacrament, and in spirit I cast myself at Thy feet like Mary Magdalen, that Thou mayest pardon me. With the woman that had the issue of blood, I touch Thy sacred vestment that Thou mayest cure me; and with St. Thomas, I feel Thy sovereign wounds, (4) that Thou mayest illuminate me and quicken my faith; with which I say and confess that Thou art my Lord and my God, worthy of highest honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

POINT II.

Secondly, I am to consider in what gentle and *amiable manner* Christ our Lord comes to visit me, I being so *miserable* and abominable a *sinner*.

1. First, I will ponder that it might have sufficed for my salvation to behold this most blessed sacrament, as it sufficed the Israelites when wounded by serpents, for the

(4) Joan. xx. 27.

healing of their wounds, to behold a brazen serpent "set" "up for a sign," (5) which was the figure of this Saviour. Or it might have sufficed only to touch it with the hand, as the woman that had the issue of blood was made whole by touching only the hem of His garment; (6) and to give me but this liberty were an over-great honour. But the charity of this great God was not contented with this, but He will also join Himself to me with the most *entire* and penetrating *union* that any corporeal thing can join itself to man; for, in the form of food, He enters in at my mouth, passes through my throat, and makes His dwelling and habitation within my breast, so long as the species of the sacrament remain; and so renews that famous miracle of which the prophet Jeremias spoke: "The Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth." "Fæmina circumdabit virum;" "A woman shall compass within her a perfect man" (7) in wisdom and sanctity, which is Christ; for every day, whatever woman or other person communicates, bears within them for that time this man, perfect in age, and as great and beautiful as He is in heaven.

2. But this will seem a much greater wonder to me if I consider the *vileness* of the *person that bears it* within him, and the baseness and exceeding straitness of the house into which He enters.

Colloquy.—O Sovereign new man, celestial Adam, what new inventions of love are these that Thou makest to cherish me? Knowest Thou peradventure into what house thou enterest? Behold what I am, a vessel of iniquity, a cave of basilisks, and a house of perdition. Then why wilt thou enter into so vile a harbour, or how dare I entertain Thee there? My tongue is a world of impieties, how shall I touch with it Him that is the fountain of all good? My throat is a sink of gluttony and drunkenness, then how shall

(5) Num. xxi. 9; Joan. iii. 14. (6) Luc. viii. 44. (7) Jer. xxxi. 22.

the author of purity and sanctity pass through it? My breast is a sink of wicked cogitations and desires, how shall I harbour in it Him that is charity itself? O sovereign king, how well does it befit Thee to be the Father of mercy, seeing Thou wilt dwell in a house of so great miseries? Renew it first, O Lord, cleanse and adorn it, that it may be for Thee a worthy abiding-place. O infinite God, "inclina cœlos tuos, et descende;" "bow down Thy heavens and descend." (8) And seeing Thou wilt descend and humble Thyself to dwell within me, what is it for the heavens to humble themselves and descend? Let the celestial virtues come into my soul; let lively faith, assured hope, and much-enkindled charity come; let humility, obedience, and devotion come, and convert into heaven that which must be the habitation of the king of heaven Himself! Amen.

3. The like colloquies I should make to the three Persons of the Godhead, beseeching them that they would make me a new man, renewed in spirit to receive this new celestial Adam, who is willing to harbour Himself in my soul; and especially I will say to the Holy Spirit,

Colloquy.—O most holy Spirit, that didst purify and adorn the soul of the most sacred Virgin, that it might be a worthy habitation for her Son, purify me also, and adorn me with Thy grace, seeing the self-same God that entered into her is to enter into me! Amen.

POINT III.

Thirdly, I must consider the *ends* that *Christ* our Lord purposes in this coming, beseeching Him as soon as He enters to put them in execution, and that my unworthiness may be no means of hindering it.

1. This may be considered by running through some of the *offices* that this our Lord did in the world, which He

(8) Ps. cxliii. 5.

comes to exercise in my soul. i. He comes as a Saviour to pardon me my sins, applying to me the price of the blood He shed for them. ii. He comes to cure all my spiritual infirmities, like a physician that enters into the house of a sick man, and comes near him to apply to him his sovereign remedies. iii. He comes as a master, to illustrate me with the light of His inspirations, and to instruct me in the way of virtue and perfection. iv. He comes as a high-priest, to apply to me the fruit of the bloody sacrifice which He offered for me upon the cross, and to move me to offer to Him the sacrifice of an humble and contrite heart, the host of praise and the holocaust of love. v. He comes as meat to sustain me, as to a child with the milk of His deliciousness, and to unite Himself to me with the union of perfect love, and to give me the kiss of peace, of reconciliation and perfect friendship; fulfilling the desire of the soul that said, "Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth," (9) and make peace with me. And in this manner I may run through His other offices, imagining that He comes as a shepherd, to gather me to His fold; as a protector, to defend me; and as "a consuming fire," to purify and inflame me.

