

SINNER'S GUIDE

IN TWO BOOKS

The "Sinner's Guide," by Father Lewis, of Granada, is a work highly celebrated for its great practical usefulness to all who seek to persevere in virtue, and is recommended as such to the Catholics of this diocese.

† FRANCIS PATRICK KENRICK, Bishop, *Philadelphia*.

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P R E F A C E .

SAY to the just man, that it is well; Isa. iii. 10. This is a message from God, delivered by the prophet Isaías, to all the just; it is the shortest in words, and the most copious in bounty, that could have been sent. Men are usually free in promising, but slow in performing; God, on the contrary, is so liberal and magnificent in performing, that all the expressions of his promises are infinitely short of his actions. For what could be expressed shorter than the aforesaid sentence, *Say to the just man, that it is well*? Yet how comprehensive is this word *well*! which I conceive was, therefore, not enlarged upon or distinguished, that men might be sensible no words were sufficient fully to express it, nor any distinction requisite to declare what sort of blessings were comprehended under this word *well*, which includes all that can be imagined. So that, as when Moses asked of God what name he had, the answer was, *He that is*, without adding any other word, to show that his being was not limited and bounded, but that it comprehended every being and perfection which belongs to the said Being, without mixture of imperfection; so here he delivered this short word *well*, without explaining it, to signify that all the blessings the heart of man is capable of desiring, are contained under this promise God makes to the just man in reward of his virtue, expressed by the single monosyllable *well*.

2. This is the main subject I design, by the help of God, to treat of in this book, adding such rules and instructions as are proper to make a man virtuous. Accordingly, it shall be divided into two principal parts. The first will show how much it is our duty to follow virtue, and the inestimable benefits and advantages we reap by so doing; the second shall treat of a virtuous life, and prescribe a method and directions for attaining it. For there are two things requisite towards making a man virtuous; the one is, that he really desire to be such; the other, that he know how to compass it. The first book shall answer the end of the former of these two points; the second, the latter; since, as Plutarch very well observes, "those who excite us to virtue, and teach us not the way to it, are like those that light a lamp, but put in no oil to feed the flame."

3. Though this second part be so necessary, yet the first is much

more absolutely so, for the light and law of nature, born with us, teach us how to distinguish between good and evil; but there are great contradictions and impediments proceeding from sin, both within and without man, which obstruct his loving the one, and hating the other. For man being composed of spirit and flesh, and each of these naturally inclining to its likeness, the flesh seeks carnal things, in which the vice is predominant, and the spirit spiritual things, in which virtue prevails. Thus the spirit suffers much contradiction from the flesh, which regards nothing but what is delightful, and whose desires and appetites are violent, since the guilt of original sin broke the reins of original justice, which served to curb them. Nor is it the flesh alone that opposes the spirit, but the world, which, as St. John says, *is armed on all sides with vice*; as also the devil, the mortal enemy of virtue; and the ill custom of habit, become a second nature, at least in those that have been long in it; and, therefore, it cannot be denied to be a matter of great difficulty, and which requires some assistance, to break through all these obstacles and contradictions, and to desire, sincerely and heartily, to be virtuous, in spite of the flesh and all its confederates.

4. The design of the first of these two books is to give some assistance in this point; wherein I have used my utmost endeavors to bring all the arguments this work would admit of in behalf of virtue, showing the great advantages that attend it, both in this life and in the next; as also how much we are obliged to pursue it, because God requires it of us, to whom our duty is so great, as well in regard to what he is in himself, as what he is towards us.

5. The motive I had to treat this subject was, that I saw most men extol virtue and follow vice, and conceived that, among many other causes which produced this evil, one was, that such persons did not understand the nature and properties of virtue, looking upon it as harsh, barren and dull; and, therefore, believing vice to be more delightful, they give themselves wholly up to it, utterly casting off virtue, which they suppose to be distasteful. Being, therefore, concerned to see mankind thus deluded, I resolved to take the pains here to describe the inestimable worth, amiableness, dignity and beauty of this heavenly spouse, and to make appear how little she is known, that this might undeceive and induce them to fall in love with what so well deserves it. For if it be true, that virtue is one of the most excellent things in heaven or on earth, and which best merits love and esteem, it is a great misfortune that man should so little know, and keep at such a distance from this great good; and, therefore, he does the public signal service who endeavors to restore this lady to her honor, and seat her on her royal throne, since she is sovereign queen and mistress of all things.

6. Before I enter on it, I will show by an example with what

attention this work is to be read. The heathens write of their renowned Hercules, that, being grown up to those years when men use to choose what course of life they will follow, he retired to a solitary place to consider seriously upon this matter, where there occurred to him two distinct methods of living, the one of virtue, the other of pleasure; and after weighing both of them maturely, he at last resolved to follow the way of virtue, and forsake that of delight. If any thing in this world requires good advice, and a steady resolution, it is the same: for if we so often make reflection on those things which are for the benefit of life, how much more application ought we to make for the business of life itself, especially since in the world there are many guides and ways of living.

7. This it is, Christian reader, I would have you do, and what I invite you to, viz. that laying aside for a short time, all the cares and business of the world, you withdraw yourself into this spiritual solitude, and diligently consider what course of life you had best to steer. Remember that, among all worldly concerns, there is none requires more solicitude, and a longer study, than the choice of what life we are to follow: for, if this be rightly instituted, all other things will go right; and, on the contrary, if this be mistaken, every thing else will go wrong. So that to be right or wrong, in other cases, concerns only particulars; this alone is universal and comprehends all. For what can be built upon an ill foundation? What will all other prosperities, and prudential acts signify, if life itself be disorderly? Or what harm can all adversities and mistakes do, if life be duly formed? *What is a man advantaged* (says our Saviour) *if he gain the whole world and lose himself, and cast away himself?* Luke ix. 25. So that there is not, under the sun, any business of more moment to be treated than this; nor is there any that more nearly concerns man; for it is not his honor or fortune that lies at stake here, but the life of his soul, and everlasting bliss. Do not, therefore, read this cursorily, as you do other things, turning over many leaves, and hastening to the end, but sit down like a judge on the tribunal of your heart, and give ear to these words with silence and attention. This is no business to be done with precipitation, but requires much sedateness, as treating of the whole business of life, and all that depends on it. Consider how nice you are in examining worldly affairs, since you will not stand to the judgment of one bench, but appeal to higher courts and judges, that they may not miscarry. And since the matter you have in hand does not concern earth but heaven, not the things belonging to you, but your own soul; remember this is not to be treated negligently, as if you were half asleep, but with much application. If hitherto you have been in the wrong, reckon yourself now new born in the world; let us now call ourselves to an account, let us wipe off all past miscarriages, and turn over a new

leaf. O that you would now believe me, listen to me attentively, and, like an upright judge, give sentence according to what shall be alleged and made out! How happy would your choice be! How fortunate my labor!

8. I am sensible my wish is very great, and no pen is able to bring it to pass; for which reason, I here, in the beginning, beseech him who is the virtue and wisdom of his Father, and who has the keys of David, to open and shut to whom he pleases, that he will be present with, and instil himself into these words, and give them spirit and life, to move such as shall read them. Yet, if I reap no other fruit of my labor, but the satisfying my own desire, in abundantly extolling so commendable a thing as virtue is, which I have long coveted, I shall look upon this alone as a sufficient reward for all my labors. I have endeavoured in this, as in all my other works, to suit myself to all persons, either spiritual or carnal, that, since the necessity and cause is universal, my writing may be so too. For good men, by reading this book, will be more confirmed in the love of virtue, and take deeper root in it; and those who are not so will, perhaps, discover how great losers they are in deviating from it. According to this doctrine, good parents may educate their children from their infancy, that from those tender years it may become habitual for them to honor, worship and follow virtue, for a virtuous child is one of the greatest blessings a father can have.

9. This work may be also of great use to those whose duty it is to instruct the people, and preach up virtue; because the principal motives and inducements to oblige us to embrace it are here orderly set down, and whatsoever has been written upon this subject, may be reduced to them as to common places. And as we here speak of the present advantages of grace promised to virtue, specifying twelve singular privileges it enjoys, and that it is most certain all these riches and blessings were conferred on us through Jesus Christ, therefore, this doctrine is very beneficial for the better understanding those books of Holy Writ, which particularly treat of the mysteries of Christ, and the inestimable benefit of our redemption, such as the prophet Isaias, the Canticles, and the like.

THE ARGUMENT.

1. THIS first book, Christian reader, contains an ample exhortation to virtue, that is, to the keeping of God's commandments, wherein true virtue consists. It is divided into three principal parts. The first is, a persuasive to virtue; to this purpose, making use of all those arguments holy authors, for the most part, have brought upon this subject, which are our infinite obligations to Almighty God, as well in regard of what he is himself, as what he is to us, on account of his inestimable benefits, as also of what great consequence virtue itself is to us, which is sufficiently expressed by the four last things relating to the end of man, death, judgment, hell and heaven, which is the subject of this first part.

2. The second is, to persuade the same thing, but by other arguments, viz., the advantages of grace promised to virtue in this life: and here are set down twelve singular privileges belonging to it, every one of which is particularly discoursed of. Though holy authors sometimes briefly hint at these privileges, speaking of the peace, inward light, true liberty, comfort of a good conscience, and consolation of the Holy Ghost, enjoyed by the just, and the usual concomitants of virtue, yet I have not met with one that has handled this subject at large, and in due order. This has caused me more laborious research, in selecting and putting together all these matters out of several parts of the Holy Scriptures, giving them their proper names, placing them in order, and expounding and supporting them with several other texts of Scripture, and of the writings of the holy fathers: which method was very requisite to be used, to the end, that those who are not excited to the love of virtue by the hope of blessings to come, as believing them too remote, may at least be moved by the inestimable value of the advantages which at present attend it.

3. But because it is not sufficient to adduce those arguments that make for a cause, without confuting those that may be alleged against it, therefore, we have formed the third part of this book, in which all the excuses vicious men plead for avoiding virtue are answered and confuted.

4. Now, that the reader may not be confounded, he is to understand, that this first book answers to the first of The Memorial of a Christian Life, which, as well as this, contains an exhortation to

virtue; but that there it is short, as became a memorial, but is here very large, solidly handling this necessary and noble subject, which is supported by all that has been piously wrote in the world. The second book answers to the short Rule of Christian Life we gave there, which is here much dilated upon; and because virtue is the object of those books, the reader may observe, that by this word we do not only express the habit of virtue, but the acts and duties, to which this noble habit tends; but it is no new thing to call the effect by the name of the cause, and the cause by that of the effect.

THE
SINNER'S GUIDE.

BOOK I.

A POWERFUL EXHORTATION TO VIRTUE, AND THE KEEPING OF
GOD'S COMMANDMENTS.

CHAPTER I.

*Of the first Motive that obliges us to Virtue and the Service of
God, which is his Being, considered in itself; and of the Ex-
cellency of his Divine Perfections.*

1. Two things, Christian reader, particularly dispose the will of man to the undertaking of any commendable action. The consideration of duty and justice is the one; the other, the benefit and advantage we may reap by it. All wise men, therefore, agree, that justice and profit are the two most powerful inducements to incline our will to whatsoever it ought to undertake. Now, though profit be more generally sought after, yet justice is, in itself, the more prevalent of the two; for, as Aristotle teaches, no worldly advantage can be equivalent to the excellence of virtue, nor any loss so great, as that a prudent man should not embrace it rather than incline to vice. The design of this book being to allure and incline men to embrace the beauty of virtue, it will be proper to begin with the principal part, showing how far we are obliged to it, on account of the duty we owe to God, who, being goodness itself, neither commands, requires or asks any thing in this world, but that we be virtuous. Let us see, in the first place, and seriously consider, on what grounds, and for what reasons, Almighty God claims this duty of us.

2. But since these are innumerable, we shall here touch upon only six of the chief of them, on account of every one of which, man owes all he is or can do. The first, greatest and most inexplicable of them, is the very being of God, which comprehends the greatness of his infinite majesty and of all his perfections; that is, the incomprehensible immensity of his goodness and

mercy, of his justice, his wisdom, his omnipotence, his excellence, his beauty, his fidelity, his sweetness, his truth, his felicity, with the rest of those inexhaustible riches and perfections that are contained in his divine essence. All which are so great and wonderful, that, according to St. Augustine, if the whole world were full of books, and each particular creature employed to write in them, and all the sea turned into ink, the books would be sooner filled, the writers sooner tired, and the sea sooner drained, than any one of his perfections could be fully expressed. The same doctor says further, that should God create a new man, with a heart as large and as capacious as the hearts of all men together, and he, by the assistance and favor of an extraordinary light, come to the knowledge of any one of his inconceivable attributes, the pleasure and delight this must cause in him would quite overwhelm and make him burst with joy, unless God were to support and strengthen him in a very particular manner.

3. This, therefore, is the first and chief reason, that obliges us to the love and the service of God. It is a point so universally agreed upon, that the very Epicureans, who, by their denying of a Divine Providence, and the immortality of the soul, have ruined all philosophy, never went so far as to cut off all religion, which is nothing else but the worship and adoration we owe to God. For one of those philosophers, discoursing upon this matter (Cic. de Nat. Deorum), brings very strong and undeniable arguments, to prove, that there is a God; that this God is infinite in all his perfections, and deserves, therefore, to be revered and adored; and that this duty would be incumbent on us, though God had no other title to it. If a king, even out of his own dominions, purely only for the dignity of his person, is treated with respect and honor, when we have no expectation of any favor from him; with how much more justice are we to pay the same duties to this King and Lord, who, as St. John says, has these words written upon his garment, and upon his thighs, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS! This is he, *who with three fingers holds up the frame of the earth*. It is he that disposes the causes of all things; it is he that gives motion to the celestial orbs, that changes the seasons, and that alters the elements. He it is that divides the waters, produces the winds, and creates all things. It is from him that the planets receive their force and influences. It is he, in fine, that, as King and Lord of the universe, gives every creature its life and nourishment. And, besides all this, the kingdom he is in possession of, neither came to him by succession, nor by election or inheritance, but by nature. And as man is naturally above an ant, so this noble Being is, in such an eminent degree, above all created things whatsoever, that they, and all the world together, are scarce any more, in regard of him, than one of these insects. If philosophers, so ill principled as the Epicu-

reans were, have acknowledged this truth, what ought we to do, who are brought up in the Christian religion?—a religion, which teaches us, that, notwithstanding the infinite obligations we have to God, we are more indebted to him upon this account than upon any other; so that, if a man had a thousand hearts and bodies, this reason alone should be enough to make him offer them all to his honor and service. This is a point which all the saints, who have had a sincere and disinterested love for him, have faithfully complied with. And, therefore, St. Bernard, upon this subject, says, “True love is neither increased by hope, nor lessened by distrust;” Serm. 83, in Cantic. Hereby giving us to understand, that it is not the reward he expects, that makes him serve God: but that he would go on still with the same fervor, though he were sure he should never have any thing for it; because he is not influenced by interest, nor wrought upon by any other consideration, but that of the pure love which is due to his infinite goodness.

4. But though this, of all obligations, is the greatest, yet it is that which, least of all, moves those who are not perfect. Because the greater power self-love has over them, the more they are carried on by their own interest; and, being as yet but rude and ignorant, they are unable to conceive the beauty and excellence of this supreme goodness. Whereas, were they but a little more enlightened, the very brightness of this divine glory would charm them into a love of it above all other things. For which reason, it will be very proper to instruct them upon this matter, that they may acquire a more perfect knowledge of the majesty of God. All I intend to make use of, for the effecting of this, shall be taken out of St. Denis, who wrote his treatise of Mystical Divinity with no other design, but to let us know how infinitely different God Almighty's excellences and perfections are, from those of creatures: that, by seeing this, we may learn, if we have a mind to know what God is, the necessity of shutting our eyes to the beauties we observe in creatures, for fear of deceiving ourselves, whilst we judge of God by those things that bear no proportion at all with his greatness. We are to look upon them as mean and base, and raise up our souls to the contemplation of a Being that exceeds all beings; of a Substance, above all other substances; of a Light, that eclipses all other lights; and of a Beauty, which is so far beyond all beauties imaginable, that the greatest of them, and the most complete, is but ugliness and deformity when set by this. This is what we are told by the cloud Moses entered into to discourse with God, which removed every thing but God from him, that he might, by that means, have a better knowledge of God; Exod. xxiv. 16, 18. And Elias's covering his face with his cloak, when he saw the glory of God passing before him, is a lively expression of the same thing; 3 Kings,

xix. 13. It is certain, then, that a man, to contemplate the perfections and beauty of God, should turn away his eyes from all the things of this world, as too base and mean to be regarded at the same time with him.

5. We shall understand this much better, if we consider the vast difference between this uncreated Being and all that are created; that is to say, between the Creator and his creatures. For all these we see had a beginning, and may have an end; but he is without a beginning, and can have no end. They all acknowledge a superior, and depend upon another; but he knows nothing above himself, and, therefore, is independent. The creatures are variable and inconstant, but the Creator is always the same, and cannot change. The creatures are composed of different matters, but the Creator is a most pure Being, and free from all those mixtures which bodies are made up of; for, should he consist of several parts, there must, of necessity, have been some being above and before him, to have ordered these parts, a thing altogether impossible. The creatures can never come to such a degree of perfection as not to admit of a further increase; they may receive more than they have already, and know what they are at present ignorant of; but God can never be better than he is now, because he contains within himself the perfections of all other beings: nor is it possible that he, who is the Source of all riches, should ever be richer. Nor can he know more than he does already, because his wisdom is infinite, and his eternity, which has all things present to it, suffers nothing to be concealed from his knowledge. Aristotle, the chief of all the heathen philosophers, not ignorant of this truth, calls him a *pure act*; which is a complete and absolute perfection, incapable of any further addition, there being nothing imaginable above it; nor can we think of any thing it stands in need of. There is no creature in the world free from motion and change; and it is this that helps them in the finding of what they want, for they are all of them poor and needy. God, on the contrary, is fixed and immovable; because he is never exposed to any kind of necessity, but is present in all places. There is, in all created things, some difference or other, by which one creature is to be easily known and distinguished from another; but the purity of God's essence allows of no difference or distinction. So that his being is his essence, his essence is his power, his power is his will, his will is his understanding, his understanding is his being, his being is his wisdom, his wisdom is his justice, his justice is his mercy. And though the effects of the one are contrary to those of the other, because the duty of mercy is to pardon, and that of justice to punish; they are, notwithstanding, so perfectly one and the same thing in him, that his mercy is his justice, and his justice is his mercy. So that to appearance, there are contrary

perfections and qualities in God; but yet, as St. Augustine observes, there is no such thing in effect (Medit. c. 19 and 20), because he is very remote and yet very present, very beautiful and very strong, constant and inconceivable, confined to no place and in all places, seen by none, and yet seeing all, who changes every thing, whilst he himself can never change. He it is, who is always in action, and yet always enjoys an eternal rest: it is he that fills all things, but cannot himself be circumscribed: who provides for all without the least solicitude: who is great without quantity, and consequently immense; who is good without quality, and, therefore, truly and sovereignly good; nay, what is yet more, *he only is good*; Matt. xix. 17. In fine, not to lose ourselves in this abyss, we may venture to say, that as all things are tied up to the bounds of a limited being, so they have a limited power, beyond which they can never pass. The works they are employed about are limited, the places they live in have their bounds, they have names to distinguish them by, and definitions by which we may know them, and are reducible to their particular kinds. But as for this supreme Substance, it is as infinite in its power, and in all its other attributes, as it is in its being. It is not known by any definition, nor comprehended under any kind, nor confined to any place, nor distinguished by any name. On the contrary, according to St. Denis, it has all names, though it has no name, because it contains within itself all those perfections which are signified by names. We may, therefore, say, that all creatures, as they are limited, are to be comprehended; whilst this divine essence, inasmuch as it is infinite, is far above the reach of any created understanding. For, as Aristotle says, since that which is infinite has no end, it is not to be comprehended but by him alone who comprehends all things. What else could be the meaning of those two seraphims Isaiah saw near the majesty of God, seated upon a high throne, each of which had six wings; with two of them they covered his face, and with two his feet; Isa. vi. 12. Was it not to teach us, that these, which possess the chief places in heaven, and are seated the nearest to God, are not capable of knowing perfectly what he is, though they have the favor to see him clearly, in his very essence and in all his beauty? For as a man, standing on the shore, sees the sea itself yet cannot discover its depth or extent, so these blessed spirits, with all the saints in heaven, see God truly and really, but can neither fathom the abyss of his greatness, nor measure the duration of his eternity. For this reason God is said *to be seated upon the cherubims*: and, though they are filled with treasures of wisdom, nevertheless, to show how short they come of conceiving his majesty, or of understanding his essence, it is said, that he sits upon them.

6. This is the darkness David speaks of, when he says, God

made darkness his covert; Ps. xvii. 12. To give us to understand what the apostle has expressed more clearly, saying *that God inhabiteth light inaccessible*; 1 Tim. vi. 16. The prophet calls light darkness, because it dazzles our eyes so that we cannot look against it to see God. And as, according to one of the philosophers, there is nothing more resplendent or visible than the sun, and nothing at the same time which we can less look at, because of its extraordinary brightness and the weakness of our sight; in like manner, there is nothing more intelligible in itself than God is, and yet nothing, for the same reason, that we understand less.

7. If, therefore, any man desire to know what God is, when arrived at the highest degree of perfection he is capable of conceiving, he must with humility confess, that an infinite space still remains; that what he proposed to himself is infinitely greater than he imagined; and that the more sensible he is of these incomprehensibilities, the further advance he has made in this sublime science. For this reason St. Gregory, writing upon those words of Job, v. 9, *Who doth great things and unsearchable, and wonderful things without number*—says thus: We never speak better of the works of the Almighty God, than when, surprised with astonishment and ravished with wonder, we keep an awful silence. And as those persons, who design to praise another, whose deserts are beyond all they are able to say, think they best discharge themselves from their obligation when they say nothing at all; so ought we, in St. Denis's opinion, to reverence the wonders of this supreme Deity with a holy and profound respect of soul, and with a chaste and devout silence. The saint seems herein to allude to those words of David, *A hymn, O God, becometh thee in Sion* (Ps. lxiv. 2), which St. Jerome has translated thus: "Thou, O God, art praised by silence in Sion:" to signify to us, that we cannot praise God in a more perfect manner than by saying nothing at all in praise of him, acknowledging the incapacity of our understanding, owning with humility that this inexpressible substance is too high for us to conceive; and confessing that his being is above all beings, his power above all powers, his greatness above all greatnesses, and that his substance infinitely excels, and is inconceivably different from all other substances, whether material or spiritual. Upon which St. Augustine says excellently well, "When I seek my God, I seek not the beauty of the body, nor the agreeableness of the seasons, nor the brightness of the light, nor the sweet charms of the voice, nor the odoriferous smell of flowers, perfumes and essences; it is neither manna nor honey, nor any other thing that is pleasing to the flesh; I seek none of these things when I seek my God: and yet I seek a certain light not to be seen by the eyes, and exceeding all light; a voice beyond all voices, yet not to be discerned

by the ears; a smell surpassing all smells, which the nostrils are not capable of; a sweetness more delightful than all sweetness, yet unknown to the taste, and a satisfaction above all satisfactions, that is not to be felt. For this light shines where there is no place, this voice sounds where the air does not carry it away, this smell is perceived where the wind does not disperse it, and this taste delights where there is no palate to relish it, and this satisfaction is received where it is never lost." L. 10. Conf. c. 6. Soliloq. c. 31.

§ I.—8. If none of these reasons, as weighty as they are, can give you the satisfaction you expect, of having some idea of this unspeakable majesty, cast your eyes upon the frame of this material world, the work of God's own hands; that so the contemplation of such a noble effect may give you some insight into the excellence of the case. Presupposing, in the first place, with St. Denis, that in every thing there is a being, power and action, which bear such proportion to one another, that the power is always suitable to the being, and the action to the power. This being presupposed, consider the beauty, the order and extent of this world: since, as astronomers tell us, there are stars in heaven fourscore times as big as the earth and sea together. Consider again, how many different sorts of creatures there are upon the earth, in the water and in the air; you will see every thing so complete and perfect in its kind, monsters only excepted, that you can wish for nothing to be added or diminished, to make its being more complete; and yet, according to St. Augustine, who grounds his opinion on Ecclesiasticus xvii. 1, God, in one single moment, created this world, as great and wonderful as it is; drew a being from no being, and wrought this great work without any matter to work upon; without any help or assistance; without any outward draft or platform; without any tools or instruments; without any limits of either space or time. He created the whole earth, and all that is contained within the extent of the same, by one single act of his will. Consider, further, that God could have produced a thousand worlds more, much fairer and larger than this, much better peopled too, as easily as he created this; and that, if he had made them, he could with as much ease, and without any kind of opposition, reduce them to nothing again.

Now, if, according to our supposition taken from St. Denis, by the effects and operations of things we judge of their power, and by their power of their being; how powerful must that cause be, which has produced such wonderful effects! And, if this power be so great, what must the Being be, which we are to judge of by this power? This, doubtless, surpasses all expression or imagination; and yet we are further to consider, that all these great and perfect works, which are or might have been, are nothing at all in comparison of the divine power, but infinitely inferior to

it: who then, can reflect on, or contemplate the greatness of so eminent a Being, and so high a power, without surprise and astonishment? Yet, though we did not see with our corporal eyes, we cannot, from what has been said, but conceive, in some measure, how great and incomprehensible this power is.

9. St. Thomas, in his *Sum* of Divinity, explains this infinite greatness very clearly, by this example: We see, says he, that in material or corporeal things, that which is the most perfect is the greatest in quantity. Thus the water is greater than the earth, the air is greater than the water, and the fire greater than the air. The first heaven is greater than the element of fire; the second heaven greater than the first; the third than the second; and so of the rest, till you come to the tenth sphere or empyreal heaven, which is of unmeasurable greatness. This will appear much plainer yet, if we consider what proportion the sea and earth joined together have with the heavens; for astronomers tell us, they are both but as a point in comparison of them: which they prove by this demonstration. They divide the heavens equally into twelve signs, through which the sun performs its yearly course; and because a man may always see six of these signs, in whatsoever part of the earth he be, they conclude, that the earth is but as a point, or a sheet of paper, in the middle of the world; for, if its extent could be, though ever so little, compared with that of the heavens, we should not be able to discover half of them at once, in any part of the earth whatsoever. Now, if the empyreal orb, the most excellent and most noble of all material substances, is so incomparably bigger than all the other orbs; we may from thence infer, that God, who is above all beings imaginable, whether corporeal or spiritual, as being the Author of them all, must be infinitely greater than all of them together; not in quantity, for he is a pure Spirit, but in the excellence and perfection of his being.

10. But, to come more home to our subject, you may, I say, by this means know, in some manner, what God's perfections are, because they cannot but bear a proportion to his being. The author of the book called Ecclesiasticus, speaking of God's mercy, says, *His mercy is as great as himself*; Eccl. ii. 23. Nor are any of his other attributes less. So that his goodness, his mercy, his majesty, his meekness, his wisdom, his bounty, his omnipotence and his justice, are all entirely equal. Thus he is infinitely good, infinitely merciful, infinitely wise, infinitely amiable, and upon these considerations most infinitely worthy to be obeyed, respected, revered and feared, by all creatures. Nay, were man's heart capable of an infinite love and fear, justice would oblige him to give it all to God, upon the account of his infinite greatness. For, if, the greater quality a person is of, the more respect we are to show him, we ought to pay God an infinite respect,

because his dignity is infinite. Whatsoever, therefore, our love wants of acquiring this degree, is wanting upon no other account but our inability of making God the returns his boundless greatness deserves.

11. Since, then, it is certain that, were there no other consideration but that alone, it would be a sufficient motive to oblige us to the love of God; what can he be in love with, who does not love this goodness? Or what can he be afraid of, who does not fear this infinite majesty? Whom will he serve, who will not serve this Lord? What was our will given us for, but to love and to embrace good? If, therefore, this great God be the sovereign good, why does not our will embrace it before all other goods? If it is an unhappiness and misery not to love him, nay, and that, too, above all things in the world, what should those persons expect, who love every thing else better than they do him? Who would ever have thought that man could carry his ingratitude and malice so far: and yet what do they less who are continually offending this sovereign goodness, for a beastly pleasure, for a trifling punctilio of honor, or from some vile and sordid interest? What, then, shall we think of them, who sin upon no motive at all, but either out of mere malice or custom, and without the least hope of advantage or profit? Yet this pass mankind is now come to. O, unparalleled blindness and folly! O, insensibility, worse than that of brutes! O, the diabolical rashness and impudence of man! What punishment does he not deserve, that lets himself be carried away by such a crime as this? What torments ought not he to expect, who has the boldness to despise so high a majesty? Such an unhappy soul shall, without doubt, be condemned to those pains and torments prepared for it; to burn with the devils in hell for all eternity;—a punishment far less than such offences deserve.

12. This is the first and chiefest reason that obliges us to the love and service of God. An obligation so close and strict, that there is nothing in the world can oblige us to love the creatures, because of their perfections, which is to be called an obligation, if we compare it with this. For as the perfections of the creatures are but mere imperfections, in comparison with the perfections of God; so all the obligations, that proceed from these perfections and excellences, cannot with any justice be called obligations, if you set them against those we owe to God: nor can the offences we commit against the creatures, be properly accounted such, if we but consider those we are guilty of towards God. This is the reason why David, in his Penitential Psalm, cries out, *Against thee alone*, meaning God, *have I sinned*; Ps. l. 5. Though, at the same time, he had sinned against Urias, whom he murdered; against Urias's wife, whom he seduced; and against all his subjects, in the scandal his bad example gave

them; and yet, after all, he declared he had sinned against God alone; looking upon all those other offences as nothing at all, if compared with those he had committed against the law of God. This crime so afflicted him, that he took no notice of the rest.—For as God is infinitely greater than all the creatures; so the obligations we have to serve him, and the offences we commit against his divine majesty, are infinitely greater, too, there being no comparison nor proportion between finite and infinite.

CHAPTER II.

Of the second Motive that obliges us to Virtue, and the Service of God, which is the Benefit of our Creation.

1. ANOTHER obligation we have in the pursuit of virtue and the keeping of God's commandments, besides his being in itself, is the consideration of what he is towards us, that is, of those innumerable favors we have received from him; which, though we have spoken of elsewhere, upon other occasions, we will, nevertheless, treat of them again, that so we may the better understand how much we are obliged to this liberal Benefactor.

2. The first of these benefits is *our creation*, which being so well known, I will only say, that such a favor is of itself sufficient to oblige man to give himself up entirely to the service of his Creator; because in justice he stands indebted for all he has received; and since by this benefit he has received his being, that is, his body with all its senses, and his soul with all its faculties, it follows he is obliged to employ them all in the service of his Creator, under the penalty of being looked on as ungrateful to so bountiful a Benefactor. For if a man builds a house, who should have the use or the rent of it, but he that built it? If a man plants a vine, who else should have the fruit of it but the planter? If a man has any children, who are they obliged to serve but the father that begot them? This obligation is so strict, that the laws themselves give every father a right and power to sell his own children, if he should be reduced to a very pressing necessity. For his having given them their being, makes his authority over them so absolute, that he may dispose of them as he pleases. What power, then, and authority ought he to have, who is the sovereign Master and Author of all creatures both in heaven and on earth, since the power a father has over his children extends so far? And if those persons who receive a favor, are, according to Seneca, obliged to imitate a good soil, which returns with interest what it receives, how shall we be able to make God any such return, when, after having given him all we have, we can

give him no more than what we have received from him? And if he who gives back but just what he received, does not comply with this precept of the philosopher, what shall we say of him that does not return so much as the least part of it? Aristotle tells us it is impossible for a man to make equal returns to the favours his father and the gods have bestowed on him. How, then, can it be possible for us to make any return to this great God, who is the Father of all fathers, and from whom mankind has received infinitely more than from all the fathers in the world together? If for a son to disobey his father is so heinous a sin, how grievous a crime must our rebellion be against God, who has so many titles to the name of Father, that, in comparison with him, no father deserves to be so called. And, therefore, he, with much reason, complains of this ingratitude by one of the prophets, in these words: *If I am your Father, where is my honor? And if I am your Lord, where is my fear?* Mal. i. 6. It is upon the account of the same ingratitude that he expresses his indignation in another place with much more severity and anger, saying, *Is it thus that you requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise nation? Is not he thy Father, that has taken thee into his possession, and has made and created thee?* Deut. xxxii. 6. These are truly the ungrateful creatures, that never lift up their eyes towards heaven to contemplate on it, nor look down to consider themselves. Did they but enter into this consideration, they would soon inform themselves what they are, and desire to have some knowledge at least of their original. They would be willing to know by whom and for what end they have been created, that they might by this means be acquainted with one part of their duty. But having already neglected the one, they easily neglect the other, and live as if they had made and created themselves. This was the crime of that unfortunate king of Egypt, whom God threatened so severely by his prophet, when he sent him this message: *Behold, O Pharaoh, king of Egypt, it is to thee that I speak, thou great dragon, that liest down in the midst of thy rivers, and sayest, The river is mine, and I have made myself.* These words, if they are not in the mouths, are at least in the hearts of those who think as seldom of their Creator as if they themselves were the authors of their own being, and would acknowledge no other. St. Augustine's sentiments were quite different from these; for the knowledge of his own origin brought him to the knowledge of him from whom he had received it. Hear how he speaks in one of his soliloquies: "I returned to myself, and entered into myself, saying, What art thou? And I answered myself, A rational and a mortal man. And I began to examine what this was, and said, O, my Lord and my God, who is it that has created so noble a creature as this is? Who, O Lord, but thou? Thou, O my God, hast made me, and not I myself. What art thou? Thou by whom

I and all things live. Can any one create and make himself? Can he receive his being and his life from any one else but from thee? Art not thou the chief being, from whom every other being comes? Art not thou the fountain of life, from which all lives flow? For whatsoever has life lives by thee, because nothing can live without thee. It is thou, O Lord, that hast made me, and without thee nothing is made. Thou art my Creator, and I am thy creature. I thank thee, O my Lord and my God, because thou hast created me; thou, by whom I live, and by whom all things live. I thank thee, O my Creator, because thy hands have made and fashioned me. I thank thee, O my Light, for having enlightened and brought me to the knowledge of what thou art, and what I am myself."

This is the first favor we have received from God, and the foundation of all the rest, because all other benefits presuppose a being, and this is first given us at our creation. Nay, there is no benefit but has a near relation to our being, as the accidents of a thing have to the substance of it; by which you may see how great a benefit this is, and how deeply you are indebted to God for it. If, then, it is certain, that God is very careful and exact in requiring some acknowledgment for all the benefits he bestows upon us, not out of any interest or advantage to himself, but only for our good; what acknowledgment do we think he will expect from us, for that favor, upon which all others are built? For God is no less rigorous in exacting our thanks, than he is liberal in conferring his grace; not that he gets any thing by it, but because the performance of our duty is so very advantageous to us. Thus we read in the Old Testament, that God no sooner bestowed any grace upon his people, than he commanded them not to forget the same. As soon as he had brought his Israelites out of the slavery of Egypt (Exod. xii.), he immediately commanded them to keep a solemn feast every year, in remembrance of that happy day. He destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians, but, at the same time, to prevent his people's ingratitude, he gave orders, that in return for so signal a favor, they should offer up all their first-born to him. A little after their departure from Egypt (Exod. xvi. 33), when he first rained down the manna from heaven, a food with which he maintained them for forty years in the wilderness, he ordered immediately that a certain quantity of it should be put into a vessel, and kept in the sanctuary, as a memorial to all their posterity of so extraordinary a mercy; Exod. xvii. 14. After the victory which he gave them over the Amalekites, he bids Moses write it down in a book for a memorial, and deliver the same to Josue. Now, if God has been so exact, in requiring that his people should never forget those temporal favors he has done them, what will he not expect from us, for this immortal one? For since the soul he has given

us is immortal, the benefit we receive with it must be so too. It was this that introduced the custom amongst the old patriarchs, of erecting altars, as often as God had favored them in any particular manner; Gen. xiii. 7, 8; xiii. 18; xxii. &c. Nay, the very names they gave their children expressed the favors they had received, that so they might always be mindful of them. Hence St. Augustine took occasion to say that man ought to think of God every time he draws his breath; Soliloq. c. 18. Manuale c. 29. Medit. c. 6. Because, as it is by the means of his being that he lives, he should be continually giving God thanks for this immortal being, which he has had from the divine mercy.

We are so strictly obliged to the performance of this duty, that it is the advice even of worldly philosophers never to be ungrateful to God. Hear how Epictetus, a very noted Stoic, speaks upon this matter. "Have a care," says he, "O man, of being ungrateful to that sovereign Power, and forgetting to return thanks, not only for having given you all your senses and life itself, but for all those things that support it: not only for the pleasant fruits, for the wine, the oil, and for whatever other advantages of fortune you have received from him; but praise him particularly for having endowed you with reason, by which you may know how to make that use of every thing which it ought to be put to, and understand the true worth and excellence of all things." If a heathen philosopher obliges us to such acknowledgments for these common and ordinary things, what sentiments of gratitude should a Christian have, who has, beside all these, received the light of faith, which is a most inestimable favor.

5. But you will perhaps ask, What obligations can these benefits lay upon me, which are common to all, and seem rather to be the ordinary graces of God, since they are nothing but the consequences and products of such causes as work always after the same manner? This objection is so much below a Christian, that a heathen would be ashamed to make it, and none but a beast can be guilty of such baseness. That you may the more easily believe me, hear how the same philosopher condemns it: "You will say, perhaps, that you receive all these benefits from nature. Senseless and ignorant creature that you are! do not you see, that when you say so, you only change the name of God? For what is nature but God, who is the Author of nature? It is therefore no excuse, ungrateful man, to say you owe this obligation to nature, not to God, because without God there is no such thing as nature. Should you borrow a sum of money of Lucius Seneca, and afterwards say you were obliged only to Lucius, and not to Seneca, that would only change your creditor's name, but not your creditor."

§ I. *Of another Part of this Motive that obliges us to the Service of God, which is, that we are to receive our Perfection from him.*

6. It is not justice alone that obliges to the service of our Creator: our own necessities force us to address ourselves to him, if we desire to arrive at the happiness and perfection of our being, which is the end of our creation. For the better understanding hereof, you must conceive that, generally speaking, whatever is born is not born with all its perfections: it has something, but it wants much more yet, and none but he that began the work can rightly finish it. So that no being can be perfected by any other cause than that which put the first hand to it. This is the reason why all effects have an inclination and tendency towards those particular causes which produced them, that they may receive their last stroke and perfection from them. The plants love the sun, and run as deep as they can into the earth which shot them forth. The fishes continue in the waters where they were first engendered. A chicken runs under the hen's wings as soon as it is hatched, and follows her up and down for shelter. A lamb, as soon as it is brought forth, runs after its ewe, and can distinguish it from a thousand others of the same color. It follows her without ever losing sight of her, and seems to say, "Here it is I received whatsoever I have, and it is here I will receive whatsoever I want." This is what usually happens in the works of nature; and if those of art had any sense or motion, they would do the same. Should a painter draw a piece and leave out the eyes, what would it do were it sensible of its wants? whither would it go? Not to the palaces of kings or princes, who, as such, could never be able to supply its defects, but to the master's house, that he who drew the first strokes might give the last, and finish it quite. Is not this your own case, O rational creature? You are not yet finished. You have, it is true, received something, but there is a great deal yet wanting to make you as complete and perfect as you should be. You are scarce any more than a rough draught. You have received nothing of the beauty and lustre you are to have. This you will be very sensible of, if you do but observe the propension of nature itself, which, being always in want, never rests, but is continually craving and wishing for more. God thought fit to starve you out, that your own wants might force you to have recourse to him. For this reason it was he left you at first unfinished. His not giving you at your creation all that you stood in need of, was an effect not of covetousness, but of love. It was not to leave you poor, but to make you humble. It was not to forsake you in your necessities, but to oblige you to address yourself to him. For since you are really poor and blind, why do you not

go to the Father that made you, and to the painter that first began to draw you, that he may give you what you have not yet received? Consider whether David did not understand this secret, when he said, *Thy hands, O Lord! have made me, and formed me: give me understanding, and I will learn thy commandments*; Ps. cxviii. 73. As if he had said, all that is in me is the work of thy hands, O Lord! but thy work is not yet completed. I am not quite finished, O Lord, because the eyes of my soul are not yet opened. I have not light enough to see what is convenient for me. Whom shall I have recourse to for the obtaining what I want, unless to him who has given me what I have? Grant me, O Lord! that light which is necessary for me. Enlighten the eyes of this wretch that has been born blind, that he may see thee, and that thou, O God! mayest finish what thou hast already begun in me.

7. As, therefore, there is none but this great God that can perfect the understanding, so neither is there any beside him, that can complete and rectify the will, with all the other faculties of the soul; that so he who first began the work, may finish it. It is this Lord alone, who satisfies without leaving any want, who enlarges without noise, who enriches without vanity, and gives a solid contentment, without possessing many things: with whom the creature lives, though poor, yet content; though rich, yet destitute; though alone, yet happy; though deprived of all things, yet possessing all. It is upon this occasion the wise man says, with so much reason, *One is as it were rich, when he hath nothing; and another is as it were poor, though he hath great riches*; Prov. xiii. 7. By this we are taught that the poor man, who has God for his inheritance, as St. Francis had, is truly rich, and that he whom God takes no notice of is very poor, let him be ever so rich in worldly possessions.

What advantage have great and wealthy men by all their riches, if they are, nevertheless, racked with such cares and diseases, that all they have cannot give them any ease? Or what comfort can rich clothes, a plentiful table, and chests crammed with gold and treasures, bring to an unquiet and troubled mind? How often, and with what restlessness, does the rich man turn and toss about every night in his down-bed; nor can all his wealth help him to the least wink of sleep, or give any rest to his disturbed conscience? It follows, from what has been said, that we are infinitely obliged to serve God, not only on account of his benefits, but for whatsoever else contributes to the making our happiness complete.

CHAPTER III.

Of the third Motive that obliges us to serve God, which is the Benefit of our Preservation and Direction.

1. ANOTHER obligation man has to God, besides that of his creation, is *the care he takes to preserve him*. He it is who gave you your being, and who still continues the same to you. So that you depend now as much upon his power, for the preserving of it, as you did, before he gave it to you, for the receiving it; and it is as impossible for you to subsist without him, as it was, before you were created, to create yourself. Nor is the second obligation less than the first, but rather greater, for that was laid upon you but once; whereas this is conferred on you every moment of your life. For to be continually preserving you, after your creation, requires no less love nor power than it did to create you. If, therefore, your obligation to him, for having created you in an instant, be so great; what do you not owe him for preserving you so many moments, so many hours, nay, so many years? You cannot go a step unless he gives you power to move. You cannot so much as open or shut your eyes without his will and assistance. For if you do not believe that it is he who moves every joint and member of your body, you are no Christian; but if you believe it is from him you receive this favor, and yet, after all, are so impudent as to offend him, I cannot tell what name to give you. If a man were standing on the top of a high tower, with a small cord in his hand, and another man hanging at the end of it, do you think that he who should be so near falling down headlong, would dare to give abusive language to the person that held the cord? Imagine yourself to be in such a condition. You depend on the will of God as it were on a thread; so that, should he forsake you but for one moment, you would be instantly reduced to your first nothing. With what insolence, then, can you dare provoke so dreadful a Majesty, who is so merciful as to support you, even when you sin against Him? For, as St. Denis says, such is the virtue of the sovereign Good, as to give creatures power to disobey and rebel at the very moment they are rebelling against it. Since there is no denying this truth, how dare you presume to make use of those senses and members, as instruments to offend him who preserves them? O incredible blindness and folly! O unheard-of rebellion and disobedience! Was there ever so horrid a conspiracy as this is, that the members should rise up against their Head, for which they ought to die a thousand times? The day will come when this affront shall be most severely punished. It is then that God will hear those complaints, which his own honor, trampled under foot

by you, shall make to his divine justice. Disloyal and ungrateful man! is it not just, since you have conspired against your God, that the whole world should rise up and exclaim against you? that God should arm all his creatures to revenge the injuries you have offered him? and that the whole earth should fight for him against the ungrateful? Without doubt, there is no greater justice than that they, who would not open their eyes to so many mercies, when they might have done it, should be forced to it now by severity and rigor, without finding any remedy or comfort.

2. If to all these benefits we add the whole world, which is as a rich and plentiful table God has prepared and spread for your particular use, how infinitely will the obligation be increased? There is not any one thing under the face of heaven, but what is entirely for man, or for his service. And should any one object, that flies are of no use to man, he may observe, they are food for birds, which are created for him. Though a man does not eat the grass of the fields, it nourishes the cattle which are necessary for his subsistence. Cast your eye about the world, and you will see what rich lands, and what large possessions you have, and how great your inheritance is. All that moves on the earth, all that swims in the waters, that flies in the air, or that shines in the heavens, is made for you. These things are all of them the effects of God's bounty, the witnesses of his mercy, the sparks of his charity, and the common publishers of his greatness. Consider these are so many preachers God sends to you, that you may not want the opportunity of knowing him. Every thing, says St. Augustine, on earth and in heaven, perpetually exhorts me, O Lord! to love you. And that no man may pretend to a lawful excuse from so just a duty, they speak the same language to every body else.

3. O! that you had but ears to hear the voices of the creatures, you would easily understand how they all agree in their inviting you to the love of God; for they silently declare they have been created to serve you: that you may, therefore, love and adore this common Lord, not only for yourself, but for them. The sky says, It is I, that by my stars continually furnish you with light, that you may not walk in the dark. It is I, that by my different influences occasion the production of all things necessary for life. The air, on the other side, tells you, It is I who give you breath; it is I who refresh you with my gentle blasts, and temper the heat of your vital spirits, that you may not be scorched up by it; it is I who maintain this almost infinite number of different kinds of birds, pleasing your eyes with the beauty of their feathers, charming your ears with the sweetness of their notes, and satisfying the niceness of your appetites with their delicious taste. The water says, It is for you that I pour out my seasonable and moderate rains; it is for you that my streams

and fountains are always running; it is for your nourishment that I engender such variety of fish. I water your lands and your gardens, that they may bring you their fruits in due season. I make a short passage for you through the sea, that you may thereby have the opportunity of making use of the whole world, and of joining the riches of other countries with those of your own. What shall I say of the earth, the common mother of all things, and the universal shop, as it were, of nature; where all the different causes produce their several effects? She may, with a great deal of reason, speak to you, as the rest have done, and tell you, it is she that, like a mother, carries you in her arms; it is she supplies you with all the necessities of life; it is she that maintains you with the variety of her products; that, to serve you, she holds a correspondence with all the other elements, and with the heavens themselves, for the procuring of their influence; and that she, in short, like a tender mother, neither forsakes you whilst you are alive, nor leaves you at your death; for she it is that nourishes and supports you during your life, and takes you into her bosom when you are dead, and there gives you a resting-place. To conclude, all the world cries out aloud to you, Behold, O mortal man, and consider, what a love your Creator has had for you; since it is for your sake that he has made me, commanding me, at the same time, for the love of him, to serve you; that so you may love and serve him, who has created me for you, and you for himself.

4. This, O Christian, this is the general voice of all the creatures; and can you, after this, deny, that you are most strangely dull and stupid, if you have no ears to hear the same? How can you avoid confessing, that you are guilty of an unparalleled ingratitude, if you take no notice of so many favors? If you are not ashamed to receive an obligation, why do you refuse to make a simple acknowledgment of it to him from whom you have received it, that so you may escape the punishment your ingratitude otherwise deserves? For, according to a great writer, there is no creature in the world but what speaks these three words to man: "*Receive, give, take heed*; that is to say, receive the benefit, give what is due, and take heed of the punishment which follows ingratitude, if you do not do so;" Rich. de S. Vict.

5. And, that you may have more cause to admire, consider how Epictetus, a heathen philosopher before mentioned, has been able to lift himself up to this sublime divinity. He advises us, in these words, to make the creatures serve us, as so many memorials of the Creator:—

"When the raven croaks," says he, "and thereby gives you notice of some change of weather, it is God, not the raven, that gives you this notice. If men should, by their words and discourses, advise you to any thing, is it not God that has given

them power to advise you thus? thereby to let you understand, that he exercises his divine power several ways, in order to bring about his designs; for when God thinks fit to acquaint us with matters of greater moment, he makes choice of more excellent and more inspired men for this purpose." Afterwards, he adds this: "In fine, when you shall have read my instructions, say to yourself, Is it not Epictetus, but God, that has given me this advice; for whence could he have had such precepts and rules as these are, if God had not suggested them to him?" Thus far the words of Epictetus. Now, is there any Christian in the world, that will not be ashamed, and blush to be excelled by a heathen? If there be, he may well be confounded to think, that his eyes, with the assistance of the light of faith, cannot see as far as those that were in the darkness of human reason.