2. Whilst I am pondering these offices which Christ our Lord is willing to do for me, I will also consider the great *necessity* that I have of them, beholding myself as a man captive under the devil for my sins, sick of divers passions, ignorant with many errors, weak, poor, and needing sustentation for my soul, peace with my Creator, and to be governed, protected, and favoured by my Saviour. And making comparison between Him and myself, and between His excellent offices and my own innumerable miseries, I will break out on the one side into affections of admiration, and on the other into fervent desires of His coming, saying to Him,

(9) Cant. i. 1.

Colloquy.—O God of immense majesty, how is it that I am not beside myself, considering this device of Thy infinite charity! Elias and Eliseus contracted their dimensions, joining themselves to a dead child to restore him to life; (10) but Thou constrainest Thyself much more to a morsel of food to join Thyself to me, and to raise me again to a new and fervent life. It had been sufficient that with Thy word Thou hadst commanded what Thou wouldst, and presently it had been done; or that some servant of Thine, like Giezi, (11) had touched me with Thy “staff” that I might live, but Thou wouldst not, but comest in person to heal me, to revive me, and to reclaim me. Come, then, O my Saviour, and delay not! Come, and dissolve the miseries of Thy servant, awake Thy omnipotency and come, that Thou mayest presently save me! “O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and wouldst come,” that with Thy coming “the mountains” (12) of my passions might dissolve, and all my bowels might “melt” themselves in Thy love! “Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just: let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour!” (13) O most sweet Saviour, come to my soul that longeth to receive Thee, take from her all impediments to Thy entrance, exercise in her the offices Thou purposedst by Thy coming. Join Thee speedily to me, for I desire to see myself united with Thee my only chief good, world without end! Amen.

3. This kind of fervent desires is much to be exercised in this point; for Christ our Lord will be received with desire and hunger of His coming. And this food, the greater the hunger with which it is eaten with so much the more profit it enters. And in this we shall be aided with other places of divine Scripture like those which have been produced, in which the holy fathers declared the fer-

(10) 3 Reg. xvi. 21.

(11) 4 Reg. iv. 34.

(12) Isa. lxiv. 17.

(13) Isa. xlv. 8.

vent desire they had of the coming of the Messias for the redemption of the world.

4. With these desires I should join others, of carrying the greatest possible purity of heart; endeavouring that, as the body goes to communicate fasting from all corporal meat, (so that from the midnight before it must not have eaten nor drunk anything, how little soever,) so also the soul may that day go fasting from all sin; in such a manner that, as near as may be possible, from the night before it be not spotted with any defilement "of the flesh" or "of the spirit," (14) and that from my mouth there issue no idle word nor from my heart any evil thought; for Christ our Lord being purity itself, it is our duty to receive Him with the greatest purity that we possibly can. And if through our imbecility we fall into any sin, we are first to purify (15) ourselves of it by the means of confession, (which is obligatory if it be a mortal sin,) or by the means of contrition, when it is but a light sin and that we were lately at confession.

MEDITATION XXXIV.

ON SPIRITUAL COMMUNION, OR A DISPOSITION FOR SACRAMENTAL COMMUNION AND FOR HEARING MASS PROFITABLY.

SPIRITUAL communion is an exercise of excellent interior acts, by which, as St. Thomas says, (1) without receiving the sacrament, we participate in the fruit of the sacrament, which is union with Jesus Christ. And it serves on two occasions and for two ends.

i. The first is, duly to prepare ourselves before sacramental communion, adorning the soul with acts of virtues suitable to this celestial banquet. ii. The second is, to hear mass every day with profit. As the priest when he

(14) 2 Cor. vii. 1. (15) 1 Cor. xi. 28. (1) S. Th. 3, p. q. lxxx. art. 1 ad 3.

says mass together offers the sacrifice and receives the sacrament, so, when I hear mass, it is good that I do two other like things. The first is, to offer that sacrifice in thanksgiving for the benefits received or in satisfaction of my sins or of the sins of them that are departed, and to obtain of Almighty God the benefits that I require of Him for myself and for the whole Church ; for to all this is this sacrifice ordained, as in the fourth part shall be declared. The second is, to receive likewise the sacrament spiritually, eating Christ our Lord with desire, by means of the acts of the three theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity ; according to which the same Lord Himself said, " I am the bread of life ; he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." (2) The manner of this communion disposing for the sacrament is that which follows.

POINT I.