§ I. *From what has been said is inferred how unworthy it is not to serve God.*

6. Since things are really just as we have represented them, is it not great ingratitude and neglect for man to be surrounded on all sides by so many benefits, and yet to forget him from whom he has received them all? St. Paul says, *that he who does his enemy a good turn, heaps coals of fire upon his head* (Rom. xii. 20.), by which he inflames his charity and love. Now, if all the creatures in the world are so many benefits God bestows on you, the whole world can be nothing else but one fire, and all the creatures so much fuel to feed and increase it. Is it possible any heart should be in the midst of such flames as these, and not be entirely inflamed, or so much as warmed by them? How comes it then, that after receiving so many benefits and graces, you should neglect even to cast your eyes towards heaven, to see from whence they all come? If you were to go a great journey, and in the way, being quite tired, and almost dead with hunger, should be forced to sit down at the bottom of a high tower, from the top of which some charitable person should take care to supply you with whatsoever you wanted, could you forbear looking up sometimes, if it were but to have a sight of one that was so kind and charitable to you? Does God do any thing less for you, than continually shower down from above all sorts of blessings upon you? Find me out, if you can, but one thing in the world, that does not happen by his particular providence. And yet you never so much as look up to know, and by that means to love, so liberal and constant a Benefactor. What can be said of such hard-heartedness, but that man has divested himself of his own nature, and is grown more insensible than brutes? It is a shame to say whom we resemble in this particular, but it is fit that man should hear it. We are like a herd of swine feeding under an

oak, which, all the time their keeper is shaking down the acorns from the top of the tree, do nothing else but grunt and fight with one another for their meat, without ever looking upon him that gives it them, or lifting up their eyes to see from whose hands they receive such a benefit. O! the brutal ingratitude of the children of Adam! who, having received not only a rational soul, which other creatures have not, but also an upright body, and eyes set to look up towards heaven, yet will not lift up the eyes of the soul to behold him that bestows such blessings on them.

7. It is to be wished, that brutes and irrational creatures did not excel us in this point. For this duty of acknowledgment is, in effect, so deeply engraved by the finger of God upon all his creatures, that the fiercest of them have not been deprived of so noble an inclination. There are a great many examples in history to prove what we here assert. Is there any beast more fierce than a lion? and yet Appian, a Greek author, tells us of a man who, having accidentally sheltered himself in a lion's cave, and there plucked a thorn out of one of his feet, shared with him every day of the prey he got, as an acknowledgment of the favor and the cure he had wrought upon the beast. This man was taken up a considerable time after for some notorious crime, and was condemned to be exposed to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre at Rome, to be torn in pieces by them. The same lion, which had been taken some days before, being let loose, eyed the man, and, knowing him, came up gently and fawned upon him, just as a dog does upon his master when he has been abroad, and ever after followed him up and down without doing any harm. We read of another lion, who, having received the same favor from a seaman, that had been cast by a storm upon the coast of Africa, brought him daily a part of his booty, which maintained him and his company until such time as they put to sea again. Nor is that less to be admired, when they tell us of another, who, as he was fighting with a serpent, was so put to it, that in all appearance he would have lost his life, had not a gentleman, who was riding that way, accidentally come to his assistance, and killed the serpent; the lion, to return the obligation, gave himself up entirely to his deliverer, and followed him whithersoever he went, serving him as a hound in hunting. The gentleman at last took shipping, and left his lion on shore. The beast was so impatient and uneasy to stay behind, that he took to the water, and, not being able to make to the vessel, was drowned. What shall I say of the gratitude and fidelity of horses? Pliny gives us a relation of some, that have had such a lively concern for the loss of their masters, as to shed tears for them; and of others, that have starved themselves to death for the same reason. Some there are, again, that have revenged their masters' death upon those that murdered them

by tearing them in pieces, or by trampling them under their feet. Nor is the gratitude of dogs less surprising, of whom the same author relates such strange things as are almost incredible. Amongst the rest he tells us of one, that, having fought for his master, who was murdered by highwaymen, as long as he was able, sat by the dead body to keep off the birds and beasts from devouring it. He speaks of another, that would neither eat nor drink after he had seen his master, Lucius, dead. He relates another much more remarkable passage, that happened at Rome in his time, which is this: A man, that was condemned to die, had a dog which he had kept very long, and which never left him all the time he was in prison, no, nor after his execution; but, on the contrary, staying always by him, made known his grief by his howling. If any body flung him a piece of bread, he would take it up, and carry it immediately to his master, and put it into his mouth. At last, the body being thrown into the Tiber, the dog leaped in, and got under it, to keep it from sinking. Can there be any thing in the world more grateful than this was? Now, if beasts, who have only a small spark of natural instinct, whereby to acknowledge a good turn, are yet so ready to requite, serve and attend their benefactors, how can man, who has so much more light to know the good he receives, be so forgetful of him that bestows so much upon him? How comes he to suffer himself to be exceeded by beasts, in courtesy, fidelity and gratitude? Especially, when the benefits, which man receives from God, are so infinitely beyond those which beasts receive from men; when the Benefactor is so excellent, his love so singular, and his intention so sincere, that he proposes no interest to himself, but does all out of mere charity and bounty. This is, indeed, a matter of no small wonder and astonishment, and evidently shows there are devils, that blind our understandings, harden our hearts, and impair our memories, that we may not remember so liberal a Benefactor.

8. Now, if it be so great a crime to forget this Lord, what must it be to affront him, and to convert his favors into the instruments of our offences against him? Seneca says, that not to pay back the benefits we have received, is the first degree of ingratitude; the second is to forget them; the third is to render evil for good; and this last is the highest degree. But what is all this to the affronting and abusing your Benefactor with those very kindnesses he has shown to you? I doubt whether there is any man in the world, who has ever dealt with his fellow creatures, as we frequently deal with God. What man would be so ungrateful, as to go immediately, and employ a considerable sum of money he had received from his prince, in raising an army against him? And yet you, base and miserable wretch! never cease to make war upon God, with those very bounties

you have received from him. What can a man think more abominable than this? Should a husband make a present to his wife of a necklace of pearl, or a rich set of diamonds, to oblige her to honor and love him the more; what would you say of the perfidiousness of this woman, if she should throw all away immediately upon her gallant, to tie him the more strongly to her, and make herself more the mistress of his affection? Every body would certainly look upon this as the basest action she could be guilty of; and yet the offence here is only between equals. How much more heinous, then, is the crime, when the affront is offered to God? And yet this it is those persons are guilty of, who waste all their strength, and spend their estates, and ruin their health, in committing sinful actions. Their strength makes them proud, their beauty makes them conceited, and their health unmindful of God. Their wealth enables them to devour the poor, to vie with the great ones, to pamper their flesh, and to corrupt the virtue of some unthinking maid, making her, like Judas, sell what Christ purchased by his blood, whilst they buy it with money like the Jews. What shall I say of the abuse of other graces? The sea serves but to satisfy their gluttony, and the beauty of creatures their lust. The fruits and product of the earth serve to feed their avarice, and their wit and natural gifts go to the increasing of their vanity. They are puffed up in prosperity, even to folly, and cast down to despair in adversity. They choose the darkness of the night to hide their theft, and the light of the day for the laying of snares, as we read in holy Job. In short, whatever God has created for his own glory, they have devoted to satisfy their inordinate passions.

9. What shall I say of their essences and perfumes, of their stately furniture, their sumptuous tables, and niceness and superfluity of their dishes, with their different sorts of sauces, and their several ways of cooking? Nay, sensuality and luxury are so much in fashion, that men have made a trade of these scandalous excesses, and published books to instruct us how to sin in this matter. They have corrupted all things by their misusing them, and, instead of taking an occasion from them to praise God, the end they were given them for, they have made use of them as the incentives to their debaucheries and vanities; thus perverting the lawful use of the creatures, they have made those things help and assist them in vice, which ought to have encouraged and excited them to virtue. There is nothing, in fine, which they have not sacrificed to the gratifying of their senses, and the pampering of their flesh, whilst they have quite neglected to relieve their neighbour, though God has so particularly recommended him to their care. They never complain that they are poor, but to those that are so themselves; nor do they ever so much as think of paying their debts, unless when any body comes

to beg an alms of them; take them at any other time, and you shall neither find them poor nor in debt.

10. Have a care this be not laid to your charge at the hour of your death. Do not suffer so heavy a burden as this, to be pressing upon you at that time. Consider that the greater the concern is, the more strict account you must give of it. To have received much, and to have made but small acknowledgment of it, is a kind of judgment laid upon you already. It is a great sign of a man's reprobation, when he continues to abuse those favors God Almighty bestows on him. Let us look upon it as the utmost disgrace, that beasts should surpass us in this virtue; since they requite their benefactors with gratitude, whilst we neglect to do it. If the Ninevites are to rise up in judgment against the Jews, and condemn them for not entering into a state of penance after our Saviour's preaching, let us take care that the same Lord have no reason, at the last day, to condemn us upon the examples of beasts, for taking so little notice of our Benefactor, when they have expressed much love to theirs.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the fourth Motive that obliges us to the Pursuit of Virtue, which is the inestimable Benefit of our Redemption.

1. LET us come now to the great work of our redemption, a favor not to be comprehended by either men or angels. A mystery so much above whatsoever I am able to say, and myself so unworthy at the same time to speak any thing of it, that I neither know where to begin or where to leave off, what to take or what to leave. Were not man so stupid as to stand in need of these incentives, to stir him up to the love of virtue, it would be much better to adore this profound mystery in silence, than to eclipse it by the darkness of our expression. They tell us of a certain famous painter, who, having drawn a picture representing the death of a king's daughter, and painted her friends and relations standing about her with most sorrowful countenances, and her mother more melancholy than the rest; when he came to draw the father's face, he hid it under a shade, to signify that so much grief was not to be expressed by art. Now if all we are able to say falls short of explaining the benefit of our creation, what eloquence will suffice deservedly to extol that of our redemption? God created the whole universe by one single act of his will, without spending the least part of his treasures, or weakening the strength of his almighty arm. But to the redeeming of it, there went no less than thirty-three years of sweat

and toil, with the effusion of his blood to the very last drop, and not one of his senses or members was exempt from suffering its particular pain and anguish. It looks like a lessening of such sublime mysteries, to attempt to explain them with mortal tongue. What shall I do then? shall I speak, or shall I hold my peace? I am obliged not to be silent, and am unfit to speak. How can I be silent of such wondrous effects of God's mercy? And how shall I be able to discourse of such ineffable mysteries? To be silent looks like ingratitude, and to speak of it seems a rashness. Wherefore, I here prostrate myself before thee, O my God, imploring thy divine assistance and mercy to the end, that whilst my ignorance detracts from thy glory, instead of extolling and displaying it, those who are capable of doing it may praise and glorify thee in heaven, that they may supply what I am deficient in, and beautify and adorn what a mortal man cannot but spoil by the meanness of his capacity.

2. After God had created man, and with his own hand seated him in a place of delights, investing him with honor and glory, that which ought to have engaged him the more deeply in his Creator's service emboldened him the more to rebel against him. Whereas, the infinite favors he had received should have laid a stricter obligation on him, to love that divine Goodness that bestowed them, he made use of them as instruments of his ingratitude. This was the cause of his being driven out of Paradise, into the banishment of this world, and condemned to the pains of hell, that, as he had been the devil's associate in sin, he might partake of his sufferings and torments. When Giezi, Elisha's servant, had received the present which Naaman the leper made him, the prophet said to him: *Since thou hast received Naaman's money, the leprosy, therefore, of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever*; 4 Kings v. 26, 27. God has pronounced a like sentence against man, judging it requisite, that since he has coveted the riches of Lucifer, which are his guilt and his pride, he should in like manner be defiled with Lucifer's leprosy, which is the punishment of his rebellion. Thus man, by imitating the devils' sins, becomes like them, and shares with them in their punishment, as well as in their guilt.

3. Man having brought such a disgrace upon himself, this same God, whose mercy is as great as his majesty, considered not the affront, which was offered to his infinite goodness, so much as he did our misery. He was more concerned for the unhappy condition we were reduced to, than angry for the offences we had committed against him; and, therefore, resolved to succor us by the means of his only Son, and to make him the Mediator of our reconciliation with himself. But what was this reconciliation? Who is able to express this mercy? He settled

such a close friendship betwixt God and man, as to find out a way to make God not only pardon man, receive him into his favor again, and make him one and the same thing with himself, by love, but what is far beyond all expression, he united him to himself in such a manner, that there are no created beings in nature so closely united as these two are now; because they are not only one in love and in grace, but in person too. Who could ever have thought, that such a breach as this, would have been so made up again? Who could have imagined, that these two things, which nature and sin had set at such a distance, should ever have been united together, not in the same house, at the same table, in the same union of grace and love, but in the same person? Are there any two things in the world more different from one another, than God and a sinner? And yet, are there any things more closely united than God and man are now? There is nothing, says St. Bernard, more high than God, and nothing lower than the clay man was made of. Yet has God, with so much humility, descended into this clay, and this clay with so much honour ascended to God, that we may say the clay has done whatsoever God has done, and God has suffered all the clay has suffered.

4. When man, finding himself naked, and become an enemy to God, endeavoured to hide himself in the most concealed parts of the terrestrial paradise, who would have made him believe a time would come, when this base and vile substance should be united to God, in one and the same person? This alliance was so strict and close, that it could not be separated even by death, which broke the union between soul and body, but could never divide the divinity and humanity, because God never quitted what he had once taken upon him for our sake.

Thus our peace was concluded; this is the medicine we have received at the hands of our Saviour and Mediator. And though we are infinitely more indebted to God for so sovereign a cure, than we are in any wise able to express, we are no less obliged to him for the manner of applying it, than for the remedy itself. I am infinitely indebted to thee, O my God, for having redeemed me from hell, and restored me to thy favour; but I owe thee much more for the manner of restoring my liberty, than for the liberty itself. All thy works, O Lord, are to be admired in every part of them; and though man may seem to lose himself in the contemplation of any one of thy wonders, the same disappears, as soon as he lifts up his eyes towards heaven to reflect upon another. Nor is this any discredit to thy greatness, O Lord, but an argument of thy glory.

What course, O my God, hast thou taken to heal me? Thou mightest have procured me my salvation by an infinite number of ways, without putting thyself to the trouble or expense; but

thy bounty was so great and surprising, that to give me a more manifest proof of thy goodness and mercy, thou hast chosen to relieve my miseries by thy own pains and sufferings, which were so vehement, that the very thoughts of them drew a bloody sweat from thy veins, and thy undergoing of them rent the very rocks with sorrow. Let the heavens and the angels praise thee, O my God, for ever; and let them never cease to publish thy wondrous works! What need hadst thou of our goods, or what damage were our miseries to thee? *If thou shouldst sin*, says Elihu to Job, *what hurt wilt thou do to God? And if thy transgressions should be multiplied, what wilt thou do against him? On the contrary, if thou shalt do that which is just, what wilt thou give him, or what can he receive from thy hand?* Job xxxv. 6, 7. This great God, who is so powerful, and so far above the reach of any misfortune; he, whose riches, whose power and whose wisdom, can neither be increased nor lessened; he, who was neither greater nor less after he had created the world than he was before; he, who can receive no more glory from all the praises men and angels are able to give him, than he has always had from all eternity; he, who would be no less glorious, though each particular mouth were to be employed in cursing and blaspheming him; this Lord, I say, whose majesty is so great and infinite, notwithstanding our infidelities and treacheries have been such as deserve his eternal anger and hatred, has vouchsafed, even when he had no need at all of us, and upon no other motive but that of his excessive love to us, to bow down the heavens of his greatness, and to descend into this place of banishment, to clothe himself with our flesh, to undertake the payment of our debts, and, that he might discharge us, to undergo the most dreadful torments that ever were, or that ever shall be undergone! It was for my sake, O my God, that thou hast been born in a stable, laid in a manger, circumcised the eighth day, and forced to fly into Egypt; it was for the love of me, that thou hast been so affronted and injured; it was for me that thou hast fasted, watched and wandered from place to place; that thou hast sweated, wept and subjected thyself to all those miseries which my sins have deserved, notwithstanding that thou wert so far from being the offender, as to be all this while the party offended; it was for me that thou wert apprehended, forsaken, sold, denied, and brought before several courts and judges; it was for my sake that thou wert accused before them, and that thou wert affronted, buffeted, spit upon, whipped, blasphemed, put to death and buried. Thou hast, in fine, vouchsafed for the healing of my wounds, to die upon a cross, in the sight of thy most holy mother, in so great poverty, as not to have one drop of water at the hour of thy death, and in so stupendous a manner forsaken by all, that thy heavenly Father himself seemed to neglect thee at that

time. Can any thing enter into the heart of man more lamentable than this, to see a God of most infinite majesty come down upon earth to end his life upon a cross, like a notorious malefactor?

6. If any man, though of ever so mean a condition, were to be executed for some public crime he had committed, there is no body could, without some kind of concern, especially if he had known him before, consider the deplorable state his misery had reduced him to, and the unhappy end he was going to make. Now if it be surprising to see a man of but an ordinary condition brought to such disgrace, how ought we to be astonished, when we see the Lord of all created things in no better circumstances? What a subject of wonder should it be, to see a God like a malefactor? and if it be true, that the greater the quality a person is of, the more we are surprised at his disgrace and fall, what surprise should here seize us? O you blessed angels, who had so full a knowledge of the greatness of this Lord, what did you think, when you saw him hanging upon a cross? God commanded Moses to put two cherubims at the sides of the ark, with their faces turned towards the mercy-seat, and looking upon one another with admiration (Exod. xxv. 18.); and for what other end was all this, but to give us to understand with what a holy astonishment those supreme spirits must be seized, when they considered the effect of so great a charity, and beheld this great God, who created heaven and earth, nailed to the holy cross, to atone for our crimes? Nature herself is amazed, and every creature is astonished. The principalities and powers of heaven are ravished with this inestimable goodness, which they behold in God. Is there any body, after all this, that is not swallowed up in the abyss of such wonders? Who is there, that is not drowned in the ocean of such infinite mercies? Who is there that can contain his admiration, so as not to cry out with Moses, when God showed him the figure of this mystery upon the mount, *O the Lord, the God, merciful and gracious, patient and of much compassion, and true!* Exod. xxxiv. 6. He was unable to do any thing else, but publish aloud the infinite goodness God had given him a sight of. Who would not, like Elias (3 Kings xix. 13), hide his eyes, if he saw his God passing by, not in the brightness of his majesty, but under the veil of his littleness; not overturning mountains, or splitting the rocks in pieces by his omnipotence, but delivered up into the hand of the wicked, and making the very rocks melt and burst asunder with compassion? Who is there that will not shut the eyes of his understanding and open the bosom of his will, that at the sight of so boundless a love, it may be inflamed with gratitude, and return all the love it is able to give, without setting any limits or measure to its passion? O height of charity! O greatness of mercy! O abyss of incomprehensible goodness!

7. It is true, O Lord, that I am thus indebted to thee for having redeemed me; how great must the obligation be, for having redeemed me in such a manner? For to redeem me thou hast suffered such torments, and such disgrace, as are above the reach of our imagination. Thou hast made thyself the scorn of men, and the contempt of the world, for the love of me. To procure me honor, thou hast dishonored thyself; and hast suffered thyself to be accused, that I might be acquitted. Thou hast shed thy blood, to wash away the stains of my guilt. Thou hast died, to raise me to life, and by thy tears hast delivered me from everlasting weeping and gnashing of teeth. How truly dost thou deserve the name of a kind Father, since thou hast had so tender a love for thy children? How justly art thou called a good Shepherd, who hast given thyself for the nourishment of thy flock? How truly faithful a guardian art thou, since thou hast so freely laid down thy life for those whom thou hast taken into thy care? What present shall I make thee, answerable to this? With what tears shall I return these tears? With what life shall I repay this life? What proportion is there between the life of a man and the life of his God, between the tears of a creature and those of his Creator?

8. But if, O man, thou shouldst perhaps imagine, that his suffering for every body else, as well as for thee, has lessened thy obligation, thou deceivest thyself. For though he suffered for all mankind in general, it was in such a manner, that he suffered for each particular person. For his infinite wisdom gave him as clear and as distinct a representation of all those for whom he underwent those torments, as if there had been but one single person; and his immense charity, which made him take in all together, has done no less for each one in particular. So that he has shed his blood for every single man, as much as for all mankind together; and so great has been his mercy, that had there been but one sinner in the whole world, he would have suffered as much for him alone, as he had done now for all the world. Consider, therefore, how infinitely thou art obliged to this Lord, who has done so much for thee, and who would have done a great deal more, if there had been any need of it for procuring thy happiness.

§ 1. *We may gather from what has been hitherto said, how grievous a thing it is to offend God.*—9. I appeal now to all creatures, whether man can possibly think of any greater benefit, any more generous favor, or any obligation more binding than this is. Tell me, O all ye choirs of angels, whether God has ever done so much for you? Can any man, then, after all this, refuse to give himself up entirely to the service of God? “I am indebted to thee, O Lord,” says St. Anselm, “for all that I am, upon three several accounts; because thou has created me, I

owe thee all that is in me: but I owe thee the same debt, and with more justice, because thou hast redeemed me, and because thou hast promised to reward me with the enjoyment of thyself, I cannot but acknowledge I am wholly thine. Why, then, do not I give myself once, at least, to him, to whom I am so justly due?" O insupportable ingratitude! O invincible hardness of man's heart, which is not to be softened by so many favors! There is nothing in the world so hard but it may, by some means or other, be made softer. Fire melts metal; iron grows flexible in the forge; the blood of certain animals will soften even the diamond itself: but, O more than stony heart, what iron, what diamond is so hard as thou art, if neither the flames of hell, nor the care of so charitable a Father, nor the blood of the unspotted Lamb, which has been shed for thee, can make thee soft and flexible? Since thou, O Lord, hast showed so much goodness, so much mercy, and so much kindness to man, is it to be endured that any one should not love, that any one should forget this benefit, and that any one should still offend thee? What can that man love, that is not in love with thee? What favors can work upon him, that is not to be wrought upon by thine? How can I refuse to serve him who has had such a love for me, who has sought after me with so much solicitude, and who has done so much for the redeeming of me? *And I, says our Saviour, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself;* John xii. 32. With what force, O Lord, with what chains? With the force of my love, with the chains of my mercies. *I will draw them, says the Lord, with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love;* Osee xi. 4. Who is there that will not be drawn with these cords? who will not suffer himself to be bound with these chains, or who will not be won by these mercies?

10. Now, if it be so heinous a crime not to love this great God, what must it be to offend him, and to break his commandments? How can you dare employ your hands in injuring those hands which have been so liberal to you as to suffer themselves to be nailed to a cross for your sake? When the holy patriarch, Joseph, was solicited, by his lewd mistress, to defile his master Putiphar's bed, the chaste and grateful young man, by no means consenting to so foul an action, made this reply: *Behold, my master hath delivered all things to me, and knoweth not what he hath in his house: neither is there any thing which is not in my power, or that he hath not delivered to me, but thee, who art his wife: How then can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?* Gen. xxxix. 8, 9. As if he had said, Since my master has been so kind and generous to me; since he has put all that he is worth into my hands, and has done me such an honor as to intrust me with his whole estate; how shall I, who am bound by so many obligations, dare affront so good a master? We are to observe, here, that

Joseph did not say, *I ought not*, or, *It is not just that I should offend him*, but, *How can I do this wickedness?*—to signify that extraordinary favors ought to deprive us, not only of the will, but, in some measure, of the very power of offending our benefactor. If, therefore, so great an acknowledgment was due to such benefits as these, what is it those favors we have received from God do not deserve? That master, who was but a mortal man, had intrusted him with the management of his estate. God has delivered into your hands almost all he has; consider how much the riches of God exceed those of Putiphar, for so much more have you received than he did. And, to make this apparent, what is it God possesses that he has not intrusted you with? Ps. iii. The sky, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the rivers, the birds, the fishes, the trees, the beasts; whatsoever, in short, is under the heavens, is in your power: and not only what is under heaven, but even what is in heaven itself; that is, the glory, the riches, and the happiness that is to be found there. *All things are yours*, says the apostle, *whether it be Paul, or Appollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; for all are yours* (1 Cor. iii. 22); for they all contribute to your salvation. Nor is that which is in heaven all we have; the very Lord of heaven himself is ours too. He has given himself to us a thousand ways; as our Father, our Tutor, our Saviour, our Master, our Physician, our Price, our Example, our Food, our Remedy, and our Reward. To conclude, the Father has given us the Son; the Son has made us worthy of the Holy Ghost; and it is by the virtue of the Holy Ghost that we deserve the Father and the Son, who are the very sources and fountains from whence all sorts of riches flow.

11. If it be true, that God has given you the possession of all, how can you find in your heart to offend so bountiful and so generous a Benefactor? If it be a crime not to requite such great favors, what must it be to despise and offend him that bestows them? If young Joseph thought himself unable to do an injury to his master, because he had committed the care of his house to him, with what face can you affront him who has delivered all heaven and earth, nay, himself too, into your hands? O miserable and unhappy man! if you are not sensible of this evil, you are more ungrateful than the brutes are, more savage than the most savage tigers, and more senseless than any senseless thing in nature. For what lion or tiger is so enraged as to fly at him that has done him a kindness? St. Ambrose tells us of a dog that, seeing his master killed by one of his enemies, continued all night by the body, barking and howling. The next day, amongst a great many people that crowded to see the corpse, the dog spied out the person that had committed the murder, and immediately flew upon him, and so, by his barking and biting, discovered the

malefactor, who otherwise might have probably escaped. If a dog showed so much love and fidelity to his master, for a morsel of bread, how can you be so ungrateful as to let a dog exceed you in good nature and gratitude? And if this creature was in such a rage against the man that had murdered his master, how can you forbear being incensed against those who have put your's to death? And who do you think are they but your own sins? It was they that apprehended and bound him, that scourged and crucified him. Your sins, I say, were the cause of all this. For his executioners could never have had so much power, if your sins had not given it them. Why, then, do you not rise up in arms against these barbarous murderers, who have taken away your Lord and Saviour's life? How can you behold him lying dead before you, and for your sake, without increasing your love for him, and your aversion to sin, which has been the occasion of his death? especially, knowing that, whatsoever he either said, did or suffered, in this world, was for no other end but to excite in our hearts a horror and detestation of sin. He died to make sin die, and suffered his hands and feet to be nailed, that he might bind up sin in chains, and bring it under subjection. Why, then, will you let all your Saviour's toils, sweat and pains be lost to you? Since he has, with his blood, delivered you from your fetters, why will you still remain a slave? How can you forbear trembling at the very name of sin, when God has done such extraordinary things to ruin and destroy it? What could God have done more, in order to bring men off from sin, than place himself upon a cross betwixt it and them? If a man were to see heaven and hell open before him, would he then dare offend God? And yet it is, without doubt, a thing much stranger and more surprising, to see a God nailed to an infamous cross. If, therefore, so frightful a spectacle as this cannot work upon man, there is nothing in nature will be able to move him.

CHAPTER V.

Of the fifth Motive that obliges us to Virtue, which is the Benefit of our Justification.

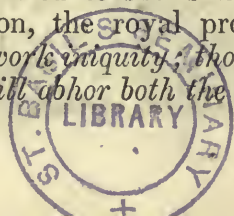
1. BUT what would the benefit of our redemption avail, were it not followed by that of justification, by which this extraordinary favor is applied to us? For, as physic, though ever so well prepared, is wholly useless, if not applied to the distemper, so this heavenly medicine would work no cure in us, unless applied by means of this benefit we now treat of. This application is peculiarly the work of the Holy Ghost, to whom the sanctification of

man is attributed. He it is who prevents the sinner with his mercy, who, having thus prevented, calls him, who justifies him when called, who conducts him, when justified, in the paths of justice, and thus raises him to perfection by the gift of perseverance, to crown him in the end with everlasting glory. These are the different degrees of grace contained under the inestimable favors of justification.

§ I.—2. The first of all these graces is that of our vocation. When man, by the force of the divine Spirit, having broken all the bands and fetters of his sins, is freed from the tyrannic slavery of the devil, and raised from death to life; when, of a sinner, he becomes a saint, and a child of God from a child of wrath, which is not to be done without the special help of the divine grace, as our Saviour testifies to us by these words: *No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him* (John vi. 44); to signify to us that neither free-will, nor all the advantages of human nature, are sufficient of themselves to lift a man out of the depth of sin, and raise him to a state of grace, unless the Almighty lend him a helping hand. And as St. Thomas, explaining these very words, says, "That, as the stone naturally tends downwards, and cannot raise itself up again without some exterior assistance, so man, according to the bent of his nature, depraved by the corruption of sin, is always sinking downwards in the desire of earthly things; so that God must, of necessity, lend a hand to lift him up to a supernatural love and desire of heavenly delights, or he will never be able to rise." This sentence very well deserves both our consideration and tears, for by it man comes to know himself, grows sensible of the corruption of his nature, and of the necessity he perpetually lies under of begging Almighty God's assistance.

3. But to come to the point, it is impossible for man to return from sin to grace, unless the almighty hand of God raise him up. But this is a favor of such value that there is no expressing how many graces are contained in it. For, there being nothing more certain than that sin is, by this means, extracted from the soul, and that it is sin which is the cause of all its miseries, how great a good must this consequently be, which expels and banishes so many evils? But, for as much as the consideration of this benefit is a powerful motive to make us grateful for it, and excite us to the pursuit of virtue, I will explain here, in short, the vast riches this benefit brings along with it.

4. First, then, it is by this that man is reconciled to God, and restored to his favor; for the greatest misery sin causes in our souls is the rendering them odious to God, who, as he is goodness itself, bears such a hatred to sin as is proportioned to his goodness. For this reason, the royal prophet says, *Thou, O Lord hatest all them that work iniquity; thou shalt destroy all them that tell lies; the Lord will abhor both the blood-thirsty and the deceit-*



ful man; Ps. v. 7, 8. It is this which, in effect, is the greatest of all evils, and the source from whence all others flow; as the love of God, on the other side, is the greatest of all goods, and the very fountain of all the rest. This, therefore, is the evil we are freed from, by virtue of our justification, since by it we are restored to God's favor; and, though we were his enemies before, this reconciles us to his love again, and that not in any mean degree, but in the highest that may be, which is that of a father for his son. This it is the beloved evangelist St. John so much extols, where he says, *Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God*; St. John iii. 1. He does not think it enough to say that we are called the children of God; he adds, further, that we are really so; to the end that human distrust, which carries so much weakness and imperfection along with it, should have a clearer and more distinct view of the liberality of God's grace, and perceive that he has truly and really ennobled man, by making him his son, and not given him the title only. If, as we have said, it is so miserable a thing to be hated by God, what a happiness must it be to be beloved by him? Philosophers tell us that, the worse any thing is, the better and more excellent its contrary must be. Whence, we are to conclude that thing to be supremely good whose opposite is supremely evil, such as man is when he is become the object of God's hatred. If men use so much caution in this world, not to lose the love of their masters, fathers, princes, superiors or kings, how solicitous should we be to keep in favor with this powerful King, this heavenly Prince, this sovereign Lord and Father, in comparison of whom all earthly power and authority is a mere nothing! This favor is the greater by how much it is more freely bestowed; for, as man could do nothing before he was created to deserve his being, because at that time he was not; so neither could he, after having once fallen into sin, do any thing at all that might deserve the gift of justification; not because he was not, but because he was wicked and odious in the sight of God.

5. Another benefit, besides this, is, that justification takes off the sentence of everlasting torments, which man's sins had condemned him to. For, whereas sin makes a man the object of God's hatred, and it is impossible that any one should be hated by him, and not, at the same time, be in the greatest misery imaginable, it follows that the wicked, having cast Almighty God off from them, and ungratefully despised him, deserve very justly to be cast away by God, and to be despised and neglected by him. They deserve to be banished for ever from his presence, never to enjoy his company, never to enter into his most beautiful and glorious palace. And because, in separating themselves from him, they have had an irregular love for the creatures, it is but

justice they should be condemned, for the same, to eternal pains and torments, which are so rigorous that, if we compare all that men suffer, in this life, to them, they will look more ideal than real torments. Let us add to these miseries the never-dying worm, which will continually gnaw the very bowels, and tear the consciences of the wicked; add also, the company which these unhappy souls must always keep, which shall be no pleasanter than that of all the damned. What shall I say of their horrible and melancholy habitation, full of darkness and confusion, where there never shall be any order, joy, rest or peace; never any comfort, satisfaction or hope? where there shall be nothing but eternal weeping and gnashing of teeth, eternal rage and blasphemies? God delivers those whom he justifies from all these miseries, and, having restored them to his grace and favor, frees them entirely from his wrath and vengeance.

6. There is another advantage, yet more spiritual than the former, which is the reforming and renewing of the inward man, all deformed and disfigured by sin. Because sin, in the first place, deprives the soul, not only of God, but of all its supernatural force, and of all those treasures and gifts of the Holy Ghost, with which it was enriched and adorned. So that, being once robbed of the riches of grace, it is immediately maimed and wounded in all its natural powers and faculties; because man, being a rational creature, and sin being an action against reason, as it is very natural for one contrary to destroy another, it follows of course, that, the greater and more numerous our sins are, the greater must be the ruin the faculties of the soul lie open to, not in themselves, but in the natural inclination they have to do good. Thus, sin makes the soul miserable, weak, slothful, inconstant in the doing of what is good, and bent upon all kind of evil, unable to resist temptations, and soon tired with walking in the way of God's commandments. It also deprives the soul of true liberty, and of that sovereignty of the spirit, and makes it a mere slave to the world, the flesh, the devil, and its own inordinate appetites; bringing it under a harder and more unhappy servitude than that of the Israelites in Egypt or Babylon. Nor are these all the miseries which sin reduces the soul to: it oppresses it, besides, in such a manner that it can neither hear God speaking to it, nor perceive those dreadful calamities with which it is threatened; it is quite senseless to that sweet smell which comes from the virtues and examples of the saints; it cannot taste how sweet the Lord is, nor feel the stroke of God's hand, any more than those graces which he pours into it, to excite it to the love of him. Besides all these ills, it takes away the peace and joy of conscience, and so, by degrees, lessens and cools the fervor of the spirit, till it leaves poor man in such a miserable condition that he is foul, deformed and abominable in the sight of God, and of his saints,

7. The grace of justification delivers us from all these miseries. For God, who is an infinite abyss of mercy, thinks it not enough to pardon our sins, and receive us into his favor, unless he free our souls from all those disorders which sin had raised in it, by reforming and renewing the inward man. So that he heals our wounds, he cleanses us from our filth, he loosens our chains, he eases us of the burthen of our evil desires, he frees us from the slavery and captivity of the devil, he moderates the heat of our passions, he restores us to a true liberty, he beautifies the soul anew, he settles peace and joy in our consciences again, he enlivens our inward motions, he makes us forward to do what is good, and backward to do that which is not, he strengthens us against temptations, and, after all these benefits, he enriches us with a treasure of good works; in fine, he repairs our inward man, with all its faculties, after such a manner, that the apostle does not hesitate to call those, who are thus justified; *new men and new creatures*; 2 Cor. iv. 16. So great is the grace of this renovation, that, when we receive it by baptism, it is called a regeneration (Galat. vi. 15); when by penance, a resurrection; not only because the soul, by virtue of it, is raised from the death of sin to the life of grace, but because it holds some proportion with the glory of the general resurrection at the last day. This is so certainly true, that no tongue is able to declare the beauty of a justified soul, but only that divine Spirit which beautifies and makes it his temple and dwelling-place; so that, if we should compare all the riches of the earth, all the honors of the world, all the benefits of nature, and all the virtues we are able to acquire, with the beauty and riches of such a soul, they would all appear base and deformed before it. Because the life of grace has the same advantages over that of nature, the beauty of the soul over that of the body, inward riches over the outward, and spiritual strength over the corporeal, as heaven has over earth, a spirit over a body, or eternity over time. For all these things are transitory, limited and only beautiful to the eyes of the body; nor have they need of any more than a general assistance and support from God, whilst the others stand in need of a peculiar and supernatural help, and cannot be called temporal, because they lead us to eternity; nor can we say they are altogether finite, because they make us worthy to partake the infinity of God, who has such an esteem and love for them that he is even enamoured with their beauty. And though God could do all these things only by his will, yet he was not so satisfied, but would adorn the soul with infused virtues, and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; by the means whereof, not only the essence, but all the faculties of the soul are adorned and beautified with these heavenly graces.

8. To all these extraordinary benefits, his infinite goodness, and

boundless liberality has added another, which is the presence of the Holy Ghost and of the blessed Trinity, which descends into the soul of him that is justified, to instruct him what use to make of all these riches; like a good father, who not only leaves his estate to his son, but provides him a guardian to look after and manage it for him; so that as the soul of one that is in sin is a den of vipers, dragons and serpents; that is to say, a place where all sorts of wicked spirits dwell, according to our Saviour (St. Matthew, ch. xii.); so the soul of a justified man becomes the habitation of the Holy Ghost and of the blessed Trinity, which, having expelled all these hellish monsters and wild beasts, make it its temple and place of abode, as our Saviour has expressly signified by these words: *If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him*: St. John xiv. 23. From which words the holy fathers and the school-men conclude that the Holy Ghost dwells, in a particular manner, in the soul of a justified man, distinguishing between the Holy Ghost and his gifts; and declaring that such persons partake, not only of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, but of the Holy Ghost himself; who, entering into every soul thus disposed, makes it his temple and dwelling-place; and, to this end, he himself cleanses, sanctifies and adorns it, with his gifts, that it may be a place worthy to entertain such a guest.

9. Add to all these benefits one more, which is, that all those who are justified become living members of Jesus Christ; whereas they were dead before, and incapable, whilst they remained in that condition, of receiving the influence of his grace, whence many other singular privileges and excellences flow to it. For this is the reason why the Son of God loves and cherishes these persons as his own members, and, as their Head, is continually communicating force and vigor to them. And, lastly, the eternal Father behold them with eyes of affection, because he looks upon them as living members of his only Son, united to and incorporated with him by the participation of the Holy Ghost. And, therefore, their actions are pleasing to him, and meritorious to themselves, inasmuch as they are actions of the living members of his only Son Christ Jesus, who produces all that is good in them. This is, also, the reason why those persons, who are thus justified, whensoever they beg any favor of Almighty God, address themselves to him with a perfect confidence; because they suppose that what they ask is not so much for themselves as for the Son of God, who is honored in them, and with them. For since the members can receive no benefit but the head must partake of it, Christ being their Head, they conceive that, when they ask for themselves, they ask for him. And, if what the apostle says be true, that they who sin against the members of Jesus Christ sin against Jesus Christ himself, and that he looks upon

any injury offered to one of his members, upon his account, as done to him, as he said to the apostle himself, when he persecuted the church; what wonder is it that the honor done to these members should be done to him? This being so, what confidence will not the just man bring with him to his prayers, when he considers that in begging for himself, he, in some measure, begs of the heavenly Father for his beloved Son? For when a favor is granted at the request of another, it may, doubtless, rather be said to be bestowed on him that begs, than on him that receives it; as we see, that he who serves the poor for the love of God, serves God more than he does the poor.

10. There remains another benefit, to which the rest tend and are directed; it is the right and title those that are justified have to eternal life. For God, who is no less merciful than he is just, as he on the one side condemns impenitent sinners to everlasting torments, so, on the other side, he rewards them who are truly penitent with everlasting happiness. And though he could forgive men their sins, and restore them to his friendship and favor; without raising them so high as to partake of his glory, yet he would not do so, but out of the excess of his mercy justified those whom he had pardoned, adopted those whom he had justified, and made them his heirs, giving them a share in his riches, and an inheritance with his only Son. Hence proceeds that lively hope, which comforts the just in all their tribulations, because they are assured beforehand of this inestimable treasure. For though they see themselves surrounded with all the troubles, infirmities and miseries of this life, they know very well that all the evils they can possibly suffer here are nothing, in comparison of the glory which is prepared for them hereafter; nay, on the contrary, they assure themselves, that *our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory*; 2 Cor. iv. 17.

11. These are the advantages comprehended under that inestimable benefit of justification, which St. Augustine, with a great deal of reason, prefers before the creation of the whole world; because God created all the world with one single word: but the justifying of a man after his fall was at the expense of his blood, and of those other most grievous pains and torments he endured. Now, if we are so strictly obliged to the Almighty's goodness for having created us, how much more do we owe his mercy, for having justified us; a favor we stand so much the more indebted for, as it cost him more than the other?

12. And though no man can certainly tell whether he be justified or not, yet he may give a probable guess, especially by the change of his life; as, for example, when one that before never scrupled at committing a thousand mortal sins, would not now commit one, though it were to gain the world: let him that per-

ceives he is in such a happy condition, consider what an obligation lies upon him to serve his Lord, for having thus sanctified him, and at the same time delivered him from all those miseries, and heaped all those favors on him which we spoke of. But if he happen to be in the state of sin, I know nothing that can more efficaciously excite him to a desire of being freed from it, than the consideration of those misfortunes which sin draws after it, and of those treasures of blessings which go along with the incomparable benefit of justification.

§ II. *Of some other Effects that are wrought by the Holy Ghost in the Soul of a justified Man, and of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.*—13. Notwithstanding those effects which are produced by the Holy Ghost in the soul of one that is sanctified are very great, yet they do not end there. This divine Spirit deems it not enough to put us in the way of justice, but, after having led us in, still helps us forward, till, all the storms of this world being weathered, he brings us into the haven of salvation; so that, when he has entered into a soul by the grace of justification, he does not remain idle there; he not only honors such a soul with his presence, but also sanctifies it with his virtue, doing in it and with it whatever is necessary for the obtaining its salvation. He behaves himself there like a head of a family in his house, looking after and directing like a master teaching in his school, like a gardener cultivating in his garden, and like a king in his kingdom ruling and governing it. He further performs in the soul what the sun does in the world; that is, he gives light to it: and, like the soul in the body, animates and enlivens it, though he does not act as the former does upon its matter, but as the head of a family in his house. Can man desire any greater happiness in this world than to have such a Guest, such a Guardian, such a Companion, such a Governor, such a Tutor, and such an Assistant within himself; for he being all things, exercises all capacities in the soul, in which he takes his habitation: thus we see, that, like fire, he enlightens the understanding, inflames the will, and raises us from earth to heaven. It is he who, like a dove, makes us simple, peaceable, gentle and kind to one another: he it is who, like a cloud, defends us against the burning lusts of the flesh, who moderates the heat of our passions, and, in fine, like a violent wind, forces and bends down our wills towards that which is good, and carries them away from all such affections as may lead to evil. Hence it is, that they who are justified conceive such a horror of the vices they had so great a love for before their conversion, and so great an esteem for the virtues they so much detested before. This David very lively represents to us, speaking of himself in one of his Psalms, where he says, *I hated and abhorred iniquity* (Ps. cxviii. 163); and again, in the same Psalm, *I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all*

riches; ver. 14. Who was it but the Holy Ghost, that occasioned this alteration? for he, like a loving mother, put wormwood upon the breasts of this world, and most delicious honey into the commandments of God.

This plainly shows, that whatsoever good we do, what progress soever we make, we are entirely obliged to the Holy Ghost, for the same. So that, if we are converted from sin, it is by his grace; if we embrace virtue, it is he that brings us to it; if we persevere in it, it is by his assistance; if, in short, we one day receive the reward he has promised, it is he himself that gives it us: for which reason St. Augustine says very well, *God rewards his own benefits when he rewards our services*. So that one favor procures us another, and one mercy is only a step to the obtaining of another. The holy patriarch Joseph (Gen. xlii. 25) thought it not enough to give his brothers the corn they went to buy in Egypt, but ordered his servants to put the money they brought to pay for it into the mouth of the very sack: God in some measure does the same with his elect, for he gives them not only eternal life, but grace and a good life to purchase it. Whereupon Eusebius Emissenus says excellently well, "that he who is adorned, to the end that he may show mercy, has showed mercy already, when he gave us grace to adore him."

Let every man, therefore, consider how he has spent his life, and reflect upon all those favors God has bestowed on him, and on all those crimes, these frauds, adulteries, thefts and sacrileges, which he has preserved him from falling into, and by this means he will see upon what accounts he stands indebted to him; because, according to St. Augustine, it is no less mercy to preserve us from falling into sin, than to pardon it when committed, but much greater; and, therefore, the same saint, writing to a virgin; says, "Man is to make account, that God has pardoned him all sorts of sin, inasmuch as he has given him grace not to commit them;" Lib. 2. Conf. c. 7. Let not, therefore, your love be little, as if he had pardoned you but little; rather endeavour to love much, because you have received much. For if a man loves a creditor that forgives a great debt, how much more reason has he to love a Benefactor that bestows so much on him? For he who has lived chastely all his lifetime, has, therefore, continued so, because he had God to direct and guide him; he who, of an impure person, becomes pure, has had God to correct him; and he who continues impure to the end, is justly forsaken by Almighty God. This being a matter beyond all doubt, it only remains that we say, with the prophet, *Let my mouth be filled with praise, that I may sing thy glory and honor all day*; Ps. lxx. 8. Upon which words St. Augustine says, "What means all the day? Nothing else, but that I will praise thee for ever, and without ceasing; in my prosperity, because thou com-

fortest me; in my adversity, because thou chastisest me; since I have had my being, because it is from thee that I have received it; when I sinned, because thou forgavest; when I return to thee, because thou receivedst me; and when I persevered to the end, because thou rewardest me. For this reason my mouth shall be filled with thy praise, O Lord, and I will sing thy glory all the day."

14. It would be proper here to speak of the benefit of the Sacraments, which are the instruments of our justification, and particularly of that of Baptism, as also of the light of faith, and of the grace we receive with it; but having treated this subject elsewhere, I shall add no more at present; yet I cannot pass in silence that grace of graces, that sacrament of sacraments, by virtue of which God is pleased to live with us on earth, to give himself every day to us as our food and as our sovereign remedy. He was sacrificed on the cross but once for our sakes; but here he is daily offered up to his Father on the altar, a propitiation for our sins. *This is my body which is given for you*, says he; *do this for a commemoration of me*; Luke xxii. 19. O precious pledge of our salvation! O divine sacrifice! O most acceptable victim! Bread of life! Most delicious nourishment! Food of kings! O sweet manna, which contains whatsoever is pleasant and delightful! Who can ever be able to praise you according to your deserts? who can worthily receive? who can honor you with due respect and reverence? My soul quite loses itself, when it thinks of you; my tongue fails me; nor am I able to express the least part of your wonders as I desire to do.

Had our Lord bestowed this favor upon none but innocent and holy men, it would have still been inestimable; how great, then, must this unparalleled charity be, which, after having moved him to communicate himself so freely to those, has further prevailed on him to pass through the impure hands of many wicked priests, whose souls are the habitations of devils, whose bodies are vessels of corruption, whose lives are continual sacrileges, and spent in nothing else but in sin and iniquity? And yet, that he may visit and comfort his friends, he suffers himself to be touched by such polluted hands, to be received into such profane mouths, and to be buried in their noisome and abominable breasts. His body was sold but once; but in this sacrament he is sold a thousand times. He was scorned and despised but once in his passion; whereas these impious priests offer him infinite affronts and injuries at the very table of the altar. He was once crucified between two thieves; but here he is crucified millions of times in the hands of sinners.

15. Who is there that will pretend, after all this, to be able to pay due respect and honor to a Lord that has consulted our interest so many several ways? What returns can we make for so wonderful a nourishment? If servants serve their masters for

a poor livelihood, if soldiers for their pay expose themselves to fire and sword, what ought we to do for this Lord, who maintains us with this heavenly and immortal food? If God, in the old law, required so great an acknowledgment for the manna he sent from heaven, though it was corruptible food, what returns will he expect for this, which, besides being exempt from corruption, makes all those who receive it worthily incorruptible? If the Son of God thanks his Father, in the gospel, for only one meal of barley-bread, what kinds of thanks should we give him for this bread of life? If we are so much indebted to him for the nourishment he gives us to preserve our being, how much greater is our obligation for that food which preserves in us the supernatural being of grace? For we do not commend a horse purely because he is a horse, but because he is a good horse; nor wine because it is wine, but because it is good wine; nor man because he is man, but because he is a good man. If you are so much obliged to him that made you man, how much greater is your obligation for having made you a good man? If the acknowledgment be so great on account of corporal benefits, what should it be for the spiritual? If you are so deeply indebted for the gifts of nature, how much more do we owe for those graces? And if, to conclude, his having made you a son of Adam, lays so strict a tie of gratitude on you, how much must you be obliged to him for having made you a son of God himself? For it is certainly true, as Eusebius Emissenus says, "That the day we are born to eternity is infinitely better than that which brought us forth to the toils and dangers of this world."

This, dear Christian, is another motive, and, as it were, a new chain added to the others, to bind your hearts the faster, and oblige you to the pursuit of virtue and service of this Lord.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the sixth Motive that obliges us to the Love of Virtue, which is, the Benefit of Divine Election.

1. ADD to all the benefits we have hitherto spoken of, that of election, which belongs to none but those whom God has chosen from all eternity to be partakers of his glory. It is for this inestimable benefit the apostle thanks God in his own and in the name of all the elect, when, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, he says, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things, in Christ: as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in his sight in charity.*

for it did not begin with the world, but was long before it, for it is co-eternal with God, who, being himself from all eternity, has, in like manner, from all eternity loved his elect, has always had them in his divine presence, and has them there still, beholding them with a fatherly eye of love, and being always resolved to confer so great a favor on them. Consider, after all, how particular this benefit is, since he has been pleased to honor you with so infinite a blessing, as is the admitting of you into the number of his elect, whilst there are so many nations quite ignorant of him, and which he has rejected, and, therefore, he separated you from the mass of perdition, to raise you to a holy union with his saints, making that which was the leaven of corruption become the bread of angels. Such a grace should put a stop to our pens and tongues, that we may be wholly taken up in the acknowledging and admiring of it, and in learning what returns we are to make for it. But what should give a greater value to this favor, is the small number of the elect, whilst that of the reprovèd is so great, that Solomon (Eccl. i. 15) calls it *infinite*; *the number of fools*, that is, of the reprobate, *is infinite*. But if none of all these considerations is able to make any impression on you, be moved, at least, by the excessive price this sovereign Elector has given to purchase you; it is no less than the life and blood of his only begotten Son, whom he, from all eternity, resolved to send down into the world, to put this, his divine decree, in execution.

5. If this be true, what time can suffice to spend in humble reflections upon so many mercies? What tongue can be eloquent enough to express them? What heart capacious enough to conceive them? What returns and acknowledgments can be made for them? With what love shall a man be ever able to repay this eternal love? Can any man be so base as to defer loving God to the end of his life, when God has had such a love for him from all eternity? Who will part with such a friend as this is, for any friend in this world? For if the Scripture sets such a value upon an old friend, how much ought we to praise that friendship which is eternal? *Forsake not an old friend, for a new one will not be like him*; Eccl. ix. 14. If this advice holds good in all cases, who is there that will not prefer this friend before all the friends in the world? And if this be true, that possession, time out of mind, gives him a title that had none before, what must a possession do that has been everlasting? It is eternity that has entitled God to the possession of us, that he might, by this means, make us his.

6. What riches or honor can there be in the world, which a man should not give in exchange for this blessing? What troubles or misfortunes, which we ought not to suffer for purchasing it? Is there any man, though ever so wicked, that would not fall down and kiss the ground a beggar trod on, were he assured by divine

revelation that the beggar was predestined to everlasting happiness, that would not run after him, and prostrating himself at his feet, call him a thousand times happy? Who is there that would not cry out, O blessed soul, is it possible that you should be one of this happy number of the elect? Is it possible that God should have made choice of you from all eternity, to see him one day in all his beauty and glory? that he should have chosen you to be a companion and brother to the elect? Are you one of those who are to be seated among the choirs of angels? Must you hear the heavenly music? And shall you behold the resplendent face of Jesus Christ and of his holy Mother? Happy the day which first brought you into the world: but much happier that of your death, because then you shall begin to live for ever. Happy the bread you eat, and the ground you tread on, since it bears such an inestimable treasure! But much more happy those pains you endure, since they open you the way to eternal ease and rest! For what clouds of affliction can there be, which the assurance of this happiness will not disperse!

7. We should doubtless break out into such transports as these, did we behold a predestined person, and know him to be so. For if all people run out to see a young prince, that is heir to some great kingdom, as he passes through the street, admiring his good fortune, as the world accounts it, to inherit large dominions, how much more reason have we to admire the happiness of a man elected from his birth, without any preceding merits on his side, not to a temporal kingdom in this world, but to an eternal crown of glory in heaven.

8. Here you may learn how great these obligations are, which the elect owe to God, for so unspeakable a favor. And yet there is not one of us all, if we do what is required of us, that is to look upon himself as excluded this number. On the contrary, *every one should use his endeavours*, according to St. Peter, *to make his calling and election sure, by good works*; 2 Pet. i. 10. For we are most certain that he who does so shall not miss his salvation; and, what is more, we know that God has never yet refused, nor ever will refuse, any man his grace and assistance. It is, therefore, our main business, since we are assured of these two points, to continue in the doing of good works, that we may by that means be of the number of those happy souls whom God has chosen to be partakers of his glory for ever.

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CHAPTER VII.

Of the seventh Motive that obliges us to the Pursuit of Virtue, which is Death, the first of the four last Things.

1. ANY one of the aforementioned motives ought to be sufficient to persuade men to give themselves up entirely to the service of a master that has obliged them with so many favors. But, because duty and justice have less influence over the generality of mankind than profit and interest, I will, therefore, add those great advantages which are proposed as the recompense and reward of virtue, both in this life, and in the next, and shall first speak of the two greatest, viz. the glory we shall acquire, and the punishment we shall avoid, by faithfully adhering to it. These are the two oars that are so serviceable to us in this voyage; they are, as it were, the compass by which we may steer our course more steadily and securely. This is the reason why St. Francis and St. Dominick, in their rules, both of them moved by the same spirit, and making use of the very same words, commanded the preachers of their orders, never to take any other subjects of their sermons but virtue and vice, heaven and hell; the one to instruct us how to live well, the other to incline us to it. It is a received opinion among philosophers, that reward and punishment are, as it were, the two springs which make the wheels of a man's life turn round in regular motion. For such, alas! is our unhappiness, and so great the corruption of our nature, that no one can endure naked virtue, that is to say, if the fear of punishment does not go along with it, or the hope of a reward attend it. But since there is no punishment or reward which can so justly deserve our consideration as those which are never to have an end, we will, therefore, speak here of everlasting glory and everlasting torments, together with those other two things that are to precede them, which are death and judgment. For any one of these points, considered with attention, may be infinitely advantageous to the making us love virtue and hate vice, according to the wise man, where he says: *In all that thou undertakest, remember thy last end, and thou shalt never do amiss*; Eccl. vii. 40. He means here those four things we have just now mentioned, and which we are going to discourse on.

§ 1.—2. To begin with the first, which is death. The reason why this, of all the rest, works most on us, is its being the most certain, the most frequent, and the most familiar of them all, especially if we reflect upon the particular judgment that is to be given on the whole course of our lives at that time, which, when once past, will not be reversed on the general judgment day; for

whatsoever is then decreed shall stand good for ever. But how rigorous this judgment will be, and how severe an account will be taken of our actions, I do not desire you should believe upon my bare allegation, but that you give credit to a passage, related by St. John Climachus upon this point, to which he himself was an eye-witness, and is, indeed, one of the most dreadful I ever read in my life. He tells us, "there was a certain monk in his time called Hesychius, who lived in a cell on Mount Horeb. Having led a very careless and negligent sort of life, during the whole time of his retirement, without so much as ever thinking of his salvation, he was at last taken very ill, and, being past all hopes of recovery, lay for about the space of an hour as if he had been quite dead. But afterwards coming to himself again, he earnestly desired that we would all go out of his cell. And as soon as ever we had left him, he walled up his door, and remained thus, shut up within his cell, for twelve years, never speaking one word to any person during all that time. He lived upon nothing but bread and water; and continued always sitting, keeping his whole thoughts, as if it had been in perpetual ecstasy, so bent upon what he had seen in his vision, that he never so much as once altered the posture he was in, but remaining; as it were, always out of his senses, and in deep silence, wept most bitterly. A little before his death we broke open his door, and went into his cell, earnestly desiring him to speak some words of edification. But all we could get from him was; 'Pardon me, my brethren, if I have nothing else to say to you but this, that he who has the thoughts of death deeply imprinted upon his mind, can never sin.'" These are St. John Climachus's own words, who was present when this happened, and relates nothing but what he saw; so that, though the passage may seem incredible, there is no cause to mistrust the truth of it, since we have it from so grave and credible an author. There is nothing which we ought not to fear, when we consider the life this holy man led, but much more if we inquire into the frightful vision that was the occasion of his long penance! This evidently makes out the truth of that saying of the wise man: *Be mindful of thy last end, and thou shalt never do amiss*; Eccl. vii. 40. If, then, this consideration be of such force to make us avoid sin, let us briefly reflect upon the most remarkable circumstances that attend it, to the end we may by this means obtain so great a benefit.

3. Remember, therefore, that you are a man and a Christian. As man, you know you are to die, and as a Christian, you know you are to give an account of your life as soon as dead. Daily experience will not permit us to doubt the one, nor the faith we profess let us call the other into question. Every one of us all lies under this necessity. Kings and popes must submit to it. The day will come when you shall not live to see night, or a night

when you shall not survive till day. The day will come and you know not whether it may not be this very day or to-morrow, when you yourself, who are now reading this treatise in perfect health, and who perhaps think the number of your days will be answerable to your business and wishes, shall be stretched out in your bed, with a taper in your hand, expecting the last stroke of death, and the execution of that sentence which is passed upon all mankind, and from which there is no appeal. Consider, then, the uncertainty of this hour, for generally it surprises us when we least think of it, and is, therefore, said to come like a thief in the night; that is, when men are fastest asleep. A violent and mortal sickness is the usual forerunner of death and of all its attendants. Pains, aches, distractions, griefs, ravings, long and tedious nights, which quite tire and wear us out, are but so many ways and dispositions towards it. And as we see that an enemy, before he can force his entrance into a town, must batter down the walls, so the forerunner of death is some raging distemper, which so furiously, without intermission, batters down our natural vigor and breaks in upon the chief parts of the body, that the soul, not able to hold out longer, is obliged to surrender.

4. But when the sickness grows desperate, and the physician or the distemper itself undeceive us, by leaving us no hopes of life, how great is our anguish at that time! Then it is we begin with concern and sorrow to think of departing this life, and of forsaking whatsoever we held most dear. Wife, children, friends, relations, estates, dignities, employments, all vanish when we die. Next follows those last accidents, that attend us just at our going off, which are much more grievous than all the rest; the feet grow cold, the nose shrinks in, the tongue stammers and is incapable of performing its duty; in fine, all the senses and members are in confusion and disorder on so sudden and hasty a departure. Thus man, at his going out of the world, by his own sufferings, pays back those pains he put others to when he came into it; so that there is no great difference, as to the matter of suffering, between his birth and his death, since they are both of them attended with grief, the first with what his mother endured, and the last what he endured himself.

5. Nor is this all that makes this last passage so terrible; for after this violent anguish, there appears before him the approach of death, the end of life, the horror of the grave, the miserable condition of the body, just ready to be preyed on by worms; but what is more dreadful yet than all the rest, is the lamentable state of the poor soul, as yet shut up in the body, but knowing not where she shall be within two hours; it is then you will imagine yourself before the judgment seat of Almighty God, and all your sins rising up against you; it is then, unhappy man, you will be sensible of the heinousness of those crimes you committed with

so little concern; it is then you will curse a thousand times the day in which you sinned, and those pleasures which were the occasions of your offences: your condition will be so deplorable, that you will never be able sufficiently to deplore your own blindness and folly, when you shall see for what trifles (for all you have so foolishly set your affections on are no better) you have exposed yourself to the dangers of suffering most exquisite torments, which you will even then be sensible of: for the pleasure being now all over, and the judgment that is to be passed on them approaching, that, which of itself was little, and now ceases to be, seems nothing, and that, which of itself is of so much weight and consequence, being present, appears just as it is; thus will you become sensible of the danger you have exposed yourself to, of losing so much bliss for the enjoyment of mere vanities, and which way soever you turn your eyes, you will see you are surrounded with subjects of sorrow and trouble; for you have no time left to do penance, the glass of your life is run out, nor must you expect the least assistance from your friends or from those idols you have hitherto adored; nay, what you have had the most affection for will be the greatest torment and affliction to you then. Tell me now, if you can, what your thoughts will be at that time, when you shall see yourself reduced to such extremities? whither will you run? what will you do? or to whom will you have recourse? To go back is impossible, to go forward is intolerable, to continue as you are is not allowed; what is it then you will do? Then, says God, by the mouth of his prophet, *the sun shall go down at noon-day, and I will darken the earth in the clear day, and I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation, and your last day into a day of bitterness*; Amos vii. 9, 10. Is there any thing more dreadful than these words? God says, the sun shall go down at mid-day, because then the wicked having the multitude of their sins laid before them, and perceiving God's justice is beginning to shorten the course of their life, many of them shall be seized with such dread and despair, as to imagine that God has entirely removed his mercy from them. So that, though they are still in broad day, that is, within the bounds of life, a time to merit good or evil, they persuade themselves that, do what they can, it is lost, since it is impossible to obtain pardon. Fear is a very powerful passion; it makes those things which are little seem great, and gives us a near view of that which is furthest from us. If a light apprehension has been able sometimes to do so much, what must a certain and real danger do? Though they see they have a little left, and all their friends about them, yet they fancy they already begin to feel the torments of the damned in hell. They look on themselves as between life and death, and, grieving at the loss of the goods of this life, which they are just ready to part with, they begin to suffer the pains of

the next, which they apprehend. They think those men happy whom they leave behind, and envying the condition of others, increase their own misery. It is then the sun shall truly set to them at noon, when, which way soever they look, the way to heaven shall seem to be blocked up against them, and they shall not see so much as the least glimmering light. If they look up towards God's mercy, they think themselves unworthy of it; if they reflect on his justice, they imagine it is now going to fall on them; that till then it has been their day, but now it is the day of God's wrath; if they consider their lives past, there is scarce one moment but what rises up in judgment against them; if they reflect on the present time, they see themselves on their deathbeds; if they look forward, they imagine they see the judge waiting for them. What can they do, or whither can they fly from so many objects of fear and terror?

6. The prophet tells them, *that God will darken the earth in the clear day*; which is, that those things, which they have most delighted in before, shall now become the greatest occasions of their sorrow. A man in perfect health loves to see his children, his friends, his family, his riches, and whatsoever else can be any way agreeable to him; but this light shall be then turned into darkness, because all these things will be a great affliction to a dying man; and there is nothing will be a greater torment to him than what he most delighted in. For as we naturally are pleased in the possession of what we love, so are we equally troubled and concerned at the loss of it. This is the reason why they will not let a man's children come near him when he is dying; and why women, that are unwilling to lose their husbands, keep from them at this time, for fear the sight of one another should increase grief and sorrow. And, though the journey is so long, and the period of absence endless, yet grief breaks through all, and scarcely allows him that is departing leisure to bid his friends farewell. If you have ever been in this condition, you cannot but acknowledge all that I say to be true; but if you have never yet made the experiment, believe those that have. *Let them who have been at sea recount the dangers they have met with there*; Eccl. xliii. 26.

§ II.—7. If the circumstances which go before death are so frightful, what must those be which follow it? Death has no sooner closed the sick man's eyes, than he is brought before the judgment-seat of Almighty God, to render his accounts to him, who will avenge himself with severity and terror for the crimes which have been committed against him. For the understanding of this, you are not to inquire of the men of the world, who, living in Egypt, that is, in darkness and ignorance, are always exposed to mistakes and errors. Ask the saints, who dwell in the land of Jessen, where the light of this truth shines always in

its full vigor. They will tell you, not only by their words, but by their actions, how terrible this account will be.

For David, though so holy a man, was so prepossessed with this fear, and with the just apprehensions of the account he was to give, that he begged of God, saying, *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight no man living shall be justified*; Ps. cxlii. 2. Arsenius was a great saint, who had lived a very virtuous and rigid life for several years in the desert; and yet, finding that he had but a very little time to live, was seized with such apprehensions of this judgment, that his disciples, who were all gathered together about him, perceiving it, asked him this question: "Father, are you afraid now?" To which the holy man made answer: "This is no new fear, which you observe in me, my children; it is what I have been sensible of all my lifetime." They write that St. Agatho, when he was near his death, was seized with the same apprehensions, and, being asked what he could be afraid of, who had lived so virtuously, said, "Because the judgments of God are quite different from those of men." St. John Climachus gives us another no less dreadful example of a holy monk, which, being very remarkable, I will here relate it in the saint's own words. "There was a certain religious man," says he, "called Stephen, that lived in this place, after having spent a great many years in a monastery, where he was in much repute, on account of his tears and fasting, and where he had enriched his soul with several other excellent virtues; but having an extreme desire to lead a solitary and retired life, he built himself a cell at the bottom of Mount Horeb, where the prophet Elias had the honor to see God. This man, notwithstanding his great austerity and rigor, thinking that what he did was not enough, but aspiring to a more rigid and severe way of living, went to another place called Siden, where some holy anchorets lived. Here he continued for some years in the severest and strictest life imaginable, destitute of all human comfort and conversation, having seated his hermitage about three score and ten miles from any town. But the good old man, towards the end of his life, came back again to his first cell, at the foot of Mount Horeb, having there with him two disciples that were natives of Palestine, who had retired thither not long before he came back. Within a few days after his return, he fell into his last sickness. The day before he died, being in a kind of ecstasy, but with his eyes open, and gazing first on one side of his bed, and then on the other, just as if he saw persons there, who made him give an account of his life, he answered so loud that every person could hear him, sometimes saying, 'Yes, I confess it: that is true; but I have fasted so many years in atonement for the sin.' Sometimes he was heard to say, 'That is false; you wrong me: I never did any such thing.'

Immediately after, 'As to that, I acknowledge it. You are in the right, but I have bewailed the same, and have done penance for it, by serving my neighbor upon such and such occasions.' Then again he cried out, 'That is not true; you are all impostors.' But to other accusations, he answered, 'It is true, and I have nothing to say to that point, but that our God is a God of mercy.' Certainly this invisible judgment, being so severe, could not but be terrible and frightful. And what ought to make it more dreadful, they laid such crimes to his charge as he had never been guilty of. O my God! if a hermit, after about forty years spent in religious and solitary life, after having obtained the gift of tears, declared that he had nothing to say for himself, as to some sins that are brought against him, what will become of such a miserable and unhappy wretch as I am? Nay, what is yet more, I have been credibly informed by several, that, whilst he lived in the desert, he used to feed a leopard with his own hands. He died as he was giving this account of himself, leaving us in an entire uncertainty of the end of this judgment, and of the sentence that was passed on him." Thus far St. John Climachus. By this, we may plainly see, what apprehensions a man that has lived idly and carelessly must be in, when he comes to die, since such great saints as these have been so hard put to it at that moment.

8. Should you ask one, what there is in death that can affright such holy men, I will answer you out of St. Gregory's fourth book of *Morals* (ch. 16, 17, 18), where he says, "The saints, seriously considering how just the Judge is, to whom they are to give an account of all their actions, are continually thinking on the last moment of their lives, and carefully examining themselves on what answer they shall make to every question their Judge shall put to them. But if they find themselves free from all those sinful actions, which they might have committed, another subject of their apprehension is, lest they should have consented to those bad thoughts to which man's corruption always exposes him. For let us suppose that the overcoming of such temptations as lead to the performance of some sinful action, is no very hard matter, yet you will not find it so easy to secure yourself against the continual war, raised by bad thoughts. And though these holy men are always afraid of the secret judgments of so just a Judge, yet they then particularly fear them most, when they are at the point of discharging the common debt of nature, and when they perceive themselves advancing nigher to their sovereign Master. But this fear of theirs is much greater, at that time when the soul is just going to quit the body. Then it is that the mind is no longer filled with idle thoughts, nor the imagination drawn away by impertinent fancies. Neither does he, that is now done with this world, think of any thing that is

in it. Dying men think of nothing but themselves and God who is just before them. They look on every thing else as no concern of theirs. But if, whilst they are in this condition, they cannot think of any good action, which they have knowingly omitted, they are afraid lest they might have omitted that which they did not know; because they cannot pass a true judgment on themselves, nor have perfect knowledge of their own failings. This is the reason of their being seized at death with such great and secret apprehensions, because they know they are on entering into a state, which they shall never afterwards be able to change." These are St. Gregory's own words, which plainly show us there is much more to be feared in this judgment, and at this hour, than worldly men imagine.

9. If this judgment is so rigorous, and has been so much and so justly dreaded by holy men, what apprehensions ought theirs to be, who are not so? they who have spent the greatest part of their lives in vanities and trifles, who have so frequently despised God and his commandments, who have scarce so much as ever thought of their salvation, and have taken so little pains to prepare themselves for their last hour? If the just man be ready to sink under the weight of his fear, how shall the sinner be able to keep up? If the cedar of Lebanon be thus shaken, what will become of the reed in the wilderness? And, in short, *If, as St. Peter says, the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* 1 Pet. iv. 18. Tell me now, after all this, what will be your thoughts at that hour, when, having left this world, you appear before the divine tribunal, in a lonely, poor and naked condition, without any other assistance but what your own good works will bring you, without any other company but that of your own conscience; and if your accounts fall short, how miserable will your condition be? To what shame and confusion will your past neglects put you? The princes of Judah were, without doubt, very much surprised when they saw the conqueror Sesach, king of Egypt, putting all Jerusalem to the sword. Their present punishment brought them to a sense of their former crimes; and yet what was all this in comparison with the trouble and disorder the wicked shall be in, when they are near their end? What shall they do? whither shall they go? or what defence shall they be able to make? Their tears will be then unprofitable to them, their repentance will not avail, their prayers will not be taken notice of, nor their promises of future amendment regarded: they will have no more time given them to do penance; and as for their riches, their honors, or the respect the world gave them, they will signify least of all. For according to the wise man, *riches shall not be profitable in the day of vengeance, but justice will deliver a man from death;* Prov. xi. 4. What will a poor

soul do, when it sees itself surrounded with so many miseries? what will it do but cry out, with the royal psalmist, *The sorrows of death have encompassed me, and the dangers of hell have found me out?* Ps. cxiv. 3. Unhappy wretch that I am! To what a miserable condition have my sins reduced me? how unexpectedly has this unfortunate hour stolen on me? how suddenly has it surprised me when I least thought of it? what good will all my former titles and honors do me now? All my friends and servants, those riches and revenues which I have once been master of, what service can I expect from them now? Six or seven feet of clay at the most, with a poor winding sheet to bury me in, is to be my whole inheritance; and to complete my misery, all that money I have been so long hoarding up, with so much pains and injustice, I must now leave behind me, to be squandered away by an extravagant heir, whilst the sins I have been guilty of in getting it, will pursue me to the next world to condemn me to eternal torments. Where is now the delight I took in all my former recreations and pleasures? They are now at an end for ever, and nothing but the pangs of them remain; that is, the scruples and remorse of my guilty conscience, the stings of which pierce my very heart, and will torment me for all eternity. Why did I not rather employ my time in preparing myself for this last hour? How often have I been forewarned of what I suffer, but would never give ear to the advice? *Why have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to them that instructed me?* Prov. v. 12, 13. I have committed all kinds of sins and iniquities, in the very bosom of the church, and in the sight of all the world.

10. See here what anxieties and disquietudes the wicked will be rent with. See here what a burden their own thoughts will be to them in this miserable condition. But to preserve you from falling into the same misfortunes, I here advise you to gather, from what has been said, these three considerations, and to keep them continually in your mind. The first is, that of the trouble you will be in at the hour of your death, for all those sins you have committed against God during the whole course of your life. The second is, how you will wish to have served him, that he might be favorable to you at this moment. The last is, what a rigid penance you would willingly undergo in this world, if you could but obtain the favor of returning thither, that you might begin, from that very moment, to live as you will then desire to have lived before.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the eighth Motive that obliges us to the Pursuit of Virtue, which is, the last Judgment, the second of the four last Things

1. As soon as ever the soul has left the body, immediately follows its particular judgment, and after that, the general one of all mankind together; at which time shall be accomplished what the apostle said: *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil; 2 Cor. v. 10.* Having treated, in another place, of those dreadful signs, which are to be the forerunners of the general judgment-day, I shall speak here of nothing but that severe and exact account; which will be then required from us, and of what is to follow, that this may teach man how much he is obliged to the pursuit of virtue.

2. As to the first, which is the strict inquiry God will make into all our actions, it is so frightful, that there was nothing surprised holy Job more than to consider, that God, whose majesty is so great, could show so much rigor towards man, notwithstanding his being so frail a creature, as to set down every word, every thought, every motion of his, in his book of justice, to require a particular account thereof. After having said a great deal to this purpose, he goes on thus: *Why dost thou hide thy face, and lookest upon me as thy enemy? Thou exercisest thy power against a leaf which is driven to and fro by the wind, and thou pursuest the dry stubble. For thou writest bitter things against me, and hast a mind to destroy me for the sins of my youth; thou hast put my feet in the stocks, and hast observed all my paths, and hast taken notice of the steps of my feet. I who am to be consumed as a rotten thing, and as a garment that is moth-eaten. Job xiii. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.*

Immediately after he adds, *Man that is born of a woman, and has but a short time to live, is full of miseries. He comes forth like a flower, and is trodden down; he flies away like a shadow, and never continues in the same state. - And dost thou think fit to open thy eyes upon such a one, and to bring him into judgment with thee? Who can make that clean which is conceived of unclean seed? Who but thou alone? Job xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4.* These are the terrible words which Job spoke, filled with surprise and astonishment at the severity the divine justice exercises against so poor and helpless a creature as is man; against one so bent on any thing that is evil, and that drinks up iniquity like water. For that God should be so severe to the angels, who are spiritual, and very perfect creatures, is not to be a matter of so much wonder: but for his justice to call men, whose vicious inclinations are numberless, to so strict an account, as not to pass over

any one circumstance of their whole lives, not to leave out any one idle word, nor so much as one moment of time that has been misemployed, without a very narrow inquiry into it, is a subject of the greatest amazement. For who can hear these words of our Saviour without astonishment? *I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment;* Matt. xii. 36. If we are to give an account of such words as these are, that hurt nobody, what an examination will be made into lewd discourses, unchaste thoughts, bloody hands, and lascivious looks? What, in short, into all that time men have spent in committing sinful actions? And if this be true, as doubtless it is, what can a man say of the severity of this judgment, but will fall far short of it? What a fright will a poor man be in, to see himself accused before so venerable an assembly, of some light word he spoke in his life-time, without any design or intention? Who will not be surprised at so stange a charge? or who would have dared to affirm this, had not God himself said it? Was there ever any prince that called his servant to account for the loss of a pin or a needle? O the excellence of the Christian religion! what perfection and purity dost thou teach, and how strict an account wilt thou require of it, and with how rigorous a judgment wilt thou examine into it!

3. Now if this judgment-day be so great a subject of all men's astonishment, what shame and confusion must sinners be then put to? For all the wickedness they have ever committed, with so much caution and privacy in their most secret closets, and all the impurities they have ever been defiled with, and all the evil that has lain hid in the darkest recesses of their souls, shall be then made public, and exposed to the view of all the world. Is there any man now, whose conscience is so clear, as not to begin to blush and be afraid of this confusion? We see how often it happens, that men, upon no other motive but that of a sinful and criminal shame, will not discover their secret sins to their confessors, not even in confession, where the obligation to secrecy is so inviolable, and the tie so sacred. They, for no other reason but this, choose rather to let their souls be pressed down under the weight of their sins, than to undergo the shame of revealing them. How great, then, will that shame be, which men shall be put to before God, and in the sight of all ages, past, present and to come? The prophet tells us this confusion will be so extraordinary, that the wicked *shall say to the mountains, Cover us, and to the hills, Fall upon us*, that we may not be exposed to such shame; Hos. x. 8.

4. But what horror will they be filled with, at the hearing of this last sentence thundered out against them: *Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;* Matt. xxv. 41. What will the damned think at the sound of those dreadful words? *If*, says Job, *we can scarce endure the least sound of his voice. who shall be able to*

look against the thunder of his greatness? Job xxvi. 14. This word will carry such force along with it, that it will make the earth open in a moment, to swallow up and bury in its bowels those who, as the same Job says (ch. xxi. 12), *Take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.* St. John, in his Revelations, describes this fall in these words: "I saw an angel come down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was enlightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, it is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Revel. xviii. 1, 2. In the same place the holy evangelist adds: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." After the same manner shall the wicked, who are to be understood here by Babylon, be flung into the dungeon of everlasting darkness and confusion.

5. But what tongue shall be able to express the multitude of torments they are to suffer there? Their bodies shall burn in scorching flames, which shall never be extinguished; the worm of conscience shall perpetually gnaw and tear their very souls in pieces, without ever being tired or sated. It is there that weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, we are so often threatened with in holy scripture, shall never cease. There it is that the damned, hurried on with rage and despair, shall vent their fury on God and themselves, biting off their flesh, bursting their hearts with sighs and grief, breaking their teeth with grinning and vexation, like madmen pulling their own limbs in pieces, and continually blaspheming that just God who has condemned them to such torments. There every one of them will a thousand times curse the hour of his birth, frequently repeating, though with a different spirit, these words of holy Job: "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, A man-child is conceived. Let that day be turned into darkness, let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death obscure it, let a cloud overcast it, and let it be wrapt up in terror. As for that night, let a dark tempest seize upon it, let it not be reckoned among the days of the year, nor come into the number of the months. Why did I not in the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why was I placed upon the knee? or why had I the breast to suck?" Job iii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12. These are the complaints the damned shall make in hell for all eternity. O unhappy tongues, which shall never utter any thing but blasphemies! O wretched ears, which shall never hear any thing but frightful shrieks and groans! O unhappy eyes, which shall never

see any thing but objects of misery! O wretched bodies, which, instead of being refreshed, shall be eternally burning in hell flames! What a condition will those sensual persons be in then, who have spent all their days in sports and delights? O! for how short and how fleeting a pleasure have they brought on themselves an endless train of miseries? Foolish and senseless creatures! what do all your pastimes, which lasted so short a time, avail you, when the consequence is an eternity of pain and sorrow? what is now become of all your riches and treasures? where are now your delights? Your seven fruitful years are now over, and they are followed by seven years of such barrenness that your former abundance is all swallowed up, and not the least sign or memory of it remains. Your honor is lost, and your happiness drowned, in that ocean of sorrow. You are reduced to such extremity as not to be allowed one single drop of water to quench the scorching thirst which parches up your very bowels; nay, your past prosperity is so far from giving you any comfort now, that it is rather one of your greatest torments. For then shall be fulfilled this saying of Job: "The delight of the wicked shall be changed into worms" (Job xxiv. 20); which, according to St. Gregory will happen, when the remembrance of their past pleasures shall be an increase of their present torments: when they shall call to mind the days they have seen, and those they now see; thus unhappily experiencing, at their own cost, that, for things of so short a continuance, they suffer miseries which shall never have an end. Then they will plainly see how the enemy has deceived them, and being now, though too late, sensible of their folly, they will begin to make use of these words in the book of Wisdom: "We fools have wandered out of the way of truth, and the light of justice has not shined upon us, and the sun of understanding has not rose upon us. We have wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction, we have walked through hard ways; but as for the way of the Lord we have not known it;" Wisd. v. 6, 7. These are to be the perpetual complaints of the damned, this their repentance, this their sorrow; but all to no purpose, for the time of improving is now past.

6. The due consideration of these things cannot but excite us to the love of virtue. And, therefore, St. Chrysostom often makes use of these arguments in his homilies, to exhort us to it. In one of them he says, "That you may prepare your soul in time, to be the temple and abode of God, call to mind the dreadful day when we are to appear before the throne of Jesus Christ, to give an account to him of all our actions. Consider in what manner this Lord will come to judge the living and the dead. Consider how many thousands of angels will attend him. Imagine you already hear the sound of that frightful but irrevocable sentence, which Jesus Christ will pass against the world

Consider that, as soon as this sentence shall be given, some will be tumbled headlong into outward darkness; others, though they have taken a great deal of pains for the preserving of their virginity, shall have the gates of heaven shut on them; some shall be tied up like bundles of weeds, and flung into the fire; others again shall be delivered up as a prey, to the worm which will never die, and condemned to everlasting wailing and gnashing of teeth." We are all of us convinced of the truth of these things; why then do not we, whilst we have time, cry out with the prophet, *Who will give water to my head, and fountains of tears to my eyes, and I will weep day and night?* Jer. ix. 1. Let us, therefore, hasten and endeavour, before it is too late, to prevent the judgment by a confession of our sins: it is written: *Who shall confess to you, O Lord, in hell?* Ps. vi. 6.

7. Let us consider, further, that God has given us two eyes, two ears, two feet and two hands, that, if we should happen to lose the use of any one of these members, the other may still serve us. But he has given us but one soul, so that, if we lose that, we have no other left us to enjoy eternal glory. Let it, therefore, be our main concern to preserve it, for this soul must be one day saved or damned with the body for ever, and must appear before the tribunal of our great God, where, if you would excuse yourself, saying, you were dazzled with the false glittering of money, the judge will answer, that he forewarned you of this danger, when he said, *What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, if he loses his own soul?* Matt. xiv. 26. Should you say, the devil seduced me, he will tell you, that Eve did not clear herself by saying, it was the serpent that deceived her; Gen iii.

8. Look into the Scriptures, and consider the prophet Jeremiah's vision: first he saw a watching-rod, and then a great cauldron boiling over a hot fire, to signify how God dealt with men. First he threatens, and then, if that will not do, punishes them. Nor is it to be doubted, but that he who will not submit to the correction of the rod, shall be made to undergo the torture of the cauldron. Read but the gospel, and you will see that nobody offered to intercede for those unhappy wretches whom our Saviour condemned. Brothers did not speak for their brothers, nor friends for their friends; the father did not stand up for his son, nor the son for his father. But what do I speak of these, who were sinful men, since neither Noe, Daniel or Job, notwithstanding all their virtue and piety, will be able to alter the sentence once given by the judge? Ezech. xxvi. See whether any one durst so much as open his mouth in favor of him, who was turned away from the wedding-dinner; Matt. xxii. 11, 12, 13, and xxv. 11, 12, 13. See whether any body ever spoke one word for that servant who would not trade with the talent his master intrusted him with. Which of all those five virgins, that could

not get any admittance into heaven, ever found any one that undertook to plead her cause? Jesus Christ himself called them fools, for managing themselves so unwisely as, after having despised the delights of the flesh, and extinguished the fire of concupiscence, nay, after having observed the great precept of virginity, to neglect the commandment of humility, which seems to be much easier, and to take a pride in their chastity. Consider whether the rich man, who took no pity on Lazarus, could obtain one single drop of water, which he begged of the patriarch Abraham, as poor a comfort as it was, to mitigate those scorching flames that so tormented him; Luke xvi. Why then will we not charitably assist each other? why will we not praise and glorify God before the sun of his justice is set, and before he removes his light from our eyes? We had much better let our tongues be parched with fasting for the short remainder of this life, than, having satisfied them in this world, to let them be reduced to the necessity of begging a drop of water in the next, out of all possibility of obtaining it. If we are so nice and tender here, that we cannot suffer the heat of a light fever the space of three days, how shall we be able to endure those eternal burnings? If the sentence of death passed on us by a mortal judge, who cannot take away above forty or fifty years of our life at furthest, be so terrible, why do not we tremble at the sentence that is to be given by a Judge, in whose power it is to deprive us of life everlasting? - It terrifies us to see the punishments inflicted on malefactors here on earth, to see the executioners drag them away by force, scourge, disjoint, quarter, tear or burn them, and yet what is this but a mere dream or shadow, in comparison to the pains of hell? For death puts an end to all these sufferings, but there the worm of conscience never dies, there life is never at an end; the tormentors are never tired, and the fire never is put out. Let us, therefore, set what we will against this misery, let it be fire or sword, wild beasts, or any other kind of torment whatever; to this it will appear but as an imperfect draft or representation.

9. What will these unhappy wretches do, when they shall see themselves deprived of so many blessings, and condemned to suffer such unspeakable miseries? What will they say? How will they cry out against themselves? How horribly will they sigh and groan, and yet to what little purpose? For neither is the sailor useful after he has lost his vessel, nor the physician when his patient is dead. It is then—but too late, alas!—they will begin to reflect on their sins, and to say, We should have looked better to ourselves, and not fallen into this deplorable state. Alas! how often have we been told of this, and would take no notice of it! The Jews shall then know him, who came in the name of the Lord, but it shall not avail them, because they would not know him when this knowledge might have been beneficial to them.

But what shall we, miserable creatures, be able to say for ourselves, when heaven and earth, the sun and moon, night and day, nay, the whole world, shall cry out against us, and be witnesses of the sins we have committed? But should every thing else be silent, we have still our consciences to rise up against and accuse us. This is almost all taken out of St. John Chrysostom, and is sufficient to show us how terrible the idea of this dreadful day must be to those persons, who have not governed themselves by the dictates of reason and virtue. St. Ambrose, as severely as he searched into his own actions, gives us plainly to understand, in his commentaries on St. Luke, that this was his sentiment: his words are these: "Wo unto me, O Lord, if I do not bewail my sins; if I do not rise at midnight to praise thy holy name, if I deceive my neighbor, or if I speak against the truth, because the axe is now laid to the root of the tree." Let him, therefore, who is in the state of grace, endeavor to bring forth the fruits of justice; let him who is in the state of sin, endeavor to bring forth the fruits of penance. For the Lord is nigh at hand, and comes to gather in his fruit, and will give life to those who work faithfully and profitably, and death to them who are idle and unserviceable.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the ninth Motive that obliges us to Virtue, which is, Heaven, the third of the four last Things.

1. ANY one of these considerations, we have here proposed, should suffice to persuade us to the love of virtue. But because the heart of man is so stubborn, that very often all of them together are not able to prevail on it, I will here add another motive, no less powerful than any of the others; that is the happiness and reward promised to a good life, which is, the possession of everlasting glory: wherein two things particularly occur to be taken notice of; one is, the beauty of the place itself, which is heaven; the other, the glory and excellency of the King, who keeps his residence there with all his elect.

As for the first, though no tongue is able to express the beauty of this place, yet we will endeavor to guess at it as well as we can, and to discover as it were, at a distance, some part of it. The first thing then to be considered is, the end for which God created this excellent frame; for, generally, the best way of knowing the worth of a thing is, to inquire into the design of it. Now the design of this place is to make known God's glory. For though, as Solomon says, *The Lord has made all things for himself* (Prov. xvi. 4), it is plain, nevertheless, that he particularly made this place for this end, because it is here that he manifests the greatness and splendor of his glory in a more than ordinary

manner. Therefore, as the great king Ahasuerus (Esther 1.), who reigned over an hundred and twenty-seven provinces, made a sumptuous feast in the city of Suza, the metropolis of his empire, which lasted a hundred and four-score days, with all the costs and state imaginable, to let his subjects see how powerful and how rich he was; so this almighty King is pleased to make a noble feast in heaven, not for a hundred and four-score days only, but for all eternity, to show the infinite immensity of his riches, his wisdom, his bounty and his goodness. This is the feast Isaiahs speaks of, when he says, *In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto this people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined* (Isaiahs xxv. 6); that is to say, of most rich and delicious things. If God has prepared this banquet to make the greatness of his glory known, we must needs imagine, that since this glory of his is so great, the beauty of the place where he resides is proportionable to it.

2. We shall better understand this, if we but examine into the power and riches of the Lord who has chosen it for his residence. As to his power, it is so great, that he created the whole world out of nothing with one word, and with one word can destroy it again whensoever he please. Nay, it reaches so far, that with one single word he could have created not only one world, but millions of them, and have reduced them to nothing with another. And what is more considerable yet, whatsoever he has made has cost him no pains nor trouble, nor was it harder to him to create the noblest seraphim than it was to create the least insect, because this infinite Power can do whatsoever it has a mind to do, and whatsoever it has a mind to do it does purely of its own will, and is neither tired by the greatest works nor eased by the least. If this Lord is so powerful, if the glory of his holy name is so great, and if he has such a love for his own glory, how beautiful must that place or that banquet consequently be, which he has prepared to show us his glory? What is there wanting towards the perfection of this great work? There can be no want of hands, because the Workman is infinitely powerful; no want of skill, because he is infinitely wise; no want of will, because he is infinitely good; no want of wealth, because he is infinitely rich. If, then, all things be so well disposed to make it great, what must that work be, which is performed by the omnipotence of the Father, by the wisdom of the Son, and by the goodness of the Holy Ghost?—where goodness inclines, wisdom directs, and omnipotence performs all that an infinite goodness desires, and an infinite wisdom prescribes, though all these things are the same in the same divine Persons.

3. There is another remarkable thing yet to be considered in this matter, which is, that God has prepared this stately place, not only for his own honor, but also for the glory of all his elect

How solicitous God is for them, and for the effecting of all he has promised in their behalf, when he said, *Whosoever shall glorify me, I will glorify him* (1 Kings ii. 30), plainly appears by his actions, since he has put every thing in the world under their command, even whilst they are in this life. How wonderful was it to see Josue command the sun to stand still in the midst of its course, and to make it stop, as if he had the direction of the whole world in his power! *God*, as the Scripture says, *obeying the voice of a man*: Jos. x. 14. How strange was it to see the prophet Isaias bid king Ezechias (Isa. xxxiii. 8) choose whether he would have the sun go back ten degrees upon the dial, or forward, for either should be performed! How prodigious was it to see the prophet Elias (3 Kings xvii. 1, and xviii. 43, &c.) lock up the waters and clouds of heaven as long as he thought fit; and then command them, by virtue of his word and prayer, to pour down their rain again! Nor is it during their life-time only that God has given his saints such powers; he continues the same after their death, and confers it on their very bones and ashes; 4 Kings xiii. 21. Who can forbear praising God, when he reads of the prophet Elisha's bones raising a dead man to life, who was accidentally thrown by a band of highwaymen into the prophet's grave? Who will deny that God bestows great favors on his saints, when he hears that the sea opened for three miles together, the day that St. Clement was martyred, that so those persons who had mind to see the relics of one that had suffered for Christ's sake, might pass over? God has been pleased to inspire the whole church to institute a feast in honor of St. Peter's chains, that we may see what an esteem he has for the bodies of the saints, since he commanded us to pay such solemn respect for the fetters they wore. But what is all this in comparison with the honor which God did not only to this apostle's fetters, not only to his bones or body, but to his very shadow; which, as St. Luke affirms in the Acts (ch. v. 15), cured all persons of their distempers that could come within the reach of it. O God! how infinitely art thou to be admired! O God! how infinitely good art thou, and with what an infinite honor dost thou reward thy saints! Thou hast given this man what thou never made use of thyself; for nobody ever saw Jesus Christ curing the sick with his shadow. Now if it be certain that God has such a love for his saints, even at such a time and in such a place too as is designed for them to toil and labor in, and not to receive their rewards; how great must that glory be which he has prepared to honor them with, and for which he will be honored and praised in them! What may we imagine he, who has so great a desire to glorify them, and who, at the same time, both can and knows best how to do whatsoever is capable of contributing to their glory, has prepared and provided for this end?

4. Consider, further, how liberal God is in rewarding services

done him. He commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, whom he loved so tenderly; and just as the patriarch was on the point of complying with his command, his divine goodness stopped him, and would not let him proceed any further. *The angel of the Lord, said to him, Lay not thy hand upon the boy, neither do thou any thing to him; now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake. By my own self have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake, I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the sea shore: thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.* Gen. xxii. 12, 16, 17, 18. Was not this service well requited? It is truly a return that becomes God, who ought to appear like himself in all things, as well in the favors he bestows, as in the punishments he inflicts.

David began one night to consider with himself, that he had a house to dwell in, and the ark of God had none, and thereupon resolved to build one for it. But God sent the prophet Nathan to him the next morning with this message: *Because thou hast thought of building me a house, I swear to thee, that I will build one for thee and thy posterity, which shall remain for ever; and I will give thee a kingdom which shall have no end, nor will I ever remove my mercies from it;* 2 Kings vii.; 3 Kings viii.; 1 Chron. xviii. This was the promise God made David; nor did he fail in the performance of it, for the kingdom of Israel was governed by the princes of the house of David down to the coming of our Saviour, who reigns there now, and will there reign for all eternity. What follows on this is, that heaven is nothing else but the general reward which God gives his saints, for all the services they have done him; and would we but at the same time consider how generous God is, in the present he makes, we might give some kind of guess at least at the qualities and conditions of this glory; though it is an abyss too deep for us to fathom.

5. Another way of passing a judgment on it is, to reflect on the price God has thought fit it should be purchased at for us. For since he has been so liberal to us, we must not think he would set a greater value on things than they are worth in themselves. Yet that we might, after we had sinned, be made partakers of this glory, nothing less than the blood and death of his only Son could procure it for us. So that God has been pleased to die the death of man, that man might live the life of God. God has suffered those afflictions and tribulations which were due to man, that man should enjoy the rest and ease that belonged to God. Nor would man have ever been honored with a place among the choir of angels, had not God been nailed to

the cross betwixt two thieves. How great a favor, then, must this be, for the procuring of which a God has sweated blood, has been taken prisoner, has been scourged, spit upon and buffeted; and, after all, has been fastened to a cross! What can that be, which God, who is so generous, has prepared, to procure at so great a rate? Could a man but fathom this abyss, he could have no better way of finding out the greatness of eternal glory.

But besides all this, God requires of us as much as possibly can be required of man, which is, that we take up our cross and follow him; and if our right eye offend us, we pluck it out; that we have no further concern for father or mother, nor regard any thing in this world, be it what it will, if it be consistent with whatsoever God shall command us. And after we have punctually complied with all that he enjoins, he tells us he bestows this glory gratis. This is what he says, in St. John: *I am Alpha and Omega; the Beginning and the End. To him that thirsteth I will give of the fountain of the water of life, free cost.* Apoc. xxi. 6. How great a favor must this be, when God requires so much for it; and yet, when we have given him all we can, he tells us himself, he gives it to us for nothing. I say, *for nothing*, with respect to what our actions are worth in themselves, when separated from the value grace puts on them. Tell me now, if this Lord is so liberal in granting of his favors; if he has been so good as to bestow upon every one so many several kinds of benefits even in this life; if every creature, both in heaven and earth, has been created for man's use in general; if he has given the sinner as well as the just, the bad man as well as the good, a free and common possession of this world, how shall we be able to rate those inexhaustible riches, which he has laid up for none but the just? How will he, who has been so generous in conferring of his favors on those who have not deserved them, reward those to whom his graces are in some manner due? How noble must he be in requiting services done him, who has been always so forward in bestowing of his mercies! And if he is so bountiful in his gifts and presents, how magnificent will he be in the returns he makes! It is certain we can neither express nor conceive the glory he will bestow on the grateful, since he has here laid so many obligations on the unthankful.

§ I.—6. Something of this glory may be further discovered by the situation and height of the place designed for it, which is not only the most capacious, but the noblest and most beautiful of all the rest. It is called in the Scripture, *the land of the living*. Whence we are to infer, that the land we now live in is the land of the dying. If, therefore, it is certain, there are so many excellent and curious things in this country of the dying, what must there be where those persons reside who are to live for ever? Look about, in every quarter of the world, and con-

sider how many beautiful objects there are in it. Observe the greatness of the heavens, the brightness of the sun, moon and stars, the beauteousness of the earth and of the trees, of birds, and other creatures. Consider how pleasant the plain and open fields are : how delightful the mountains, with their unevenness ; the valleys, with their greenness ; and how the springs and rivers, which are dispersed and scattered, like so many veins throughout the whole body of the earth, contribute with their freshness to its beauty. Reflect on the vast extent of the seas, which have such a great variety of wonders in them. What are the lakes and pools of pure water, but, as it were, the eyes of the earth, or the mirrors of the heavens ? Or what can we think of the verdant meadows, interwoven with roses and other flowers, but that they resemble the firmament all bespangled with stars in a clear night ? What shall we say of the mines of gold and silver, and other rich metals, of rubies, emeralds, diamonds and other precious stones, which seem to stand in competition with the stars themselves, for a glittering lustre and beauty ? What shall we say of that variety of colors which is to be seen in birds, in beasts, in flowers, and in an infinite number of other wonderful objects ? Besides all this, art has added to the perfections of nature, and so improved the beauty of all things. Hence come those works, which are so pleasing to the eye, glittering with gold and precious stones, noble paintings, delightful gardens, royal garments, stately structures adorned with gold and marble, and innumerable things of other sorts. If, then, there are so many, and such delights in this, which is the lowest of all the elements, and the land of the dying, what must there be, in that sublime place, which as far exceeds all the other heavens and elements, in riches, honor, beauty, and all kinds of perfections, as it does in height ! If we consider how much those beauties of the heavens, which are visible to our eyes, as the sun, moon and stars, surpass those of this lower world in brightness, in form, and in duration, how glorious must we imagine those of the next world to be, which are only to be seen with immortal eyes ! All we are able to conceive or think will come infinitely short of them.

7. We know man must have three different places of habitation, answering to the three different states of life. His first place of habitation is his mother's womb after his conception ; his second is the world he lives in after his birth ; his third is heaven, where he is placed after his death, if he has lived a good life. These three several places bear some sort of proportion to one another, so that the third has, in an infinite degree, all those advantages over the second, which the second has over the first, as well in duration, greatness and beauty, as in all other qualities whatsoever. As to the duration it is visible, for the length of life, in the first place, is nine months ; in the second, it some-

times extend to a hundred years; but in the third, it lasts for eternity. The same is to be said of the largeness of the first place, which has no greater extent than that of a woman's womb; the second is no narrower than the whole world itself; and as for the greatness of the third, the best rule we have, whereby to judge of it is, the wide disproportion which is between the first and the second place: nor does it less excel those other places in beauty, riches, and all other perfections and accomplishments, most proper to recommend it to us, than it does in extent and duration. If, therefore, this world of ours be so great and glorious as we have represented it, and if, notwithstanding, the other we have been speaking of, be as far above it as we said it is, how charming must its beauty be, and how vast and spacious its extent! This we may discover by the great difference there is between the inhabitants of both places, because the stateliness of a building should hold a proportion with the quality of the person that is to live in it. We are to consider, then, that the place we live in is the land of the dying, the other of the living; the one is the habitation of sinners, the other of saints; the one is the dwelling-place of men, the other of angels; the one is a place for penitents, the other for those who are justified; the one is the field of battle, the other the city of triumph. In the one, to conclude, there are enemies as well as friends; whilst there are none but friends in the other, and those are no other but the elect themselves. The same difference, that is between the inhabitants of these two places, is between the places themselves. For God has created all places suitable to the quality of the persons they are designed for. *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God*; Ps. lxxxvi. Thou art unmeasurable in thy extent, and most stately in thy structure. The matter which thou art made of is most precious, the people that live in thee are most noble; all thy employments are delightful, all sorts of goods abound in thee, nor is there any kind of misery whatsoever, which thou art not entirely secure from. Thou art very great in every thing, because he who made thee is very great, because the end which he designed thee for is very noble, and because those citizens, for whose sake he has created thee, are the most honorable of all mankind.