Acts of Faith.—1. First, we are to exercise acts of *faith* concerning this mystery, briefly pondering, first, the excellency and firmness of the four pillars upon which this faith relies ; that is to say, that Almighty God wanted not infinite wisdom to invent this means of our spiritual sustentation, nor goodness to will it, nor omnipotence to execute it. And seeing God is an infallible truth in all that He reveals, and that He *has* revealed this mystery, I am to believe Him with all assuredness, much more than if I had seen Him with my bodily eyes.

2. Upon this foundation faith is to exercise her acts, denying the judgment that proceeds from the senses, and firmly believing that under those species of bread and wine is Christ Jesus true God and man, with all the fulness, glory, and majesty that He has in heaven. And as there He invites and fills the blessed with the clear sight of His

(2) Joan. vi. 35.

divinity and humanity, so here He will unite and fill our desires of good things with the sight, by a lively faith, of Himself inclosed in this sacrament. And to this end faith must help itself with meditation and contemplation, penetrating the greatneses of this Lord, as has been said in the first point of the preceding meditation. The acts of faith are to be exercised in this form : I believe that under this veil is covered Jesus Christ my Lord, His body, His soul, His blood and His divinity. I believe that there is present the Son of the ever-living God, infinite, eternal, immense, almighty, wise and holy—yea, wisdom and sanctity itself. I believe that there is my Saviour, my Master, my Father and Judge, and my Glorifier, He that for me was born in a manger, and was whipped, crowned with thorns, and crucified. All this I believe because He Himself has revealed it ; and I am most assured that He had knowledge, power, and will to do it.

Colloquy.—O my King and my Almighty God, although I see Thee not clearly, yet it suffices me to know that Thou art there, that I may reverence, adore, and glorify Thee as if I did see Thee. I rejoice to have Thee present, and I give Thee thanks that Thou deignest to be with me. Quicken my faith, O Lord, that I may love ever to be with Thee! Amen.

POINT II.

Secondly are to be exercised the acts of *hope*, resting upon the same four pillars that faith does ; namely, upon the infinite wisdom, goodness, and omnipotence of Almighty God, and upon His fidelity to fulfil all that He promises, seeing He has knowledge, power, and will to perform it. Upon this foundation hope must exercise its acts, aiding itself with prayer to ask and obtain what it hopes and desires.

1. And what here is to be hoped and desired is the per-

formance of the promises that Christ our Saviour made to those that worthily receive Him in this sacrament, as may be gathered out of the sixth chapter of St. John, saying thus to Him, "I hope," O my Saviour, that if I "eat of" this "bread of life," I shall never 'die,' I "shall live for ever," I shall abide "in" Thee, and Thou "in" me, united Thou with me, and I with Thee. I hope that "as" Thou dost "live by the Father, so I" shall "live by" Thee; and by Thy means I shall obtain "everlasting life," and Thou wilt "raise" me "up in the last day." (3)

Colloquy.—O "Bread of life," I come to receive Thee, with great confidence that Thou wilt quicken my spirit, comfort my heart, cheer my soul, fortify my powers, make chaste my flesh, and change me into another man, for I shall not change Thee into me (4) unless Thou changest me into Thee. O most sweet Saviour, augment in me confidence, that I may be worthy to obtain Thy sovereign promise!

2. But hope must pass yet farther, hoping in the goodness and omnipotence of this our Lord, who is not tied to the sacrament, but may grant me all these benefits only for a lively desire in me to receive Him; and therefore, beholding this divine sacrament, I may exercise these acts of faith and confidence—sometimes, with the centurion, saying unto Him, "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my" soul "shall be" saved. (5) And sometimes I will say to Him, If to behold "the brazen serpent" (6) sufficed to heal those that were wounded, it may likewise suffice me to behold Thee with a lively faith, and Thee to look upon me with Thy mercy, that Thou mayest deliver me from all misery. At other times, as the woman that had the issue of blood, I will say within myself, "If I" (7) touch but the "garment"

(3) Joan. vi. 35, 50, &c.

(4) S. Aug. vii. confes. c. 10.

(5) Matt. viii. 8.

(6) Num. xxi. 8.

(7) Luc. viii. 44.

that covereth my Lord, without doubt "I shall be healed." And if the shadow of His apostle healed the sick, (8) how much more shall the shadow of this divine sacrament heal my soul? With this confidence ought I to enter into the Church, to assist at mass, and to behold the sacred Host and chalice when they are elevated. For, as St. Bernard says, great faith attains to great things; and the more the affection of confidence dilates itself, the more we shall obtain of God's mercy. (9)

POINT III.

Finally, *charity* is to exercise her acts by which we are spiritually united and joined with Christ our Lord with the union of love, which is intended in the communion of this blessed sacrament. The principal acts are, to rejoice in the goodness, charity, omnipotence, and liberality of Christ, which is resplendent in this banquet; to rejoice to see myself so beloved of Him, that He gives Himself to me for meat; to desire always to be united with Him by actual knowledge and love, and to be like Him in all His virtues; to desire that all may know, love, and reverence Him in this most blessed and sovereign sacrament, and may enjoy the benefits that are inclosed in it; and to offer myself with great earnestness, to have in all things the same willing and aversion that He has, placing my whole liking in complying with His.

Colloquy.—O most sweet Saviour, wheresoever Thou art Thou art exceedingly amiable; but in this sacrament Thou art most worthy to be beloved with all the whole forces of love. Oh that I loved Thee with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength. May I love Thee for the bounty that Thou discoverest herein; for the love that herein Thou showest to me; for the benefits which herein Thou dost me; for the evils from which Thou deliverest me;

(8) Act. v. 15.

(9) S. Bern. serm. xxxviii. in cant.

for the good things which Thou promisest me; and for the much that Thou desirest that I should love Thee. Fulfil, O Lord, this desire which Thou hast, and which I have, granting me to love Thee as Thou desirest to be loved, uniting me to Thee with the union of perfect charity, that it may remain unto life everlasting! Amen.

(Divers other meditations, with several forms of preparing ourselves to communicate, shall be set down in the parts that follow, following the order of the evangelical history, and will easily be found by the table.)

MEDITATION XXXV.

ON THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION.

AFTER we have communicated, it is of the greatest importance to know how to enjoy the sweet presence of the Guest that we have received; for there is no better time to treat with Him than when we have Him within us. For here likewise it is truth that He said, that while He is in the little "world" of every man, He is "the light of the world," (1) and therefore it behoves us to walk whilst this light lasts, before it be hidden, and "darkness" overtake us. And as this divine sacrament is so sovereign a benefit, and so high a gift of His divine liberality, so we are to be grateful to Him for it, with the greatest gratitude that we possibly can; applying herein the counsel of the Wise man, "Defraud not thyself of the good day;" (2) "et particula boni doni non te prætereat," "and let not the part of a good gift overpass thee," but make use of the good lot that has befallen thee. For as we much esteem the least part whatsoever of this sacrament, for that whole Christ is in it,

(1) Joan. viii. 12; xii. 46.

(2) Eccclus. xiv. 14.

so we should esteem every little part of the day and time that we have Him within us ; seeing in each part of it He is able to do us great favours if, with a devout and thankful mind, we dispose ourselves to receive them, especially as this sacrament (as St. Dionysius (3) says) is the consummation, fulfilling, and perfection of all the other, and the most effectual means that Almighty God has given us for our perfection. And seeing we have Him present to communicate it unto us, there is reason to enlarge the vessel of the heart to receive it. To this end we are here to exercise with greatest fervour the three acts of thanksgiving that were set down in the 34th meditation, spending the time not so much in new considerations, seeing those that are set down are sufficient, as in new affections, and canticles of praise and thanksgiving in this form ensuing.

POINT I.

1. First, I am greatly to quicken my faith of the *presence* of this our Lord that is within me, beholding the invisible as if I did visibly behold Him, and briefly pondering that He is the same Lord of whom I conceived so great excellences when I prepared myself to communicate. And seeing where the king is there is the court, I may imagine (as St. Gregory (4) says) that He is environed with thousands of the courtiers of heaven, in whose company, prostrate in spirit before His feet, and wondering that so great a God is harboured in so humble a place, I will break out first into affections of humility, of reverence, and of my own confusion, sometimes saying with St. Peter, "Depart from me," and go forth from this wretched little ship, "for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (5) And sometimes with St. Eliza-

(3) De eccl. hierar. c. iii. ; S. Th. 4. q. lxxv. art. 3.

(4) Lib. iv. dialog. c. 58.

(5) Luc. v. 8.

beth I will say to Him, "Whence is this to me that" my God and "my Lord should come to me?" (6)

Colloquy.—O eternal God, "what is man that Thou art mindful of him?" or the son of man that Thou visitest him? "Thou madest him a little less than the angels" by being clothed with vile flesh; and comest Thou from heaven accompanied with angels to harbour Thyself within him? "O Lord, our Lord, how admirable is Thy name in the whole earth," (7) seeing Thou hast made it Thy habitation as well as heaven!

2. Then will I break out into affections of praise and thanksgiving, using some canticles of the Church. Sometimes I will say as the seraphim, "Holy, holy, holy the Lord God of hosts," (8) that has humbled Himself to dwell in this smoky, cloudy temple of my soul. Sometimes I will cry out with the Hebrew children that accompanied Christ on Palm-Sunday, saying, O king of Israel and Saviour of the world, "blessed be He" that has come from on high to visit me, I not knowing how to deserve it. (9) At other times, with the three children that were in the furnace in Babylon, I will invite all creatures to "bless the Lord" (10) for this favour that He has done me.