§ 8. All we have hitherto said relates only to the accidental glory of the saints, besides which there is another sort called essential glory, infinitely beyond the accidental. This essential glory consists in seeing and enjoying God himself; which St. Augustine speaks of, when he says, "that virtue shall be rewarded with no less a price than with God himself, the giver of all earthly virtue, whom we shall see for all eternity, whom we shall love without ever being cloyed, and whom we shall praise without ever giving over." So that this is the greatest reward we can receive; for it is neither heaven nor earth, nor sea, nor any

created being whatsoever ; but it is God himself, who, notwithstanding his being free from all kind of mixture, contains within himself all that is good and perfect. For the understanding of this point, you must conceive, that one of the greatest mysteries in this divine substance is, that it comprehends within itself, in an infinitely eminent degree, the perfections of all the creatures, though, at the same time, it is a most pure Being : because God having created them all, and directed them to their last end, he must of necessity possess what he gives to others. Whence it follows, that the blessed shall enjoy and behold all things in him, each in proportion to the glory he shall be partaker of. For as the creatures serve us now instead of a mirror, in which we may behold some part of God's beauty, so God himself will, at that time, be the glass wherein we shall see the beauty of the creatures, but in a much more perfect manner than if we saw them in themselves. Thus God will be the universal happiness of all the saints, he will be their complete felicity and the accomplishment of all their desires ; he will then be a mirror to our eyes, music to our ears, sweetness to our taste, and a most pleasing perfume to our nostrils. In him we shall behold all the variety of the several times and seasons of the year, the freshness of the spring, the clearness of the summer, the plenty of the autumn, and the repose of the winter. There is nothing, in short, that can please all the senses of our bodies, or the faculties of our souls, which we shall not meet with in him. "It is in him," says St. Bernard, "we shall find the fulness of light for our understanding, the abundance of peace for our wills, and the continuation of eternity for our memories." There the wisdom of Solomon will appear but folly, the beauty of Absalom deformity, the strength of Samson weakness, the long lives of the old patriarchs a short mortality, and the riches of all the kings of the earth mere poverty and want.

9. If, as most certainly it is, all this be true, why do you stay to look for straws in Egypt, and to drink muddy water in filthy puddles, when you should be going on toward this spring-head of happiness, this fountain of living waters ? Why do you beg by parcels, what you may find heaped up together, and more abundantly in this great all ? If you aim at pleasures, raise up your heart, and consider how delightful this good must be which contains in itself all goods and pleasures. If you are in love with this created life, how much greater satisfaction will you take in that life which has created every thing ! If the health you enjoy be a pleasure to you, how much more will you be pleased with him who is himself the Author of health ! If you are taken with the knowledge of the creatures, how much more will you be with that of the Creator ! If beauty charms you, he it is whose beauty the sun and moon admire. If nobility be what you seek after, he is the very source and origin of all that is

noble; if you wish for long life, he is life everlasting; if plenty be your desire, he is the fulness of all riches; if you love music and charming voices, the angels are continually singing in his presence; if you hunt after company and conversation, you will there have the company of all the blessed, who have but one heart and one soul. If you aim at honorable employments and covet riches, they are both to be found in the house of God; if, in fine, you would be freed from all kinds of miseries and sufferings, it is there you will be happily delivered from them, and that for ever. God commanded his people in the old law, to circumcise their children on the eighth day, giving us thereby to understand that on the eighth day, that is the day of the general resurrection, which is to follow the week of this life, he will circumcise and cut off all the miseries of those persons who shall have circumcised themselves, and have put a stop to all their inordinate desires, who shall have retrenched all their superfluities and have overcome their feelings for his sake. What can be happier than such a life as this, which is free from all misery and trouble, and which, as St. Augustine says, shall never be exposed to any fear or poverty, indisposition or sickness; where there never shall be any anger or envy, where we shall never stand in need of eating and drinking, never covet worldly preferments and honors, never be afraid of devils, never dread the pains of hell, nor apprehend the death either of the body or of the soul; for we shall live there with all manner of content and satisfaction, enjoying the delights of immortality, which shall never be interrupted or disturbed with divisions and factions; for there all things are in perfect and perpetual peace and concord.

10. To all these advantages must be added, that of living in the company of angels, of enjoying the conversation of all those sublime spirits, and of seeing those noble troops of saints, who are more bright and glorious than the stars of heaven. There the patriarchs shall appear with glory, for their perfect obedience, and the prophets, for their lively hope; there you shall behold the martyrs adorned with crowns, dyed in their own blood, and the virgins clothed in white robes, in token of their chastity. But what tongue shall be able to express the majesty of the sovereign Monarch, who resides in the midst of them all? Were we every day to suffer fresh torments, nay, should we undergo for some time the pains of hell itself, that we might see the Lord in his glory, and enjoy the happy company of his elect, it would certainly be worth our while to endure all this, that we might arrive at such a height of happiness. Thus far St. Augustine.

If, therefore, this be so great a blessing, how happy shall those eyes be, that are to be always fixed on those objects! What a happiness must it be, to see this stately city, to behold these honorable citizens in all their glory, to have a sight of the face

of this Creator, the magnificence of these buildings, the riches of these places, and the common joy of this heavenly country! What must it be, to behold all the orders of these blessed spirits, the authority of this sacred senate, and the majesty of those venerable elders, whom St. John saw seated on thrones in the presence of God! Apoc. iv. 4. What a pleasure must it be, to hear these angelic voices, these charming singers, and this harmonious music, not in four parts, as ours here is, but in as many parts and of as many different voices as there are blessed souls in heaven! How shall we be charmed when we hear them sing this most ravishing song, which the same St. John once heard: *Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen.* ch. vii. 12. And, if it be so pleasing a thing to hear the harmony of these voices, how much more delightful must it be to see the unity and concord of these unanimous souls and bodies! to observe what a union there will be between men and angels, but more particularly between men and God! What a happiness shall it be, to see these fine fields, these fountains of life, and these pastures on the mountains of Israel! Ezek. xxxiv. 14. What a glorious thing will it be, to sit down at this sumptuous table, to have a place amongst the guests, to eat of the same dish with Jesus Christ, that is, to share with him in his glory! There the blessed shall be at rest, and have a full enjoyment of eternal bliss. It is there that they shall sing and praise, and be perpetually entertained with the most delicious banquets. Since, therefore, faith tells us, that such great blessings as these are the rewards of virtue, can any man stand so much in his own light as not to resolve on an immediate pursuit after it, in hope of so large a recompense?

CHAPTER X.

Of the tenth Motive that obliges us to the Love of Virtue, which is, the fourth of the four last Things, that is, the Pains of Hell.

1. ANY, the least part of this great reward we have now spoken of, should be more than sufficient to inflame our hearts with the love of virtue. But if, to the fulness of that glory which is reserved for the just, we further add, the severity of those torments that are prepared for the wicked, what an effect should this have on us, especially there being no middle state between these two! The wicked man cannot comfort himself by saying, "All that can come of my living wickedly is, that I shall never enjoy God; as for the rest, I expect neither happiness nor misery." The sinful man shall not escape thus. One of these two opposite conditions must be his lot: he must either

reign with God for all eternity, or burn for ever with the devils in hell. These are the two baskets the Lord in a vision showed the prophet Jeremiah, before the gates of the temple (Jerem. xxiv. 1, 2), one of which had very good figs, and the other very naughty ones, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. God's design by this was to let his prophet know that there were two sorts of persons, the one, objects of his mercy, the other of his justice. The first cannot be in a more happy condition, nor the latter in a more miserable; because the happiness of the first consists in seeing God, the perfection of all goodness, while the misery of the other is to be deprived of his sight, the greatest misfortune that can possibly befall poor man.

This truth, well considered, would make those men, who sin so unconcernedly, sensible what a weight they voluntarily lay on themselves. They who get their living by carrying of burdens, observe first what they carry, and lift it up a little, to see if it is not too heavy for them; and will you, who are brought up amidst the delights and charms of sin, let your sensual desires draw you away so far, in opposition to the will of God, as to oblige you to carry the heavy burden of sin, without any hope of ease or rest, and all this for the enjoyment of a base, infamous pleasure? Try first its weight, that is, consider the punishment attending it, that you may see whether you are able to bear it. That you may the better conceive how painful this torment is, and how weighty a burden you lay on your shoulders, as often as you sin, I will propose to you the following considerations: and though I have treated of this matter elsewhere, yet I cannot pass it over without saying something on it again in this place, though quite different from what I have said before; for the subject is so copious, there is no exhausting it.

2. Consider first the immense greatness of God, who is to punish sin. He is God in all his works, that is, great and wonderful in them all, not only in heaven, earth and sea, but even in hell, and in all other places. Now if this Lord is God, and shows himself God in all his actions, he will certainly appear so no less in his wrath, in his justice, and in the punishment he inflicts on sin. This is what he means, when he says, by the prophet Jeremiah, *Fear ye not me? Will ye not tremble at my presence, who have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it, and though the waves toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?* Jerem. v. 22. As if he had said more plainly, Is it not highly requisite that ye should fear the strength of that arm, which has wrought so great a miracle; which will be neither less powerful nor less wonderful in the punishment it inflicts, than in all its other works? So that we have as much reason to fear him infinitely, on the account of the miseries he can reduce us to, as we have to praise him for the favors he has bestowed

on us. It was this that made the same prophet, though innocent and sanctified in his mother's womb, to tremble, when he said, *Who will not fear thee, O King of nations, for glory appertains to thee?* Jer. x. 7. And in another place, *I sate alone, because of thy hand; for thou hast filled me with commination;* ch. xv. 17. The holy prophet knew very well, that these threats did not touch him; yet, for all this, they were so dreadful as to make him tremble. Therefore, it is with reason we say, the pillars of heaven shake before the majesty of God, and the powers and principalities all tremble in his presence; not that they are in doubt of their own happiness, but because they are in continual admiration of his infinite majesty. If these pure spirits are not free from fear, what apprehension should sinners, and such as despise God's commandments, be in, as being the persons on whom he will thunder out the dreadful effects of his vengeance! This is, without doubt, one of the chief reasons, which ought to stir up in our souls a fear of this punishment, as St. John plainly shows us in the Apocalypse (ch. xviii. 8), where, speaking of the punishments which God will inflict, he says, *Babylon's plagues shall come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be burnt with the fire; because God is strong who shall judge her.* And St. Paul, who very well knew his great strength, says, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;* Heb. x. 31. It is no dreadful thing to fall into the hands of men, because they are not so strong but that a man may break from them, nor have they power enough to thrust a soul headlong into hell. Our Saviour, for this reason, said to his disciples, *Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. Fear him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, fear him.* Luke xii. 4, 5. These are the hands the apostle says it is terrible to fall into. Those persons were surely very sensible of the force of these hands, who cried out, in the book of Ecclesiasticus (ch. ii. 22), *Unless we do penance we shall fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men.* All this plainly makes it appear, that as God is great in his power, in his authority, and in all his works, so will he be in his anger, in his justice and in punishing the wicked.

3. This will be still more evident, if we but consider the greatness of the divine justice which inflicts this punishment; and we may see more of it, in those dreadful examples we have in the Holy Scriptures. How remarkably did God punish Dathan and Abiron (Num. xvi.) with all their accomplices, by making the earth to open and swallow them alive, and by sinking them down into hell for rebelling against their superiors! Who ever heard of any threats or curses like those that are to be read in Deuteronomy, against the transgressors of the law? These are some of those many dreadful comminations: *I will send armies of enemies against you, says God, which shall besiege your cities, and shall*

bring you into such straits, that the tender and delicate woman among you, which would not venture to set the sole of her foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness, shall devour the after-birth, with the blood and the rest of the uncleanness that flows from her. She shall eat them, for want of all things, secretly in the siege. Deut. xxviii. 50, 52, 55, 56, 57. These are, indeed, most terrible punishments; and yet neither are these, nor any others whatsoever, that man can suffer in this life, any more than a mere shadow, or a faint resemblance, in comparison of those which are reserved for the next. Then will be the time that the divine justice shall signalize itself against those who have here despised his mercy. If, therefore, the shadow and the resemblance be so frightful, what shall we think of the substance and original? And if the chalice of the Lord be so unpalatable now, when there is water mixed with it, and when the severity of justice is lessened so much by the mildness of mercy, how bitter must the potion be, when we shall be forced to drink it off without any mixture at all! and when those persons who would not accept God's mercy shall feel nothing but the effects of his judgments! And yet these torments, though so great, are all infinitely less than what our sins deserve.

4. Besides the consideration of the greatness of God's justice, another way to make us understand the rigor of these punishments he will inflict, is to reflect on the effects of his mercy, on which sinners so much presume. For what greater subject of astonishment can we have, than to see a God taking human flesh on him, and suffering in his body all the torments and disgraces which he underwent, even to the dying on the cross? What greater mercy could he show, than thus to humble himself, to carry the burden of all our sins, that he might thereby ease us of their weight, and to offer up his most precious blood for the salvation of those very wretches who shed it? Now, as the works of the divine mercy are wonderful in themselves, so will the effects of God's justice be. For since God is equal in all his attributes, because all that is in him is God, it follows, that his justice is no less in itself than his mercy is; and as, by the thickness of one arm, we may judge how big the other is, so may we know how great the arm of God's justice, by that of his mercy, since they are both equal.

If God, when he was pleased to make known his mercy to the world, performed such wonderful and almost incredible things, that the same world looked on them as folly, what do you think he will do at his second coming, which is the time designed for manifesting the severity of his justice? especially since every sin that is committed in the world gives him a new occasion to exercise it; whereas he never had any motive to mercy but that same mercy itself; there being nothing at all, in human nature, that deserves his favor: but as for his justice, he will have as many

reasons to execute its utmost rigor, as there have been crimes committed by mankind. Judge by that how terrible it must be.

5. St. Bernard, in one of his sermons on the coming of our Saviour, has explained this very well, in these words: "As our Lord, at his first coming into the world, showed himself very merciful and easy in forgiving, so, at his second, he will show himself as rigid and severe in punishing; and as there is no one but may be reconciled to his favor now, it will be impossible for any one to obtain it then; because he is as infinite in his justice as he is in his mercy, and can punish with as much rigor as he pardons with mildness. His mercy, it is true, has the first place, provided our behavior has not been such as may provoke the severity of his justice." These words give us to understand, that the greatness of God's mercy is the standard whereby we may guess at his justice. The same doctrine is held forth to us by the royal prophet, saying, *Our God is the God from whom cometh salvation; God is the Lord, by whom we escape death. God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his wickedness.* Ps. lxxviii. 20, 21. This shows how kind and merciful God is to those who return to him, and how severe against hardened and obstinate sinners.

6. Another proof of this we have, in the extraordinary patience with which God bears, not only the world in general, but every sinner in particular. How many do we daily see, who, from the very first moment they came to the use of reason till their latter days, have been employed in nothing but sin, without ever regarding God's promises or threats, his mercies or his commands, or any other thing that tended to their conversion? And yet this sovereign goodness has been all the while expecting them with patience, without cutting off one minute of their unhappy lives, and has not ceased to make use of several means to bring them to repentance, but all to no purpose. What therefore, will he do, when, after having exhausted this long patience, his anger, which has been so long a time gathering in the repository of his justice, shall overflow the banks which kept it in? With how much force and violence will it rush in on them! This is what the apostle meant, when he said, *Knowest thou not, O man, that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance? But according to thy hardness, and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his works.* Rom. ii. 4, 5, 6.

What can he mean by *treasurest up to thyself wrath*, but as they who hoard up riches daily, heap gold on gold, and silver on silver, for the increasing of their stock; so God daily adds to the treasure of his anger, in proportion to the number of the sinner's crimes? Were a man to be altogether employed for fifty or sixty

years together, in heaping up treasures, so as not to let one day or hour pass without making some addition to it, what a mighty sum would he find at the end of that time! How miserable, then, must your condition be, since you scarce suffer one moment of your life to slip without adding something to the treasure of God's wrath, which is every minute increased by the number of your sins! For though nothing else were to be put in but the immodest glances of your eyes, the malicious and vicious desires of your heart, and the oaths and scandalous words that come from your mouth, these alone would suffice to fill a whole world. Then, if so many other enormous crimes as you are daily guilty of, be added to these, what a treasure of wrath and vengeance shall you have heaped against yourself at the end of so many years!

7. If, besides all this, we make a serious reflection on the ingratitude and malice of the wicked, it will, in a great measure, show us with what severity and rigor this punishment is to be inflicted. To pass a true judgment on this matter, we should consider, on one side, how merciful God has dealt with men, what he did and said for them whilst he was here on earth, and how much he suffered for them, what dispositions and means he has found for their leading a virtuous life, how much he has pardoned or seemed not to take notice of, the benefits he has done them, the evils he has delivered them from, with infinite other graces he is always bestowing on them. Let us consider, on the other hand, how forgetful men have been of God, their ingratitude, their treasons, their infidelities, their blasphemies, the contempt they have had of both him and his commandments, which has been carried so far, that they have trampled him under foot, not only for a trivial interest, but very often for nothing, and out of mere malice; nay, they are come to such a degree of impudence, that the laws of God are the frequent matter of their pleasantry, ridicule and impiety. What do you think those persons who have despised so high a majesty can expect, those who, as the apostle says (Heb. x. 29), *have trodden under foot the Son of God, and have esteemed the blood of the covenant unclean, with which he was sanctified*, but to be punished and tormented on that day, wherein they must render an account of themselves, according to the affronts and injuries they have offered? For, God being a most equitable judge, that is to say, such a one as will punish the offender proportionably to the offence given, and being, besides, the party offended, how great must the torments be, which the soul and body of the criminal, delivered up to his justice, shall suffer, since they are to equal the grievances of the crimes by which the divine Majesty has been affronted! And if it was necessary that the Son of God should shed his blood to satisfy for those sins which had been committed against him (the merits of the person supplying what might be wanting to the rigor of the punishment), what must follow when this satisfaction is to

be made by no other way but by the severity of the punishment, without any consideration of the person at all?

8. If, as we have seen, the quality of the Judge ought to make us so much afraid, what should that of the executioner do? For the sentence which God shall pass against a soul is to be put in execution by the devil, and what favor can be expected from so cruel an enemy? That you may conceive something of his fury and malice, consider how he dealt with holy Job, when God had delivered him into his power. What cruelty and violence did he not exercise on this righteous man, without the least show of tenderness or pity? He sent the Sabeans to drive away his oxen and asses; his sheep and his servants he destroyed by fire; he overthrew all his houses, he killed his children, he covered his body all over with sores and ulcers, leaving him no part of those vast riches he possessed before but a dunghill to sit on, and a tile to scrape off the corruption that ran from his sores. And, to add to his sorrow, he left him a wicked wife, and such friends as it had been more humanity to destroy than spare; for they, with their tongues, pierced and tormented his heart more cruelly than the worms that preyed on his flesh. Thus he behaved himself towards Job. But what was it he did, or rather what was it he left undone, against the Saviour of the world, in that dreadful night, when he was delivered up to the power of darkness? It is more than can be comprised in a few words. If, then, this enemy of mankind, and all his accomplices, are so inhuman, so bloody, such enemies to mankind, and so powerful to do harm, what will become of you, miserable creature, when you shall be delivered up into their hands, with a full and absolute authority, to execute on you all the cruelties they shall be able to invent? And this not for a day, or for a night, nor for a year only, or for an age, but for all eternity. Do you think these merciless devils, when they have you in their clutches, will use you kindly? O! how dark and dismal will that unhappy day be, when you shall be delivered up to the power of these ravenous wolves, these savage beasts!

9. But that you may the better conceive what usage is to be expected at their hands, I will here set down a notable example, out of St. Gregory's Dialogues; L. 4. c. 33. He tells us, "That there was a religious man in one of his monasteries, no riper in virtue than in years, who was ready to die of a very violent sickness. The brothers being all met together, according to their custom, to assist him in this his dangerous passage, and kneeling about his bed to pray for him, the dying man cried out to them, 'Begone, begone, fathers, and leave me a prey to this dragon, that he may swallow me up, for my head is already in his fiery jaws, and he presses me with his scales, which are like the teeth of a saw, so that I am in most insupportable torment. I desire you, therefore, to quit the room, and leave me to him, for not

being able to make an end of me whilst you are here, he puts me to so much greater pain.' The religious advised him to take courage, and make the sign of the cross: 'How shall I do it,' says he, 'when the dragon has so twisted his tail about my hands and feet, that I am not able to stir?' They, not at all disheartened at this, renewed their prayers with much greater fervor than before, and seconding them with sighs and tears, obtained of the Father of mercies his deliverance from this violent agony, which left him so astonished and confounded, that he afterwards lived so virtuous a life as to put him out of all danger of seeing himself reduced to such circumstances again."

10. These are the wicked spirits which St. John describes in his Revelation, under the most frightful forms we are able to conceive. "I saw," says he, "a star fall from heaven upon the earth, and there was given to him the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and the smoke of the pit arose as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air was darkened with the smoke of the pit. And from the smoke of the pit there came out locusts upon the earth, and power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who have not the seal of God on their foreheads: and it was given to them that they should not kill them; but that they should torment them five months, and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it; and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for battle: and on their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold; and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women: and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breast-plates as breast-plates of iron, and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like to scorpions, and there were stings in their tails." Apoc. ix. 1—10. Thus far are the words of St. John. Now what was the design of the Holy Ghost in showing us the greatness of these torments under such terrible representations and figures? What other design could he have, but to let us know, by these dreadful forms, how great the wrath of the Lord will be, what the instruments of his justice, what punishments are to fall on sinners, and what power our enemies are like to have, that the dread of these things might deter us from offending God? For what star was it that fell from heaven, and had the key of the bottomless pit delivered to it, but that bright angel, who was flung headlong out of heaven into hell, and to whose power the kingdom of darkness was committed? And what were these locusts, so fierce and so well armed, but the devils his accomplices, and the ministers of his

rage? What were these green things, which they were commanded not to hurt, but the just, who flourish by being watered with the heavenly dew of grace, and thus bring forth the fruits of eternal life? Who are those that have not the seal of God stamped on them, but such as are destitute of his Spirit, the true and infallible mark of his servants and of the sheep of his flock? It is against these unhappy wretches the divine justice has raised such forces, that they may be tormented, both in this life and in the next, by those very devils whose service they have preferred, before that of their Creator, as the Egyptians once were by the flies and gnats, which they adored. Add to all this, how dreadful it will be to behold, in this sad place, those hideous and frightful monsters, this devouring dragon, and this writhing serpent. What a horrible sight must it be to see this huge and monstrous behemoth, which is said in the book of Job, to erect his tail like a cedar, to drink up whole rivers, and to devour mountains.

11. A thorough consideration of all these things is sufficient to make us understand what torments the wicked are to suffer. For who can imagine, from what has been said, but that these pains must be very great? What can a man expect from the greatness of God himself; from the greatness of his justice in punishing sin; from the greatness of his patience in bearing with sinners; from the infinite multitude of favors and graces by which he has endeavored to invite and draw them to himself; from the greatness of the hatred he bears to sin, which deserves to be infinitely hated, because it offends an infinite Majesty; and from the greatness of our enemy's cruelty and fury? What can we, I say, expect from all these things, which are so great, but that sin should meet with a most severe and terrible punishment? If, therefore, so severe a punishment is ordained for sin, and no doubt can be made of it, since faith testifies this truth, how can they, who pretend to own and believe it, be so insensible of the heavy weight every sin they commit throws on them, when, by giving way to but one offence, they bring themselves into the danger of incurring a penalty, which on so many accounts appears so terrible?

§ I. *Of the duration of these Torments.*—12. But though all these considerations are sufficient, without any further addition, to make us tremble, we shall have much more reason to be afraid, if we do but reflect with ourselves on the duration of the pains mentioned. For if, after several thousands of years, there should be any limits set, or any ease given to these sufferings, it would be some kind of comfort to the wicked: but what shall I say of their eternity, which has no bounds, but will last as long as God himself? This eternity is such, that, as a great doctor tells us, should one of the damned, at the end of every thousand years, shed but one tear, he would sooner overflow the world than find any end to his miseries. Can any thing, then, be more terrible? This is certainly so great an evil, that, though all the pains of hel-

were no sharper than the prick of a pin, considering they were to continue for ever, man ought to undergo all the torments of this world to avoid them. O! that this eternity, this terrible word *for ever* were deeply imprinted in your heart! how great would be the benefit you would reap by it! We read of a certain vain and worldly-minded man, who, considering seriously one day on this eternity of torments, was frightened with the duration of them into this reflection: No man in the world in his right senses would be confined to a bed of roses and violets for the space of thirty or forty years, though he were at this price to purchase the empire of the whole earth. If so, said he to himself, what a madman must he be, that will, for things of much less value, run the hazard of lying infinite ages on a bed of fire and flames! This thought alone wrought him up to such and so immediate a change of life, that he became a great saint and a worthy prelate of the church. What will those nice and effeminate persons say to this, whose whole night's sleep is disturbed and broken if a fly be but buzzing in their chamber? What will they say, when they shall be stretched out on a bed of fire, and surrounded on all sides with sulphurous flames, not for one short summer's night, but for all eternity? These are the persons to whom the prophet Isaias (ch. xxxiii. 14) put this question: *Who among you can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among you can dwell with everlasting burnings?* Who can be able to bear such a scorching heat as this for so long a time? O foolish and senseless men! lulled into a lethargic sleep by the charms of this old deceiver of mankind! Can any thing be more unreasonable than to see men so busily providing for this mortal and corruptible life, and at the same time to have no greater concern for the things which regard eternity? If we are blind to this mistake, what will our eyes be open to? What will we be afraid of, if we have no apprehension of this misery? or what shall we ever provide against, if not against a matter of such importance?

13. Since all this is so undeniably true, why will we not resolve to walk in the way of virtue, though ever so painful, that we may avoid those punishments we are threatened with, if we take the contrary way? Should God leave it to any man's choice, either to be tormented with the gout or tooth-ache, in such a violent manner, as not to have any hopes of ease either day or night, or else to turn Carthusian or barefoot Carmelite, and undergo all the austerities those religious men are obliged to, it is not to be imagined any man would be so stupid as not to choose either of these two states, though on the bare motive of self-love, rather than suffer such torture for so long a time. Why then do not we accept of so easy a penance to avoid such lasting torments, since the pains of hell are so much more insufferable, of so much longer continuance, and God requires so much less of us than the

life of a Carthusian or Carmelite? Why do we refuse to undergo so little pain, when by it we may escape so long and so rigorous a punishment? Can any man be guilty of greater folly than this is? But the punishment of it shall be, that since man would not, by short penance done here, redeem himself from so much misery, he shall do penance in hell for all eternity, without reaping any benefit by it. The fiery furnace which Nabuchodonosor commanded to be kindled in Babylon is a type hereof (Dan. iii. 47); for though the flames mounted forty-nine cubits, they could never reach to fifty, the number of years appointed for solemnizing the Jewish jubilee; to signify to us, that though the flames of this eternal furnace of Babylon, which is hell, are continually casting forth a most violent heat, and put those souls which are thrown into them to most exquisite pains and torments, yet they shall never obtain for them the grace and remission of the year of jubilee. O unprofitable pains! O fruitless tears! O penance so much the more rigorous, as it is accompanied with perpetual despair! How small a part of all those evils you are now forced to suffer might have obtained you a pardon, if you would but willingly have undergone it in this life! How easily might we prevent our falling into such miseries with but a little pains and trouble! Let our eyes, then, melt into fountains of tears, and let our hearts break forth into continual sighs without intermission. *For this*, says the prophet, *I wail and howl; I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the ostriches; for her wound is desperate*; Mich. i. 8.

14. If men had never been told these truths, or if they had not looked on them as infallible, we should not wonder to see them fall into that supine negligence they are subject to. But have we not a deal of reason to be astonished, when those very persons who hold what we have here asserted as an article of faith, and know that, as our Saviour has said, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not my word*; that is to say, it shall infallibly have its effect, live so inexcusably careless and unconcerned? Tell me now, O man, blind in body, but blinder more in soul and understanding, what pleasure can you find in all the advantages and riches of the world to counterbalance the hazard of your eternal salvation? "If," says St. Jerome, "you were as wise as Solomon, as beautiful as Absalom; as strong as Samson, as old as Enoch, as rich as Cræsus, and as powerful as Cæsar, what good would all this do you, if, when you die, the worms should prey upon your body, and the devils seize on your soul to torment it, as they do the rich glutton's, for all eternity?"

Thus much for the first part of the exhortation to virtue. We will treat now of the extraordinary favors which are promised it, even in this life.

THE
SINNER'S GUIDE.

BOOK I.

PART THE SECOND.

OF THE SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL ADVANTAGES PROMISED TO
VIRTUE IN THIS LIFE, AND PARTICULARLY OF TWELVE
EXTRAORDINARY PRIVILEGES BELONGING TO IT.

CHAPTER I.

*Of the eleventh Motive that obliges us to the Pursuit of Virtue,
which is, the inestimable Advantages promised it in this Life.*

1. I KNOW not what excuse man can plead for not following virtue, which is supported by such powerful reasons: for in its behalf may be urged all that God is in himself, all he deserves, what favors he has done us, what he still promises, and what punishments he threatens. And therefore, we have cause to ask how there come to be so few Christians that seek virtue, since they confess and believe all that has been said. For it is no wonder that the heathens, who are ignorant of its value, should not prize what they do not know, like a delving peasant, who, if he happen to find a precious stone, makes no account of it, because he is ignorant of its value. But for Christians, who are well acquainted with these great truths, to live as if they believed nothing at all of them, to be so entirely forgetful of God, to be such slaves to their vices, to let their passions so tyrannize over them, to be so wedded to the things of this world, and so little concerned about those of the next, to give themselves over to all manner of crimes, as if there were neither death, judgment, heaven or hell; this is what should surprise the whole world, and give us ground enough to ask, *Whence does this blindness, this stupidity proceed?*

2. This mighty evil owes its rise to more causes than one. The chief one is the general prepossession of worldlings, that God

reserves to the next life all the rewards he promises to virtue, without allowing it any recompense in this. This is the reason why men, who consult their own interests so much, and are so violently wrought on by present objects, concern themselves so little about what is to come, as looking after nothing that does not give them immediate satisfaction. Nor is this mistake a new one, for it is what was made in the days of the prophets. Thus we see that whenever Ezekiel either made any great promises, or threatened severely in the name of God, the people laughed at him, and said to one another, *The vision which this man sees will not come to pass yet ; nor shall his prophecies be fulfilled this great while ;* Ezek. xii. 27. They also jeered the prophet Isaias, and repeated his words, saying, *Command and command again, command and command again, expect and expect again, expect and expect again, a while hence, another while hence ;* Isa. xxviii. 13. This, then, you see, is one of the chief reasons of men not observing the commandments of God. They have nothing they think to hope for, from his mercy at present, but that is all to put off till hereafter. Solomon, as very sensible of this common error, took occasion from hence to say, "That the reason why men give themselves over, without any kind of consideration, to all manner of vice, is because the sentence passed against the wicked is not immediately put in execution." And afterwards he says, "That the greatest misery in this life, and what of all makes men sin most, is to see that the good and the bad, that those who offer up sacrifice, and those who condemn it, fare alike in all things, in appearance at least ;" Eccles. ix. 2, &c. And, therefore, the hearts of men are filled with malice in this life, and they are afterwards plunged into hell. What Solomon said concerning the wicked is sufficiently confirmed in themselves, in the prophet Malachy (ch. iii. 14, 15,) where they say, *He loses his labor that serves God ; and what good have we got by keeping his commandments, and by our walking pensively before the Lord of hosts ? Wherefore we esteem those happy who are proud, since they are exalted, whilst they commit iniquity and have tempted God, and are yet secure.* This is the common talk of sinners, and one of the chief motives of their continuing in their crimes. For, as St. Ambrose says, "they think that to buy hopes with dangers is too hard a bargain, that is, to purchase future goods with present evils, and to let go what they have in their hands to feed themselves up with an imaginary possession of things which they have no hold of yet ;" L. 7. in Luc. c. 7.

There is nothing better, in my opinion, to disabuse us of this dangerous mistake, than these words of our Saviour, interrupted with his tears, when considering the deplorable state of Jerusalem ; he wept over it, saying, *If thou also hadst known and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace : but now they are hidden from thy eyes ;* Luke xix. 42. Our Saviour considered,

on one side, what advantages this people had received by his coming; for all the treasures and all the graces of heaven were brought down from thence, with the Lord of heaven. On the other side, he saw that this same people, despising the poor and mean appearance which he made in his dress and in his person, would neither receive nor own him for what he was. He knew how great a loss this nation which he loved so tenderly would suffer by their ignorance. For they were to lose not only all those graces which he brought with him for them, but their temporal government and liberty. The Lord, pushed on, by the force of grief, shed these tears and spoke these few words, which he broke off abruptly, though they were as significant as they were short. The same words may be well applied to our present purpose; because if, on the one hand, we consider the beauty of virtue, with the extraordinary graces which go along with it, and how these graces, on the other hand, are hid from the sight of carnal men, it is manifest we have reason to weep, and to say with our Saviour, *If thou also hadst known!* O unhappy sinner, how great a value would you set on virtue! how would you long after it, and what would you not do for obtaining it, should God but open your eyes to let you see what riches, what pleasures, what peace, what liberty, what tranquillity, what light, what sweetness, and what other benefits are its continual attendants? But these are all hid from the eyes of worldlings, who, minding nothing but its hard and bitter outside, imagine all within to be troublesome and unpleasant, and that it may pass current in the next life, but not in this. So that, reasoning according to the flesh, they say they will not be at the charge of certain dangers for the purchase of uncertain hopes, nor hazard their present happiness for a slippery dependence on what is to come. This is the common discourse of those who are daunted by the outward appearance of virtue. They do not know that Christian philosophy is like Christ himself, who, under the form of a poor and humble man, continued still to be God and sovereign Lord of all things. And for this reason it is said of the faithful that they *are dead* to the world: but their *life is hid with Christ in God*; Coloss. iii. 3. For as our Saviour's glory was concealed under this veil, so should the glory of all such as imitate him. We read of certain images that were called Silenes, coarse and rough on the outside, but very curious and artificial within, so that all the beauty and art lay hid, whilst that which was but mean and ordinary was turned outward. Thus the eyes of the ignorant were deceived by the appearance, but the inside ingenuity attracted the wiser sort. Such, without doubt, have been the lives of the prophets and apostles, and of all true and perfect Christians, as was the life of their Lord and Master.

4. But if you still find the practice of virtue hard, reflect on the

means God has assisted you with to make it easy. Such are the infused graces, with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the sacraments of the new law, and several other divine favors, that serve as oars and sails to a ship, or as wings to a bird. Consider what the very name and being of virtue imports, which is essentially a very noble and perfect habit; and, therefore, regularly speaking, ought, like all other habits, to make us act with facility and pleasure. Consider, further, that our Saviour has promised to his elect, not only the goods of glory, but those of grace, the latter for this life, and the former for the life to come. As the royal prophet assures us, saying, *The Lord will give grace and glory* (Ps. lxxxiii. 12), which are like to rich vessels, filled with all kinds of good things, the one for this life, and the other for the next; by which we may see there is something more in virtue than appears at first sight. Consider, again, that since God lets us want nothing that is necessary, having so plentifully provided all creatures with whatever they stand in need of, it is not to be imagined, since nothing can be more necessary or of greater importance to man than virtue, that he would leave us entirely to the disposal of our own free wills, which are so weak and impotent to the blindness of our understanding, to the inconstancy of our humors, to our own desires, which are so bent on evil, to a nature, in short, so depraved by sin, without strengthening us with infused habits, which are, as it were, oars to help us over all those shelves and sands, that hinder us from making our way through the sea of this life. For it is unreasonable to think that the Divine Providence, which has taken so much care for the fly, the spider and the ant, having supplied them with all things requisite for their subsistence, could have left man, the noblest of all creatures under heaven, without such means as are necessary for his acquiring virtue.

5. To go further yet, how can God possibly be so sparing to his faithful servants, as to leave them in their necessities, and forsake them in the midst of their sufferings, whilst the world and the devil, by too many different false delights and pleasures, win the hearts of those who serve them? How can you imagine the practice of virtue to be so mean, and that of vice so noble? Can you persuade yourself that God would ever permit this last so much to surpass the other? What do you think God designed to signify to us by the answer his prophet Malachy made in his name, to the complaints of the wicked? *Return, said he, and you shall see what difference there is between the righteous man and the wicked, between him that serves God and him that serves him not*; Malac. iii. 1. This shows that God does not think it enough to propose the advantages of the next life, of which he treats afterwards, to those who return to him; but he says to them, *Be converted, and you shall see*; as if he had said, It is not my only design you should wait till the other life to know

the advantages you are to reap, but return to me and you shall see, this very moment, what difference there is between the good and the bad, the riches of the one and the poverty of the other; the joy, peace and satisfaction the one enjoys, and the sorrow, restlessness and discontent that follow the other; the light the one walks in, and the darkness that surrounds the other. Thus experience will show you how many advantages, more than you imagined, the followers of virtue have over those that follow vice.

6. God gives almost the very same answer again to some other persons who had no better opinion of virtue than the former. Deceived by the same appearance, they laughed at those who were virtuous, and said to them, *Let your Lord be glorified, and we shall see it in your joy*; Isa. lvi. 5. After these few words, the prophet, giving a large account of the torments prepared by God's justice for the wicked, immediately tells us what joys are laid up for the just. *Rejoice*, says he, *with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: Rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her. That ye may suck, and be filled with the breasts of her consolations, that ye may milk out, and flow with delights from the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord: Behold I will bring upon her as it were a river of peace, and as an overflowing torrent the glory of the gentiles, which you shall suck: you shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees they shall caress you. As one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem. You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb, and the hand of the Lord shall be known to his servants*; ch. lxvi. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. This is to signify, that as men, by the vast extent of the heavens, earth and sea, and by the brightness of the sun, moon and stars, judge of the omnipotence and the infinite beauty of God, the Author of these wondrous works, shall discover to the just the greatness of his power, riches and mercy, by those infinite favors he will bestow on them, and the joy they receive. So that, as he showed the world his severity and rigor toward the wicked, by the punishments he inflicted on Pharaoh; he will, in the same manner, show the greatness of his love to his elect, by the extraordinary favors he will confer on them. Happy the soul that shall receive favors from God in token of his infinite love! and unhappy those whose torments and sufferings shall manifest the rigor of his justice! For each of these attributes being infinite, what effects must such infinite causes produce!

7. I must further add, that if you shall think the way of virtue uneasy and melancholy, you may look into those words the divine wisdom utters of herself, as follows: "I walk in the ways of justice, in the midst of the paths of judgment, that I may enrich them that love me, and may fill their treasures;" Prov. viii

20, 21. What are these riches but the riches of this heavenly wisdom, far more precious than are the riches of the world, and bestowed on the lovers of justice, which is the same we have hitherto called virtue? For if her riches did not much better deserve the name, than all other riches, how could the apostle have thanked God for the Corinthians being rich in spiritual things? 1 Cor. i. 5. He calls them rich without any kind of limitation, whilst he styles others the rich of this world only.

§ I. *Gospel authority for what has been said.*—8. For further proof of what I have said, I will add this divine sentence of Jesus Christ. St. Mark tells us, that when St. Peter asked our Saviour, what reward they should have who had quitted all for love of him, he gives him this answer: *Amen I say to you, there is no man who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who shall not receive a hundred times as much, now in this time; and in the world to come life everlasting;* Mark x. 29, 30. If you weigh those words exactly, you cannot in the first place deny, but that Jesus Christ makes a formal distinction between the rewards of virtue in this life and in the next, the one being a promise of a future, and the other of a present, happiness. You must confess, too, that it is impossible this promise should not be performed, since heaven and earth are sooner to pass away than one tittle of these words, how hard soever they appear, shall fail. And as we certainly believe, there is in God both Trinity and Unity, because he has said so, though this mystery is beyond the reach of our reason, so are we to believe this other truth, though it exceeds all human understanding, since it is grounded on the same authority of God's own word.

9. What, then, is this *hundred fold*, which the just receive even in this life? For we see they are, for the most part, men of no very considerable quality nor very rich, of no great employment in the state, nor enjoy any other worldly advantages, but, on the contrary, many of them live retired, obscure, poor and necessitous. How then can this *infallible* word of God be proved to be true, but by acknowledging, that God makes them so spiritually rich, that they are more happy and quiet than if they were sovereign lords of the world, and yet are destitute of the conveniences of this life? Nor is this to be wondered at, because, as God may preserve mankind by other means, and not by bread alone, so it is not necessary he should satisfy those souls he has such a love for with temporal goods, having better ways of doing it. This we have seen in a particular manner justified in all the saints, whose prayers, fastings, tears and labors have given them far greater delight and satisfaction than all the joys and pleasures of the world could ever have done; which shows us plainly, that what they received was a hundred times better than what they left for

the love of God. For instead of the false and apparent goods they forsook, they received such as were true and real; instead of the uncertain, those which were certain, spiritual instead of temporal, ease instead of care, quiet instead of trouble, and for a vicious and unpleasant life, a virtuous and delightful one; so that if, for the love of God, you have despised the base treasures of this world, you shall find in him such as are inestimable. If for his sake you have contemned false honors, you shall meet with true ones in him. If you have forsaken a mortal father on his account, the eternal Father will satisfy you with all kinds of delights. If, in fine, you bid adieu to hurtful pleasures for the love of him, he will entertain you with such as shall be free from the least tincture of bitterness or alloy. When you shall arrive to such a degree of perfection as this is, you will then abhor what you took the greatest pleasure in before. For when our eyes are once cleared up by this heavenly brightness, we discover a new light, which represents things quite different from what they appear to us at first. What we then thought sweet, tastes bitter to us now; and what we looked on as bitter then, we now find to be sweet. We are pleased now with that which frightened us before, and look on that as hideous and ghastly, which once seemed beautiful and charming. Thus we find our Saviour's words to be verified, by his bestowing on us the incorruptible goods of the soul for the corruptible ones of the body, and for the goods of fortune those of grace, which are incomparably better, and more capable to satisfy man, than all earthly goods.

10. In further proof of this important truth, I will give you an example, taken out of the lives of the famous men of the order of the Cistercians. It is there written, "that as St. Bernard was preaching in Flanders, full of zeal for the conversion of souls to God, amongst those who were touched with a particular grace, was a certain person called Arnulphus, one of the chief men of that country, and closely tied to the things of this world. But he at last, breaking through all, became a Cistercian monk, in the monastery of Clairvaux. St. Bernard was so pleased with this great change, that he used often to say, that God had manifested his power as wonderfully in converting Arnulphus, as in raising Lazarus from the dead, having drawn him from so many pleasures, which, like a grave, he lay buried in, to raise him to a new life, which was no less to be admired in its process than it had been in his conversion." But because it would be too tedious to give you a particular account of this holy man's virtues, I shall only make use of what serves our present purpose: "This good monk was very subject to terrible fits of the colic, which often put him in a very dying condition. One day it seized on him so violently, that he lost both speech and senses; whereon the religious, seeing but little hopes of life left, gave him the Extreme Unction. Soon

after, coming to himself, he began to praise God, and cried out aloud, 'All thou hast ever said, O most merciful Jesus! is very true.' The religious, surprised at his frequent repeating the same words, asked him what he meant, but he made them no answer, continuing to cry out louder and louder, 'All thou hast ever said, O most merciful Jesus! is very true.' Some who were present fancied his pains had put him beside himself; but he, perceiving their mistake, said to them, 'It is not so, my brothers, it is not so, for I never was better in my senses than now, whilst I tell you, that all that Jesus Christ has said is very true.' Hereon the rest of the monks said, It is what we all of us believe, but why do you repeat it so often? 'Because,' said he, 'our Saviour has told us in his gospel, that whosoever shall forsake his friends and relations for the love of him, shall receive a hundred fold now in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting; Mark. x. 30. This is what I find true by my own present experience; for I assure you, I at this very moment receive that hundred fold; the excessive pains I endure being so pleasing to me, through the lively hope I have now given me of my salvation, that I would not exchange it for a hundred times as much as I left when I forsook the world. And if so great a sinner as I am finds so much satisfaction in what I suffer, what consolations must they who are perfect be sensible of? For the anticipated fruition of those eternal pleasures which I now enjoy by hope, is not a hundred times only, but a hundred thousand times better than all the delights the world could ever afford me.' They were all astonished to hear a man of no learning at all talk so piously and sublimely; but it plainly appeared that what he said was dictated by the Holy Ghost."

11. This is a demonstration, that God can give those who serve him more pleasure and delight, than they forsook for his sake, and yet not enrich them with temporal goods. And thus we see how much in the wrong those men have been, who could never persuade themselves that virtue had a reward in this life. The twelve following chapters shall serve for the better undeceiving such persons, wherein we shall treat of twelve wonderful fruits and privileges that attend virtue even in this life; by which they who have hitherto loved nothing but the world, may understand that it is more delightful than they imagine. And though it is in some manner requisite for the perfect comprehending of this truth, that a man should have had some experience from the practice of virtue, because there is no one knows her own worth so well as she herself does; this defect may, nevertheless, be supplied by faith, since by means of it we believe the Holy Scriptures to be true, out of which I intend to prove all I shall say on this subject, that so no one may call the truth of it in question.

CHAPTER II.

Of the twelfth Motive that obliges us to the Pursuit of Virtue, which is, the particular Care the Divine Providence takes of the Good, in order to make them happy, and the Severity with which the same Providence punishes the Wicked.—The first Privilege.

1. OF all these favors, the greatest certainly is, the care God takes of those who serve him. From this, as from their fountain, flow all the other privileges of virtue. For, though providence extends itself to all creatures, yet we see how particularly careful it is of those whom God has chosen for himself; because they, being his children, and receiving as his gift, an affection truly filial for him, he, on his part, loves them with a truly fatherly love, and his love is the measure of the care he takes for them. Yet no man can conceive how great his providence is, unless he has either had experience of it, or read the Holy Bible with much attention, and observed those passages there that treat of this matter; for there is scarce any part of Scripture but treats on this subject. It turns on these two points, *to ask, and to promise*, as the world turns on its poles. So that, whenever God on one part requires our observance of his commandments, he promises a generous reward to those who comply, and severely threatens such as neglect to obey. This doctrine is so distributed, that almost all the moral books in it require and promise, whilst the historical verify the fulfilling of both; giving us to understand how differently God deals with the just man and the sinner. But, considering how liberal he is, and how poor man, how ready he is to promise, and how backward man is to perform—we must needs find a great difference between what he requires and what he gives. All he requires of us is, that love and obedience which he himself has given us; and yet in return of that little which we hold purely of his liberality, he offers us inestimable riches for this life as well as for the next. Of all which the chiefest is, the fatherly love and providence wherewith he assists those he looks on as his children, and this is infinitely beyond whatever affection the most tender father in the world can show; for never was there any one yet who laid up such riches for his children as God does, which is no less than the participation of his eternal glory. Never did any man undergo so much for his children as God has done, having for their sakes shed the very last drop of his blood; nor will ever any father take so much care of them as God does, since he always has them in his sight, and assists them in all their necessities. This holy David acknowledges, when he says, *Thou hast upheld me by reason of my innocence; and hast established*

me in thy sight for ever (Ps. xl. 13), which is to say, you have always watched so carefully over all my actions as to keep your eyes continually fixed on me. And in another psalm he says, *The eyes of the Lord are upon the just: and his ears unto their prayers. But the countenance of the Lord is against them that do evil things: to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.* Ps. xxxiii. 16, 17.

2. But because this divine providence is the greatest treasure a Christian has, and on his hopes and assurance of his being protected by it depends the increase of his confidence and joy; it will be to our purpose here to make use of some passages of the Scripture, in proof of those immense riches wherewith God blesses the just. In Ecclesiasticus (ch. xxxiv. 19, 20) it is said, *The eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear him, he is their powerful protector, and strong stay, a defence from the heat, and a cover from the sun at noon. A preservation from stumbling, and a help from falling, he raiseth up the soul, and enlighteneth the eyes, and giveth health, and life, and blessing.* The royal prophet says, *With the Lord shall the steps of a man be directed, and he shall like well his way. When he shall fall, he shall not be bruised, for the Lord putteth his hand under him.* Ps. xxxvi. 23, 24. What harm can he come to who falls so soft, and is supported by the hand of God? He says again, in another place, "Many are the afflictions of the just: but out of them all will the Lord deliver them. The Lord keepeth all their bones, not one of them shall be broken." Ps. xxxiii. 20, 21. This providence is yet much more magnified in the gospel; for our Saviour himself there not only tells us, that he takes care of all their bones, but of their very hairs, that not one of them may be lost (Luke xxi. 18); thus, to express in how extraordinary a manner he protects them; for what is there he will not look after, who does not neglect the very hair of our heads? If this be a declaration of his great concern for us, what the prophet Zachary (ch. ii. 8) tells us expresses it no less: "Whosoever," says he, "shall touch you, touches the apple of my eye." It were much had he said, "Whosoever shall touch you, touches me;" but "Whosoever shall touch you, touches the apple of my eye," is still much more.