3. Or in imitation of this canticle I will make another, inviting to the same end the nine choirs of angels, and the choirs of the patriarchs and prophets, of the apostles and evangelists, of the martyrs and doctors, bishops and confessors, priests and Levites, virgins and widows, and all the saints in heaven in this form.

Colloquy.—May Thy angels, archangels, and principalities bless Thee, O Lord! may they praise and glorify Thee for ever! May Thy powers, virtues, and dominations bless, praise, and glorify Thee, world

(6) Luc. i. 48.

(7) Ps. viii. 5.

(8) Isa. vi. 3.

(9) Matt. xxi. 15.

(10) Dan. iii. 52.

without end! May the thrones, cherubim, and seraphim bless Thee, praise Thee, &c. Bless our Lord, O ye patriarchs and prophets, praise Him and glorify Him for ever! "Bless our Lord," O ye apostles and evangelists, praise Him, &c.

And in this manner I may go through all the saints.

4. I may likewise with David invite all faculties and senses, and all the thoughts and affections of my heart, saying, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name,"(11) that all together may assemble to adore and glorify this our Lord for the part that they all have in this sovereign benefit.

Colloquy.—May mine eyes bless Thee, O Lord, for they have seen Thee in this sacrament; and my lips, for they have touched Thee; and my tongue and palate, for they have tasted Thee; and my breast, for that it is Thy habitation; and let all my bones say, "Lord, who is like to Thee?"(12) Let my memory bud forth Thy praises, my understanding magnify Thee, my will love Thee, my appetites desire Thee; and let them all be dissolved in Thy presence, singing the glory of Thy coming. Amen.

POINT II.

1. Then I am to recall to my memory the *office* of Christ our Lord, and the *ends* that He had in coming to visit me, being glad and joyful to have within me my Redeemer, my physician, my master, and all my good; and with a great affection I will spiritually embrace Him with the arms of humility and charity, speaking that of the Canticles, "I have found Him whom my soul loveth; I hold Him, and will not let Him go."(13) I will for no cause part from His sweet company; and for no labour nor tribulation(14) will

(11) Ps. cii. 1.

(12) Ps. xxxiv. 10.

(13) Cant. iii. 4.

(14) Gal. iv. 26.

I leave His friendship. I will always have Him with me till He carry me to the house of my mother, which is the celestial Jerusalem, where I may enjoy Him with perfect security.

2. Then, like David, (15) in the presence of this our Lord I will pour forth my prayer, and set before Him all my necessities and miseries, recounting them as if He knew them not, because He delights to hear them, beseeching Him to do His offices in remedying them, seeing this was the end of His coming; and that the coming of so great a prince should not be in vain. And therefore I may say to Him,

Colloquy.—I, O Lord, am sick of grievous infirmities and passions; pride, wrath, sensuality and covetousness have prostrated me. Thou art the omnipotent physician, and hast come to my soul to cure me; cure me according to Thy power, and leave me whole. Say in this entrance as Thou saidst entering into the house of Zaccheus, “Hodie salus huic domui facta est,” “This day is salvation come to this house.” (16) And because Thy saying is doing, it shall be as Thou saidst. I am likewise full of ignorances and errors in the darkness and obscurity of death. Thou art my master, my light, and my guide; teach me, illuminate me, and guide me, for this was the end of Thy coming!

In these and other like petitions I will spend another while, wrestling like Jacob (17) with this angel of the great counsel, with the wrestling of prayers, beseeching Him not to depart without pouring out upon me His most abundant benediction.

POINT III.

1. Finally, I am to *make* some *offers* to this our Lord in *thankfulness* for the favour He has done me, inviting Him,

(15) Ps. cxiv.

(16) Luc. xix. 9.

(17) Gen. xxxii. 24.

seeing He invites me; for upon this He says in the Apocalypse, "If any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me;" (18) for the soul to whom our Lord enters sups of the celestial gifts that this our Lord communicates to her, and He sups of the fervent affections and purposes that she offers to Him. And so in communicating I am to invite Christ our Lord, considering what is acceptable to Him, and offering to Him what is best to His liking.

i. And specially I will offer Him my *heart*, (19) for that is the principal thing He requires of me; and seeing He gives me *His* heart, what is it for me to give Him *mine*, with a determination to admit nothing that may be contrary to His love, nor any thought that may separate me from Him? (20)

ii. I will likewise exhibit to Him my *body* as a sacrifice, holy and pleasing to His eyes, with a desire to carry ever with me His "mortification," and the signs of His passion; resolving particularly to mortify and make a cruel war against that passion that most hinders me from serving Him as I ought. And besides this, it shall be well that day to invite Christ Jesus in the poor, bestowing on them some alms according to my ability.

iii. And if I be a religious man, I may anew offer to Him *perpetual obedience* to His most holy *will*, most pure *chastity*, and *poverty* of spirit, according to my estate. And I will always offer something that I may accomplish *the same day*, endeavouring to spend it all in these exercises of thanksgiving and imitation, saying as the spouse, "A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, he shall abide between my breasts;" (21) and as the apostle, "I live, now not I," for I have within me "Christ Himself, who liveth in me," (22)

(18) Apoc. iii. 20. (19) Prov. xxiii. 26. (20) Rom. xii. 1.

(21) Cant. i. 12.

(22) Gal. ii. 20.

in whose "strength" I will walk like another Elias, "unto the mount of God, Horeb," (23) ascending from virtue to virtue, until I clearly and manifestly behold Him whom in this blessed sacrament I receive.

2. I will conclude with a colloquy to this our Lord, beseeching Him that although the sacramental species being consumed He departs, as regards His corporeal presence, yet that He would always remain with me, according to His spiritual presence, awakening my memory that I may always be mindful of Him, illustrating my understanding that I may always think and meditate upon Him, and inflaming my will that it may always be united with Him, world without end, Amen.

MEDITATION XXXVI.

ON PURGATORY, TO ENCOURAGE US TO THE WORKS OF PENANCE.

THE principal end of this meditation is, to encourage those who walk in the purgative way to the exercise of penal works, to pay the pains that they owe for their sins; and likewise it may be exercised on All Souls' Day in remembrance of the dead, to move us to have compassion on them, and to assist them.

POINT I.

First I am to consider that God our Lord has ordained that whosoever shall die, having committed mortal or venial sin, although the fault be pardoned him, yet if he have not paid the pain correspondent to it *he shall not enter into heaven until he pay it* in a prison under the earth, deputed to this end, which is called purgatory, to which the soul of

(23) 3 Reg. xix. 8.

the just is carried by his angel, that he may there satisfy his whole debt to "the last farthing." (1)

1. Upon this truth of our faith, I will ponder first how *just God our Lord is*, and *how great* is the righteousness of His justice, though it be mixed with mercy. For He will leave no sin without some chastisement; and therefore in the sacrament of penance, when he pardons mortal sin He changes the eternal into some temporal punishment, demonstrating in that His infinite mercy, and His justice; His mercy in pardoning the most terrible pain that was perpetually to continue, and His justice in requiring satisfaction with another lighter pain that continues but a while. With this consideration I will animate myself to conform myself to His justice, seeing His mercy so abundant towards me, to change millions of years in a most terrible fire into a very few of voluntary penance; so that all I am able to suffer in this life is to seem little or nothing to me in comparison of what I have deserved, and Almighty God has pardoned me.

2. Secondly, I will ponder how *this temporal pain*, if it be not paid in this life with some very deep contrition, or with some penal works, it *must of necessity be paid in the other*, as well for observing the order of the divine justice, as also because Almighty God is so great a lover of purity that He will admit nothing into heaven but what is very well purged, not only from sin, but from the pains which are its consequences, for the "glorious church," says Saint Paul, "must neither have spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," (2) and therefore I must labour for such purity in this life that I may have nothing to purge in the other.

Colloquy.—O Lamb of God, in whose blood the just wash and make "white" their souls to be admitted into Thy kingdom, grant me by the virtue of

(1) 2 Mach. xii. 40; Zach. ix. 11; 1 Cor. iii. 12; S. Th. in addit. q. lxix. et lxx.; Matt. v. 26.

(2) Ephea. v. 26.

Thy most precious blood, so great compunction for my sins that I may likewise be free from the pains, that my soul being loosed out of the prison of this body (3) be not detained in the prison of purgatory! Amen.

3. Hence I will proceed to ponder how *great an evil venial sin* is, seeing that with it it is impossible to enter into heaven until it be first purified, for there, as St. John says, nothing that is polluted may enter. And I shall also perceive how much Almighty God abhors it when He there detains captives His own friends though they be very holy, until they be purified, and humbles them so much that He gives them for their prison, under the earth, an obscure place, and near to hell, discovering hereby how heavy the burden is of any sin whatsoever or pain that results from it, seeing it casts us into so profound an abyss. From all these considerations I will gather a great detestation of venial sins for the good that they deprive me of, for the prison with which they menace me, for the burden with which they burden me, and, above all, because Almighty God so abhors it, as we shall forthwith ponder more at large.

POINT II.

Secondly, I am to consider *what a great feeling* those souls have, and mine shall have, of the *obscurity* and darkness of that prison, which is *to want the sight of Almighty God*, and what a terrible pain this is, which is like to that which they call the pain of loss, pondering the *causes* of this feeling and pain.