3. Nor does he only look after us himself, but has also committed us to the care of his angels: and, therefore, David says, "He hath given his angels charge over thee: to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up: lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Ps. xc. 11, 12. Thus, our good angels, like elder brothers, carry the just men in their arms; for not knowing how to walk by themselves, they have need of another to lead them. Nor are the angels content to serve them thus in this life only, but even at their death too, as appears by the poor man in the gospel, who, after he was dead, "was carried by

angels into Abraham's bosom;" Luke xvi. 22. We are told also in another psalm, "The angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear him: and shall deliver them;" Ps. xxxiii. 8. Or, as St. Jerome renders it more expressive, "The angel of the Lord has pitched his camp about those that live in his fear, to preserve them;" B. 4. c. 6. v. 15, 16, 17. What king has such a guard about his person as this? We see it plainly in a passage of the Book of Kings, where we read, that as the king of Syria's army was marching toward Samaria, with a design to take the prophet Elisha, the holy man took notice of the concern his servant was in at the sight of so formidable an army, and prayed to God that he would be pleased to open the young man's eyes, and let him see that there was a much greater army ready to defend them than that of their enemies. God heard the prophet's prayer; whereon the young man saw the whole mountain covered with horse and fiery chariots, and Elisha in the midst of them. We read of such another guard in the Canticles (ch. vii. 1), in these words: "What will you see in the Sulamite," which is the figure of the church, and of a soul in the state of grace, "but the companies of an army," which is composed of angels? The same thing is signified by the Spouse, under another figure, in the same book (ch. iii. 7, 8), where it is said, "Behold threescore valiant ones of the most valiant of Israel, surround the bed of Solomon: all holding swords, and most expert in war: every man's sword upon his thigh, because of fears in the night." What is all this, but a lively representation made by the Holy Ghost, under these figures, of that care the divine providence has over the souls of the just? For how can a man, who is conceived in sin, who lives in a body so naturally inclined to evil, and who is surrounded with so many dangers, preserve himself for several years from committing any mortal crime, did not the divine providence secure and keep him from it?

4. This providence is so powerful, that it not only delivers us from evil and leads us to good, but what is more, very often, by a wonderful effect, draws even good out of evil, which sometimes God permits the just themselves to fall in. This happens when, repenting for their sins, they thence take occasion to become more circumspect, more humble, and more grateful to God, for the mercies he has shown them, in freeing them from the danger they were in, and in pardoning them all their faults. It is in this sense the apostle says, *that all things work together unto good to them that love God*; Rom. viii. 28.

If, therefore, these favors so highly deserve our admiration, how much cause have we to wonder at God's being so careful of their children, of their whole posterity, and of all that belong to them? As himself has assured us, when he said, *I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon*

the children, upon the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and showing mercy unto thousands to them that love me, and keep my commandments; Exod. xx. 5, 6. We find him as good as his word to David, whose race he would not destroy after a great many years, though several of them had deserved it for their sins; Kings viii. 19. Another example of his care we have in Abraham, whose posterity he pardoned so often for their father's sake. This care of his went so far as to promise Abraham that he would bless his son Ismael, though he were born a slave, *that he would make him increase, and multiply him exceedingly; and that he should grow into a great nation*; Gen. xvii. 20. And all this only because he was Abraham's son. We have yet a further proof hereof, in God's conducting Abraham's servant through the whole journey, and instructing him in his duty when he went to seek a wife for Isaac; ch. xxiv. Nor has he only been merciful to a servant for the sake of a good master, but even to wicked masters for their pious servant's sake; ch. xxxiii. 22, 23. Thus we see he bestowed great favors on Joseph's master, though a heathen, in consideration of the virtuous young man who lived with him. What mercy can exceed this? Who will not serve such a master, who is so liberal, even so thankful to those that do him any service, and so careful of every thing which belongs to them?

§. 1. *Of the Titles given to Almighty God in Holy Writ, on Account of his Providence.*—5. This divine providence producing so many different and wonderful effects, God has, therefore, a great many different names given him in the Holy Scripture; but the most usual and most remarkable is that of *Father*, as his beloved Son calls him in the gospel, and he has been pleased it should be given him in several places of the Old Testament. And, therefore, David says, “As a father hath compassion on his children; so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear him, for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust;” Ps. cii. 13. Another prophet, not content to call God Father, because his care is infinitely greater than that of a father, speaks thus to him: “Thou, O Lord, art our Father; Abraham hath not known us, and Israel hath been ignorant of us” (Isa. lxiii. 16), to give us to understand, that these, being our carnal fathers, deserved not that name in comparison of God.

6. But because a mother's affection is, generally speaking, more affectionate and tender than a father's, God is pleased to call himself a *Mother*, nay, and more than a mother too. “Can a woman,” says he, in Isaias (ch. xlix. 15, 16), “forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in my hands: thy walls are always before my eyes.” Can any

thing be more tender than this? or can any man be blind to such proofs of love as these are?

7. Did we but consider it is God who speaks, he, whose truth cannot deceive, whose riches are inexhaustible, and whose power has no limits, what joy would such pleasing words as these bring us? But such is the excess of God's mercy; that, not content to compare his affection with that of common mothers, he amongst all others chooses the eagle, a creature the most remarkable for this love, and compares his tenderness to hers; saying, by Moses, "As the eagle enticing her young to fly, and hovering over them, he spread his wings, and hath taken them and carried them on his shoulders;" Deut. xxxii. 11. The same prophet expressed this yet more lively to the people of Israel, when, on their arrival at the land of promise, he told them, "You have seen how the Lord your God has carried you through the wilderness all the way you went, as a man doth his little son, until you came to this place;" Deut. i. 31. As he does not disdain to call himself our Father, he does us the honor to call us his children; as a proof of which, we have in the prophet Jeremy (ch. xxxi. 20), "Ephraim is an honorable son to me, surely he is a tender child; for since I spoke of him, I will still remember him. Therefore are my bowels troubled for him: pitying I will pity him." Every word here should be weighed with attention, as coming from God, and should force from us a tender affection for him, in return of his tender love to us.

8. It is on account of the same providence that he gives himself the name of a Shepherd, as well as that of a Father. And to let us see that how great his pastoral care is, he says, "I am the good Shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know me;" John x. 14, 15. How is it, O Lord, that thou knowest them? How doest thou look after them? "As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father." O blessed care! O sovereign providence! What greater happiness can a man enjoy than to be taken care of by the Son of God, just as his Father takes care of him? The comparison, it is true, will not hold in all respects, because a begotten son deserves much more than one that is only adopted; but to be in any manner whatever compared with him, is a very great honor. God acquaints us with the wonderful effects of this his providence, fully and elegantly, by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel, saying, "Behold, I myself will seek my sheep, and will visit them. As the shepherd visiteth his flock, in the day when he shall be in the midst of his sheep that were scattered: so will I visit my sheep, and will deliver them out of all the places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and will gather them out of the countries, and will bring them to their own land; and I will feed them in the mountains of Israel, by the rivers, and in all the

habitations of the land : I will feed them in the most fruitful pastures, and their pastures shall be in the high mountains of Israel : there shall they rest on the green grass, and be fed in fat pastures upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my sheep : and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost : and that which was driven away, I will bring again : and I will bind up that which was broken, and I will strengthen that which was weak, and that which was fat and strong I will preserve : and I will feed them in judgment" (Ez. xxxiv. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16); that is, with great care, and with a particular providence. A little lower he adds : "I will make a covenant of peace with them, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land : and they that dwell in the wilderness shall sleep secure in the forests. And I will make them a blessing round about my hill : and I will send down the rain in its season, there shall be showers of blessing (ver. 25, 26);" that is to say, wholesome showers, and such as shall do no hurt to the places which my flock feeds in. What greater promises can God make us, or what more tender expressions can he give us of his love ? For it is certain, that he does not speak here of a material but of a spiritual flock, composed of men, as the text itself plainly shows. It is no less certain that he does not mean fat lands, or an abundance of temporal goods, which are common to the bad as well as the good, but, like a good shepherd, he promises to assist those that are his with particular graces, on all occasions. It is what he himself has explained by Isaias (ch. xl. 11), where he says, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd : he shall gather together the lambs with his arm, and shall take them up in his bosom, and he himself shall carry them that are with young." Is there any tenderness like this ? The divine psalm which begins thus, "The Lord is my shepherd" (Ps. xxii.), is full of these charitable offices of a shepherd which God performs to man.

9. As we call God our Shepherd, because he guides us, so we may call him our King, because he protects us ; our Master, because he instructs us ; our Physician, because he heals us ; our Foster-father, because he carries in his arms ; and our Guard, because he watches so carefully over all our actions. The holy Scripture is full of such names as these. But yet there is none expresses a more tender love, or discovers his providence more than that of Spouse, a title he often gives himself in the Canticles, and in other places of the Bible. It is by this he invites the sinner to call on him : "Thou art my father, the guide of my virginity" (Jerem. iii. 4) ; which name the apostle highly extols ; for after those words which Adam spoke to Eve, "Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh," he goes on saying, "This is a great sacrament ; but I speak in Christ and in the church."

which is his spouse (Gen. ii. 24; Eph. v. 31, 32), and we may in some respect say the same of every one in the state of grace. What, then, may we not hope from him who goes by such a name, and that with so much reason?

But what need is there of recourse to the Bible to seek for names, since there is not one that promises us any good, but may be applied to God? For whosoever loves and seeks him, shall in him find whatever he can wish. For this reason St. Ambrose says, "We have all things in Christ, and Christ is all to us. If you want a cure for your wounds, he is a physician; if you are in a burning fever, he is a fountain; if you are tired with the burthen of your sins, he is justice; if you are afraid of death, he is life in you; if you hate darkness, he is light; if you would go to heaven, he is the way; if you are hungry, he is your food." L. 3. de Virg. See here how many names God has, who in himself is but one; for though he is but one in himself, yet he is all things for us, that he may relieve all our necessities, which are infinite.

10. It would be tedious to count all the authorities of this kind in the Holy Scriptures. These I have taken notice of, for the comfort and encouragement of all that serve God; and for the gaining of such as do not; for it is certain there is no greater treasure under heaven than this. As, therefore, those persons who have served their prince upon some extraordinary occasions, and received certificates under his hand, and promises of considerable rewards for their services, are very careful to secure those authentic papers, comforting themselves, in the midst of dangers, with the hopes of obtaining the reward of their labors; so God's servants lay up in their hearts all these divine promises, which are much more securely to be relied on than any that are made by mortal kings. In these they place their hope, these are their support in all their toils, their trust in all their dangers, and their comfort in all their miseries. To these they have recourse in all their necessities; they inflame them with the love of so good a master and oblige them wholly to his service; for, as he assures them, he will give himself entirely up to the procuring of their good, for he is their all. Thus we see that the main foundation of a Christian life is the practical knowledge of this truth.

11. Can there be any thing in the world more precious or valuable, or that better deserves our esteem and love? Or what greater happiness can a man enjoy in this life than to have God for his father, his mother, his shepherd, his physician, his tutor, his master, his mediator, his will, his defence, and, what is yet more, for his spouse, in short, for his all? Has the world any thing comparable to this to give to its admirers? How much reason, then, have those who enjoy such a benefit, to rejoice, to comfort, to encourage themselves, and to glory in him above all things? "Be glad in the Lord," says the prophet, "and rejoice, ye just;

and glory, all ye right of heart?" Ps. xxxi. 11. As if he said more clearly, Let others rejoice in their worldly riches and honor, others again in their birth and quality, others in their favor and esteem of their prince, others in their great employments and dignities; but as for you, who lay claim to God for your share, do you more truly rejoice in this inheritance, which as far exceeds all other inheritances as God himself does all other things. This we may learn from the royal psalmist, when he says, "Deliver me, and rescue me out of the hand of strange children; whose mouth hath spoken vanity; and their right hand is the right hand of iniquity. Whose sons are as new plants in their youth; their daughters decked out, adorned round about after the similitude of a temple: their storehouses full, flowing out of this into that. Their sheep fruitful in young, abounding in their goings forth: they have called the people happy, that hath these things: but happy is that people whose God is the Lord." Ps. cxliii. 11, 12, 13, 15. The reason why David delivers himself thus is evident, because in God alone we possess every good thing that is to be desired. Let others value themselves as much as they please on riches, but as for me, though I am a rich and powerful king, in God alone shall be all my glory. Thus another holy prophet glorified, saying, "but I will rejoice in the Lord; and I will joy in God my Jesus. The Lord God is my strength: and he will make my feet like the feet of harts; and the conqueror will lead me upon my high-places, singing psalms." Habac. iii. 18, 19. This is the treasure, this the glory, which he has prepared even here for those that serve him. This is a great reason why all men should desire to serve him, and on this will he ground the greatest complaint he can make against those who serve him not. Thus it was he complained, by the prophet Jeremy (ii. 5), of his people: "What iniquity," says he, "have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?" and a little lower: "Am I become a wilderness to Israel, or a lateward springing land?" (ver. 31) as if he said, It is plain, it is not so, since by my means they have been so successful and victorious. "Why then have my people said: We are revolted, we will come to thee no more? Will a virgin forget her ornament, or a bride her stomacher? but my people hath forgotten my days without number" (ver. 32.), who am all their ornament, their glory and their beauty. If God complained thus in the time of the old law, when his favors were so great, how much more reason has he to complain now when they are so much greater, as they are more spiritual and divine?

§ II. *What providence God uses towards the Wicked in punishment of their Sins.*—12. If the mercy of this blessed providence which the good enjoy, has no influence on us, let us at least be moved with the fear of that providence, if I may so call it, which

God uses against the wicked, and which measures sinners by their own measure, and deals with them according to their forgetfulness and contempt of the divine Majesty, forgetting those who forget him, and despising those by whom he is despised. God, to make this the plainer to us, commanded the prophet Osee (ch. i. 2) to marry an adulteress, to signify to his people the spiritual fornication they had committed, in leaving their true spouse and Lord, and ordered the child he had by his wife to be called Lo-ammi, a Hebrew word, which means "not my people," to show them that since they would not acknowledge nor serve him as God, he would not own or deal with them as his people. And that they might know him to be in earnest, he says to them, "Judge your mother, judge her; because she is not my wife, and I am not her husband" (ch. ii. 2); giving them to understand, that since she had not observed the respect and duty of a good wife, neither would he show her the love and kindness of a true husband. Thus plainly God tells us he will deal with us just as we deal with him.

They, therefore, who live as if they took no notice at all of God, are abandoned by him, and left as a school without a master, a ship without a rudder, as goods without an owner, or as a flock that goes astray for want of a shepherd, which never misses falling among the wolves. And, therefore, he tells them by the prophet Zacharias (ch. xi. 9), "I will not feed you; that which dieth, let it die, and that which is cut off, let it be cut off: and let the rest devour every one the flesh of his neighbor." What he says by Moses, in his canticle, is to the same purpose: "I will hide my face from them, and will consider what their last end shall be;" Deuter. xxxii. 20.

13. He acquaints us more at large with this kind of providence, by the prophet Isaias speaking to his people under the figure of a vine, against which, for not yielding the fruit that was expected from it, after having been so carefully dressed and pruned, he pronounces this sentence: I will show you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be wasted: I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will make it desolate; it shall not be pruned, and it shall not be digged; but briars and thorns shall come up: and I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it" (Isaias v. 5, 6); that is to say, I will take away all those efficacious helps and succors I had given it before, and then must necessarily follow its utter ruin and destruction.

14. Do not you think this sort of providence is much to be dreaded? what greater misery can a man fall into than to be deprived of the providential care of God, to be exposed to all the accidents of the world, and to all the injuries and calamities this life lies open to? For since, on the one hand, this world is like a tempestuous sea, a desert of so many wild beasts and thieves,

since there are such numbers of misfortunes and accidents, so many and such powerful enemies to encounter with, so many snares laid for us, and so many dangers surrounding us; and since man, on the one hand, is a creature so frail, so helpless, so blind, so impotent, so destitute of strength, and so much in need of advice, what can he do against so many strong ones, if he wants the help and assistance of God? What can he, who is a mere dwarf, do against so many giants? How can he, who is so blind, avoid so many snares? Or, alone and unarmed, how can he deal with so many enemies?

15. Nor does their punishment end here. For God not only turns his eyes from the wicked, whence it follows that they fall into such sins and miseries, but does himself produce and send them these afflictions; so that the eyes which watched for their advantage before, are now open to their ruin: as the prophet Amos (ch. ix. 4) testifies, saying, I will set my eyes upon them for evil, and not for good; that is, I who before looked on them, in order to secure them, will do it now to punish them, according to what their sins deserve. And the prophet Osee (ch. v. 12) tells us plainly, that God says, "I will be like a moth to Ephraim, and like rottenness to the house of Juda." And because this seemed too easy a punishment, and too lingering, he immediately threatens them with another more speedy and more severe: "I will be like a lioness to Ephraim, and like a lion's whelp to the house of Juda: I, even I, will catch, and go away, and there is none that can rescue;" ver. 14. Can any thing be more terrible than this?

16. We have as clear a proof of this kind of providence in the prophet Amos, who, after telling us, that God would put all the wicked to the sword, for their sins of covetousness, goes on and says, "They shall flee, and he that shall flee of them shall not be delivered. Though they go down even to hell, thence shall my hand bring them out: and though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down. And though they be hid in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them away from thence: and though they hide themselves from my eyes in the depth of the sea, there will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them. And if they go into captivity before their enemies, there will I command the sword, and it shall kill them. And I will set my eyes upon them for evil, and not for good." Amos ix. 1, 2, 3, 4. These are the words of the prophet. And what man, on reading them, if he but considers, that they were spoken by God himself, and does but observe what kind of providence he exercises against sinners, can without trembling see how powerful an enemy he has against him, and how closely he pursues him, having secured all the avenues, and lying continually in wait to destroy him? What rest can a man take that reflects on this? What stomach can he

have for his food, who has the eyes of God, red with indignation and fury, fixed on him? Who has such a persecutor and such an arm stretched out against him? For if it be so great a misfortune to be deprived of God's favor and providence, what must it be to have armed this same providence against you, and to make him turn that sword on you, which was drawn in your defence? What an unhappiness must it be to have those eyes open to your destruction, which before watched for your security; to have that arm, which was before stretched out to hold you up, extended now to cast you down; to have that heart, which thought of nothing for you once but of peace and love, have no other thoughts for you now but of affliction and sorrow? What misery is it, that he who ought to shade, shield and protect you, should be changed into a moth to consume you, and into a lion to tear you in pieces? How can that man sleep securely, who knows that God all the while stands over him, like Jeremy's rod, to punish and torment him? What means can he use to frustrate the designs of God? What arm can withstand his arm? Or what other providence can resist his providence? Did any man, says Job (ch. ix. 4), ever resist him and prosper?

17. This evil, in fine, is of such a nature, that the withdrawing of his fatherly providence from sinners is one of the severest punishments he either inflicts on, or threatens them with in this life, as he himself has declared in several places of the Holy Scripture. In one of which, he says, "my people heard not my voice: and Israel hearkened not to me" (Ps. lxxx. 12, 13); for which reason I will not take any notice of them, as I have done before; "So I let them go according to the desires of their heart: they shall walk in their own inventions." Their condition must, therefore, grow each day worse and worse. He says also, by the prophet Osee (ch. iv. 6), since "thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children." As there is no greater misfortune can befall a woman than to be divorced from her husband, nor a vine than to lie neglected and unpruned, so the greatest loss a soul can undergo is, to have God withdraw his hand from her. For what is a soul without God, but a vine without its pruner, a garden without a gardener, a ship without a pilot, an army without a general, a commonwealth without a ruler, and, in short, a body without life? See here how God encompasses you on all sides, that the fear at least of being forsaken by him may work on you, though his providential love and concern do not move you; for fear and apprehension often influence those whom favors and benefits can do no good with.

CHAPTER III.

Of the second Privilege of Virtue, that is, the Grace of the Holy Ghost bestowed upon virtuous Men.

1. FROM this fatherly providence, as from a fountain, flow all the favor, God bestows on those who serve him. For it belongs to this providence to supply them with all necessities for the obtaining of their end, which is their last perfection and happiness, by assisting them in all their wants, and infusing into their souls such virtues and habits as are requisite for this end. Of all which the chief is the grace of the Holy Ghost, because next to this divine providence, it is the beginning of all other heavenly gifts and privileges. It is the garment which was first given to the prodigal son, on his return to his father's house. And should you ask me what this grace is, I answer, that grace, as divines define it, is a participation of the divine nature, that is, of God's sanctity, purity and greatness; by virtue of which a man rises from the baseness and filth he received from Adam, and partakes of the divine sanctity and beauty, divesting himself of himself, and putting on Christ Jesus. Holy writers explain this to us by this familiar example: When we take a piece of iron out of the fire, it sparkles and looks red like fire itself, but continues still to be iron, retaining the same name and substance it had before, though the brightness, heat and other accidents belong to fire: so grace, which is a heavenly quality, infused by God into the soul, transforms man into God in such a manner as to make him in some measure partake of the virtues and purity of God, without ceasing to be man. Thus was he transformed who said, "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me;" Galat. ii. 20.

Grace is also a divine and supernatural form, by means whereof man lives suitably to the origin and source he proceeds from, which is supernatural and divine. And here it is the providence of God so gloriously exerts itself. For it being his will that man should have two lives, the one natural and the other supernatural, he has to this end given him two forms, which are, as it were, two souls, for each life one. Hence it follows, that as all the powers and sensations of the natural life spring from the soul, the natural form; so from grace, the supernatural form, flow all those virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost, that go to the support of the supernatural life. As if one man should furnish another, that understands two trades, with two sets of tools, to work at them both.

2. Grace is moreover a spiritual dress and ornament for the soul made up by the hands of the Holy Ghost, which renders her

so acceptable to God that he adopts her for his daughter, and takes her for his bride. It was in this dress the prophet gloried, when he said, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; and with the robe of justice he hath covered me, as a bridegroom decked with a crown, and as a bride adorned with her jewels" (Is. lxi. 10); which are the several gifts of the Holy Ghost, wherewith the soul of a just man is adorned and beautified by the hand of God. This is the garment of divers colors with which the king's daughter, seated at the right hand of her bridegroom, was gloriously arrayed; Ps. xlv. For from grace come the colors of the different virtues and divine habits wherein their beauty consists.

By what has been said, we may judge what effects grace works on the soul it resides in. One of the greatest is, to make it look so lovely and fair to the eyes of God, that he chooses her, as has been said, for his daughter, his spouse, his temple and his habitation, where he takes his pleasure with the children of men. Another effect is, to strengthen the soul by means of those virtues it brings with it, which, like Samson's hair, at the same time confer both force and beauty. She is commended for both these qualities in the book of Canticles (ch. vi. 9), where the angels, admiring her beauty, say, "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?" Grace then, as we see, is like a complete suit of armor which secures a man from head to foot. It both beautifies and strengthens him in such a manner, that, as St. Thomas says, the least degree of grace suffices to overcome all the devils and all sorts of sin.

3. A third effect of it is, to make man so pleasing to God, and to give him such power with him, that every action deliberately performed, saving those that are sinful, is acceptable to the meriting eternal life. So that not only acts of virtue, but even those actions that are done in submission to the necessities of nature, as eating, drinking, sleeping and the like, are grateful to God, and merit such a favor. For when the object itself is so agreeable and meritorious, whatever it does that is not sin must be so too.

Besides all this, grace makes man the adopted son of God and heir to his kingdom. It causes his name to be written in the book of life, and gives him a claim to the inheritance of heaven. This is the privilege our Saviour so highly commended to his disciples, when observing how pleased they were that the devils had obeyed them in his name, he said to them, "Rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven;" Luke x. 20. This, therefore, is the greatest treasure a man can wish for in this life.

4. It is grace, to conclude, that qualifies man for all kind of good, that makes the way to heaven smooth and easy, and the yoke of Christ light and pleasant; it is this makes men run in the paths of virtue; it is this that cures the infirmities of nature, and makes that easy and light which, whilst she was weak, weighed her down; it is this that, by means of those virtues which proceed from it, reforms and strengthens all the faculties of the soul, enlightening the understanding, inflaming the mind, refreshing the memory, fortifying the free-will, moderating the concupiscible appetite, that it may not give way to evil, and animating the heart, that it may not be too backward in the pursuit of good. And because all the passions of nature which reside in these two inferior parts are like so many hills that overlook and command the fortress of virtue, or as sally ports, through which the devils enter into our souls, to remedy this, grace sets a sentinel at these places to secure the passage; and this is some infused virtue sent down from heaven, and placed there to deliver us from those dangers which the heat of our passions may expose us to. Thus temperance, for example, secures us against gluttony, chastity against impurity, humility against pride, and so with the rest.

But what is yet above all, grace brings down God himself into our souls, that he by his presence may govern, defend and conduct them to heaven. There he is like a king on his throne, like a general in his army, like a housekeeper in his family, like a master in his school, and like a shepherd amidst his flock, exercising in a spiritual manner all their several offices. If, therefore, so precious a pearl as this is, which brings in such vast treasures, be the inseparable portion of virtue, can any man refuse to imitate the direction of the wise merchant in the gospel, who gave all he had for the purchase of this jewel? Matt. xiii. 46.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the third Privilege of Virtue, viz. Supernatural Light and Knowledge.

1. THE third privilege of virtue is a particular light and wisdom God grants the just, which, like all the rest, comes from that grace we have spoken of. For as it is the business of grace to cure nature, and to heal the infirmities occasioned by sin in the appetite and will, so it enlightens the understanding, which was no less obscured by sin; to the end that man, through the one, may know his duty, and by the help of the other may put it in

execution. It is on this account St. Gregory says, in his *Morals*, "That as man's not knowing his duty is a punishment for his sins, so is his not being able to perform it when he does know it;" L. 25. c. 9. For the same reason the psalmist so often repeats, *The Lord is my light* against ignorance; *The Lord is my salvation* against the want of power. By the one we are taught what we are to desire, and we are enabled by the other to bring our desires about; but they both depend on grace. And, therefore, besides the habits of faith and of infused wisdom, which instruct us in what we are to believe, and what we are to do, there are added, the gifts of the Holy Ghost; whereof four belong to the understanding; which are, that of wisdom, to give us the knowledge of the sublimest things; that of knowledge, for those things that are lower; that of understanding, to dive into the divine mysteries, and see how beautiful they are, and how consonant to one another; and that of counsel, to direct us how to conduct ourselves amidst the difficulties so frequent to be met with in this life.

All these rays of the divine light are reflected on us by grace, which, in the Holy Scripture is called an unction or anointing: "*And this anointing*," says St. John, "*instructeth you in all things*;" 1 John ii. 20. For as oil, above all other liquid things, is good both for the nourishing of light and for the curing of wounds, so this divine unction performs both, curing the wounds of our will, and enlightening the darkness of our understanding. This is the oil more precious than any balsam, which David gloried in, when he said: "*Thou, O Lord, hast anointed my head with oil*;" Ps. xxii. 5. It is plain he speaks not here of a corporeal head, or of material oil, but of a spiritual head, which is the noblest part of our souls; and, according to Dydimus, on this text, the seat of the understanding, and of the spiritual oil, which is the light of the Holy Ghost, that feeds this lamp and keeps it in. This holy king was sensible of the light this oil gave, as he himself confesses in these words: "The uncertain and hidden things of thy wisdom thou hast manifested to me;" Ps. l. 6.

2. Another reason is, that since it is grace makes a man virtuous, and since it cannot do this without disposing him to a sorrow for his past life, to a horror of sin, to a love of God, to a desire of heavenly things, and to a contempt of the earthly, the will can never be excited to such affections unless the understanding receive a sufficient light and knowledge to produce them. For the will is a blind faculty, altogether unfit to act, unless the understanding go before, and inform it what is good or bad, that so it may, accordingly, fix or withdraw its affection. St. Thomas, to this purpose, says, "that the knowledge of God's goodness and beauty increases in the souls of the just proportionably to

the love they have for him. So that, if the one advance a hundred degrees, the other will advance as many; because he that loves much must know a great many qualities in the thing he loves which make it deserve his love; and so on the contrary;" St. Th. 2. 2. qu. 2. ar. 4. What we say of the love of God is also to be understood of fear, of hope, and of the horror of sin, which he can never have above all things, if he does not know that it is so great an evil as to deserve such hatred. For as the Holy Ghost requires all these affections to be in the soul of a just man, he expects there should be cause to occasion and produce them; even as when he designed to work different effects on the earth, he appointed there should be different causes and influences in the heavens.

3. Moreover, since, as we have said before, grace makes God dwell in the soul of a just man, and God, according to St. John (i. 9) "is a light enlightening every man that cometh into this world," it is certain, the purer and cleaner he finds this habitation, the rays of his divine light will shine the brighter on it; as a glass, the clearer it is, the brighter and the stronger it reflects the sun. St. Augustine, therefore, calls God "the wisdom of a purified soul" (Lib. 2. de Lib. Arbit.), for enlightening the soul, which is in such a state, with the rays of his light, and instructing it in what is necessary to its salvation. And what wonder that God should do this for man, since it is, in some manner, what he does for other creatures? For they, by a certain natural instinct, know all those things that are necessary for the preservation of their being. Who has taught the sheep, among so many different plants, to avoid those which are hurtful to them, and to browse on those which are not? From whom has it learned what creature is its enemy, and what its friend; and by this means to run from the wolf, and to follow the mastiff? Is it not from God? Now, if God, thus instructs the brutes, for the preserving of their natural life, how much more reason have we to think he will enlighten the just with such a knowledge as shall be necessary to the maintaining of their spiritual life, considering that man stands in no less need of those things, that are above his nature, than brutes do of such as are suitable to theirs? And if the divine providence has been so careful in providing what regards nature only, how much more solicitous will it be in furnishing us with such things as regard grace, which are infinitely more excellent, but, at the same time, far above the reach and power of man!

4. This example teaches us, not only that there is such a knowledge, but what a kind of knowledge it is, which consists not so much in the speculation as in the practice; since it is given us more for the direction of our actions than for the improvement of our understanding, and is rather to instruct us how to perform all we do virtuously than how to discourse learnedly. For this reason, it stops not at the understanding, as that knowledge we

acquire in the schools does, but communicates itself to the will, and makes it ready in the performance of whatever this knowledge inclines it to. This is the property of the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, who, like an accomplished master, perfectly instructs those under his care, in all that is requisite for them to know. And, therefore, the Spouse, in the Canticles (ch. v. 6), says, "My soul melted away when my beloved spake." Thus we may see what difference there is between this and human learning. For, whereas the one does nothing else but increase the understanding, the other, moreover, governs and excites the will, and, by its virtue, searches unto all the recesses of our souls, doing all that is necessary for the reformation of each in particular. Whereon the apostle says, "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. iv. 12); because it separates the sensual part of man from the spiritual, cutting asunder those unhappy knots which generally tie the flesh and the spirit together, when the spirit, closely contracting with the wicked flesh, becomes one with it. It is the force and efficacy of the word of God that breaks this knot, and makes man follow, not the dictates of the flesh, but of the spirit.

5. This is one of the chief effects of grace, and a particular privilege of virtuous men in this life. But, because carnal and sensual men, perhaps, can neither understand, nor will so readily believe this truth, I will make it plainly appear to them, by several passages both of the Old and New Testament. In the New, our Saviour says: "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you;" John xiv. 26. He tells us in another place (ch. vi. 45), "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught by God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me." Isa. liv. 13. He hath told us, in like manner, by his prophet Jeremy, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, KNOW THE LORD; for they shall all know me." Isa. xxxi. 33, 34. In the prophet Isaias (ch. liv. 11, 12, 13), the Lord, speaking of the prosperity of his church, uses these words: "O, thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted! Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord." He repeats the same again, elsewhere, by the same prophet: "I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldst go;" ch. xlviii. 16. By these words are understood two sorts of knowledge, that of saints, and that of wise men. It is

that of the saints which Solomon speaks of, when he says, knowledge of the holy is understanding;" Prov. ix. 10. For bare knowledge does but teach us how to know, but prudence instructs us how to act by what we know; and this is the knowledge of holy men.

6. Besides, how often shall we find this very same wisdom promised to the just, in David's Psalms. In one of them, he says, "The mouth of the righteous shall be exercised in wisdom, and his tongue will be talking of judgment;" Ps. xxxvi. 30. God, in another, makes the good man this promise: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go;" Ps. xxxi. 8. In another, as if it were a business of the greatest consequence, the prophet puts the question, saying, "What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way he shall choose;" Ps. xxiv. 12. And in the same psalm we have these words: "The salvation of the just is of the Lord;" which St. Jerome renders thus: "The Lord discovers his secrets to those that fear him, and he will show them his covenant;" that is, his holy laws are made known to them. This knowledge is a great light to the understanding, a delicious food to the will, and the greatest pleasure man can enjoy. The same prophet calls it a pasture in which God fed him; a water with which he refreshed his soul; and a table upon which were placed such meats as might strengthen him against all the power of his enemies; Ps. xxii. 2, 5. For which reason, the same prophet so frequently begs for this inward light, and for their inward instructions, in that divine psalm, which begins, "Blessed are the undefiled;" Ps. cxviii. To this end he says, in one place, "O Lord, I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies;" ver. 12. In another place, "Open thou my eyes, O Lord, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law;" ver. 18. And again, "Give me understanding, and I shall search into thy law, and I shall observe it with my whole heart;" ver. 34. This is, in fine, the petition he so often makes in this psalm. Nor would he have done it with such earnestness, had he not been very well acquainted with its efficacy, and with the manner of God's communicating the same.

7. All this being undeniably true, what greater honor can man receive, than to have such a master and such a school to go to, where the Lord himself teaches his elect this heavenly wisdom? If, as St. Jerome says, men in former times went as far as Rome, from the remotest parts of France and Spain, to see Livy, a man so renowned for his eloquence (Ep. 120, ad Paulin.); and if Apollonius, who had the false reputation of one of the wise men of his age, went to mount Caucasus, and traversed the greatest part of the world, to see Hiarchas sitting among a few scholars, on a golden throne, disputing with them on the motions of the heavens and of the planets; what should men do to hear God,

seated on the throne of their hearts, not to teach them how the heavens move, but how they themselves may move thither?

8. And, that you may not look on this doctrine as contemptible, hear the royal prophet's commendations of it; "I have more understanding than all my teachers, because thy testimonies are my meditation; I understand more than the aged, because I have sought after thy commandments;" Ps. cxviii. 99, 100. Nay, the Lord promises more than all this, by his prophet Isaias, to those that serve him. "The Lord," says he, "shall give thee rest, and shall fill thy soul with brightness, and shall set thy bones at liberty; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters should not fail;" Isa. lviii. 11. What brightness is this, wherewith God fills the souls of his servants, but the knowledge he gives them of things necessary to their salvation? For it is he that shows them how beautiful virtue is, and how deformed vice; he it is that tells them how vain a thing the world is, that informs them of the worth of grace, the greatness of eternal glory, the sweetness of those consolations which the Holy Ghost bestows, the goodness of God, the malice of the devil, the shortness of life, and the general mistake of most men. God, as the same prophet observes, by virtue of this knowledge, makes his servants dwell on high, "that they may behold the king in his beauty, and look down upon the earth that is very far off;" Isa. xxxiii. 17. Therefore, the things of this world are of so little value with them, because, besides their being generally so, they see them only at a distance; but as to the riches of the other world, they prize them at what they are worth, as having a very near view of them. The wicked, on the contrary, having a distant prospect of heavenly things, and standing so close by the earthly, undervalue those, and overrate these. This is what preserves such persons as partake of this heavenly gift from being either puffed up with prosperity, or cast down by adversity; for they, by the help of this light, see how little what the world can give them is in comparison of what they have from God. And therefore, Solomon says, "The goodly man remaineth in wisdom like the sun, but the fool is changed like the moon;" Eccclus. xxvii. 12. Upon which words St. Ambrose says, "That, as for the wise man, neither can fear move him, nor power change him; amidst his prosperity he is never proud (Epist. L. 2), nor melancholy in the midst of troubles (Ep. 7); because virtue, strength and courage are the perpetual attendants on wisdom." Such a man's soul is always in an even temper; no change makes him either greater or less; nor is he to be carried away by the winds of a new doctrine, but remains steady in Jesus Christ, immovable in his charity, unshaken in his faith.

9. Nor are we to wonder at the force of this wisdom, since it is not earthly, but heavenly; which does not puff up, but edify

which does not enlighten the understanding by its speculation, but inflames the will with its heat. Thus wonderfully was St. Augustine touched and moved, that, as is written of him, he never heard the psalms and hymns of the church sung but he wept. The words, entering in at his ears, sunk down to the very bottom of his heart, whilst the warmth of his devotion spread the truth of them throughout his whole soul. This made him break out into tears, and, according to his own confession, gave him a great deal of joy and comfort. O blessed tears! O divine school! O happy wisdom, that bears such fruit as this! Conf. L. 9. v. 24. Is there any in the world we can compare with this wisdom? Job says, "It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls, for the price of wisdom is above rubies," &c. Job xxviii. 15, 16, &c. After all these commendations, the holy man concludes: "Behold the fear of the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding;" ver. 28.

10. This is one of the greatest rewards that can be offered to excite you to follow virtue. And Solomon makes this proposal to encourage men to a good life: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." Prov. i. 5, 6. This wisdom does not always continue in the same degree, but receives a daily increase of light and knowledge, as the same wise man has hinted to us: "The part of the just," says he, "is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18); the day of this blessed eternity, wherein we shall receive the divine inspirations, I will not say, with Job's friends, by stealth, but shall have a full sight and knowledge of God himself; Job iv. 12.

11. Of this true wisdom the children of light partake, whilst the wicked, on the contrary, live in such ignorance, that like the Egyptian darkness, they may feel it with their hands. We have a lively figure of the one in the land of Jessen, where the Israelites lived, which always enjoyed the light: and of the other in the land of Egypt (Exod. x. 22, 23), which was quite covered over with darkness, a true emblem of that horrible blindness in which the wicked live, as they themselves acknowledge in Isaias, when they say, "We look for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, and we have walked in the dark. We have groped for the wall, and like the blind, we have groped as if we had no eyes; we have stumbled at noon-day as in the dark; we are in dark places as dead men." Isa. lix. 9, 10. What greater blindness than what the wicked fall into every step they take? What

greater blindness than for a man to sell the solid joys of heaven for the vanities of the world? What greater blindness than for a man not to be afraid of hell, not to seek after heaven, not to have a horror for sin, not to think of the last judgment, not to regard the threats or promises which God has made, not to be afraid of death, which may every moment surprise him, not to prepare himself for the making up of his accounts, not to see how short and momentary his delights are, whilst the torments that shall follow them are to last forever? "They will not be learned nor understand," says the royal prophet, "but walk on in darkness" (Ps. lxxxi. 5); from an inward darkness to an outward one, from the darkness of this life to that of the next.

12. I shall conclude this chapter with a word or two of advice, which is, that, notwithstanding the truth of all I have said upon this matter, a man, how just soever he is, should not on this account withdraw himself from the humble submission he owes to the opinion and counsel of those above him, especially of such as are looked upon as the doctors of the church. For was ever man more enlightened than St. Paul or Moses, who talked with God face to face? And yet one of them goes to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles on the gospel he had learned in the third heaven (Galat. ii. 1, 2); and the other refuses not the advice of Jethro his father-in-law, though a heathen; Exod. xviii. The reason is, because the inward helps of grace exclude the outward assistance of the church, since the Divine Providence has been pleased to allow them both to supply our weakness, which stands much in need of them. As, therefore, the outward heat of the air maintains the inward natural heat, and as nature, after all its care to procure the health of every particular, is assisted with such medicines as have been created for this end, so is the light and doctrine of the church a help to the inward lights and assistance of grace, and whosoever refuses with humility to submit to the authority of the one, is to be judged unworthy to receive the favors and helps of the other.

CHAPTER V.

Of the fourth Privilege of Virtue, that is, the Consolations which good Men receive from the Holy Ghost.

1. I MIGHT here very well, after having spoke of the light of the Holy Ghost, which enlightens the darkness of our understandings, count charity and the love of God, with which our wills are inflamed, as the fourth privilege of virtue, especially since the apostle accounts it the first fruit of the Holy Ghost.

But our design at present being not so much to treat of virtue itself, as of the favors granted to it, and charity being not only a virtue, but of all virtues the noblest, we shall forbear to treat of it here; not but that we might speak of it in this place, though not as of a virtue, yet as of a gift which God bestows on the virtuous, inflaming their wills in an unspeakable manner, and making them love God above all things. The more perfect this virtue grows, the pleasanter it becomes, so that we may therefore look on it as the fruit and reward, not only of the virtues, but of itself too. But not to be thought ambitious of speaking too much in commendation of this virtue, which gives us so many other occasions of speaking in its favor, I will assign the fourth place to the joy and comfort of the Holy Ghost, it being the natural property of charity itself, and one of the chief fruits of this same spirit, as St. Paul tells us, Galat. v. 22.

2. This privilege is a branch of the former; because, as we said before, this light, with which God enlightens his servants, does not stop at the understanding, but descends into the will, and there darts out the rays of its brightness, with which it entertains them, and gives them a wonderful delight in God. So that from this spiritual light comes the spiritual joy we speak of, as the material light produces the heat we perceive by our senses. This gave the royal prophet occasion to say, "Light is risen to the just, and joy to the right of heart;" Ps. xcvi. 11. We have treated on this subject elsewhere, yet we may venture to speak of it again, without any fear of repeating what we said before.

3. For the better pursuing the design of this book, we must first explain the greatness of this joy, because the knowing of this will go a great way towards making men in love with virtue. We all know, that as all kinds of miseries are included in vice, so are all kinds of delight in virtue, those excepted which the wicked complain they have not. For which reason, man being naturally a friend to pleasure, these persons tell us, by their actions at least, if not by word of mouth, that they had rather enjoy what pleases them, though at the expense of their salvation, than not to satisfy their sensual desires, though hell follows the consenting to them. Lactantius, writing on this subject, says, "that men are frightened into a flight from virtue, and charmed into a pursuit of vice, because vice has a sensible pleasure attending it;" L. 2. de Falsa Relig. c. 2. This being the rise of so many misfortunes, he that shall disabuse men of this mistake, and show them plainly that the way of virtue is much more pleasant than that of vice, must certainly be very serviceable to mankind in general. My design, therefore, is, to prove this to them by unquestionable authorities, drawn particularly from the Holy Scripture, the best proof we can bring for matters of this nature, since "heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of God shall not;" Mark xiii. 31.

4. Tell me, then, blind, deluded man! if the way to heaven be so rough and so unpleasant as you imagine it is, what means the prophet David, when he says, "O how plentiful is thy sweetness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!" Ps. xxx. 20. Here he lets us see what delights the virtuous enjoy, and why they are unknown to the wicked, because God hides them from such. What, likewise, do these words of the same prophet signify: "My soul shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall be delighted in his salvation. All my bones," that is, all the powers of my soul, "shall say, Lord, who is like to thee?" Ps. xxxiv. 9, 10. This is to teach us, that the comfort the just have is so great, that, notwithstanding it is immediately received by the spirit, it rebounds in such a manner on the flesh, that though its chief delight is in carnal things, yet, by the communication of the spirit, it is pleased with the spiritual, and places its satisfaction in God, and that with such transports of joy, that all the bones of the body being ravished with this sweetness, men are forced to cry out, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord?" What pleasures are to be compared with those we enjoy in thee? What content, what love, what peace, what delight can any creature give, like what we receive from thee? What is it again the same prophet means by his saying, "The voice of rejoicing and of salvation is in the tabernacles of the just?" (Ps. cxvii. 15) but to tell us, that true peace and pleasure are no where to be met with, but in the dwellings of the just. He says again, "Let the just feast and rejoice before God; and be delighted with gladness;" Ps. lxvii. 3. And this to show us, what spiritual feasts God often makes for the entertainment of his elect, by giving them a taste of heavenly things for the refreshment of their souls.

5. It is at these divine banquets they drink that delicious wine, the same prophet so highly commends: *They shall be inebriated*, says he, *O Lord, with the plenty of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure*; Ps. xxxv. 9. Could the prophet have used more expressive words to show how these delights even force men to a hearty love of God? For as one, that has drank a deal of wine, loses the use of his senses, and is, in that point, like a dead man; so he, that has once drank of this celestial banquet, dies to the world, and to the irregular desires of what is in it.

6. We read again, *Happy is the people, that know what jubilation is!* Ps. lxxxviii. 16. Others would perhaps have said, Happy they who roll in riches, who are enclosed with strong walls, and have their soldiers to defend them? But holy David, who had a good share of these things, terms only him *happy*, who, by experience, knows what it is to rejoice in God, and that not with an ordinary joy, but with such a one as deserves the

name of jubilation; which, according to St. Gregory, is a joy of spirit, we can neither express by words, nor discover by outward signs and actions; L. 24. Moral. c. 3. Happy they, who have made such an advance in the love of God as to have experience of this jubilation! It is a knowledge, which neither Plato, with all his wisdom, nor Demosthenes, with all his eloquence, could arrive to. For God resides in none, but in the pure and humble of heart. If, then, God be the Author of this joy, how great must it be of course, since the comforts, that come from him, are as equally proportioned to himself, as are the punishments he inflicts? If, then, he punishes with so much rigor, with what sweet delights must he fill the souls of those that love him? If his arm is so heavy, when he holds it out to chastise, how light must it be when stretched out to caress? For he is more wonderful in his works of mercy than in those of justice.

7. What cellar of rich wine is that, which the Spouse in the Canticles (ch. i. 3) boasts of her being carried into by her beloved, and of being filled there with charity and love? What noble banquet is that, which the same Spouse invites us to? *Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved*; Cant. v. 1. We look on that man to be drunk, when, having had more wine than his natural heat can digest, the vapors fly up into his head, and rendering him incapable of governing himself, force him to follow the impressions they make on his imagination. If this be so, what condition must a soul be in, that has drank so much of this heavenly wine, and is so full of God and of his love, as to be overcharged with an excess of delight and pleasure, and to be made unable, with all its force, to bear up under such a weight of happiness? So it is written of St. Ephrem, that he was so often overpowered with the strength of the wine of this divine sweetness, that his body not being able to support these delights, he was forced to cry out, "Retire from me a little, O Lord! because my body is too weak to endure the force of thy sweetness any longer;" St. John Clim. deg. 19.

8. O unspeakable goodness! O immense sweetness of this sovereign Lord! who communicates himself with such profusion to his creatures, that their bodies are too weak, and their hearts too narrow, to endure and contain the strength and fulness of such charms! It is by this celestial wine the powers of the soul are lulled to rest; it is this, that gives them a gentle slumber of peace and life; it is this, that raises the soul above herself; it is by virtue of this she knows, and loves, and enjoys such pleasures, as are far above the strength of her natural faculties. Hence it follows, that as water over a fire, when it has arrived to a certain degree of heat, forgetful, as it were, of its own quality, which is to be heavy, and consequently to tend downward, mounts upwards, borrowing the natural lightness of fire, which gives it this

extraordinary motion; so the soul, warmed with this heavenly fire, lifts herself up above herself, and, endeavoring to fly from earth to heaven, from whence this flame was darted, is transported with the desire of enjoying God; runs after him, with all the speed she can, and stretches out her hand to embrace him, whom she so passionately loves. But if she can neither overtake him, nor cool the heat of her flames, she pines and languishes under the loss of her wish, and all the comfort she has is to send up her amorous sighs to heaven, crying out with the spouse, in the Canticles (v. 8), *Tell my beloved that I languish with love.* Holy writers inform us, that these languishings proceed from the opposition the soul meets with, in the effecting of her desires. Whereon, one of them says, “Be not discouraged, O amorous soul, for thy sickness is not to death; it is for God’s glory, and that the Son of God may be glorified thereby;” St. John c. xi. 4. But what tongue can express the charms and pleasures these happy lovers enjoy, on Solomon’s stately bride-bed, *which was made of the wood of Libanus, the pillars thereof were of silver, and the bottom of gold!* Cant. iii. 9. 10. Here it is the spiritual marriage-feast is kept. It is called *a bed*, for its being a place of rest and love, and where they enjoy such pleasures that, as St. John says in his Revelation, no man can conceive how great they are, but he that has experienced them. Though the knowledge of these things be hid from us, we may nevertheless frame to ourselves some idea of them. For if a man does but consider what an excess of love the Son of God had for him, in suffering such unheard-of injuries and torments for his sake, he cannot wonder at what we now say, since it is but little when compared to this. What will he not do for the just, who has undergone so much for sinners? How will he caress and make much of his friends, who has endured such pains, as well for his enemies as for them! We have a token of this in the book of Canticles, where the heavenly bridegroom shows such a passionate tenderness to his bride, which is the church, and every particular person in the state of grace. Such amorous discourses pass there between them, that no other eloquence or love can express.

9. We may also conceive it from the just themselves, God’s true friends; for if you look into the hearts of those persons, you will find their greatest concern and desire, and the perpetual employment of their thoughts, is the service of God, and the putting themselves in a condition of doing something for him, who has done, and who continues every day to do so much for them, treating them with such sweetness and love. If, therefore, man, of himself so unfaithful, and so unable to do any good, can nevertheless be so faithful to God, what is there that God will not do for him? —God, who is infinite in his fidelity and love. If it is the property of God, as the psalmist says, *to be holy with the holy, and good*

with the good (Ps. xvii. 26), and if man can arrive to such a degree of goodness, as we have said he can, how far will the goodness of God reach? If God should vie with just men on this point, how much will he outdo them in this glorious strife? If, therefore, a good man is willing to do so much to make himself pleasing to God, what will not God do in return to comfort and please him? He will do more than we can express or conceive. For this reason the prophet Isaias says, *The ear hath not heard, neither hath the eye seen what thou, O God, hast prepared for them that wait for thee*; ch. lxiv. 4. This is to be understood, not of the goods of glory only, but, according to St. Paul (1 Cor. ii.), of those of grace too.