1. The first is, because there they have a very lively *faith* of what Almighty God is, and how good, how beautiful and potent He is; how He is our last end and eternal blessedness, many of those clouds and doubts which we have

(3) Apoc. vii. 14.

here being taken away. And this liveliness of faith shall kindle their desire to see their last end, and consequently shall increase the pain of their delay of the beholding it; for, as the Wise man says, "Hope that is deferred afflicteth the soul." (4)

2. The second cause is, because *the love of Almighty God* is there in its perfection, and exceedingly desires to see its beloved, to be united with Him, and has nothing to divert it, nor entertain it in this life, with meriting new glory, augmenting its perfection and doing good to its neighbours; all which ceases in purgatory. And if with all this some holy men have *here* so great a longing to behold Almighty God, that they are much afflicted with the delay of the accomplishment of their desire, and mourning say with David, "Woe to me, that my sojourning is prolonged," (5) my soul hath been long a sojourner on the earth; with how much more feeling shall the souls detained in purgatory say this, who love, are in pain, and yet profit not by that pain?

3. The third cause of this pain is, the *suspension* in which those souls are, not knowing how long time this prison, and this delay of beholding Almighty God shall endure; for although they are conformable to the *will* of God, yet for all this they are in great pain, considering that originally it springs from their own sin, and from their own negligence and carelessness, as well in satisfying for their sins as in desiring to see Almighty God. For, as it was revealed to St. Bridget, (6) there is for this culpable lukewarmness a kind of punishment in the other life, which they call the purgatory of desire, with which they are chastised that were but lukewarm in their desire to see Almighty God.

4. This pain likewise is augmented by *wanting the sight of our Saviour Christ*, of the most blessed Virgin, of the

(4) Prov. xiii. 12.

(5) Ps. cxix. 5.

(6) Refert Blossius in monili spirituali, c. xiii.

sweet society of the angels and saints in heaven, and the sight of all other things which they believe and hope to behold; for of them all they have a very lively faith, confirmed by the experience of their immortality, and of the purgatory itself which they suffer. The greatness of this pain I may figure by that which a discreet, wise, and noble man has, when he is imprisoned in a very obscure prison, without seeing the light of heaven but by some chink or loop-hole, without having any communication with his kindred, friends, or acquaintance, and without knowing what passes in the world, or how long his imprisonment shall continue. And although it is to be believed that the angel guardian comes now and then to comfort the soul of him of whom he had care, yet we may imagine that it answers him, as blind Tobias answered to St. Raphael, "What manner of joy shall be to me, who sit in darkness and see not the light of heaven," (7) or my sweet Creator and Redeemer?

Colloquy.—O my soul, seeing thou believest this pain that attends thee in purgatory if thou payest not here what thou owest for thy sins, defer not the payment, that Almighty God may not defer thy beholding Him clearly. Desire with great fervency to go to behold Him, removing from thee all that may defer the accomplishment of this desire; that with the end of thy life there may be an end of thy pain, and that thou mayest presently enter into rest and glory. Amen.

POINT III.

Thirdly, I am to consider the pain which they call of *sense*, which my soul shall suffer in purgatory, tormented by its terrible fire.

1. This is to be estimated, first, because this fire is the same with that of hell, in comparison of which that of this

(7) Tob. v. 12.

life is as it were but painted; as also because it wonderfully torments, as being the instrument of Almighty God, and of a wrathful God, whose hand is exceeding heavy when He revenges His injury. For as the fire melts the silver, to purify it from dross, so this fire, as the Prophet (8) says, shall melt, that is, shall terribly afflict those souls, to purify them from the dross they brought from the world. So that whilst there is anything to purify, the pain shall continue; for there is no sleep, nor distraction, nor anything else to temper the fury thereof, as there is in this life. And upon this holy men conclude (9) that the torments of purgatory exceed in that which is pain and torment the torments that sinners endure in this life, and those which martyrs have sustained; and even those that the king of martyrs Himself, Christ Jesus our Lord did suffer, to whom I am humbly to say,

Colloquy.—O most sweet Redeemer, chastise me not in Thy fury within the fire of hell, and purify me so in this life that I may have no need of the fire of purgatory! Amen.

2. From this consideration I should collect three affections and intentions of very great importance.

i. The first is, a great *fear of Almighty God*, and of the rigour of His justice. For if I consider it well, what need I be so much amazed that the majesty of God stands beholding the souls burn in hell without having compassion of them, seeing they are His enemies, and persist in abhorring Him; as that He should see those of purgatory burn, enduring most terrible pains, and sometimes for very light sins?—and yet loving them much, and being beloved by them, He lets them burn and be in pain until they pay all that they owe Him.

(8) Mal. iii. 3.

(9) S. Aug. in Ps. xxxvii., et S. Greg. in Ps. iii. peniten., S. Th. 3. p. q. xlv. art. 6 ad 3.

Colloquy.—Who shall not fear thee, O King of the nations? If Thou thus burn the fruitful tree for a few thorns that were mingled with the good fruit, how wilt Thou burn and torment the withered, barren tree that hath brought forth nothing but the thorns of grievous sins?

ii. The second intention is, to *satisfy in this life for my sins*, and to embrace willingly all penances and afflictions whatsoever, seeing they are as nothing in comparison of these other. For that which is suffered in this life is but little, and for a little time, and is very profitable in order to increase in virtue, and merit an augmentation of grace and glory; but in purgatory much is suffered, and unprofitably for the ends before mentioned. And therefore I must beseech our Lord, that if I shall be careless of this payment, it will please Him to purify me with the fire of afflictions, that I may pay here with gain that which I shall afterwards pay without gain.

Colloquy.—O my Saviour, that didst promise to purify the sins of Thy Church, as gold and silver are purified in the fire, (10) purify me as Thou wilt in this life, that in departing out of it I may go to enjoy Thee. Amen.

iii. The third intention is to *avoid* as much as possible *venial sins*, seeing, as the apostle says, they are no other thing but “wood, hay,” and “stubble,” (11) to make fuel for the fire that shall burn me in purgatory. This is a great rashness, if I have the eyes of faith to behold it; for if I should see a man cut wood from a mountain and carry it to his house, and asking him wherefore he carried that wood, he should answer me that it was to kindle a fire in which to burn himself, should I not hold him for a madman? Then am not I much more mad, doing things with so great pleasure that shall burn me in purgatory? (12)

(10) Mal. iii. 3.

(11) 1 Cor. iii. 12.

(12) S. Th. *ibid.*

Colloquy.—O my soul, seeing thou art founded upon so precious a foundation as is Christ our Lord, build upon it works of great value, “gold” of charity, “silver” of innocence, and “precious stones” of solid virtues, which may remain with thee unto life everlasting. Beware thou minglest not with them works that shall perish, the “wood” of avarice, the “hay” of sensuality, and the “stubble” of vanity, loving with some disorder the goods of this life; for this shall be fuel for the fire that shall burn thee in the life to come. O good Jesus, deliver me from such madness, preserving me from these sins by Thy grace! Amen.

POINT IV.

Fourthly, I am to consider two remarkable things that are in the souls of purgatory.

1. The first is, the *great resignation* that they have to the will of Almighty God, as regards the greatness and continuance of their pains; and the great patience with which they suffer and accept their torments, being pleased that God is just and chastises them according to their merits, and that He purifies them in that fiery furnace, that being refined they may enter into heaven. Hence I will learn to have patience in my afflictions, if I desire they should be my purgatory, and not my hell; seeing the lesser they are the more profitable they are to pay my debts withal, and are contrived by God’s justice to that end. And seeing whatsoever is in Almighty God is to be loved (for “He is all lovely” (13)), if I love Him indeed I am to rejoice that He is a doer of justice, and that He has a place appointed to chastise my sin, being, as it is, so worthy of chastisement.

2. The second is, the *great desire* that these souls have to be aided by the faithful that live upon the earth with sacrifices, prayers, alms, fastings, and other satisfactory

works; as also with indulgences and other suffrages, to get out quickly from those pains, and to go to enjoy Almighty God, which ought to move me to favour them as much as I can, though I take it from myself to give to them. For if I should see my friend burn in a great fire, and could get him out without burning myself or any other hurt, it were a great cruelty not to get him out. Then, if by faith I see these souls burn in such a terrible fire, and may deliver them with masses, indulgences, and other good works, it will be a great charity to be careful to do so. And if what I would for myself I am to will for my neighbour, it is just to do what I may to deliver him that suffers pain in purgatory as I would that others should do for me when I am there. Especially, because with this care I make myself worthy that Almighty God should then inspire others to aid me, (14) "for the merciful shall obtain mercy" (15) in that kind wherein they themselves used it. And these very souls, when they come to behold Almighty God, are very grateful to those that favoured them in their afflictions, and will solicit the favour of God for us in ours. And although I take from myself the satisfaction of the work that I apply to the dead, yet in giving it for alms I augment the merit; for charity increases by taking from myself that I had need of to succour the needy. For all these reasons the Holy Scripture says that "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins," (16) for from this care follow those benefits that have been declared to those that pray for them.

With this meditation is concluded all that appertains to the purgative way and to purity of soul, which is its proper end; whose defects, if any were in this life, are remedied

(14) S. Greg. lib. iv. mor. c. 17.

(15) Matt. v. 7.

(16) 2 Mac. xii. 46.

in the purgatory of the other, to enter with entire purity into glory, which is the final and last thing of the just; of which shall be made a meditation in the end of the sixth part, because it is the last of God's benefits, and the farthest end of the unitive way, in which the just shall rest united to their God, world without end. Amen.

END OF VOL. I.

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