10. This surely may suffice to show how pleasant the way of virtue is, and that the delights of this world are not to be compared with what the just enjoy. For what comparison is there between light and darkness, Christ and Belial, between the pleasures of earth and those of heaven, the satisfactions of the flesh, and those of the spirit, the thoughts which come from the creature, and those from the Creator? It is certain the more excellent it is, the more capable it is of contenting us. What did the prophet mean else, when he said, *Better a little to the just, than the great riches of the wicked*? Ps. xxxvi. 10. And in another place: *I had rather be the abject person in the house of my God, than dwell in the tabernacles of sinners*; Ps. lxxxiii. 11. These words of the spouse, in the Canticles, teach us the same lesson: *Thy breasts are better than wine*. And a little lower: *We will be glad and rejoice in thee, remember my breasts more than wine* (Cant. i. 1, 3); that is to say, we will think of the most delicious milk of comforts, and caresses more sweet than wine, with which you feed your spiritual children at your breasts. It is certain, that neither material wine nor material milk is meant here; for by these are understood the pleasures of the world, which the lewd woman in the Apocalypse (xvii.), seated over many waters, clothed in scarlet and holding a golden cup in her hand, made the inhabitants of Babylon drunk with; thus drowning their senses, that they might be heedless of their ruin.

§ 1. *It is particularly in Prayer that the Virtuous enjoy these divine Consolations.*—11. If, on further inquiry into this matter, you should ask me, where it is particularly the virtuous enjoy these comforts, God himself will answer the question, by the prophet Isaias (ch. lvi. 6, 7): *The children of the stranger, says he, that adhere to the Lord, to worship him, and to love his name, to be his servant: every one that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it, and that holdeth fast my covenant: I will bring them into my holy mount, and make them joyful in my house of prayer*. So that it is in this holy employment particularly, that the Lord comforts his elect in such a manner. It was on this occasion, St. Laurence

Justinian said (Tract. de Ord. Lig. Vitæ), "The hearts of the just are inflamed with this love of their Creator, whilst they are at prayer. It is then they are at times raised above themselves, and imagine they are amidst the choirs of angels, singing with them in the presence of their God; it is then they love and sigh; it is then they praise, weep and rejoice; it is then they eat, and are still hungry, they drink without being satisfied, and endeavor, with all the force that love can give them, to transform themselves into their Lord, whom they contemplate by faith, whom they adore with humility, whom they desire with passion, and enjoy with the utmost heat of love. It is then they, by their own experience, find these words of his to be true: *My joy shall be fulfilled in you;*" John iii. 29. This joy, like a gentle stream, spreads itself over all the faculties of the soul; it enlightens the understanding, it pleases the will, it refreshes the memory, and makes them think of nothing but God, and they lovingly embrace what they are unacquainted with, and which yet they have such a passion for, that they had rather die than lose it. Thus the heart wrestles with this divine sweetness, lest it should get away, being the only object of its wishes, as the patriarch Jacob did with the angel; Gen. xxxii. 26. And thus, like St. Peter on the mountain, it cries out, *O Lord, it is good for us to be here;* Matt. xvii. 4. It is here the soul has all that amorous discourse, which is in the Canticles addressed to her, whilst she, on her part, sings these charming airs of love; *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. Support me with flowers, and comfort me with apples, for I languish with love.* Cant. ii. 5, 6. Then it is, the soul, inflamed with these divine heats, desires nothing more than to break out of the prison of her body, whilst her tears are her food both day and night, because the time of her enlargement is not yet come. Life is the trial of her patience, but the object of her desire is death, and, therefore, she is continually using these words of the spouse: *Who will tell me where thou art, my brother, who suckest the breast of my mother? When I shall find thee without I would kiss thee.* Cant. viii. 1. It is then she is astonished at herself, and wonders how such treasures could be hid from her so long; but finding it is a happiness which every man is capable of enjoying, she longs to run up and down in the streets and public places, and to cry out, Fools and madmen! whither do you run? what is it you are in search of? why do you not run to the possession of such a treasure as this is? *Taste and see how sweet the Lord is; happy is the man that puts his trust in him;* Ps. xxxiii. 9. When the soul has once tasted these spiritual pleasures, none carnal will please her. Company is then a restraint on her, whilst she looks on solitude as a paradise; for all her desire and comfort is, to be alone with her God whom she loves. Honors and preferments are but a burden to her, and an estate and family a torment. She would not for all

the world, no not for heaven itself, be deprived of her comforts; and, for this reason, all her endeavors are to disengage herself from the world. She has but one love, and one desire; so that, whatsoever she loves, it is for the sake of one alone, and this one she loves in all things; she knows how to cry out, with the royal prophet, *What have I, O Lord, in heaven, or what is there upon the earth that I desire besides thee? My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, God is my portion for ever* Ps. xxii. 25, 26.

12. The knowledge of holy things seems no longer obscure to a soul in this state; she sees them now with other eyes, and feels such motions and changes within, as are strong proofs of every article of faith. She thinks the day long and tedious, and the management of her temporal concerns is troublesome to her, longing till the night comes, that she may spend it in the company of her God. She never looks on the night as too long; the longest, on the contrary, are those she desires most. If they happen to be clear, with their eyes cast up to heaven, she admires its beauty and the brightness of the moon and stars, considering them quite differently from what she used to do, and much more cheerfully; she looks on them as so many marks of her Creator's beauty, and so many mirrors of his glory, as so many messengers that come to bring her news of him, as so many lively drafts of his grace and perfections, and as so many presents which the bridegroom sends his bride, to endear and make her constant to him, till he himself shall come and lead her by the hand to this happy marriage, for an eternity in heaven; she looks on the whole world as a book that treats of nothing else but of God; she regards it as a letter from her beloved, and a token of his love. These are the pleasures and delights they who love God pass the nights in; these the quiet sleeps they enjoy. For the regular motions all creatures observe, are like a harmonious concert to the soul, that makes her slumber a little, and lulls her into the gentle and soft sleep, of which it is said, *I sleep, and my heart watcheth*; Cant. v. 2. And when her dearest spouse perceives her thus at rest within his arms, he takes care not to disturb her, and gives orders that no one presumes to wake her, saying, *I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and harts of the field, that you stir not up, nor make the beloved awake, till she please*; Cant. ii. 7.

What do you think now of such nights as these? which do you imagine to be the pleasanter, these, or those of worldlings, who spend their time, lying in wait to defile innocent virgins, to rob them of their chastity, and make them lose their honor and their souls? Thus they miserably expose themselves to the hazard of their own lives, heaping up for themselves a treasure of vengeance against that day, wherein God will punish them according to the heinousness of their crimes; Rom. ii. 5.

§ II. *Of the Comforts they enjoy, who begin to serve God.*—
 13. Perhaps you will tell me such extraordinary favors as these are for none but those who have already advanced in perfection and virtue. It is true they are for them, but yet God presents even those who are but just entered into his service, with all the blessings of his consolation. He feeds them at first like children with milk, and brings them by degrees to eat more solid meats. You see how the prodigal son was entertained at his return, and welcomed home with music and feasting. This is but a representation of the spiritual joy which the soul conceives, when she sees herself escaped out of Egypt, and freed from the captivity of Pharaoh, from the slavery of the devil; Luke xv. For how can a slave, when he has got his liberty, choose but to be glad of such a benefit? What can he do less than invite all creatures to thank his deliverer with him? *Let us sing to the Lord, for he has gloriously magnified, the horse and the rider he hath thrown into the sea; Exod. xv. 1.*

14. If this were not so, where would be that providence which supplies every creature so fully, according to its nature, strength, age and capacity? For it is certain, carnal men could never be able to enter into this new road, and trample the world under foot, unless God showed them such favors. To this end, his divine providence takes care, as soon as ever it has determined to disengage them from the world, so to smooth and plain the way that they meet with no rubs to make them stumble. This is admirably represented to us by God's leading the children of Israel into the land of promise, whereof Moses gives us this relation: *When Pharaoh had sent out the people, the Lord led them not by way of the land of the Philistines, which is near, thinking lest perhaps they would repent, if they should see wars rise against them, and would return into Egypt; Exod. xiii. 17.* The same Lord who took such care to conduct the Israelites into the land of promise, after he had brought them out of Egypt, takes no less at present, to bring those to heaven, whom he is pleased to call to this happiness, after having made them quit the world.

15. But I would have you to conceive, that though such as have arrived to perfection in virtue are caressed after a particular manner, yet, God is so good to beginners, that, considering their poverty, he helps them forward in the new way they have undertaken, and perceiving they are still exposed to temptations of sin, and have passions to overcome, he gives them, imperfect as they are, so much comfort, that their joy does not fall short of what they possess, who are advanced much further. This he does for no other end, but to give them an entire victory over all their inordinate appetites, to make them break off with their own flesh, to wean them from the milk, that is, from the weak delights of this world, and to tie them to him with such strong bonds of love, that

they may never be able to break loose. If this does not convince you, consider what God has been pleased to signify to us by the feasts of the Old Testament, where he commanded the first and last day to be observed with an equal solemnity. As for the six days which were between them, they were no more than the ordinary days of the week, but these two they always kept with much greater veneration. What can this be but a figure of what we are now treating? He ordered the first day to be kept solemnly, as well as the last, to give us to understand that he makes much of those who serve him in the beginning of their conversion, as well as those who have attained the utmost perfection. This he does in consideration of what these have deserved, and of what those stand in need of, dealing with the one according to the rules of his justice, by giving them what their virtue has deserved, and treating the other according to the dictates of his grace and mercy, by bestowing on them much more than they have deserved, on account of their necessities.

16. We are never more taken with the sight of trees, than when they are in their flourishing condition, and their fruit is ripe. The day of betrothing and the wedding-day are always devoted to mirth and festivity. Almighty God, on the return of a soul to him, betroths her to himself; and when he marries her, he is at all the charges of the wedding-feast, which he makes according to his estate and ability, not according to the deserts and quality of his spouse; and, to that purpose he says, *Our sister is little, and hath no breasts* (Cant. viii. 8), and, therefore, she must live on another's milk. The bride, speaking to her bridegroom, tells him, *The young maidens have loved thee*; Cant. i. 2. She does not say *the maidens*, which are those souls that have made a considerable progress in virtue, but those who are not of so ripe an age, that is, such as have but just opened their eyes to this new light. These, says she, have an ardent love for thee. For young lovers do usually express their passion with the greatest force and heat. This is what St. Thomas tells us, when, among several other reasons, he alleges this, that the newness of the state, of the love, of the light, and of the knowledge of divine things discovers those beauties to them, which they never perceived before; filling them with admiration, giving them at the same time a particular delight, and teaching them what returns they are to make him who has so kindly restored them their sight, after they had been so long blindfolded and in the dark. When a man first comes into any great town or noble place, he walks up and down for some time, and is pleased with what he sees; but having satisfied his curiosity with the frequent sight, he is less taken with it than he was before, nor does he admire it so much. Thus stands the case with those who first came into this new country of grace, for they are surprised to find such wonderful things. So that if

is not to be admired, that beginners in devotion should feel more fervor in their souls, than old practitioners; for the newness of the light and of their understanding divine mysteries, causes greater sensations in them. This, as St. Bernard remarks (Serm. 14. in Cant.), is the reason why the prodigal son's elder brother was not in the wrong, when he complained to his father, and told him, that for his so many years' service, without ever disobeying the least of his commands, he had never shown him so much favor, as he had done this extravagant, lewd son at his return home. This new love, like new wine, ferments at first, and as water over a fire boils up as soon as it feels the heat it never felt before; the flame, after these first sallies, grows more strong and equal, though in the beginning it is more violent and impetuous.

17. God entertains those, who enter anew into his house, with a deal of kindness and love: he bears all their charges at first, and makes every thing seem light and easy; he deals with them as traders do with their customers, who give samples of their wares gratis, but will have their full price for what they sell. The affection we show little children is usually more tender, though perhaps not greater, than what we show those who are of riper years. We carry those up and down in our arms, but let these go by themselves; and whilst these are laboring and toiling, we lay those to sleep, and let them take their rest; without giving them the trouble of asking for their meat, we feed them ourselves, and put their victuals into their mouths.

It is this kind reception new beginners find with God, and the manifest favors he shows them, which occasions that spiritual joy and comfort the royal prophet speaks of: *The young plant shall flourish with thy drops*; Ps. lxiv. 11. Now, what is this plant, and what these drops, but the dew of the divine grace with which God waters these spiritual young plants, which he has lately dug up from amongst the wild brambles of the world, and set in his own garden? These are the plants which the prophet means, when he says, *They shall rejoice in drops*; Ibid. This shows how great the joy of such persons is at their first receiving this new visit. Nor are you to think that, because these favors are called but *drops*, they have no more in them than their name seems to promise: "For (as St. Augustine says) he that drinks of the river of paradise, one drop of which is more than all the ocean, is sure, though he drink but one single drop, it will quench his thirst forever."

18. If, when you think of God, you are sensible of these comforts, it is no argument against what has been said. For if the palate, when it is out of taste by any bad humor, cannot distinguish what is bitter from what is sweet, but judges what is sweet to be bitter; what wonder is it if your soul, corrupted with so

many vices and irregular affections, and which longs so earnestly after the flesh-pots and onions of Egypt, should not relish the manna of heaven and the bread of angels? Wash your mouth first clean with the tears of penance, and then you will be able *to taste and see how sweet the Lord is*; Ps. xxxiii. 9.

What I have said being so undeniably true, is there any pleasure in the world to compare with these? Holy writers tell us there are two sorts of happiness; the one, a happiness that is but begun; the other, complete and perfect; the latter the blessed above enjoy, and just men here on earth the former. What, therefore, can you desire better than from this very moment to begin to be happy, and even in this life, to receive the pledges of that divine marriage, which is to be solemnized in heaven, though it be proposed here but at a distance? O mortal man! whosoever you are, since it is in your own power to live in paradise, and to enjoy such treasure, go and sell your all, to purchase so great an estate for so small a sum. It is Jesus Christ will sell it, and he will let you have it, in a manner, for nothing. Do not defer the opportunity any longer, for every moment lost is of more concern than all the riches of the world. And though you may perhaps meet with an occasion of purchasing it hereafter, assure yourself yet the time you shall have lost will be a trouble to you, and will force you to cry out with tears, as did St. Augustine, "O ancient goodness! it is too late I have known thee;" Solil. c. 31. The lateness of this glorious saint's conversion, though he failed not of his crown, was the perpetual subject of his complaints and tears. Have a care, therefore, lest it should be your misfortune to deplore the loss of both, if you should be deprived of the benefits of glory, the inheritance of the saints in the next life, and of those of grace, the reward of the just in this.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the fifth Privilege of Virtue, viz. the Peace of Conscience, which the Just enjoy, and of the inward Remorse that torments the Wicked.

1. BESIDES the joy proceeding from the consolations of the Holy Ghost, there is another attends the just, which is the testimony of a good conscience. For the understanding of the nature and value of this privilege, you are to conceive that the divine providence, which has furnished all creatures with as much as is necessary for their preservation and perfection, being willing that the rational creature should be most perfect, has supplied it with all that was requisite for this purpose. And because the

perfection of this creature consists in the perfection of its will and understanding, which are the two principal powers of the soul, the one made perfect by knowledge, and the other by virtue; therefore, he created the principles of all sciences, whence the conclusions flow, and the seed of all virtues in the soul, endowing it with a propensity to good, and aversion to evil, which inclination is so natural and prevalent, that though a long habit of ill life may weaken, yet it can never totally destroy it. Thus we read, that, amidst all holy Jacob's misfortunes, there was always a servant escaped to bring him the news; even so he that sins is never forsaken, by that faithful servant, conscience, who still escapes alive and safe, to show the wicked man what he lost by sin, and the miserable estate he is reduced to.

This plainly demonstrates how vigilant Divine Providence is, and its love for virtue, since it has furnished us with a monitor, that never sleeps, a continual preacher, that is never silent, and a master and tutor, that never ceases guiding and directing us. Epictetus, the Stoic, was very sensible hereof, when he said, "that as fathers are wont to commit their young children to some careful tutor, who will diligently divert them from vice, and lead them to virtue, so God, as our Father, after creating, put us into the hands of this natural virtue, called conscience, as it were of a tutor, that it might still put us forward in the way of goodness, and check us in wickedness."

3. Now this conscience, as it is a master and tutor to the good, so it is an executioner and scourge to the wicked, inwardly punishing and accusing them of the ills they do, and mixing such bitterness among their delights, that they have no sooner tasted the Egyptian onion, but their eyes presently begin to water. This is one of the punishments wherewith God threatens the wicked by the mouth of Isaias, saying, "He will deliver Babylon into the power of the hedgehog." For God's justice delivers the heart of a wicked man, signified by Babylon, to the hedgehogs, that is, the devils, and to the pricks of conscience that attend sin, which, like sharp thorns, pierce the heart. If you would know what these thorns are, one is the deformity and hideousness of sin, which is so abominable of itself, that a philosopher was wont to say, "If I knew the gods would forgive me, and men should know nothing of it, yet I could not dare commit sin, because of its own deformity." Another thorn is, when the sin is prejudicial to another, for then it appears like that blood of Abel spilt, which cried to God, and craved revenge. Thus it is written, in the first book of Maccabees, that king Antiochus had a full view of the mischiefs he had done in Jerusalem, which so afflicted him that it hastened his death, and being ready to expire, he said, "I remember the evils that I did in Jerusalem, from whence also I took away all the spoils of gold

and silver that were in it, and I sent to destroy the inhabitants of Judea without cause, I know, therefore, that for this cause these evils found me; and behold I perish with great grief in a strange land." Another thorn is, the shame that attends sin, which the sinner cannot be ignorant or insensible of, because it is natural for man to desire to be beloved, and to be troubled at being hated: for, as a wise man said, "There is no greater torment in the world than public hatred." Another thorn is the inevitable fear of death, the continual uncertainty of life, the apprehension of the strict account that must be given of every action, and the dreadful horror of eternal torments; for each of these things pricks and gores the sinner's heart in such a manner, that he can never think of this death, so certain on one hand, so uncertain on the other, without being extremely concerned, as the book of Ecclesiasticus says, because he is sensible that day will take vengeance of all his crimes, and put an end to all his sinful pleasures, it is impossible for any man to put this thought out of his mind, because there is nothing more natural to man than death is, and, therefore, the least indisposition fills him with a thousand fears and doubts whether he shall die or no; for the excess of self-love, added to so violent a passion as fear is, make him afraid of every shadow, and puts him into a concern and apprehension where there is not the least ground for it: so that if any mortality should happen, any earthquakes, or thunder and lightning, the sinner is immediately disturbed by his conscience, and fancies that God sends all this to punish his iniquities.

4. All these thorns gore the wicked at once, as one of holy Job's friends declares at large, whose words I will add, as a clearer proof of what I have asserted: "The wicked man," says he, "spends his whole life in pride, notwithstanding that he is uncertain how soon his tyranny may be put to an end. The noises of fear and terror are continually rattling in his ears" (Job xv. 20, 21, 22), which are nothing but the cries of his guilty conscience, accusing and reproaching him every moment; and in the very midst of peace, he is afraid of the snares and treacheries of his enemies: because, let him live ever so quiet, his wicked conscience never fails of putting him into continual apprehensions. He cannot persuade himself that he can possibly return from darkness to the light; that is to say, he does not believe there is any possibility of his getting out of the dreadful darkness he lives in, to enjoy the tranquillity of a good conscience, which, like a comfortable and clear light, rejoices and enlightens the most secret parts of the soul; for which way soever he turns himself, he fancies he sees a naked sword pointed at him; so that, even whilst he is at table, which is, generally speaking, a place of mirth and joy, he is racked with all kinds of fears, distrusts and jealousies, "and imagines he is just beginning the

day of darkness" (ver. 23), that is, the day of death and judgment, and on which his last sentence is to be passed on him. "He shall be frightened with tribulation, and surrounded on all sides with misery, as a king is with his guards, when he is going into the field of battle;" ver. 24. This is the description which Job's friend gives of the dreadful torments those unhappy wretches suffer within; for to make use of the saying of a philosopher, "God, by his eternal law, has ordained that fear should be the constant companion of the wicked;" which agrees very well with the sentence of Solomon, who says, "that the wicked man fleeth, when no man pursueth; but the just, bold as a lion, shall be without dread;" Prov. xxviii. 1. St. Augustine has the same thing, in short, when he says, "Thou, O Lord! hast commanded, that every soul that is irregular should be its own executioner, and we find that it is so;" St. Aug. L. 1. Conf. c. 12. There is nothing in nature that does not convince us of this truth; for can you tell me of any thing in the world which is not disturbed when out of its order? what sensible pain a man feels if he has but a bone out of joint? what violence does the element suffer which is out of its centre? and what sickness does not follow when the humors of our bodies are out of their due proportion and temperament? Since, therefore, it is so natural to a rational creature to live a regular, orderly life, how can its nature choose, but suffer and be uneasy when life is irregular, and contrary to reason? Job had a deal of reason to say, "Was there ever any man that resisted God, and yet lived in peace?" Job ix. 4. Upon which words, St. Gregory says "that the order in which God has disposed of all things for the continuing and preserving of them in their being, is no less the matter of our admiration than the power with which he has created them;" St. Greg. Moral. L. 9. c. 12. Whence it follows that no one can disturb the order of the Creator, without breaking that peace which he has intended should be the effect of this order: because it is impossible for any thing to be at rest when it is out of the place where God had put it. And thus we see, that those things which were undisturbed, whilst they submitted to the order of God, no sooner break off from this subjection than they lose the peace they enjoyed before. We have an example hereof in our first parents and the fallen angels, who, as soon as ever they disobeyed the will of God, to follow their own, and went out of the order he had put them in, were deprived of their former happiness, and lost that content they had before. And man, who, whilst he continued obedient, was absolute over himself, when he cast off that obedience, found a war and rebellion within himself.

5. This is the torment the wicked, by God's just judgment, are perpetually racked with, and of the greatest miseries they

can suffer in this life, according to the opinions of all the saints, amongst whom St. Ambrose, in his Book of Offices, asks, "Is there any greater torment in the world than the inward remorse of a man's own conscience? Is it not a misery we ought to fly more than death itself or the loss of our estates, our health, or our liberty?" L. iii. c. 4. And St. Isidore tells us, "There is nothing in nature which man cannot fly from but himself; for let him run where he will, he will still carry the sting of his own wicked conscience along with him;" St. Isid. in St. L. ii. c. 36. The same saint says, in another place, "The greatest punishment that can be inflicted is that of an evil conscience; if, therefore, you desire to live in peace, follow virtue and piety;" Idem, L. ii. Sinom. c. 36. This is so undeniable a truth, that the very heathen philosophers themselves acknowledged it, though they neither knew nor believed any thing of those pains, which our faith teaches us the wicked are to suffer; and, therefore, Seneca asks, "What avails it to fly from the conversation of others? A good conscience calls all the world to witness for it, whilst a bad one is always tormented, though in the midst of a desert. If what you do be good, you need not be ashamed to let the whole world know it; but if, on the contrary, it be bad, what matter is it whether any body knows it or not, as long as you know it yourself? Your condition will be miserable if you take no notice of such an evidence, since every man's own conscience is as good as a thousand witnesses." Sen. Epist. 97. The same author tells us, in another place, "That the severest punishment which can be inflicted for any crime is, the very committing of it;" Epist. 98. And he repeats the same elsewhere, saying, "If you have been guilty of any crime, you ought not to fear any witness that can come against you so much as your own self, because you may find out some means or other to fly from every body else, but you will never be able to fly from yourself, for every wicked action you do is its own executioner;" Epist. 45. Cicero has something to the same purpose, in one of his orations, where he says, "There is nobody so able as a man's own conscience is, either to cast or to acquit him; and, therefore, an innocent man is never afraid, whilst the guilty lives always in apprehensions." St. Isid. in St. L. ii. c. 36. This, therefore, is one of those torments which the wicked are never free from: it begins in this life, and will remain for all eternity in the next: it is the never-dying worm, as Isaias (lxvi. 24) calls it, that shall never cease to gnaw the consciences of the wicked. And it is in this sense St. Isidore interprets those words of the Psalmist (Ps. xli. 8): "One abyss calls upon another; that is," says he, "the wicked shall be carried from the sentence which their own consciences pass against them, to that of eternal damnation;" St. Isid. in Sent. L. ii. c. 26.

§ 1. *Of the Peace of Conscience which the Virtuous enjoy.*—Virtuous men are free from this plague, because they are never tormented with the stings of a bad conscience, but, on the contrary, enjoy the comforts they receive from the sweet fruits of virtue, which the Holy Ghost has planted in their souls, as in an earthly paradise and a private garden in which he delights. So St. Augustine terms it in his book on Genesis, where he says, “The joy a good conscience gives a virtuous man is a true paradise” (Tom. iii. Lib. 12. de Gen. ad lit. c. 34); and this is the reason why the church is called a paradise full of all kinds of graces and innocent pleasures for those who live justly, piously and temperately. And the same saint, in his Method of instructing the Ignorant, has these words: “You who seek after that true peace which is promised to Christians after death, assure yourself that it is to be found amongst the bitter troubles and pains of this life, if you will but love him that has made you this promise, and will keep his commandments; for you will soon find, by your own experience, that the fruits of justice are much sweeter than those of iniquity; and you will meet with a much more solid satisfaction from a good conscience, amidst all your afflictions and tribulations, than a bad conscience would ever let you take, though in the very midst of delights and pleasures;” Lib. de Catech. rud. Hitherto the words of the saint, which gives us to understand that this comfort is of the nature of honey, which is not only sweet itself, but makes those things so, though of themselves unsavory, that it is mixed with; so a good conscience brings so much peace along with it, that it makes the most painful life sweet and easy. And as we have said that the foulness and enormity of sin are of themselves a torment to the wicked, so, on the contrary, the beauty and worth of virtue, without any thing else, are comforts to the good: it is what the holy prophet David expressly teaches us, when he says, *The judgments of the Lord* (that is, his holy commandments) *are true, justified in themselves. They are more to be desired than gold and many precious stones, and are sweeter than honey and the honey-comb.* Ps. xviii. 10, 11. This holy prophet, who had tasted how sweet they were, took no greater pleasure in any thing than in the observance of them, as he tells us himself in another psalm, where he says, *I have taken pleasure in the way of your commandments, as if they had been the greatest riches in the world;* Ps. cxviii. 14. His son Solomon, in his book of Proverbs, is of the same opinion; for he says, *It is a pleasure to a just man to do justice* (Prov. xxi. 15); that is, to act virtuously, and to do his duty. Though there are several causes for this joy, yet it proceeds chiefly from the bare splendor and brightness of virtue, which, according to Plato, is most incomparably fair and beautiful. In fine, the advantages and delights which a good conscience brings are such, that St. Ambrose, in

his Book of Offices, makes the happiness of the just in this life depend on it; and, therefore, he says, "The brightness of virtue is so great, that the peace of conscience and the assurance of our own innocence are enough to make our lives pleasant and happy;" St. Amb. L. ii. de Off. c. 1.

The ancient philosophers were no less acquainted, by the bare light of nature, with the comfort that proceeds from a good conscience, than they were with the disturbances which attended a bad one; as we may see by Cicero, who, in his Tusculan Questions, says thus: "The life which is spent in actions of honor and virtue is accompanied with so much satisfaction and pleasure, that they who pass away their time thus, either never feel any trouble at all, or, if they do, it is very light and insignificant;" L. S. Tuscus. He repeats almost the same thing in another place, and says, "That virtue can find no theatre, either more public or more honorable, than the testimony of a good conscience;" Id. Ibid. Socrates, being asked who could live free from passion, immediately made answer, "A virtuous man." And Bias, another famous philosopher, being asked who, in this world, was free from fears and apprehensions, answered, "A good conscience." Seneca, in one of his Epistles, writes thus: "A wise man is always cheerful, and his cheerfulness comes from a good conscience;" Epist. 23. So that you see how these philosophers were of the same opinion in this matter with Solomon, who says, *All the days of the poor man are evil; that is to say, tedious and troublesome; but a secure mind is a perpetual feast;* Prov. xv. 14. It is impossible for man to say more in a few words: by which we are to understand that, as he who is invited to a feast is pleased with a variety of dishes, and with the company of his friends that are invited, so the just man is delighted with the testimony of a good conscience, and with the sweetness of the divine presence, having such good ground to believe that God is in his soul. But yet there is this difference between these delights, that the pleasure a man has in a feast is but earthly, and transitory; whereas this other is heavenly, eternal and noble. The one begins with hunger, and ends with distaste and loathing; but the other begins with a virtuous life, is preserved and continued by perseverance, and ends with eternal honor and glory. Now, if the philosopher, who had no hopes of any reward after his life, had such an esteem for the pleasure which a good conscience gives, at what rate ought a Christian to value it, who knows very well what rewards God has prepared for him in the next life, and with what favors he honors him even in this? And though this assurance ought not to be quite void of a holy and religious fear, yet this is such a fear as does not dismay, but rather strengthens him that has it, after a wonderful manner; because it tells him inwardly, that his confidence is then more

secure and profitable, when it is tempered with, and kept in awe by, this wholesome fear, and that, if he had no fear at all, it would no longer be a confidence, but false security and presumption.

You see here another privilege which the virtuous enjoy, and which the apostle speaks of, when he says, *Our glory is the testimony of our conscience*, that we have lived in simplicity of heart, and in true sincerity, not according to the wisdom of the world; 2 Cor. i. 12.

This is almost all that is to be said of the greatness of this privilege; but neither what I have said, nor what I am able to say, can discover its excellence to him that has never had any experience of it; for how can any one explain the deliciousness of a meat to any one who has never tasted it? This joy is, in effect, so great, that often, when a virtuous man is afflicted, and can find no ease which way soever he casts his eyes, yet if he but reflect on himself, he is immediately comforted with the consideration of the peace and quiet he finds in his own conscience. For he knows, that as for the rest, let it go which way it will, it is no matter to him; this is the only thing he has to look after. And though, as I have said already, he cannot have an evident knowledge of his innocence, nevertheless, as the sun, in a morning, enlightens the world before we see it, by its advance towards us, so the testimony which a good conscience gives a just man, is a comfort to his soul, though this knowledge is not sufficiently clear and evident. This is so true, that St. Chrysostom, speaking of the same thing, says, "Let a man be ever so melancholy, if he have but a good conscience, all his trouble vanishes like a spark of fire that is extinguished when it falls into a great river;" Hom. 10. in 2. ad Corinth. c. 3. & Hon. 54. in Matt. c. 16.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the sixth Privilege of Virtue, viz. the Hopes the Just have in God's Mercy, and of the vain Confidence of the Wicked.

1. THE comfort of a good conscience is always accompanied with that particular hope virtuous men live in: of which the apostle says, *That they comfort themselves up with hopes, and are patient in their tribulations* (Rom. xii. 12); advising us to make our hope the subject of our joy, and, in virtue of the same, to suffer with patience whatever crosses may happen, assuring us that God himself is our assistance, and the reward of our sufferings. This is one of the greatest treasures of a Christian life: these are the riches, this the inheritance of the children of God; it is the com-

mon haven against all the storms of this life, and the best remedy we have against all our miseries.

2. But not to deceive ourselves, we must observe here, that, as there are two sorts of faith, the one, a dead faith, which performs no actions of life, and is that which bad Christians have; the other, a lively one, the effect of charity, by which the just perform the actions of life; so there are two sorts of hope, the one a dead hope, which neither enlivens the soul, nor assists her in her operations, nor comforts her in her troubles; such a hope as the wicked have; the other is a *lively hope*, as St. Peter calls it (1 Pet. i. 3), because it produces the effects of life, as those things do which have life in them; that is, because it encourages, enlivens and strengthens us, in our way to heaven, and gives us breath and confidence amidst all the dangers and troubles of this world. Such a hope as this the chaste Susanna had, of whom we read (Dan. xiii. 42, 43), that after she was condemned to die, and as they were leading her through the streets, to be stoned to death, yet her heart trusted and confided in God. David had such a confidence, when he said, *Be mindful, O Lord, of thy word to thy servant, in which thou hast given me hope. This hath comforted me in my humiliation; because thy word hath enlivened me.* Ps. cxviii. 49, 50.

3. This hope works many and very wonderful effects in the souls of those who are filled with it; and that in a greater measure, by how much the more it partakes of charity and the love of God, which gives it life. The first of these effects is to encourage man to continue in the way of virtue; in hopes of the reward he is to receive; for as all the saints testify, the surer man is of his reward, the more willing he is to run through all the miseries of this world. St. Gregory says, "Hope is so strong, as to be able to lift up our hearts to the joys of heaven, and to make us quite insensible to the miseries of this mortal life;" Moral. l. xvi. c. 13. Origen says, "The hope of future glory gives those persons much ease, who are toiling in this life for obtaining it; as we see the hopes of victory, and of reward, mitigate the pains of the wounds the soldier receives in war." St. Ambrose says, "An assured hope of reward makes toil seem less, and lessens the apprehensions of dangers;" St. Ambr. in Ps. xii. St. Jerome says, "Any labor seems light and easy, when we put a value on the reward; because the hopes of what we are to receive make us think there is no trouble in what we have undertaken;" Epist. ad Demet. c. 9. St. Chrysostom is much fuller on this matter: "If," says he, "a tempestuous sea is not able to frighten seamen, if the hard frosts and violent rains of winter are no discouragements to the husbandman, if neither wounds nor death itself can daunt the soldier, and if neither falls nor blows can dishearten the wrestler, whilst they think of the deceitful hopes of what they

propose to themselves for the reward of their toils and labors; how much less ought they, who aspire to the kingdom of heaven, to take any notice of the difficulties they may meet with in their journey thither? Therefore, O Christian, consider not that the way of virtue is rugged and uneven, but reflect on what it will lead you to; and do not, on the contrary, falsely persuade yourself, that the path of vice is smooth and pleasant, but think of the precipice it will bring you to." St. Chrys. Hom. 18. in Genes. O, how true is every word this great saint speaks! for will any man be so mad, as willingly to follow a path that is strewn with flowers, if he is to die when he comes to the end of it? And who is there that will refuse to take another that is rugged and uneasy, if it leads to life and happiness?

4. Nor does this hope serve only for attaining so happy an end, but assists us in the means that tend to it, and in bearing with all the miseries and necessities of this life. For it is this that supports a man in tribulation, that defends him in danger, that comforts him in afflictions, that assists him in sickness, and supplies all his necessities and wants, because it is by means of this virtue that he obtains mercy from God, who helps us on all occasions. We have evident proofs of this throughout the Holy Scripture, but particularly in the Psalms; so that there is scarce any one of them wherein the royal prophet does not highly commend this virtue, and speak of its wonderful effects and advantages, as being, without doubt, one of the greatest treasures and comforts the virtuous can possibly enjoy in this life. To prove this, I will make use of a few passages of the Scriptures, but shall be forced to pass by many more than I can be able to quote. The prophet Hanani tells king Asa, *The eyes of the Lord behold all the earth, and give strength to them that with a pure heart trust in him*; 2 Paral. xvi. 9. The prophet Jeremias says, *The Lord is good to those that hope in him, and to the soul that seeks after him*. And in another place it is said, that *the Lord is good, he strengthens his servants in the day of tribulation, and knows all those that hope in him* (Nahum i. 7); that is, he takes care to relieve and assist them. Isaias says, *If you will return to me, and rest in me, you shall be safe; your strength shall be in silence and hope*; Isa. xxx. 15. By *silence* is to be understood here, the inward rest which the soul enjoys amidst all her troubles: now this rest is nothing else but the particular effect of this hope, which banishes all kind of solicitude and immoderate trouble by the favor it expects from the mercy of God. The book of Ecclesiasticus says (ii. 8, 9, 11), "You who fear the Lord, put your trust in him, and you shall not lose your reward. You who fear the Lord, hope in him, and his mercy will be your delight and comfort. Consider, O ye children, all the nations of the world, and know that nobody ever yet hoped in the Lord and has been confounded." Solomon's

advice to us, in his Proverbs, is this: "In all your ways think of the Lord, and he will direct all your steps;" Prov. iii. 6. The prophet David says, in one of his psalms, "Let those who know thy name, O Lord, hope in thee, because thou hast never forsaken those that seek thee;" Ps. ix. 11. And in another psalm, he says, "I have put my hope, O Lord, in thee, and therefore I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy;" Ps. xxx. 7, 8. And in another place he says, "Mercy shall surround him that puts his trust in the Lord;" Ps. xxxi. 10. He has much reason to say, *shall surround*, to let us know that he shall be surrounded on all sides with this mercy as a king is with his guards, for the security of his person. He treats this subject more at large in another psalm, where he says, "With expectation I have waited for the Lord, and he was attentive to me. And he heard my prayers and brought me out of the pit of misery, and out of the mud which I stuck in. And he set my feet upon a rock, and directed my steps. And has put a new canticle into my mouth, a song to our God. Many shall see this, and shall fear, and they shall hope in the Lord. Blessed is the man whose trust is in the name of the Lord; and who has turned his eyes from vanities and deceitful follies." Ps. xxxix. 1—7. From these words we may learn another extraordinary effect of this virtue, which is to open a man's mouth and eyes, that he may be sensible, by his own experience, of the fatherly tenderness of God, and may sing a new song with a new delight, for the new favor he has received, to wit, the assistance he hoped for. If we were to cite all the verses in the Psalms, nay, and all the entire psalms that treat on the subject, we should never have done; for the whole psalm which begins, "They who trust in the Lord are like Mount Sion," is to this purpose; Ps. cxxiv. Heb. cxxv. And so is the psalm which begins, "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High;" Ps. xc. Heb. xci. They neither of them speak of any thing else but the extraordinary advantages of those who put their trust in God, and live under his protection. For this reason, St. Bernard, writing on these words of the psalm, "O Lord, thou art my refuge," speaks thus: "Whatever I am to do, or whatever I am to omit, whatever I am to suffer, or whatever I am to desire, you, O Lord, are my hope. It is this hope that makes you perform every thing you have promised, and it is you that are the chief cause of this hope of mine. Let another allege the good works he has done, and please himself with having undergone all the heat and burthen of the day; let him say, with the Pharisee, that he has fasted twice a week, and that he is not as other men; I, for my part, will cry out with the prophet, *It is good for me to cleave to the Lord, and to put my trust in God*; Ps. lxxii. 28. If any one promises me a reward, it is by your mercy alone that I shall hope to obtain it: if any one should make war against me,

my hopes of overcoming shall be in you. Should the world set on me, should the devil roar at me, should the flesh rebel against the spirit, I will hope in none but you. Since, therefore, the Lord is alone able to assist us, why do we not banish immediately out of our hearts all these vain and deceitful hopes? And why do not we, with fervor and devotion, stick to so secure a hope as this is?" The saint, immediately after, has these words; "Faith says, God has laid up inestimable benefits for those that serve him faithfully; but Hope says, it is for me that keeps them; and as if this were not enough, Charity cries out, I will hasten and take possession of them;" St. Bern. Serm. 9. Ps. xc. 2.

5. Behold how advantageous this virtue is, and how necessary on several occasions. It is like a secure haven which the just put in at in bad weather; it is like a strong shield to keep off the attempts of the world; it is like a magazine of corn in time of famine, whither the poor resort to relieve their wants; it is the tent and shade which God promises his elect, by the prophet Isaias, to shelter them from the burning heats of summer, and from the storms and tempests of winter; that is, from the prosperity and adversity of this world. To conclude, it is a universal remedy for all our evil, because it is certain that whatsoever we hope with justice, faith and prudence to receive from God, we shall not fail of obtaining it, provided it is for our good. For which reason, St. Cyprian says, "that God's mercy is a fountain of healing waters, that hope is a vessel to receive them, and that the cure will be proportioned to the largeness of the vessel; for if we consider the fountain, it is impossible it should ever be dried up." So that as God himself told the children of Israel (Josu. i. 3), that whatever place they did but so much as set their foot on, it should be theirs; so, as much mercy as man shall put his confidence in, shall be his own. So that, according to this, he who, inspired by God, shall hope for all things, shall accordingly obtain all things. Thus, this hope seems to be a resemblance of the divine virtue and power which redounds to the honor of God. For, as St. Bernard very well observes, "nothing so much discovers the omnipotence of God, as that we see he is not only almighty himself, but that he in some manner makes all those so who hope in him;" Serm. 85. in Cant. Did not Josue partake of that omnipotence, who from the earth commanded the sun to stand still in the firmament? Josu. x. 13. Nor was his power less, who bid king Ezechias choose which he would, either to have the sun go back or advance so many degrees; 4 Kings xx. 9, 11; Isa. xxxviii. 8. It is his giving his servant such power as this, that promotes the greatness of his glory in a particular manner; for if Nebuchodonosor, the great king of the Assyrians, valued himself on having so many princes to obey and serve him, that were kings as well as he, how much more reason has Almighty God to glorify

himself, and say that those who serve him are in some measure gods, inasmuch as he communicates so much of his power to them.

§ I. *Of the vain Hopes of the Wicked.*—6. You see here what a vast treasure the virtuous enjoy, whilst the wicked have no share of it; because, though they have not entirely lost all hope, yet what they have is only a dead one; because it is deprived of its life, so that it cannot work any of those effects on them which we have spoken of. For as nothing enlivens hope so much as a good conscience, so nothing ruins it more than a bad one, because it generally walks in dread and fear, as being sensible how unworthy it is of the Almighty's grace. So that distrust and fear are the inseparable companions of a bad conscience, as the shadow is of the body. By which it appears, that such as man's happiness is, such is his confidence; for as he places his happiness in worldly treasures, so his trust is in them, because all his glory is in them, and it is to them he has recourse in time of affliction. The Book of Wisdom takes notice of this kind of hope; where it is said, that "the hope of the wicked is like a flock of wool, which is blown away by the wind, and like a light foam which is scattered by the waves, and like a cloud of smoke which vanishes in the air;" ch. v. 15. Judge by this how vain such a hope must be.

7. Nor is this all; for it is not only an unprofitable but a prejudicial and deceitful hope, as God himself has declared to us by the prophet Isaias, saying, "Wo to you, children, that have forsaken your Father, who have taken counsel, but not of me, who have begun a web, but not in my spirit, that you might add sin to sin. You have sent into Egypt for help without consulting me, expecting help from Pharaoh's forces, and putting your trust in the protection of Egypt. But Pharaoh's strength shall turn to your confusion, and the trust which you placed in Egypt's protection shall be to your disgrace. All those that have trusted in the people have been confounded, because they could neither help them nor do them any good; on the contrary, they have put them to greater shame and confusion." Isa. xxxi. 1, 3. These are the prophet's own words, who, not thinking that he has said enough, yet continues in the next chapter to make the same reproach to them, saying, "Wo to those that go down for help into Egypt, placing their trust in their horses, and confiding in their chariots, because there are many, and in their horses, because they are very strong, who have not their hope in the Holy of Israel, nor sought after the Lord. For the Egyptian is a man and no God, and their horses are flesh and not spirit; and the Lord will stretch out his hand, and both he that assists and he that assisted shall fall, and they shall be all destroyed together." Isa. xxxi. 1, 3.

8. See here the difference there is between the hope of the

just and that of the wicked ; for the hope the wicked have is that of the flesh ; but the spirit, that of the just. Or, if this does not thoroughly express it, man is the hope of the wicked, whilst the hope of the just is God ; by which it appears. that there is the same difference between these two hopes, that there is between God and man. It is on this account the psalmist, with a deal of reason, advises us to beware of the one, and invites us to the other, with these words : “ Put not your trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation. Their life shall have no end, and they shall return to the earth out of which they have been created, and then all their designs shall perish. Happy is the man who has the God of Jacob for to help him, and whose hope is in the Lord his God, who created heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them.” Ps. clxv. 3, 4. 5. Here we plainly see how different these two hopes are. The same prophet expresses it again in another psalm, where he says, “ Our enemies have relied upon their chariots and their horses ; but as for us, we will call upon the name of the Lord our God. They have been taken and are fallen, but we have risen and stand upright.” Ps. xix. 8, 9. Consider now how the effects of their hopes are proportioned, to what they are founded on, since ruin and destruction are the consequences of the one, and victory and honor of the other.

9. For this reason, they who rely on the first of these hopes are rightly compared to the man in the gospel, who built his house on the sand, which was beat down by the first storm that arose ; but they who rely on the other, are like him that built his house on a firm rock, so that neither winds nor waves, nor any tempests whatever, were able to shake it ; Matt. vii. 24, 25, 26, 27. The prophet Jeremy explains the same difference by a very proper comparison : “ Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like tamarick in the desert, and he shall not see when good shall come ; but he shall dwell in dryness in the desert, in a salt land and not inhabited.” Jer. xlii. 5, 6. But speaking immediately after of the just, he says, “ Blessed be the man that trusteth in the Lord, and the Lord shall be his confidence. And he shall be as a tree that is planted by the waters, that spreadeth out its root towards moisture ; and it shall not fear when the heat cometh. And the leaf thereof shall be green, and in the time of drought it shall not be solicitous, neither shall it cease at any time to bring forth fruit.” Ibid. ver. 7. 8. Now what more need be said, were men in their right senses, to show how different the condition of the virtuous is from that of the wicked, and how much more happy they are than these, on the bare account of hope itself. Is it possible for a tree to flourish better in any place, than in such a one as the prophet has here

represented? it fares exactly after the same manner with a virtuous man, for there is nothing imaginable but what goes well with him, because he is planted near the streams of the waters of divine grace. But, on the other hand, it is impossible for a tree to be in a worse condition, than to branch all out into wood, and to bear no fruit, because of its being set in a bad ground, and in a place where no one can come to prune it. This may convince the wicked, that it is their greatest misery to turn away their eyes and hearts from God, who is the fountain of living waters, to fix them on creatures, and to rely on their assistance, who are themselves so weak, and so deceitful, and may be truly called, "a dry, barren and uninhabitable land." By this we may see how much the world deserves our tears, being planted in so bad a soil, as having placed its hope in things that are so unable to assist it, if that may be called a hope, which is in itself so far from being so, that it is, on the contrary, nothing but confusion and deceit.

10. What misery is to be compared with this? Can there be any greater poverty, than to live without this hope? For if sin has reduced man to such a low condition, that he can find no relief, but from the hope he has in God's mercy, what will become of him, if this anchor, which is the only support left him, should fail? We see all other creatures are in their way perfect at their birth, and provided with all things necessary for the preservation of their being. Man, on the contrary, by reason of sin, comes in such an imperfect manner into the world, that he has scarce any thing in himself that he stands in need of, but requires that every thing should be brought to him, and lives on the alms which Almighty God's mercy distributes. If, therefore, he were destitute of this means, what kind of life would his be, but an imperfect and defective one, subject to a thousand miseries and wants? What is it else, but to live without hope, to live without God? What, therefore, has man left of his ancient patrimony to live on, if this support be taken from him? Is there any nation in the world so barbarous as not to have some knowledge of a God, as not to pay some kind of honor and worship to him, or to hope for some favor from his providential care? When Moses had been absent but for a little while from the children of Israel, they imagined they were without their God; and being as yet very raw and ignorant, they immediately cried out to Aaron to make them a God, because they were afraid to go on any farther without one. By which it appears, that man is taught by nature that there must of necessity be a God, though he is not always so happy as to know the true, and that he is sensible of his own weakness, though he is at the same time ignorant of the cause of it, and, therefore, runs naturally to God for a remedy against it. So that, as the ivy seeks some

tree to support it, that so it may creep upward, not being able to support itself, and as woman naturally has recourse to the assistance and protection of man, her own imperfection telling her she wants his help, so human nature, being reduced to the utmost extremity, seeks after God to defend and protect her. And since nothing is more evident than this, what kind of life must those men live, who are unhappily neglected and forsaken by God?

11. I would willingly know of those who are in such a condition, who it is that comforts them in their afflictions; to whom they have recourse in dangers; who looks after them when they are sick; to whom they can discover their ailments; whom they consult in their difficult affairs; with whom they hold a correspondence, with whom they converse, and whom they desire to assist in all their necessities; with whom they discourse, lie down and rise. In short, how can they, who are deprived of this help, get out of the confusion and disturbances of this life? If a body cannot live without a soul, how is it possible for a soul to live without God, who is as absolutely necessary for preserving the life of the soul, as the soul is for preserving that of the body? And if, as we have said before, a lively hope is the anchor of life, what man will be so rash as to venture out into the stormy sea of this world, without carrying this anchor along with him? If hope is the shield with which we are to defend ourselves against our enemies, how can men dare to go without that shield into the very midst of so many foes? If hope is the staff that has supported human nature ever since the general distemper wherewith our first parents infected it, where will feeble and impotent man be, if he has not this staff to keep him up?

12. We have here sufficiently explained the difference there is between the hope of the good and that of the bad, and consequently between the condition of the one and the other; for the one has God to protect and defend him, whilst the other puts his trust in the staff of Egypt, which, if he venture to lean on, will break and run into his hand; because the very sin man commits, in placing his confidence there, is enough to make God let him know, by his own fall, how foolishly he has deceived himself: as he has declared by the prophet Jeremy, who, foretelling the destruction of the kingdom of Moab, and the occasion of it, uses these words: "Because you have put your trust in fortifications and in your riches, you yourself shall be taken; and Chamos," which is the god in which you have trusted, "shall be carried into captivity, with his priests, and with his princes;" Jerem. xliv. 7. Consider now, what a kind of succor this must be, since the very seeking and trusting in it is certain ruin and destruction.

This shall suffice to show how great a privilege this of hope

is; and though it may seem to be the same with the particular providence we have treated of already, which God extends towards those that serve and love him, there is yet as much difference between them as is between the effect and its cause. For though there are several causes and beginnings of this hope, as the goodness and truth of God, the merits of our Saviour, and the rest; however, his paternal providence, from which this confidence proceeds, is one of the chief, because the knowledge that God has such particular care over him is the cause of this confidence in man.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the seventh Privilege of Virtue, viz. the true Liberty which the Virtuous enjoy, and of the miserable and unaccountable Slavery the Wicked live in.

1. FROM all the above-mentioned privileges, but particularly from the second and fourth, which are the grace of the Holy Ghost and the divine consolation, there arises another extraordinary one, which virtuous men enjoy, and is the true liberty of the soul; it is what the Son of God brought into the world with him; and it is on this account that he is called the *Redeemer of mankind*, for having delivered it out of that real and miserable bondage it had so long lived under, and having set it in perfect liberty. This is one of the greatest favors our Saviour has bestowed on us, one of the most remarkable advantages of the gospel, and one of the chief effects of the Holy Ghost. *For*, as the apostle says, *whosoever the spirit of the Lord resides, there liberty is to be found*; 1 Cor. iii. 17. It is, in fine, one of the noblest rewards God promises those who serve him in this life. And it was this our Saviour himself promises to some persons who had a mind to begin to enter into his service, when he said to them, "If you continue in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;" that is to say, shall give you a true liberty. To which they answered: "We are the seed of Abraham, and we have never been slaves to any man; how sayest thou, You shall be free? Jesus answered them, Amen, amen, I say unto you, that whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. Now the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the son abideth for ever. If, therefore, the son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." John viii. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36.

2. Our Saviour by these words gives us plainly to understand, that there are two sorts of liberty; the one false, which, though

it looks like liberty, is not so; the other true, which is what it appears to be. As for the false one, it belongs to those persons who, though their bodies are free, have put their souls under the arbitrary government of every passion; like Alexander the Great, who, after having made himself master of the whole world, was a slave to his own vices. But the true liberty is enjoyed by them alone, whose souls are free from the yoke of such tyrants, though their bodies may sometimes perhaps be prisoners, and sometimes at large, as was St. Paul's, who, notwithstanding his imprisonment, soared up to heaven in spirit, and by his preaching and doctrine set the whole world free.

The reason why we with so much freedom call this *liberty*, and not the other, is, because, since of those two principal parts which compose a man, to wit, the body and soul, the soul is beyond all comparison the most noble, and, as it were, man's all; whereas the body is nothing but the matter and subject, or the case the soul is shut up in; it necessarily follows, that he who has the best part of him at liberty, may be said to be truly free, whilst he whose better part is under confinement, enjoys but a false liberty, though he has the free disposal of his body, and may carry it where he pleases.

§ I. *Of the Slavery of the Wicked.*—3. Should you ask me, Whose slave is he, who is under such confinement? I answer, he is a slave to the most hideous tyrant we can possibly represent to ourselves; I mean, to sin. For hell's torments being the most abominable thing, sin must of necessity be yet more abominable, inasmuch as these torments are but the effect of it. It is to this the wicked pay their slavish homage, as appears plainly from the words of our Saviour so lately cited: "Whosoever is guilty of sin is a slave to sin," John viii. 34. And can a man possibly be oppressed with a more deplorable slavery than this is?

Nor is he a slave to sin only, but, what is still worse, to those who incite him to it, that is, to the world, the devil, and his own flesh, depraved by sin, and to every disorderly appetite the flesh is the occasion of; for he who is a slave to the son must be a slave to his parents. Now there is none of us but knows, that these three are the parents of sin, and on this account they are styled "the enemies of the soul," because they are so prejudicial to it, as to take it prisoner, and to put it under the power of such a cruel tyrant as sin is.

4. But though these three agree in this point, yet there is some kind of a difference in their manner of proceeding; for the two first make use of the third, which is the flesh, like another Eve, for the deceiving of Adam, or like a spur to drive him on to all manner of mischief. For this reason the apostle calls it *sin*, as it were by excellence, giving the name of the effect to the cause,

because there is no manner of sin whatever, which it does not tempt us to. The divines, on the same account, term it *jomes peccati*, that is, *the bait and the nourishment of sin*, because it serves, instead of wool and oil, to keep in and increase the fire of sin. But the name we generally call it by is *sensuality, flesh or concupiscence*, which, to speak more plainly, is nothing else, but our sensual appetite, the cause of all our passions, as it is spoiled and corrupted by sin, it being the incentive and provocative, nay, and the very source of all manner of vices. This it is, particularly, that makes our other two enemies employ our sensual appetite as their instrument for the carrying on of the war against us. It was this that gave St. Basil occasion to say, "that our own desires are the chief arms with which the devil fights against us; because the immoderate affection we have for whatever we desire, makes us endeavor to possess it right or wrong, and break through all that lies in our way, though forbid by the law of God; and from hence all sins take their rise and origin;" St. Bas. Hom. 23. de non adher. reb. sæcularibus.

5. This appetite is one of the greatest tyrants the wicked are subject to, and by which, the apostle says, they are made slaves; and, though he calls them slaves, he does not mean that they have lost that free-will with which they were created; because this never was nor ever will be lost, as to its essence, though man commit ever so many sins; but that sin, on the other side, has so weakened this free-will, and on the other lent such forces to the appetite, that the stronger, generally speaking, prevails over the weaker.

Besides, what greater subject of grief can we have than to see man, whose soul is created according to God's own image, who is enlightened from heaven, and has an understanding so subtile as to fly above all created beings, and to contemplate God himself; it is, I say, a deplorable thing to consider that this soul should take no notice of all these noble qualities, but let herself be governed by the blind impulse of her beastly appetite, which has been corrupted by sin, and hurried on by the devil? What must a man expect from such a government, and from such directions, but dangers, calamities, and all kinds of unparalleled misfortunes?

6. I will give you a clear prospect of the deformity of this slavery, by an example which comes home to our present business. Represent to yourself a man married to a woman that is as noble, as beautiful and as prudent as possibly woman can be; and that this fortunate man should, at the same time, have a servant, a most deformed creature, and a mere sorceress, who, envying her master's happiness, should give him a potion, so to pervert all his senses, that, despising his wife, and shutting her up in some corner of the house, he should give himself over to this lewd servant of his, make her the companion of his bed, and of all his pleas-

ures; should consult her on the management of his affairs and family, and follow her advice in all things; nay, to please her, should, at her command, squander away his whole estate in entertainments, feasting, revelling and such kind of delights; and should, besides all this, come to such a pitch of madness as to oblige his wife to wait on this wicked woman, and to obey all her commands. Can any one persuade himself a man should ever be guilty of such folly? Who would not be astonished at such madness? What indignation would he be in against this wicked woman, what pity would he take on this poor injured lady, and how would he cry out against this blind and senseless husband? We should look on this action as base and infamous, and yet it is nothing in comparison of what we are now treating of; for you are to understand that we ourselves have these two different women, to wit, the spirit and the flesh, within our own souls, which the divines, in other terms, call the *superior* and the *inferior* part; the superior part of our soul is that in which reside the will and reason, which is that natural light God bestowed on us at our creation. This reason is so beautiful and noble that it makes man like God, capable of enjoying him, and unites him by a brotherly love to the very angels. It is the noble woman to whom God has married man, that they may live together, and that he may follow its counsel and actions in all things; that is to say, that he may let himself be guided by that celestial light, which is reason. But as for the inferior part of the soul, it is taken up by the sensual appetite, which we have already spoken of, and which has been given us for no other end but the desiring of things necessary for the support of our lives, and for the preservation of mankind. But this is to be done according to the rule which reason prescribes, as a good steward would do, who makes no provision at all but what his master bids him. This appetite, therefore, is the slave we have all this while been treating; nor is it fit to be a guide, because it wants the light of reason, and on that account must itself be directed by another. But man, on the contrary, has been so unhappy as to place such an immoderate affection on, and to give himself over entirely to, the satisfying of this wicked woman's lusts, that he has taken no notice of the suggestions of reason, by which he should have guided himself, but has in all things followed the directions of his appetite, and made it his whole business to satisfy every irregular desire. For we see there are some men so sensual, so unruly, and so abandoned to the desires of their own hearts, that there is scarce any thing they propose but immediately they, like beasts, pursue it, without any respect either to the laws of justice or of reason. And what is this but giving themselves up to the flesh, which is the deformed, loathsome slave, and following all those sensual pleasures she has an inclination to, and despising the advice of that noble and lawful wife, which is our reason?

7. But, what is still more intolerable, they are not satisfied with using this lady so basely, but will force her to serve this wretched slave, and to make it her whole business, day and night, to think of, and to procure whatever may serve for the satisfying of her base desires. For when a man employs all his wit and senses about nothing in the world but inventing new fashions in his dress, in his buildings, and in his table and diet, for the pleasing of his palate, in the furniture of his house, and in continually thinking of new means and devices for raising up money to compass these things; what does he else but take the soul off from those spiritual exercises which are more suitable to the excellence of her nature, and make her a mere drudge to that creature who ought to have done the same offices for her? When a man that is passionately in love with a woman, uses all the wit he has in writing love-letters, and in composing songs and poems, and such other practices as are usual in those cases; what does he in all this but make the mistress wait on the maid, by employing this divine light in contriving means to satisfy the impure desires of the flesh? When king David used so many slights to cover the sin he had committed in secret with Bathsheba; sending for her husband out of the camp, inviting him to supper, making him drunk, and afterwards giving him letters to the camp, with private orders to Joab to put him in the very heat of the engagement, that so the innocent man might be taken out of the way (2 Kings xi.); who was contriver of this chain of wickedness but reason and the understanding? And who was it that tempted them to it but the wicked flesh, to cloak her fault, and to enjoy her delights with more security? Seneca, though a heathen and a philosopher too, blushed at these things; and, therefore, used to say, "It is beneath me, who have been born to something that is great, to be a slave to my own flesh;" Sen. Epist. 65. If we should be astonished at the stupidity of that man so bewitched, how much more reason have we to be concerned at this disorder, which is the occasion of our being deprived of much greater benefits, and of our falling into more deplorable misfortunes?

8. Now, though this be so frequent and so monstrous a disorder, we take little notice of it, and no one is surprised at it, because the world is so disorderly. "For," as St. Bernard says, "we are not sensible of the stench of our crimes, because the number of them is so great;" Bern. Ep. ad Fratres de Monte Dei. For, as no one is affronted to be called a Moor in those countries where every one is as black as himself; and as no one thinks it a disgrace to be drunk, notwithstanding the filthiness of the sin, where drunkenness is in fashion; so, this disorder being general, there is scarce any one that looks on it as he ought to do. From what has been said, we may see how unhappy a slavery this is; and not only that, but what dreadful torments man must expect

in punishment of his sins, which have delivered up so noble a creature into the hands of so cruel a tyrant. The author of Ecclesiasticus looked on it as such, when he prayed to God "that he would deliver him from the inordinate desires of sensuality, and from the concupiscence of the flesh; and that he would not give him over to a shameless and unbridled soul" (Eccl. xxiii. 6); as if he begged not to be delivered up into the hands of some cruel tyrant or executioner, looking on his irregular appetite as such.

§ II.—9. If you would now be acquainted with the power of this tyrant, you may easily gather it, by observing what effects he has wrought in the world in all ages. I will not, to this purpose, represent to you the fictions of the poets, or set before you the example of their famous Hercules, who, after having killed or tamed all the monsters in the world, was himself at last so subdued by the unchaste love of a woman as to lay down his club for a distaff, and to leave his adventures to sit and spin amongst a company of maids in compliance to his haughty mistress's commands. It is a pretty invention of the poets, to show what arbitrary power this passion exercises over us. Nor will I allege the authority of the Holy Scripture in proof of this truth; nor bring the example of Solomon, a man of such extraordinary wisdom and sanctity at one time, whilst at another he was prostrating himself before his idols, and building temples to them, in complaisance to his concubines; 3 Kings xi. It is an example, indeed, that comes very home to our present purpose, but we will only take notice of those instances that occur to us daily. Consider, therefore, what dangers an adulteress exposes herself to, for the satisfying of an inordinate appetite. I choose this passion before any of the rest, that by this you may discover the force of the other. She knows that, should her husband surprise her in the crime, she is a dead woman, and that she shall in one moment lose her life, her honor, her riches and her soul, nay, and whatever else she is capable of losing, either in this world or in the next, which is the greatest loss can be sustained. She knows that, besides all this, she shall disgrace her children and her whole family, and that she shall herself find subject of eternal sorrow; and yet, such is the force of this passion, or rather such is the tyrant, that it makes her break through all these difficulties, and swallow down so many bitter draughts so easily, for the executing all it commands her. Was there ever any master so cruel as to expose even his slave to so much danger, for the performance of his orders? Can you think of any slavery more hard and miserable than this?

10. This is the state the wicked generally live in, according to the royal prophet's remark, when he says, "They are seated in darkness and in the shadow of death; they suffer hunger, and are bound down with chains of iron;" Ps. cvi. 10. What can the

prophet means by this darkness, but the dark blindness the wicked live in, who neither know themselves nor God as they ought to do, nor understand what it is they live for, or what is the end of their creation. They are unacquainted with the vanity of what they love, and are not sensible of the slavery with which they are oppressed. And what are the chains that bind them down but the force of those irregular affections, by which their hearts are so close linked to all things they have such an unlawful love for? And what can this hunger signify but the insatiable desire they have of many things which there is no possibility of obtaining? Is there any slavery so troublesome as this?

11. Let us take another example yet of this same passion. Cast your eyes on David's eldest son Ammon, who, as soon as ever he beheld his sister Thamar with a wanton eye, was so blinded, so fettered, and so tormented with this hunger, that he could neither eat, drink nor take any rest; and this passion cast him into such a dangerous sickness, that he had like to have lost his life. Judge now, how strong those chains of love and fear, with which his heart was tied down, must needs have been, since they made so great an impression on all the parts of his body, as to throw him into so violent a distemper; and that you may not imagine him to be cured by the enjoyment of his desire, consider that he had no sooner satisfied his wish, but his distemper grew more violent, "so that," as the Scripture says, "he hated his sister much worse than he had ever loved her before;" 2 Kings xiii. 15. Thus the accomplishing of his wicked desire could not free him from his passion, but only turned one into another much worse. Now what tyrant in the world has so many ways of treating his slaves as sin has?

12. Such is the condition of all those, who are under the tyrannical government of this vice; for we can scarcely say they are their own masters, since they neither can eat nor drink but when it pleases; they discourse and think of nothing else; it is the subject of their dreams, whilst, at the same time, neither the fear of God, nor the interest of their own souls, nor heaven, hell, death or judgment, nay, very often, neither life itself, nor their honor, which they have such a tender concern for, are able to turn them out of the road, or to break the chain. What shall I say of the jealousies, suspicions, fears and sudden passions these unhappy wretches are perpetually racked with? What dangers do they expose themselves to! And what continual hazards do they run of losing both their lives and souls, for the enjoying of their filthy pleasures! Can any tyrant exercise so much cruelty on the bodies of his slaves, as this vice does on the very hearts of those that give themselves over to it? For no slave is so much taken up with his master's business, but he has some time, either in day or night, to take a little ease or rest. But such is the nature

of this vice, and others like it, that, as soon as ever they take possession of a heart, they grow so sovereign and arbitrary, that man has scarce either power, means, time or wit to do any thing else. So that Ecclesiasticus had a great deal of reason to say, "That wine and women make even wise men fools;" Eccl. xix. 2. Because, let a man be ever so wise, he is as much besotted with this vice as he is with wine, and is as little his own master, so that he can do nothing that becomes a rational creature. The prince of poets, to convince us of this truth, gives us a character of the famous queen Dido, who, at the very moment that she fell in love with Æneas, laid aside all her public employments, and went no further in the building of her city; the walls and fortifications were carried up no higher; there was no training up youth in military discipline, no care about securing the haven, or furnishing the arsenal for the defence of their country; Virg. Æn. Lib. 4. And the reason the poet gives for it is because this tyrant had seized on all the thoughts of this woman, so as to leave her unfit for any thing else but the indulging of this passion, a passion so uncontrollable, and so arbitrary, that when it has once possession of a heart, it takes the power of doing any thing else away from it. O cruel and barbarous vice! the very disturber and destroyer of whole states and kingdoms, the ruin of all that is good and honorable, the plague of virtue, the cloud that hangs over and darkens the wits of ingenious men, the enchantress of the soul, that makes fools of wise men, and makes sots and dotards of old men, that inflames and excites the boiling passions of youth, and that, in fine, is the common bane and destruction of mankind!

13. Nor is it this vice alone that is so tyrannical; all the rest are, in their different ways, as cruel and as arbitrary. Consider but the proud and ambitious man, who aims at nothing but respect, and walks blindly and darkly in the smoke of honors. See how this passion tyrannizes over him; with what greediness he catches at glory, what pains he takes to acquire it, directing every action of his life to this end: his servants, his retinue, his dress, his table, his chamber, his furniture, his attendants, his posture, his gait, his mien, his discourse, his looks, in fine, all he does, tends this way, because it is done so as it may gain him most esteem, and procure him the empty puff and blast of honor; so that, if you look narrowly into him, you will find, that what he does or says is a bait for popular applause and commendation. If we wonder at the folly of Domitian the emperor, for hunting after flies with a bodkin in his hand, when he had nothing else to do, how much more should we admire the folly of the wretched ambitious man, who not only spends some spare time, but runs out his whole life in hunting after the smoke of worldly vanity? It is this makes the unhappy man do nothing he has a mind to

do: he neither dresses himself according to his own fancy, nor goes where he himself would go; since he very often neglects even going to church, and does not care to converse with virtuous persons, for fear the world, whose slave he is, should reflect upon him. And what is yet worse, this vice makes him live above what he has, and by that means reduces him to a thousand necessities, which ruin his soul, and are very often the eternal destruction of his posterity, who have no other inheritance left them by him, but his debts to discharge, and his follies to imitate. Can such persons as these deserve any easier punishment than that, they say, a certain king used to inflict on an ambitious man, which was, to stifle him with smoke, saying, it was no more than justice that he should be condemned to die by smoke, for having spent all his life in seeking after smoke and wind. What misery can be greater than this?

14. What shall I say of the greedy covetous man, who is not only a slave to, but even an idolater of, his money? While he serves, adores and obeys in every thing it commands him; for this he fasts so rigorously, as scarce to allow himself a morsel of bread; this treasure, in fine, he loves more than he loves God, whom he makes no scruple to offend for the least profit. This is his comfort, his glory, his hope, the continual subject of all his thoughts, and the object of his love; with it he goes to sleep, with it he rises, employs his whole life about it, and is continually finding out new ways to improve it, neglecting at the same time and forgetting himself and every thing else. Can we call such a man the master of his money, to dispose of it as he has a mind; or ought we not rather to say, that, instead of his money being a slave to him, he becomes a slave to his money, considering himself, as it were, made for his money, and not his money for him? Neglecting his belly and his very soul, to give himself entirely to it?

15. Can there be a harder slavery than this? For if we call that man a prisoner who is clapped up into a dungeon, or loaded with chains and irons, what better name can we give him who has his soul oppressed and charged with the disorderly affection of what he loves? For when a man is once come to this degree, he has not any one power of his soul that enjoys a perfect liberty; he is not his own master, but his slave, whom he has so passionate a love for. For wheresoever his love is, there his heart will be, though still he does not lose his free-will. Nor does it signify any thing what chains you are tied down with, if the nobler part of you is made a prisoner; nor does your consenting to your imprisonment make your confinement less, nay, on the contrary, if it be a true prison, the more voluntary it is, the more dangerous it will be, as we see in poison, which, if pure, is no less hurtful, because it is sweet: certainly there can be no straiter

prison than that you are thus confined to, which makes you turn your eyes away from God, truth, honesty, and the laws of justice, and lords it over you at such a rate, that, as a drunken man is not his own master, but a slave to his liquor, so he that is oppressed with this slavery is no longer in his own power, but at the command of his passion, though his free-will is yet remaining. Now, if imprisonment be a torment, what greater torment can there be, than that which one of these miserable men endures, by continually desiring what he knows he can never obtain, and yet he cannot forbear or curb his desires, so that he is reduced to such circumstances, that he knows not which way to turn himself. And, being in this perplexity and trouble, he is forced to make use of the words of a certain poet to an ill-natured lewd woman: "I love you and I hate you at the same time; and if you ask me the reason of it, it is because I can neither live with you nor without you." But if at any time he endeavors to break these chains, and to overcome his passions, he immediately finds such resistance, that he very often despairs of obtaining the victory, and returns to his chains and slavery again. Do not you think, after all this, that we may very well be allowed to call this state *a torment and captivity*?

16. If these prisoners had but one chain to hold them, their misery would be much less, for there were some hope of breaking a single bond, or overcoming one enemy alone. But how miserable must we imagine their condition to be, when we consider what a great number of passions, like so many fetters, keep down these unhappy creatures? For man's life lying open to so many necessities, and every necessity exciting some new desire, and adding, as it were, another link to the chain, it follows, that he who has a great many passions must have but very little command of his own heart; but still this is more in some persons than in others; for some men's apprehension is naturally so tenacious that they can scarce ever put from them any thing that has once taken possession of their imagination; others are of a melancholy temper, which makes them strong and violent in their desires; and others are mean-spirited, who look on all things, though ever so inconsiderable, as great and worthy to be coveted, for every little thing seems great to a poor soul; others are naturally violent in whatever they desire, as generally women are; "who," as a philosopher observes, "passionately love or hate, because there is no medium in their affections." All these passions exercise continual cruelties on those that are subject to them: and now, if the misery of being bound with but one chain, and of serving only one master, be so great, how miserable must that man's condition be, who is held by so many chains, and has such a great number of masters to command him as the wicked

man has! for every passion and vice he is subject to, is a distinct master, and requires his obedience and submission.

Can there be any greater misery than this? For if the dignity of man, as man, depends on two things, viz. reason and free-will, what can be more opposite, either to the one or the other, than passion is, which, at the same time blinds the reason and drags away the free-will along with it? By which you may perceive what prejudice we are apt to receive from the least irregular affection, since it turns a man out of the throne of his majesty, obscures his reason, and perverts his free-will, without which two, man is no longer a reasonable creature, but a mere brute. See, here, the unhappy slavery the wicked are reduced to, as men, that will neither take notice of the laws or inspirations of God, nor the dictates of their own reason, but are hurried away by the impulse of their own passions and appetites.

§ III. *Of the Liberty virtuous Men enjoy.*—17. This is the cruel slavery the Son of God came down from heaven to deliver us from; and it is this liberty and victory Isaias so highly commends, when he says, “Those whom thou hast redeemed shall rejoice in thee, O Lord, as the husbandmen do in time of harvest, and as conquerors do after they have taken a prey, and are dividing the spoils. For thou hast taken away the yoke which oppressed them, and the rod which struck them, and delivered them from the sceptre of this tyrant, who has laid very heavy taxes upon them.” Isa. ix. 3, 4. All these names of *yoke*, of *rod*, and *sceptre*, agree very well with the tyrannical power of our passions and appetites, because the devil, who is the prince of this world, makes use of them as very proper instruments to work us into an allegiance to his tyranny, and into a subjection to sin. From this tyranny and subjection the Son of God has delivered us by the superabundance of his grace, which the sacrifice he made of himself on the cross has purchased for us. For which reason the apostle says, “that our old man has been crucified with him” (Rom. vi. 6); meaning here, by “the old man,” our sensual appetite, which became disorderly by the sin of our first parents. And the reason why our old man has been crucified with him is, because he, by the merit of his passion, has obtained grace for us, whereby we may subdue this tyrant, and make him suffer the same punishment he has made us to suffer, thus crucifying him who before crucified us, and bringing him into slavery, under whose slavery we have been so long groaning. Thus, what the prophet Isaias foretold in another place, has come to pass: “They shall take those who took them before, and shall bring those that have oppressed them under their subjection;” Isa. xiv. 2. For our sensual appetite, before the reign of grace, tyrannized over our understanding, and made it a slave to all its unlawful desires; but as soon as ever grace came in to its succor,

it grew so strong as to prevail against this tyrant, and make it submit to what reason prescribed.

18. This subduing of the appetite to reason has been, in a particular manner, represented to us, by the death of Adonibezech, king of Jerusalem, who was put to death by the children of Israel, after they had first cut off his fingers and toes. This unhappy prince, seeing himself in this condition, and calling to mind the cruelties he had before exercised on others, was heard to say, "Threescore and ten kings, whose fingers and toes I have cut off, have picked up the scraps that have fallen under my table; and now I see that God deals with me just as I have dealt with them;" Jud. i. 7. After which the Scripture adds, that he was carried in this condition to Jerusalem, and died there. This cruel tyrant is the figure of this world, which, before the Son of God came down from heaven, cut off the hands and feet of almost all men in general, by this means maiming and putting them out of the capacity of serving God, cutting off their hands to hinder them from doing any good, and their feet to prevent them from so much as desiring it; and, besides all this, reducing them to the necessity of living on the poor scraps that fell under his table, that is, the sensual pleasures of the world, wherewith this wicked prince maintains his servants. There is much reason for calling them scraps, and not pieces of bread, because this tyrant is so niggardly in distributing these crumbs and fragments, that he never gives enough to satisfy their appetite. But after our Saviour came into the world, he made this tyrant undergo the same torments he had put others to before, cutting off his hands and feet, that is, defeating all his forces. The Scripture expressly declares, that Adonibezech died in Jerusalem, because this was the place where our Saviour, by death, destroyed the prince of this world, and where, dying on the cross, he crucified this tyrant, binding him hand and foot, and taking all his power from him. And, therefore, immediately after his most sacred passion, men began to triumph and insult over this tyrant, and so to lord it over the world, the devil and the flesh, with all its concupiscences, that neither all the tortures they could be threatened with on the one side, nor all the pleasures that could be proposed to them on the other, were able to make them commit a mortal sin.

§ IV. *Of the Causes whence this Liberty proceeds.*—19. You will ask, perhaps, whence this great victory and liberty proceeds; to which I answer, that next to God, it proceeds immediately, as I have said already, from his grace, which, by the means of those virtues it inspires, so moderates the heat of our passions, as not to let them get the better of reason. So that as sorcerers can, by certain spells, enchant snakes, that they should do no hurt, without killing them or taking away their venom, so the grace of God

charms all the venomous serpents of our passions; and though it still leaves them their natural being in perfect vigor, yet they can do us no hurt with their poison, because they are not capable, as they were before, to infect our lives. This was meant by the prophet Isaias, when he said, "The sucking child shall sport himself over the hole of an asp, and he that is weaned shall put his hand into the basilisk's den. They shall not hurt nor kill any body in all my holy mountain, because the earth shall be as full of knowledge of the Lord as the sea is of the waters that cover it." Isa. xi. 8, 9. It is plain the prophet does not speak here of visible but of invisible serpents, which are nothing but our own passions and bad inclinations, which, when once they break out, are enough to corrupt the whole world; nor does he speak of corporal children, but of the spiritual; and those he calls "sucking children" are such as are but just beginning to serve God, and, therefore, must be fed with milk; but those that are weaned are such as have made a greater progress, and can go alone, and eat bread and stronger meats. The prophet, therefore, speaking of both of them, says of the former, that they shall be glad to see, notwithstanding they are perpetually in the very midst of these invisible serpents, that the grace of God will secure them from receiving any considerable hurt, by not permitting them to consent in any manner to sin. As for the latter, those I mean, that are already weaned, and have advanced further in the way of God, he says they shall put their hands into the very dens of basilisks, which is as much as to say, that God will preserve them even in their greatest dangers; so that we see these words of the psalmist verified in them: "You shall walk over the asp and the basilisk, and you shall tread upon the lion and the dragon;" Ps. xc. 13. These are they who shall receive no harm at all, though they put their hands into a basilisk's den, because these serpents shall be so charmed by the abundance of God's grace, spreading itself over the whole face of the earth, that they should not do any hurt to the children of God.

20. St. Paul explains this much more clearly, and without any kind of metaphor; for after having discoursed very fully of the tyranny our irregular affections and our flesh exercise over us, he cries out at last, "Unhappy man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii. 24. But he himself immediately answers his own question briefly, and says, "The grace of God which is given us by Jesus Christ our Lord;" ver. 25. What he means here, by "the body of death," is not this body of ours, that is subject to a natural death, which we all of us look for, but what he himself, in another place, calls "the body of sin" (Rom. vi. 6), that is, our depraved appetite, from which proceed all inordinate affections, which are continually enticing to sin, just as the members do from the body; and this is the

body the apostle says, the grace that is given us through Jesus Christ delivers us from, as from a cruel tyrant.

21. The second, and that a main cause of this liberty, is the greatness of that joy, and of those spiritual consolations, which the virtuous enjoy, as we have approved already. By these all their desires are so fully satisfied, that they easily overcome and dismiss all their irregular appetites; and having found out this source of all that is good and pleasant, they covet no other happiness, as our Saviour himself declared to the Samaritan woman, when he told her, "Whosoever shall drink of the water which I shall give him," which is the grace of God, "shall never thirst again;" John iv. 13. St. Gregory assures us of the same thing, in one of his Homilies, in these words: "He who is once thoroughly acquainted with the sweetness of a heavenly life, immediately bids adieu to all those things he had a sensual love for before. He forsakes all he is in possession of, he distributes liberally all his treasures, his heart is inflamed with the desire of heaven, there is nothing on earth can please him, and whatever he before thought beautiful and lovely, he now accounts deformed and hideous, because this precious jewel is the only thing that shines and glitters to the eyes of his soul." For when the vessel of our heart is full of this liquor, and the thirst of our soul is quenched with the same, it has no occasion to run after the fleeting and vain pleasures of this life, but lives free from the slavery of all those affections, which base earthly pleasures excited in her; because where there is no love, there can be no slavery: and thus the heart that has found him, who is the Lord of all things, finds itself to be, in some measure, Lord of all things, there being no other solid good, which it does not meet with in this one good.

22. Add to these two divine favors, which assist us so much in the regaining of our liberty, the pains virtuous men take to subdue the flesh to the spirit, and to make the passions submit to reason. By this means they gradually mortify their passions, obtain a habit of virtue, and lay aside that hate and violence which used to disturb them before. "For if," as St. Chrysostom says, "the wildest beasts that are, by living amongst men, come, in time, to lose their natural fierceness, and to grow tame and gentle, by observing the same qualities in men;" which gave a poet occasion to say, that time and custom bring lions under obedience; what wonder is it, that our passions, if we but accustom them to submit to reason, should, by degrees, become tame and rational, that is, should, in some manner, partake of the quality of the spirit and of reason, and love nothing more than to do as they do? Now, if this may be done only by use and custom, how much sooner and more efficaciously must it of necessity be effected, when use and custom are backed by grace?

23. Hence it is, that those who serve God feel very often a more sensible pleasure and satisfaction, if I may so term it, in their recollection, silence, reading, prayers, meditations, and in such other exercises, than they could find in hunting, gaming and conversation, or in any other worldly recreations and diversion, which they look on as mere torments, insomuch that the flesh itself begins now to hate what it loved before, and to be pleased with what it formerly loathed. All this is so true, "that the inferior part of our souls," as St. Bonaventure observes, in the preface of his Incentive to the Love of God, "is very often so delighted in prayer, and in conversing with God, that it is no small torment to it, when there is any, though ever so just a cause, that it obliges it to break off these exercises." And this is what the royal prophet meant, when he said, "I will praise the Lord, because he has given me understanding, and also because my reins have reprov'd me" (Ps. xv. 7); or, as another translation has it, "have instructed me all the night long." This is, without doubt, a particular favor of the Almighty's grace, because the expositors of the Holy Scriptures understand in this place, by the *reins*, all the inward affections and motions of man; which, as we have said already, are the general incentives to sin. But yet, by virtue of this grace, they are very often so far from stirring us up to sin, as they used to do, or from fighting for the devil, whose service they were engaged in before, that, on the contrary, they forward us in virtue, and, aspiring to Jesus Christ, turn their arms against the common enemy: though this may be seen in all the exercises of a spiritual life, it appears much more plainly in our sorrow and contrition for our sins, wherein the inferior part of the soul has its share, afflicting itself and shedding tears for them. This is the reason of David's saying, "that his reins reprov'd him in the night-time;" because then, the day being ended, the just are used to examine their consciences, and to bewail whatever they have offended in; and then it was that he himself, as he says in another place, *swept his spirit* by this exercise; Ps. lxxxi. 7. It was in the night, I say, that his reins reprov'd him, because the sorrow which he felt in this part of his soul, for having offended God, was a continual correction, to keep him from falling into those sins again, which had troubled him so much. On which account he, with a great deal of justice, thanks God, because not only the superior part of his soul, which is the seat of reason, invited him to good, but even the inferior part too, which is used, for the most part, to encourage us to evil: though all this be really true, and one of the greatest benefits we receive from Christ's redemption, who redeemed us most fully and gave us perfect liberty, yet we ought not to take occasion from hence to be negligent, nor trust too much to our flesh, be it ever so mortified, during the course of this mortal life.

24. These, therefore, are the chief causes of this extraordinary liberty. And, amongst several other effects it produces, one is the new knowledge we have of God, and the confirming us in the faith and religion we profess; and, as God himself openly declares to us, by the prophet Ezekiel (ch. xxxiv. 27), saying, "All men shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall break the chains of their yokes, and shall deliver them from the hands of those that tyrannize over them." We have said already that this yoke was our sensuality, or our inordinate affection for sin, which dwells within our flesh, and which oppresses us and makes us subject to sin. The chains of this yoke are all those bad inclinations by which the devil catches hold of us and draws us after him; now these bad inclinations are so much the more efficacious, as they have been fortified by a longer habit. St. Augustine, in his own confessions, had sufficient experience of this; for he says, "I was bound not with another's fetters, but those of my own hard will and iron, which the enemy had in his power, and of which he made a chain for me, and tied me down with the same. For my perverse will has been the cause of my vicious desires; I contracted a vicious habit, which, for want of being resisted, grew into a necessity; with all which, as with so many links that have gone towards the making of the chain, I have been tied down, and reduced to the utmost hardship." Conf. L. S. c. 5. When a man finds himself, as this saint did, to have been groaning for some time under slavery, and after having made several attempts to get out of it, perceives his escape so difficult, yet, when he addresses himself to God, sees all his chains broken, his passions mortified, himself at liberty and master of his own appetites, with the yoke that he pressed so heavily on his shoulders lying now under his feet, who but God can he imagine has broken his fetters, and eased him of the weight that had so long galled his neck? What has he to do but to praise God with the royal prophet, and to cry out with him, "O Lord, thou hast broken my chains; I will offer up a sacrifice of praise to thee, and will call upon thy holy name:" Ps. cxv. 8.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the eighth Privilege of Virtue, viz. the inward Peace and Calm the Virtuous enjoy, and of the miserable Restlessness and Disturbance the Wicked feel within themselves.

1. FROM this privilege just mentioned, which is the liberty of the sons of God, flows another, nothing inferior to it, which is the inward peace and tranquillity they enjoy For the better un-

derstanding whereof, it is to be observed, there are three sorts of peace, one with our neighbor, another with God, and the third with ourselves. Peace with our neighbors consists in such a friendly and civil correspondence with them, as banishes all design or desire of doing any man a prejudice. This peace David had when he says, "I was peaceable with those that hated peace, and when I spoke to them with meekness, they, without any reason, rose up against me;" Ps. cxix. 7. St. Paul recommends this same peace to us, when he advises us to "use our utmost endeavors, as far as is possible, to live in peace with all men;" Rom. xii. 18. The second peace, which is that with God, consists in the friendship and favor of God; it is to be obtained by the means of justification, which reconciles man to God, and makes them both love one another without any disturbance or contradiction on either side. The apostle, speaking of this peace, says, "Since we are already justified by faith through Jesus Christ our Lord, who has procured us this grace, let us live in peace with God;" Rom. v. 1. The last peace is that which a man has with himself; nor ought any one to wonder at this kind of peace, since we know very well, that there are in the very self-same man, two men so opposite to one another, as are the outward and the inward, the flesh and the spirit, the passions and reason. For the flesh and the passions are not only always at variance with the spirit, but besides disturb the whole man with their irregular appetites, and trouble his inward peace, which consists in tranquillity of mind.

§ 1. *Of the inward Restlessness and Disquiet of the Wicked.*—

2. Wicked men, and such as hearken to the persuasions of the flesh, are never free from such disturbances as these. For being, on the one hand, deprived of God's grace, which is the curb to keep their passions in awe, and on the other, their desires being so active and unruly, that they are scarce able to resist them in the least thing imaginable, it necessarily follows, that they must be carried away by an infinite number of opposite desires, some by that of honor, others of great employments, others of conversation and friendship, others of great and honorable titles, others of riches, others, again, of success in marriage, and others of recreations and pleasures. For this appetite is like a devouring fire that consumes whatever it catches hold of, or like a ravenous beast that is never satisfied, or like the leech that is perpetually thirsting after blood; and which, as Solomon says, "has two daughters that are always crying out, More yet, more yet;" Prov. xxx. 15. This leech is nothing but the insatiable desire of the heart, and her two children are *necessity* and *concupiscence*. The first of them seems to be a true thirst, but the last is only a false one, though they are both of them equally troublesome, notwithstanding our supposing one to be a real, the other but a pretended

necessity. This is the reason why no wicked man, whether he be rich or poor, can ever enjoy content: for if he be poor, when want is continually disturbing his heart, and crying out, "More yet, more yet;" whilst concupiscence never ceases to break the rich man's rest with the same noise. How then can man enjoy any ease that has two such importunate beggars always making a noise at his door, and craving many things he is not able to give them? What trouble must a poor mother be in, who has ten or a dozen of children around her, continually crying for bread, if she has not a morsel to give them? This is one of the greatest miseries the wicked endure: "They perish," says the psalmist, "with hunger and thirst, and their souls fail within them:" Ps. xxxvi. 5. For self-love, the cause of all these desires, having got so much power over them, and they placing all their happiness in earthly riches and pleasures, it is impossible they should not, with greediness, hunger and thirst after those things on which they imagine all their happiness depends. And because they cannot always obtain what they long for, being prevented by others more covetous and powerful, they disturb themselves like a froward child that longs for every thing it sees, and grows sullen if denied it. For as the obtaining of our wish is, according to the wise man, "the tree of life" (Ps. xiii. 12); so there is nothing in the world torments us worse, than to be disappointed of what we have a mind for. It is just like being ready to die for hunger, and having nothing to eat. But what is worst of all, the more they are hindered from obtaining their desires, the more they increase, and as they find they have less hopes left, they are more vexed and troubled; so they are continually turned about like a wheel that is in perpetual motion.

3. This is the miserable condition our Saviour expresses so much to the life, by the parable of the prodigal son (Luke xv.), of whom he says, that, leaving his father's house, he travelled into a far country, and there squandered away his estate in riot and debauchery; and when he had spent all, there happened to be a great famine in those parts, during which he was reduced to that extremity as to be obliged to look after swine; and, what is still more, he was put to such straits as to desire to fill his belly with what the hogs themselves lived on, and yet nobody would give him even that. Could any one lay out the whole course of a wicked man's life, with all the miseries that attend it, in more lively colors than these? Who can this prodigal son be, that leaves his father's house, but the unhappy sinner, who separates himself from Almighty God, gives himself over to all sorts of vices and abuses all God's favors and mercies? What is this country, where there is so great a famine, but this miserable world, where worldly men are so insatiable in their desires as never to be satisfied with what they have, but are perpetually

running up and down like ravenous wolves, still seeking after more? And what can you imagine is the employment of their whole lives, but feeding of hogs, that is, laboring how to content their own swinish appetites? If you are not convinced of this truth, observe a very young man, who is wholly intent on the world from morning till night, and you will see that all his business is, beast-like, to find out new ways to please and delight some one or more of his senses, as the sight, the taste, the hearing, or the rest, as if he were one of Epicurus's followers, and not a disciple of Jesus Christ, as if he had nothing else to look after but a body like a beast, and as if he believed that sensual pleasures were his only end. Thus his whole entertainment is to run from place to place, here to-day, and there to-morrow, in pursuit of fresh delights for the indulging of his senses. What other end can he have in his gallantry, in his feasting and banqueting, in his soft beds, in his music, in his conversations, in his visits, in his walks, but to look after meat for this sort of swine? You may give all this what name you please, call it grandeur or good breeding, if you will, but know that, in the language of God and of the gospel, it is nothing but feeding of swine; because, as hogs love to be wallowing in the dirt and mire, so the hearts of such men love nothing but the filth of carnal pleasures.

4. But the greatest misery is, to see that the son of such a noble father, born to be fed with the bread of angels at God's own table, cannot satisfy his hunger with such vile food, so great is the scarcity of it; because there being so many buyers of this commodity, they hinder one another, and so they all go away unsatisfied. My meaning is, that whilst so many are catching at it, there must need be much strife, as it is impossible for swine to feed under an oak, without grunting and biting one another to get a better share of the acorns that fall.

This is the dreadful hunger holy David describes, where he says, "They have wandered up and down in the wilderness in a dry place, hungering and thirsting, till they were just ready to drop down;" Ps. cvi. 45. What can this extreme hunger and thirst be, but the inordinate desire of the things of this world the wicked are inflamed with? This appetite of theirs is such, that the more they give it, the greedier it grows, the more it drinks, the drier it is, and the more wood they lay on, the more violent it burns. O unhappy creatures, what can be the cause of your being parched up with such a burning thirst as this, "but your having forsaken the fountain of living water, and running to drink out of broken cisterns, which can hold none?" Jer. ii. 13. You have mistaken the stream of true happiness, and for this reason you run up and down, till you lose yourselves through wild and desert places, in search of the muddy pond and lakes of the perishable goods

of this world, in hopes they will quench your thirst. This was cruel Holofernes's policy, when he besieged Bethulia; for as soon as ever he sat down before the city, he commanded his men to cut off all the pipes and channels that conveyed water to the town, so that the poor besieged had but a few little springs left, just by the walls, where they used to drink now and then by stealth, rather wetting their lips than quenching their thirst. Is not this your case, you, who are always seeking after pleasures, you, who are perpetually in pursuit of honor, and who are such friends to every thing that pleases the appetite, for having missed of the fountain of living waters? What else do you but run to the little springs of creatures, that come in your way, and rather serve to wet your lips and increase your thirst than to quench it? O unfortunate man! "Why will you go into Egypt to drink troubled water?" Jer. ii. 18. What water can be more troubled than sensual pleasure, which is not to be drank without perceiving an ungrateful taste and smell? For what worse smell than the stench of sin, and what more unpalatable than the remorse of conscience occasioned by it, which, as we are told, even by a philosopher, are both the inseparable companions of carnal pleasures?

5. Besides, this appetite being blind, and unable to distinguish between what it can obtain and what it cannot, and the eagerness of desire making that appear very easy which is in itself most difficult, those things are often coveted that cannot be obtained; for there is nothing worth coveting, but what is much sought after and defended by many lovers. Now the appetite being deprived of what it longs for, being hungry and wanting whereon to feed, often stretching out its arms, and yet grasping nothing but the air, and using all endeavors without any success, therefore, it frets inwardly, wastes and consumes to see itself so far from what it desires. For those two chief faculties of our souls, the irascible and concupiscible, being so closely united together as never to be wanting to one another, it is certain that whatever the concupiscible is frustrated of its desire, the irascible comes in immediately to relieve it, raging and exposing itself to all accidents and dangers, that it may give the other satisfaction. From this confusion of desires proceeds the inward disturbance we are now speaking of, which St. James calls *a war* when he says, *From whence come wars and differences among you? Come they not hence even of your lusts, that war in your members? Ye lust and have not.* Jam. iv. 1, 2. The natural contradiction that is between the flesh and spirit, and between the desires of each, has given the apostle a great deal of reason to call it *a war*.

6. There is still another thing of this nature much to be lamented, which is, that very often men obtain all that seemed

to suffice to put them into the state of satisfaction they aimed at, and when they are in such a condition that, if they pleased, they might live happy, they then conceit they ought to aspire to some other honor, preferment, dignity, or the like, which if they fail of, they are more perplexed for the miss of that nothing they want, than pleased with the enjoyment of all they possess. Thus they pass their lives with this thorn perpetually pricking, or rather with this scourge continually chastising them, which palls all their happiness, and turns their pleasure into smoke and vapor. This is what I call *nailing up the cannon*, as enemies do in time of war; for a little nail driven into the biggest piece of artillery is enough to make it unfit for service. The cannon is still as big and as sound as it was before, and yet such a little thing makes it lose all its force. God deals after the same manner with the wicked. They might see plainly, if they would but open their eyes, that joy of heart is a free gift of Almighty God, who bestows it on whom he pleases and when he pleases, without making any preparation beforehand as we do, and that he can take it away again whenever he thinks fit, only by nailing up the cannon, that is, by permitting some unhappy turn or change of their prosperity and fortune. And then this single misfortune, though unknown to any one, is sufficient to make them as uneasy and melancholy as if they had nothing in this world to live on, though, at the same time, they may be very rich and happy in all appearance. God himself tells us as much, when, speaking by the prophet Isaias, against the pride and power of the king of Assyria, he says, *That he will weaken his greatest force, and put fire under his glory, for to burn it up* (Isa. x. 6), to show us, that God can sink a vessel when it sails with the fairest wind, can weaken the greatest strength, and make a man miserable in the midst of his prosperity. The same is signified to us again in the book of Job (xxvi. 5), where it is said, *The giants groan under the waters*, to let us know that God has his deep places and his punishments for the great as well as for the little ones, though these seem to lie more open to the misfortunes and injuries of the world. But Solomon has expressed the same thing much plainer; when counting up all the notable miseries in the world, he reckons this one of the greatest of them: *There is another evil also*, says he, *which I have seen under the sun, and which is common amongst men: a man to whom God has given wealth, riches and honor, so that he wanted nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it*; Eccl. vi. 1, 2. What does he mean by these words, *God giveth him not power to eat thereof*, but that he shall not enjoy even what is his own, nor take the satisfaction and pleasure which his possessions might give him, because God has ordained that his happiness shall be disturbed and ruined? And

here wē are given to understand, that as true wisdom is not to be learned by dead letters, but that it is God who teaches it, so neither does true content depend on the goods of this world, but on God alone.

7. But to come home to our subject, how unhappy must those poor creatures be who have nothing, if even those who enjoy all they can wish are so uneasy, because they do not enjoy God! For the want of every one of these things is a particular hunger and thirst, that torments them, and a thorn that is perpetually pricking their hearts: what peace, what quiet is it possible for a soul to have, when all its thoughts and desires are continually so importunate and rebellious? The prophet says very well of such sort of people, "That the heart of the wicked is like a tempestuous sea, which is not to be calmed;" Isa. lvii. 20. And, indeed, what sea, what waves, or what winds can be more boisterous and stormy than the passions and desires of the wicked, which very often disturb not only the sea, but all the world? But there often start up contrary winds in this sea, which is another most violent sort of storm. For the same desires, like opposite winds, frequently resist one another, so that what pleases the flesh does not please honor, what honor loves, riches do not care for; reputation does not covet that which is agreeable to wealth, nor does sloth or luxury desire what reputation does. So that by this means it often happens, that the wicked, whilst they desire all things, do not know what they would have, and so are ignorant what to take and what to leave, because their desires contradict one another, just as bad humors do in distempers which proceed from different causes, where the physicians are puzzled what remedy to prescribe, because that which is good for the expelling of one humor may be apt to nourish another. Such was the confusion of languages at Babel, and such was that, for the preventing of which the royal prophet prayed to God, saying, "Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues, because I have beheld iniquity and contradiction in the city;" Ps. liv. 10. What, therefore, can this *division of tongues*, this *iniquity* and this *contradiction* be, but the disturbance which different passions make in the hearts of worldly-minded men when they oppose one another, and one desires that which is against the inclination and desire of another?

§ II. *Of the inward Peace and Satisfaction good Men enjoy*
—8. Thus you see what the condition of the wicked is, whilst the just, on the contrary, because they know how with prudence to moderate their desires, how to mortify their passions, how to make God, and not the perishable goods of this life, the only object of their happiness, and the centre of their repose; how to aim at nothing but the acquiring of those eternal goods, which no one can deprive them of, how to be in perpetual war

with self-love, with their own flesh, and with the whole train of their irregular appetites; and because, in fine, they know how to resign their will to God's, to conform theirs to his, and throw themselves entirely into his arms, are never molested by any such cares, so as to have their inward peace lost, or so much as interrupted.

This, amongst several others, is one of the chief rewards Almighty God promises to those who love him, as we may see almost every where in the Holy Scriptures. Holy David says, "Those that love thy law, O Lord, enjoy a perfect peace, and there is nothing that can make them fall;" Ps. cxviii. 165. God himself says by the prophet Isaias, "I wish you had observed my commandments, your peace should have been like a river, and your justice like the waters of the sea;" Isa. xlviii. 18. The reason of his calling this peace a *river* is, because it is able to extinguish the flames of our desires, to appease the burning heat of our lusts, to water the dry and barren veins of our hearts, and to comfort and refresh our souls. Solomon assures us of the same truth in a divine manner, though in a few words, saying, "When the ways of man are acceptable to God, he will force even his enemies to make peace with him;" Prov. xvi. 7. What enemies are these, that are at war with man, but his own passions, and the evil inclinations of his flesh, which are perpetually fighting with the spirit? The Almighty, therefore, says, that he will make the flesh and the spirit live peaceably together, when, by virtue of this grace and of good habits, the flesh, with all its desires, shall accustom itself to the works of the spirit, and by that means live quietly with it, whereas before it was in continual opposition. For though virtue, at the beginning, meets with a great deal of opposition from the passions, yet when it comes to its perfection, it acts with a deal of sweetness and ease, and with much less contradiction. It is this peace, in fine, which holy David, by another name, calls the enlarging of the heart, when he says, "Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, O Lord, and my feet have not failed me;" Ps. xvii. 37. The prophet by these words intends to show, how different the way of the virtuous is from that of the wicked, because whilst the one walk with their hearts oppressed and straitened by continual fears, solitudes and apprehensions, like a traveller that is going through a narrow path, with steep rocks and precipices on both sides of him, the others, on the contrary, walk with a deal of security and joy, like a man in a plain and open way, that is in no apprehension of falling. The just understand this better by the practice than by theory, as being sensible, by their own experience, and the alteration they find in their own hearts, of the vast difference there is between the time they employed in the service of the world, and what they spend now in the service of God; for whilst they

served in the world, they were on all occasions full of troubles, solitudes, jealousies, fears and narrowness of heart; but now they have forsaken the world, and fixed their affections on eternal goods, and placed all their happiness and confidence in God, they are out of the reach of all these things, with hearts so open, so free, and so resigned to the will of God, that they are so often astonished at the change, and cannot think themselves the same they were before, or at least they imagine they have new hearts, because they find such changes in them. And we may with truth affirm, that they are, and are not, the same persons, for, though they be the same in nature, they are not the same as to grace, which works this change, though no man can be assured of it.

9. This is what God himself promised by his prophet Isaias, when he said, "When you shall go through the waters I will be with you, to save you from being drowned; and if you walk in the very midst of fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame so much as scorch you;" Isa. xliii. 2. Now what are *these waters* but the rivers of tribulations we suffer in this life, and the deluge of innumerable miseries we meet with here every day? And what is *this fire* but the heat of our flesh, which is the fiery furnace of Babylon, heated by Nabuchodonosor's servants, that is, by the devils, from whence the flames of inordinate passions and appetites are continually breaking out? How can any man live in the midst of this fire and water, which the whole world is perpetually in danger of, without receiving hurt, and not be sensible, at the same time, that it was the presence of the Holy Ghost, and the assistance of God's grace, that preserved him? This is the peace which, as the apostle says, *exceeds all imagination* (Philip. iv. 6), because it is so noble and so supernatural a gift of God, that it is impossible for man's weak understanding to conceive of itself, by what means a heart of flesh should come to enjoy such content, such quiet and such a calm, amidst the storms and tempests of the world.

10. But he who enjoys this favor acknowledges and praises the author of these wonders, crying out with the prophet, "Come and see the works of the Lord, and the miracles he has wrought upon the earth, making war cease to the very remotest parts of the earth. He has snapped the bow and broken the arms, and thrown the shield in the fire, saying, Throw down your arms, and live in peace and quiet, that so you may know, that I am the Lord, and will be exalted in heaven and in earth." Ps. xlv. 9, 10, 11. This being so, what can there be in the world more rich, more delightful, and more desirable, than this rest, this repose, this effusion and extension of heart, and this most happy peace?

11. But if you will go a little further, and would know from what cause this heavenly gift proceeds, I answer, it proceeds from all those other privileges and advantages of virtue we have

before mentioned; for as, in the chain of vice, the links are all one within another, so in the ladder of virtue they have all a dependence on, and connection with, one another, in such a manner, that the highest, as it produces most fruit, so it has most roots to spring from. And thus this happy peace, which is one of the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost, takes its rise from those other privileges we have before spoken of, but particularly from virtue itself, whose inseparable companion it is. For as an outward reverence is naturally due to virtue, so is an inward tranquillity, being at the same time its effect and its reward. For since inward war, according to what we have already said, is begun by the pride and disturbance of the passions; as soon as ever they are weakened by those virtues, whose duty it is to subdue them, the very occasions of these tumults and seditions are removed. And this is one of the three things, by means whereof we partake of the happiness of the kingdom of heaven, even here on earth. The apostle, speaking of them, says, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17.); where, by justice, according to the Hebrew way of speaking, is to be understood the very same virtue we are talking of; in which, together with these two admirable fruits, *peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*, consists the felicity which virtuous men enjoy, by anticipation, in this life. And to prove that this peace is an effect of virtue, the Almighty himself says expressly, by Isaias, "Peace shall be the work of justice and silence, and everlasting security the fruit of it; my people shall sit in the beauty of peace, and in the tabernacles of confidence, and in a plentiful rest;" Isa. xxxii. 17, 18. What he calls here *silence*, is nothing else but this same *inward peace*; that is, the repose of the passions, which disturb the silence of the soul, by the perpetual clamors of their irregular lusts.

12. The second cause this peace proceeds from is, the liberty of the soul, and the dominion it has over the passions above spoken of. For just as when any country is brought under a foreign subjection, as soon as ever the inhabitants surrender themselves, there is a general peace immediately, and every one sits under his own fig-tree and under his own vine, without any fear of the enemy; so after the passions of the soul, which are the causes of all its disquiets, are subjected to reason, there immediately follows in the soul an inward silence and peace, which makes it live free from all disturbances imaginable. So that man being now free from their tyranny, and, what is more, keeping them in subjection to him, there is nothing left to disturb the peace he enjoys, though, on the contrary, whilst the passions had the rule and power, every thing was tossed up and down, and the whole man in general confusion and disorder.

13. The third cause of this peace is the greatness of these

spiritual consolations, that lull asleep all the affections of our appetites, which, during that time, are content with what the superior part of the soul is pleased to give them, because the concupiscible appetite, after having tasted how sovereignly sweet and delightful God is, makes him the object of all its wishes, and the irascible is quiet, because its companion is satisfied; and the whole man enjoys an entire peace and happiness, on account of his tasting the sovereign good.

14. In the fourth place, this peace proceeds from the testimony and inward joy of a good conscience, which makes the soul of a just man easy and quiet, though it does not give him any perfect assurance, for fear of making him negligent, and putting him in danger of losing that holy fear which puts him forward.

15. Lastly, this peace proceeds from the confidence just men have in Almighty God. It is this particularly, that gives them the greatest joy and comfort imaginable, even amidst the miseries of this life, because it is the very anchor they trust to, that is to say, because they assure themselves, that they have God for their Father, their Deliverer, their Defender, and their Shield, under whose protection they live in peace and happiness, and have all the reason that can be to sing with the prophet, "I will lay me down and sleep in peace, because thou, O Lord, hast secured me in a particular manner, by the hope which I have in thy mercy;" Ps. iv. It is from this hope, that the peace of the just springs, and in this they find a remedy for all their evils. How then can any man be troubled, who has so powerful a protector as his God?

CHAPTER X.

Of the ninth Privilege of Virtue, viz. that God hears the Prayers of the Just, and rejects those of the Wicked.

1. ANOTHER extraordinary privilege virtuous men enjoy is, that God hears their prayers, which is a sovereign remedy against all the necessities and miseries of this life. To make this the plainer, we are to understand, that there have been two universal deluges in the world, the one material, the other spiritual, but both of them caused by sin. The material deluge, which happened in Noe's time, destroyed every thing in the world but the ark and what was within it, for every thing else was consumed by the waters, so that all the labors and riches of mankind, together with the whole earth itself, was swallowed up by the sea. But the other deluge, which was before this, and which arose from the first sin that was committed, was much more terrible and much greater than this was, because it was the ruin not

only of those persons who were alive at that time, but even of all ages past, present and to come. Nor is the hurt it does to the body to be compared with what it does to the soul, which it strips and robs of those graces, that were bestowed on the whole world in the person of our first parent, as we may see in an infant newly born; who comes into the world as bare of all these goods as it is of clothes to cover it.

2. From this first deluge flowed all those miseries and wants this mortal life is exposed to, which are so many and so great, that they have furnished a famous pope and doctor with matter to compose a book solely on this subject: *Innocentius de Vilitate conditionis humanæ*. And several eminent philosophers, considering on one side the excellence of man above all other creatures, and on the other, the infinite number of miseries and vices he is subject to, could not but wonder to see so much disorder in the world, though they were not capable of finding out the cause of all these miseries, which is nothing else but sin. For they saw that man was the only creature in the world that had such an infinite variety of carnal delights and pleasures; that none but he was oppressed with avarice, with ambition, an insatiable desire of life, care and solicitude about a funeral, but most of all, with a concern for that which must follow. They observed, that no other creature had a more frail and uncertain life than man has; that none had a more inflamed lust, none more subject to fear, and that without any ground, nor any more cruelly angry or enraged than he. They took notice that other creatures spent the greatest part of their lives without sicknesses, or without being troubled with the physicians and medicines. They saw them provided with all the necessaries, without taking any pains or care. But as for unhappy, miserable man, they saw him exposed to a thousand sorts of infirmities, accidents, necessities, misfortunes and pains, not only of the body, but of the soul, and as much disturbed at the miseries of his friends as at his own. They saw him sorry for what was past, afflicted with the present, and painfully solicitous about what was to come; nay, very often toiling and sweating all his lifetime for the poor sustenance of a little bread and water.

3. If we were to count all the miseries of human life, we should never have done. Holy Job says, "The life of a man is a perpetual warfare upon earth, and his days are like the days of a hired servant, that labors from sunrising to sunset;" Job. vii. 1, 2. Several of the old philosophers had such a lively sense of this truth, that some of them said, they could not tell whether to call nature a mother or a step-mother, because she has subjected us to so many miseries. Others, again, used to say, it were better never to be born, or at least to die as soon as we are born: nay, some of them have gone so far as to say, there are but few persons

that would accept of life after having made an experiment of it, that is, if it were possible to make a trial of it beforehand.

4. Since, therefore, life has been reduced to this miserable condition by sin, and since we have lost our whole stock and substance in this first deluge, what remedy can we expect he has left us, who has punished us so severely? If a man that is sick and wounded were to be at sea in a great storm, and there lose all he is worth, what could he look for afterwards, having lost both his goods and his health, but beggary and want? Every man must make this case his own; for since there is no one but has lost all he is worth in this universal deluge, and is left so poor and naked, how can he help himself, but by crying like a poor beggar at the gates of God for relief and assistance? The holy king Josaphat taught us this resource when he said, "Since we do not know what we ought to do, we have one remedy left us at least, which is to lift up our eyes, O Lord, towards thee;" 2 Paral. xx. 12. The good king Ezechias has instructed us fully on the same point, when he said, "In one day thou wilt put an end to my life, O Lord; but as for me, I will cry like the young swallow, and moan like the dove;" Isa. xxxviii. 14. As if he said, I am so poor, O Lord, and have such a dependence on your mercy and providence, that I cannot give myself any assurance of one day's life, and, therefore, all I have to trust in is, to be always moaning before you like a dove, and to cry out to you as the young swallow does to its dam. Thus said this holy man, though he was a great king; and David, though much greater, made use of this same remedy in all his necessities; and, therefore, inspired by the same spirit, and enlightened by the same knowledge, says, "I have called upon thee with my voice, O Lord, and with my voice I have addressed my prayer to thee, O my God; I have sought after God in the day of tribulation, and I have stretched out my hand towards him in the night, when my soul refused to be comforted, and when my spirit failed me" (Ps. lxxvii. 1, 2, 3); that is to say, when I look round about me, and see all the passages of hope shut up, when nothing on earth can give me any ease, I immediately seek for a remedy from heaven by the help of prayer, which is the sovereign cure God has given me for all my ills.

5. You will ask me, perhaps, whether this is a certain and universal cure for all the necessities of life or not? This being a secret which depends entirely on the will of God, there is no one can answer it but those whom he has made choice of to discover his will, which are the apostles and prophets; one of them says, "There is no nation in the world so great, which have their gods so near them, as our God is near us, when we pray to him;" Deut. iv. 7. They are the words of God himself, though delivered by the mouth of a man, and they assure us, with all the certainty

imaginable, that as often as we pray, though we see no one, and though no one answers us, that we do not speak to the walls or talk to the air, but that God is present with us and hears all we say, that he assists us in our prayers, that he pities our miseries, and prepares the remedy we ask for, in case it be proper for us. What greater comfort can a man have when he is at his prayers than such a certain pledge of Almighty God's assistance? And if this alone is sufficient to encourage and comfort us, how much more will the words of our Saviour, and those assurances he has given us in his gospel, when he says, "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you;" (Matt. vii. 7.) Can we have a richer token than this? Can any man doubt of the truth of these words? Who is there that, as often as he goes to his prayers, is not comforted with the hope of this sacred promise?

6. This, therefore, is one of the greatest privileges the virtuous enjoy in this life, to know that these promises are made particularly for them. For one of the greatest favors God bestows on them, in reward of their obedience and piety, is, that he will be near them and hear the prayers they address to him. David assures us of it, when he says, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and his ears are open to their prayers;" Ps. xxxvi. 16. And God himself promises us the same by Isaias, saying, "Then," that is to say, when you shall have kept my commandments, "you shall call upon the Lord, and he will hear you; you shall call out to him, and he will say, behold I am here" (Isa. lviii. 9); that is, I am ready to grant whatever you shall desire. Nay, more than this, he promises them by the same prophet to hear them, not only when they call on him, but even long before. And yet, after all, none of these promises come any thing near that which we read in St. John, where our Saviour says, "If you shall remain in me and let my words remain in you, you shall ask whatever you shall have a mind for, and it shall be granted you;" John xv. 7. But for fear this promise, as being so great, should be more than any man could believe, he repeats it a second time, and affirms it more positively, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that whatsoever you shall desire of my Father in my name he shall give it you;" xvi. 24. Can there be any greater favor, any greater riches, or any more sovereign command than this is? You shall ask me, says he, for whatever you please, and it shall be granted you. Could any expression better become the person that promises than this does? Who but God could ever have made such a promise? Is there any one beside God, that is able to do such great things as these are? Or is there any one but him, who has so much goodness as to oblige himself to grant such favors? What else is this but to make man in some measure lord of all things, and to intrust him with the keys of the divine treasures? All the other favors

of God have their bounds set them, but this, above all the rest, as being the royal gift of an infinite Lord, carries some degree of infinity along with it. For our Saviour does not determine either this or that, or any particular thing, but *whatever you shall desire* (provided it be for your eternal good) *shall be granted you*. Could men but set a just value on things, and give them their true estimate, how great a rate would they esteem this at? How happy would a man think himself to have so great an interest with his king as to obtain his grant for every thing he should desire? Now if a man would look on it as so great a happiness to be so much in favor with an earthly king, what must he think it is to have so much interest with the King of heaven?

7. And that you may not think these are only bare promises without performance, do but look into the lives of the saints, and consider what great things they have done by the virtue of prayer. What did Moses in Egypt, and during all the time of his travels through the wilderness? What did not Elias and Elseus his disciple? What miracles were not wrought by the apostles, and all by prayer? This was the weapon the saints fought with; with this they overcame the devil, with this they triumphed over the world, with this they subdued nature, with this they turned the most violent flames into a gentle dew, with this, in fine, they appeased and quieted the wrath of God, and obtained of him whatever they asked. It is written of the holy father St. Dominick, that he told a certain friend of his he was never in his life denied any thing he had begged of the Almighty; his friend desired him to pray that one Doctor Reginald, a man famous at that time, might become a religious man of his order: the holy man spent the next night in prayer for him, and the next day early in the morning, as he was beginning the hymn of the first hour, *Jam lucis orto sidere*, this new morning-star came into the choir, and there prostrating himself at the saint's feet, desired, with a deal of humility, that he would give him the habit of his order. This, therefore, is the reward that is promised to the obedience of the just, and it is their faithful observing the voice of God, that makes him in some manner obedient to their prayers; and because they answer to the call of God, *he pays them again*, according to the proverb, *in the same coin*, by answering them whenever they call on him. And for this reason Solomon says, "That the obedient man shall talk of victories;" Prov. xxi. 28. For it is but just, that God complies with the will of man, when man complies with the will of God.

8. But it happens quite otherwise in the prayers of the wicked: for the Almighty tells them by Isaias, "When you shall stretch out your hands, I will turn my eyes away from you; and when you shall multiply your prayers, I will not hear them;" Isa. i. 15. He threatens them in like manner by his prophet Jeremy, saying "In the time of their affliction they shall say, Arise, O Lord, and

deliver us." And he will ask them, "Where are your gods, which you made for yourselves? Let them arise and deliver you in the time of your affliction." Jer. ii. 27. In the book of Job we read these words: "What hopes can the wicked man have, if he unjustly takes away his neighbor's goods? Can he hope that God will hear his prayer when he shall be in distress?" Job xxvii. 8, 9. And St. John, in his Epistle, says, "My beloved brethren, if our own conscience do not reprove us, we have a confidence in God, that whatsoever we shall ask we shall obtain of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing to his sight;" John iii. 21, 22. What the holy psalmist says is to the same effect: "If I have beheld iniquity, the Lord will not hear me; but because I have not done wickedly, therefore he has heard my prayer;" Ps. lxxv. 18, 19.

9. There are numberless examples of this sort, in holy writ, to show what vast difference there is between the prayers of the just and those of the wicked, and consequently the extraordinary advantages which the one have over the other; because the just are heard and dealt with as true children of God, whilst the wicked are treated as enemies. And what wonder is it that their prayers should not be heard, since there are no good works, no devotion, no fervor of spirit, no humility to accompany them? For, according to St. Cyprian, "It is impossible that a petition should be efficacious when prayer is barren;" St. Cypr. Orat. Dominica. Though this is generally true, the Almighty's goodness is yet so great, that he sometimes vouchsafes to hear the prayers of the wicked, which, notwithstanding their want of merit, do not cease to obtain their end; because, as St. Thomas says, "Merit proceeds from charity, but the grant of the petition comes from the infinite goodness and mercy of God, who sometimes hears the prayers of such persons;" St. Tho. 2. 2. q. 83. art. 15, 16.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the tenth Privilege of Virtue, which is, the Assistance good Men receive from God in their Afflictions; and of the Impatience, on the Contrary, with which the Wicked suffer theirs.

1. ANOTHER extraordinary privilege granted to virtue is, its encouraging its followers to bear up against the tribulations they cannot but meet with in this life. For we know there is no sea so tempestuous and inconstant as this life is. Because a man is never so secure of the felicity he enjoys as not to be exposed to an infinite number of such accidents and misfortunes as he never thought of, and which he is, nevertheless, every moment in

danger of falling into. It is, therefore, a matter of great consequence to observe with what difference the wicked and the good conduct themselves in all these changes; for the good, considering they have God for their father, that it is he who sends them this cup as a potion prescribed them by a most experienced physician for their cure, that tribulation is like a file which takes off the rust of sin the cleaner, and polishes it the brighter the rougher it is; they consider it is this affliction that makes man more humble in thoughts, more devout in his prayers, and gives him a purer conscience. These considerations make them bow down their heads, and humble themselves with cheerfulness, in the time of their tribulation; they put water in the chalice of the cross, or, to speak plainer, the Almighty himself puts it in: "For he," as the holy psalmist says, "gives them tears to drink by measure;" Ps. xcvi. 6. And there is no physician so careful in the mixture of his drugs, according to the constitution of his patient, as this heavenly physician is, in the tempering of tribulations, which he sends the just, according to the strength every one has to bear them: and if at any time the burthen should be increased, he increases the assistance he gives them for bearing it, that so the tribulation any man lies under may make him so much the richer, as it is the more painful and troublesome; nay, when his afflictions are tempered thus, he is so far from endeavoring to get rid of them as things prejudicial, that he, on the contrary, longs for them as advantageous and profitable. So that, by the help of all these considerations, good men often bear their necessities, not only with patience, but with pleasure, because they look on the reward, and not the labor, on the crown, and not the suffering, on the health their physic will restore them to, and not on the potion itself, not on the smart of the stroke, but on the love of him that lays it on, who has already said, "that he loves those that he chastises;" Heb. iii. 19.

2. To all these considerations must be added the Almighty's grace, which, as we have shown already, is never wanting to a just man in the time of his tribulation. For God being so true a friend to those who love him, he is never nearer to them than when they are in affliction, though he seems then to be furthest from them. If you doubt of the truth hereof, do but look into the Holy Scriptures, and you will see nothing so frequently repeated or so often promised. Who does the royal prophet mean but God, when he says, "that he is their helper in their necessities and tribulation?" Ps. ix. 10. Has not he himself commanded all persons to call on him during the time of their affliction, saying, "Call upon me in the day of tribulation, and I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me?" Ps. xli. 15. Has not the prophet testified this on his own experience, when he says, "When I called, the God of my justice heard me, he has enlarged my

heart in the day of tribulation"? Ps. iv. 1. Is not this the Lord in whom the prophet placed all his trust, saying, "I expected him who has preserved me from weakness of spirit and from the storm?" Ps. liv. 9. It is certain, that he does not speak here of any storm at sea, but of that storm, which the heart of a negligent and weak man that is in tribulation is tossed with; and the more a man's heart is confined, the more boisterously this storm rages, which the prophet often repeats, for the greater confirmation of this truth, and for the strengthening of our weakness. "The salvation of the just," says he, "comes from the Lord, and he is their protector in the time of their tribulation: and he will assist them and deliver them, and rescue them, from sinners, and save them, because they have put their trust in him;" Ps. xxxvi. 39, 40.

3. In another place the same prophet speaks yet plainer, thus: "How great, O Lord, and how many are the joys thou hast laid up for those that fear thee, and put their trust in thee in the presence of the children of men? Thou wilt hide them in the secret of thy face from the persecution of men: thou wilt protect them in the tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues. Blessed be the Lord, who has showed his mercy towards me in so wonderful a manner, by defending and securing me as if I had been in a fortified town. But the afflictions, which I have been overwhelmed with, have made me cry out, O Lord, I am turned out of thy sight." Ps. xxx. 20, 21, 22, 23. See here how plainly this holy prophet has taught us how God assists the just in their most pressing necessities. But you must here take particular notice of these words, "Thou wilt hide them in the secret of thy face:" for by this, according to a certain interpreter, we are given to understand, that as the kings of the earth, when they have a mind to protect any person with a more than ordinary care, keep him within their own palaces, that so not only the royal walls may secure him from his enemies, but that the king's continual presence, and the watchful eye he has over him, may be his security, than which none can be greater: in like manner, this sovereign King uses the same care for the security of those he loves. In confirmation of this, we both see and read, that holy men, even in the midst of the greatest dangers and temptations, still keep the same calmness and evenness of spirit as they had before, without showing the least concern or trouble in their looks, because they knew for certain, that he who protected them would be so faithful as not to forsake them, nay, on the contrary, that he would stand the nearer to them if he should see them in any great danger. Just as he did to the three young men whom Nebuchodonosor commanded to be flung into the fiery furnace of Babylon; Dan. iii. For the angel of the Lord was seen walking in the midst of them, and changed the violent flames into a cool, refreshing air. At which

the tyrant, being astonished, began to say, "Were they not three men that we bound and flung into the middle of the fire? Behold I see four untied and walking together without having received any hurt, and the fourth of them is as beautiful as the Son of God." Ibid. ver. 24, 25. Do you not see now by this how certain it is, that Almighty God is with the just, whenever they are in any tribulation? Nor is the care he took of young Joseph after his brethren had sold him, a less argument of this truth. For as we may read in the book of Wisdom, "He went down with him into the prison, and never left him when he was in his fetters, till he gave him the sceptre of Egypt, and power over those persons who had oppressed him: and he proved those to be liars that defamed him, and he gave him eternal glory;" Sap. x. 13, 14. These examples evince the truth of God's promises made to us by the psalmist, when he says, "I am with him when he is in affliction; I will deliver him and glorify him;" Ps. xc. 15. O how truly happy must affliction be that makes us worthy the company of our God! Let us all cry out, with St. Bernard, "If these are the effects of tribulations, grant, O God, that I may never be free from them, that so you may be always with me;" Serm. 17. in Ps. xc.

4. Add to this, the relief and assistance of all virtues which, upon such occasions, come in ready armed to succor the afflicted heart. For whenever the soul is straitened, or in any kind of danger from tribulation, all the virtues immediately run into her, and with what forces they can make, just as the blood does towards the heart whenever it is oppressed. In the first place comes *faith*, with a certain knowledge of the happiness and miseries of the next life, compared to which, all we can possibly suffer is but a mere trifle. Next comes *hope*, which makes man bear all his troubles with patience, in expectation of the reward that is to follow. After her comes *charity*, which makes them even desire to be afflicted in this world, that they may thereby express their affection for God. Then follows *obedience* and *conformity* to the divine will, which helps them to receive whatever God sends them with cheerfulness and without grumbling. *Patience* repairs thither, and it is her business to keep their shoulders up, lest they should bend beneath the weight. Then *humility* bows down their hearts, like young trees, by the stormy wind of affliction, teaching them to humble themselves under the powerful hand of God, and to acknowledge that what they suffer is infinitely less than their sins deserve. Another virtue that assists them is, the consideration of what Jesus Christ suffered on the cross, and of what all the saints have endured, which is far more severe and painful than what they sustain.

5. Thus all virtues officiously assist us in such dangerous encounters; nor do they assist us in their service only, but with their words, if I may be allowed to term it so. For, first of all, Faith

tells us, "That the sufferings of this world are not worthy of the glory which will be revealed to us in the next;" Rom. viii. 18. Charity comforts us, saying, It is but reasonable we should suffer something for his sake who had so much love for us. Gratitude tells us, with holy Job, "If we have received good things from the hand of God, why should we not receive bad ones too? Job. ii. 10. Penance says, It is no more than justice that he who has done so much against God's will should undergo something now against his own. Loyalty says, that it is requisite we should, once at least in our life, give some token of our fidelity to him, who has been bestowing his favors on us ever since we were born. Patience tells us, "That tribulation produces patience, patience the proof of our faith, faith produces hope, and that hope will not leave a man in confusion." Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. Obedience says, The highest degree of sanctity a man can arrive to, and the most pleasing sacrifice he can offer to God, is to conform in all his sufferings to his will.

6. But that which of all these virtues helps us most on such occasions, and which makes us most resolute in the very midst of tribulation, is a lively hope. It is what St. Paul himself teaches us, for he had no sooner said, "rejoicing in hope," than he adds, "being patient in tribulation." He knew very well that one is the consequence of the other, that is to say, that the strength we get by patience proceeds from the joy hope gives us. For which reason the apostle very elegantly calls this hope "an anchor" (Heb. vi. 19), because this lively hope being fastened strongly to the promises of heaven, it keeps the soul of the just man firm and constant in the midst of the waves and storms of this world, and makes it slight the violence of its winds and tempests, just as an anchor, when it is stuck into the ground, makes the ship ride securely on the water, and keeps it steady, though the winds and waves are continually beating against it. This, they say, was the practice of a certain saint, who, whenever he was in any kind of affliction, used to say, "The happiness I hope for is so great, that all I can suffer is delightful to me."

7. Thus it is that all virtues meet and agree together for fortifying a just man's heart, whenever he is in any tribulation. And if at any time he should lose courage, they come up to him again with much more vigor, and upbraid him after this manner: How now? what is become of that lively faith and confidence you ought to have in Almighty God, if you begin to shrink at the very time he is going to make a trial of you, and to see what you are? Where is your charity, your courage, your obedience, your patience, your loyalty, and the fervor of your hope? Is it for this you have so often prepared yourself, and made so many resolutions? Is this all you have desired so earnestly of God, and prayed so often to him for? Consider a little, that the duty and perfec-

tion of a good Christian does not consist in saying a few prayers, in fasting, in hearing of mass; it is necessary, besides all this, that God should find you as faithful as another Job, or Abraham, in the time of tribulation. Such considerations as these, and the virtues a just man is endowed with, together with the Almighty God's never-failing grace, make him strong enough to bear those burthens not only with patience, but oftentimes with thankfulness and pleasure. Holy Tobias's example will suffice at present to prove this: we read of him, that God having permitted that he should lose his sight, after having suffered many other afflictions, for an example of patience to men in after ages, he was not troubled at all, nor did he lose the least part of that fidelity and obedience he paid to God before these misfortunes happened to him. Whereupon the Scripture immediately gives the reason of it, saying, "Having had the fear of God before his eyes from his very infancy, and having kept his commandments, he did not murmur against him, because he had struck him with blindness, but remained immovable in the fear of God, giving him thanks all the days of his life;" Tob. ii. 13, 14. You see now by this, how plainly the Holy Ghost attributes the patience, with which a man suffers afflictions, to virtue and the fear of God, which, as the Scripture has declared, this holy man was so renowned for. I could bring several remarkable instances of holy men and women, even in our days, who have undergone all the troubles God has sent them with a deal of cheerfulness and love, who have found out honey even in gall, who in a storm had a calm, and have been refreshed and cooled in the very midst of the flames of Babylon.

§ I. *Of the Impatience and Rage of the Wicked in their Afflictions.*—S. But, on the contrary, how dreadful a thing it is to see the wicked in any trouble! to see them without charity, patience, courage, hope or any such virtue! to see how all their miseries come on them, unarmed and unprepared! to see how blind they are, and unable to behold that which the just see by a steady faith! to consider they have no lively hope to embrace what God sends them, nor have ever had any experience of his fatherly providence towards those who serve him! It is a lamentable thing to see how they are swallowed up in this gulf, without finding any place to rest on, or to lay hold of. What better hopes can a man have of them, than that they should perish in the storm, or be killed in the battle, since they have no kind of assistance to trust to; because they sail without a rudder, and fight without weapons? What can a man expect, but that the fury of the winds, and the tempest of their afflictions, should dash them against the rocks of anger, pride, dejection, impatience, blasphemy and despair? Some there are who, through the excess of their miseries, have lost either their senses, their health, or their life, or at least their sight, by their continual tears. So that the just remain

sound and entire in the fire of adversity, like fine silver, whilst the wicked, like lead, melt and are dissolved as soon as they feel the heat. Thus, whilst the one cry, the others sing; whilst the one are sinking, the others pass over dry-shod; the one, like frail earthen vessels, crack in the fire, whilst the others, like pure gold, are the more refined. So that "the voice of salvation and of joy is continually sounding in the tabernacles of the just" (Ps. cxvii. 15), whilst there is nothing to be heard, in the habitations of the wicked, but the cries of sorrow and confusion.

9. If you would more fully comprehend what I say, do but observe what extravagances several females commit on the death of their children or husbands, and you will find some of them, out of madness, and rage, and the horror they have of their life, precipitate their death: others, that soon end their days with impatience and fury, caused by their grief; and thus a family is ruined and destroyed in a moment. And, what is worst of all, they are not only in a passion with, and cruel to themselves, but pour out horrible execrations against Almighty God, accusing his providence, condemning his justice, blaspheming his mercy, and opening their sacrilegious mouths against heaven, nay, against God himself, till, at length, all their curses fall on their own heads, with many other calamities much more dreadful, wherewith Almighty God punishes them for such horrible blasphemies. This is the reward he deserves, who is so impudent as to spit at heaven itself, and to kick against the spur. Sometimes this proves a complete cure, wrought by the hand of God, who thus diverts their hearts from some extraordinary afflictions, by sending them others that are greater.

10. Thus, these miserable creatures, wanting the rudder of virtue to steer their vessels, are cast away in the storm; for blaspheming and cursing him, they ought to praise and bless, for being puffed up with pride when they ought to humble themselves, for being stubborn when they are chastised, and growing worse on those remedies which were applied to make them better, which seems to be a beginning of their hell, and a resemblance of what they are to endure in the next world. For if hell be nothing but a place of sin and punishment, why should we not look on this state as a hell, since it has so great a share of both?

11. But what a pity that still these troubles must be endured, and that, if they were borne with patience, they would become more tolerable, and at the same time more meritorious; and yet, in spite of all this, wretched man is resolved to deprive himself of the inestimable fruit of patience, and to increase the weight of his burden, by adding the burden of impatience, which alone is much heavier than all the rest of the load. It is a great trouble to labor and toil, to receive no reward, nor know whose account to place it to; but it is much worse to lose all that is got, and,

after travelling all night, to be further from the journey's end in the morning.

12. By what has been said, we may perceive the difference there is between the use the good and the bad make of their afflictions. With what peace, what joy, and what courage do the good bear theirs, whilst the wicked are quite overwhelmed with grief and trouble! This was represented to the life, by the great lamentations and complaints which were heard throughout the land of Egypt, when God destroyed all their first-born in one night (Exod. xii.), for there was not a house free from grief and sorrow; and yet there was no cry heard in the land of Jessen, where the children of Israel lived.

13. Besides this peace, what shall I say of the advantages the just make of tribulations which are so prejudicial to the wicked? St. Chrysostom says, "that as gold is refined by the same fire which consumes wood, so the just man, like gold, becomes more pure in the fire of tribulation, whilst the wicked, like dry wood, is burned to ashes;" St. Chrysostom, 14. in Matt. 1. St. Cyprian has something to the same purpose: he says, "that as the wind in harvest time blows away the light chaff, but cleanses the corn, so the wind of tribulation blows away the wicked like light straw, but purges the just, and gathers them together like good wheat;" Cypr. de unitate Ecclesiæ. The same is represented to us by the waters of the Red Sea, which were so far from drowning the children of Israel, as they passed through them, that, on the contrary, they served them for a wall on the right hand and on the left; whereas they broke down on and drowned the Egyptians' chariots and all Pharaoh's army. The waters of tribulation, after the same manner, are a greater security to virtuous men, and serve as the preservatives and trial of their humility and patience; but are like a tempestuous sea to the wicked, which drowns and buries them in the abyss of impatience, blasphemy and despair.

14. This, therefore, is another very considerable advantage virtue has over vice; and it was on this account that the philosophers extolled philosophy so much, imagining that the making of a man constant and resolute in all kind of adversities belonged to it. But they deceived themselves in this point, as they did in many others, for neither true virtue, nor true resolution and constancy, are to be found among the philosophers, but in the school of that Master, who, being nailed to a cross, comforted us by his example, and reigning now in heaven strengthens us by his Spirit and encourages us with the hopes of the glory he has promised us of all which, human philosophy is incapable.

CHAPTER XII.

The eleventh privilege of Virtue, which consists in the Cure God takes to supply the temporal Necessities of the Just.

1. ALL we have hitherto treated of are the spiritual favors which are bestowed on the followers of virtue in this life, besides the everlasting glory which is laid up for them in the next. These benefits were all promised them at our Saviour's coming into the world, as all the prophecies in the Holy Scriptures testify; for which reason he is justly styled the Saviour of the world, because it is by him we obtain true salvation, which is, grace, wisdom, peace, victory, and dominion over our passions, the consolations of the Holy Ghost, the riches of hope, and, in fine, all other benefits requisite for obtaining this salvation, of which the prophet has said, "Israel has been saved by the Lord with an eternal salvation;" Isa. xiv. 17.

But, if there be any person so carnal as to have a greater love for the goods of the flesh, than for those of the spirit, as the Jews had, we will not differ on this account, for he shall herein find more satisfaction, as to this part, than he can possibly wish. For what else could the wise man mean, when, speaking of true wisdom, in which the perfection of virtue consists, he says, "Length of days is at her right hand, and riches and glory at her left"? Prov. iii. 16. So that she holds these two sorts of goods in her hands, inviting men with one of them to the enjoyment of eternal blessings, and with the other to search after temporal. Do not imagine that God starves those who serve him, or that he is so careless as to feed the very ant and worms of the earth, and suffer them to want. If you will not believe me, read the sixth chapter of St. Matthew, and there you will see what earnest and security he has given you. "Behold the fowls of the air," says our Saviour, "for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into their barns, and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Of how much more value are you than they?" Matt. vi. 26. A little after he concludes thus: "Do not, therefore, be solicitous, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what clothes shall we put on? for the heathens trouble themselves about all these things. Do you, therefore, seek first the kingdom of God, and these things shall be given to you." ver. 31, 32, 33. It is for this reason particularly that the holy psalmist, observing that this alone was a sufficient motive to make men submit to one another, invites us to serve God, saying, "Fear the Lord, all you his saints; because those that fear him want for nothing. The rich have been in want, and have suffered hunger; but those that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any thing that is good." Ps. xxxiii. 10, 11.

This is so certain, that the same prophet adds in another psalm, "I have been young, but now I am old; yet I never saw the just man forsaken, nor his seed begging bread;" Ps. xxxvi. 25.

2. If you would be better informed of the share the just have in this promise, hear what God himself says in the book of Deuteronomy (ch. xxviii. 1—12), to those that keep his commandments: "If you will hear the voice of the Lord thy God, to do and keep all his commandments, which I command thee this day, the Lord thy God will make thee higher than all the nations that are on the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon thee and overtake thee; yet so if thou hear his precepts. 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 cattle, the droves of thy herd, and the folds of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy barns, and blessed thy stores. Blessed shalt thou be coming in and going out. The Lord shall cause thy enemies that rise up against thee to fall down before thy face: one way shall they come out against thee, and seven ways shall they flee before thee. The Lord will send forth a blessing upon thy storehouses, and upon all the works of thy hands: and will bless thee in the land that thou shalt receive. The Lord will raise thee up to be a holy people to himself, as he swore to thee: if thou keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. And all the people of the earth shall see that the name of the Lord is invoked upon thee, and they shall fear thee. The Lord will make thee abound with all goods, with the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy cattle, with the fruit of thy land, which the Lord swore to thy fathers that he would give thee. The Lord will open his excellent treasure, the heaven, that it may give rain in due season: and he will bless all the works of thy hands." These are the words of God himself, delivered by his prophet. Tell me now, after all this, are the treasures of both the Indies to be compared with such infinite blessings as these are?

3. But supposing the promise of temporal blessings was made to the Jews, rather than Christians, because the Almighty, by Ezekiel (ch. xxxiv. xxxvi.), promises to enrich these with other kind of goods of greater value, to wit, those of grace and glory; yet as God, in the carnal law, did not cease to give spiritual goods to those Jews that were virtuous, so neither will he refuse to give temporal blessings to good Christians in the spiritual law, and that with the addition of two extraordinary advantages, of which the wicked have not the least knowledge. The one is, that he gives them these sort of blessings like an experienced physician, according to their several necessities, that they may serve to support and not to puff them up. The wicked know nothing at all of this, for they heap up all they can, without

considering that superfluity of temporal goods is no less prejudicial to the welfare of our soul, than superfluity of meats is to the health of the body. For, though a man cannot naturally live without eating, yet to eat too much impairs the health, and though man's life is in his blood, yet too much of it quite chokes him up. The other advantage is, that with less noise he gives them much more content and satisfaction, which is the end of men's seeking after temporal riches, than the others can purchase with all their labor; because whatsoever God can do by the means of second causes, he can do by himself much more perfectly. It is what he has done to all the saints, in whose name St. Paul spoke, when he said, "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. vi. 10); because we are as content with the little we have, as if we were lords of all the world. Travellers endeavor to carry what money they have in gold, because they can carry much more, and with less burden; so the Almighty provides for those who love him, by giving them a lighter burden, but much more of joy, ease and satisfaction. Thus the just travel in this life naked and contented, poor and rich, whilst the wicked wallow in their riches, and yet die for hunger. And though, like Tantalus, they are up to their very chin in water, yet they cannot quench their thirst.

4. For this and such like reasons, Moses so earnestly recommended the keeping of the law of God, desiring it should be our whole study and care, as well knowing that all happiness consists in the fulfilling thereof. "Lay up these words of mine," says he, "in thy heart; teach them to thy children, and meditate upon them as thou sittest in thy house, and as thou art upon journeys, when thou goest to bed, and when thou risest again. And thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand, and keep them always before thy eyes, and write them over thy porch and over the door of thy house, that by this means thy days may be multiplied, and those of thy posterity, in the land which God shall give thee;" vi. 6, 7, 8, &c. What was it, O holy prophet, that you saw, what did you find in the keeping of God's commandments, that should make you recommend them so earnestly to others? You, without doubt, understood the inestimable value of this good, as being so great a prophet, and privy to the divine counsels: you knew that all kinds of goods whatever, present and to come, temporal and eternal, spiritual and corporal, were contained in and depended on this, and that if we complied with this obligation, we should satisfy all the rest: you knew very well that he who made it his business to do the will of God, should never lose his labor, because the doing of this was pruning his vine, watering his garden, increasing his estate, and looking after all his affairs, much better than he could do it himself, because it laid an obligation on God to do it for him. For the condition of the treaty, which

God has made with man is, that whilst man is busy about keeping of God's law, God should be busy about looking after man's concerns. And there is no fear of the contract being broken on God's side. On the contrary, if man prove a faithful servant, God will still show himself a better master. This is that one thing which our Saviour said was necessary, to wit, the knowing and the loving of God. For he that knows how to please God, is secure from all the rest. "Piety," says St. Paul, "is profitable for all things, because all the promises, both of this life and the life to come, are for it;" 1 Tim. iv. 8. You see here how plainly the apostle promises to piety, which is the worship of God, not only the goods of the next, but those of this life too, as far as they contribute to the gaining of eternal happiness, and yet man is not excused on this account from labor, or from complying with the obligations of his state or calling as far as he is able.

§ I. *Of the Poverty of the Wicked.*—5. If any one desires to know what poverty, what afflictions and calamities are laid up for the wicked, let him but read the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, and he will there see such things as will astonish and affright him: where, amongst many other dreadful threats, Moses delivers these most terrifying words from the mouth of God: "If thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep, and to do all his commandments and ceremonies, which I have commanded thee this day, all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, cursed in the field. Cursed shall be thy barn, and cursed thy stores. 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 which thou shalt do; until he consume and destroy thee quickly, for thy most wicked inventions, by which thou hast forsaken me. May the Lord set 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 the 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 thy enemies; one way mayst thou go out against them, and flee seven ways, and be scattered throughout all the kingdoms of the earth. And be thy carcass meat for all the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the earth, and be there none to drive them away. The Lord

strike thee with the ulcer of Egypt, and the part of thy body, by which the dung is cast out, with the scab and with the itch; so that thou canst not be healed. The Lord strike thee with madness and blindness, and fury of mind, and mayst thou grope at mid-day as the blind is wont to grope in the dark, and not make straight thy ways. And mayst thou at all times suffer wrong, and be oppressed with violence, and mayst thou have no one to deliver thee. Mayst thou take a wife, and another sleep with her. Mayst thou build a house, and not dwell therein. Mayst thou plant a vineyard, and not gather the vintage thereof. May thy ox be slain before thee, and thou not eat thereof. May thy ass be taken away in thy sight, and not restored to thee. May thy sheep be given to thy enemies, and may there be none to help thee. May thy sons and thy daughters be given to another people, thy eyes looking on and languishing at the sight of them all the day, and may there be no strength in thy hand. May a people, which thou knowest not, eat the fruit of thy land, and all thy labors; and mayst thou always suffer oppression, and be crushed at all times. And be astonished at the terror of those things which thy eyes shall see. May the Lord strike thee with a very sore ulcer in the knees and in the legs, and be thou incurable from the sole of thy foot to the top of thy head. The Lord shall bring thee and thy king, whom thou shalt have appointed over thee, into a nation which thou and thy fathers know not; and there thou shalt serve strange gods, wood and stone. And thou shalt be lost as a proverb and a by-word to all people among whom the Lord shall bring thee in." Deut. xxviii. 15—38. In fine, after a great many other curses, and those very dreadful ones, he adds further: "All these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue and overtake thee till thou perish: because thou heardst not the voice of the Lord thy God, and didst not keep his commandments and ceremonies which he commanded thee. And they shall be as signs and wonders on thee, and on thy seed forever. Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things. Thou shalt serve thy enemy, whom the Lord shall send upon thee, in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put an iron yoke upon thy neck, till he consume thee. The Lord will bring upon thee a nation from afar, and from the uttermost ends of the earth, like an eagle that flieth swiftly; whose tongue thou canst not understand: a most insolent nation, that will show no regard to the ancient, nor have pity on the infant, and will devour the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed, and will leave thee no wheat, nor wine, nor oil, nor herds of oxen, nor flocks of sheep: until he destroy thee, and consume thee in all thy cities, and thy strong and high walls be brought down,

wherein thou trustedst in all thy land. Thou shalt be besieged within thy gates, in all thy land, which the Lord thy God will give thee; and thou shalt eat the fruit of thy womb, and the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God shall give thee, in the distress and extremity wherewith thy enemy shall oppress thee." Ibid. ver. 45—54. These threats and curses are all taken out of the Holy Scriptures, where you may find many more which I here omit to relate; but whoever reads them with attention, will meet with such dreadful things as cannot but astonish him. Then, perhaps, he will open his eyes, and begin to have some knowledge of the rigor of God's justice and of the malice of sin, together with the extreme hatred he bears it, as appears by the terrible punishments he inflicts on it in this life, by which men may conjecture what a sinner is to expect in the next. Besides he will pity the insensibility and misery of the wicked, who are so blind as not to see the dreadful punishments that are reserved for them.

6. Do not persuade yourself, that these threats are only empty words, but consider that they are rather a prophecy of those misfortunes which have since happened to that people: for during the reign of Acham, king of Israel, the king of Syria's army having besieged them in Samaria, we read that men were forced to eat pigeon's dung, which was sold at a great price. Nay, they were reduced at last to such extremities, that mothers devoured their own children; 4 Kings vi. And Josephus tells us, they were brought to the same misery again in the siege of Jerusalem; Jos. L. 7. There is scarce any body but has heard of the captivity of this people, with the utter subversion of the whole kingdom: for ten tribes of them were carried away into perpetual captivity by the king of Assyria, and never returned home again; and the two which remained were quite destroyed a great while after, by the Roman army, who took many of them prisoners; but the number of these that were slain or died during the siege was far greater, according to the relation of the same historian.

7. Let no man deceive himself by imagining, that all these calamities concerned none but this people; for they belonged to all those in general, who, professing to serve God, nevertheless condemn and violate his law: it is what he himself assures us of by his prophet Amos, saying, "Was it not I that brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Palestines out of Capadocia, and the Syrians out of Cyrene? Behold the eyes of the Lord are over the kingdoms, which commit sin, for to destroy and blot them out of the face of the earth." Amos ix. 7, 8. By this he gives us to understand, that all these changes of the kingdoms and states, as the destroying of some and the establishing of others, are the effects of sin. And if any one doubts whether

this concerns us or no, let him search into the histories of past ages, and he will find, that God Almighty deals after the same manner with all the wicked, but particularly with those who have known the true law and yet have not observed it. He will there see that a great part of Europe, Africa and Asia, which was formerly full of Christian churches, is now in the hands of heathens and barbarians; he will see what calamities the church has suffered from the Goths, the Huns and the Vandals, who, in St. Augustine's time, laid all the countries of Africa waste, sparing neither man, woman, nor child, old or young. And at the same time, all the country of Dalmatia and the neighboring towns were so ruined by those barbarians, that, as St. Jerome, who was himself of that country, says, "Whosoever passed through it could see nothing but heaven and earth, so universal was the desolation;" S. Hier. in c. 1. Sophon. All this serves to inform us, that virtue and true devotion not only assist us, in order to obtain the eternal goods, but also to settle us in the possession of the temporal. Wherefore, let the consideration of this, and all those other advantages virtue has, serve to make an impression on our hearts, and excite them to the love of that which delivers us from so great evils, and procures us such mighty benefits.

CHAPTER XIII.

The twelfth Privilege of Virtue, which is the quiet and happy Death of the Virtuous: and, on the Contrary, the deplorable End of the wicked.

1. ADD to these privileges, the glorious death of good men, to which all the others are directed. For if, as we commonly say, it is the end that crowns the work, what can better deserve a crown, or what can be more glorious than the end of good men, and what more miserable than that of the wicked? "The death of the saints," says the psalmist, "is precious in the sight of the Lord, but the death of sinners is the worst;" (Ps. cxv. 15; xxxiii. 22); because it is the greatest of all miseries either of the body or soul. And, therefore, St. Bernard, writing upon these words, *The death of sinners is the worst*, says, "That first of all it is bad, because it takes them away from the world; worse yet, because it separates the soul from the body; but worst of all, because of those two eternal torments, fire everlasting, and the worm that never dies, which immediately follow it;" S. Bern.

Serm. inter parvos. It cannot but be a great affliction to such persons to leave the world, a much greater to forsake their own flesh, but the greatest of all, will be hell torments, which they are to be for ever condemned to. These, therefore, and several other miseries put together, will disturb the wicked at this time; because then they will first be sensible of the symptoms and accidents of their distemper, the racking pains they endure all over their bodies, the frights and terrors of their souls, the anguish their present condition causes, their apprehensions of what must follow, the remembrance of what is past, the reflection on the accounts they are going to give in, the dread they have of the sentence to be passed against them, the horror of the grave, their being separated from all they had an inordinate affection for, that is, from their riches, their friends, their wives, their children, nay, from the very light and common air, which they enjoy, and even from life itself. The greater love they had for any of these things, the more unwilling will they be to leave it: for, according to the great St. Augustine, "What we possess with love, we can never lose without grief;" De. Civit. Dei. Conformable to which was this saying of a philosopher: "The fewer pleasures a man has enjoyed, the less he is afraid of death.

2. But the greatest torment they suffer at this time, is that of an evil conscience, with the consideration and dread of those pains which are prepared for them; because man, being then alarmed at the approach of death, begins to open his eyes, and to consider what he never thought of in all his life before. Eusebius Emissenus gives us a very good reason for this in one of his Homilies, where he says, "Because at this time man lays aside all the solicitude with which he used to seek for and procure all that is necessary for life, and does not trouble his head any more, either about working or fighting, or any other employ whatever; it follows from hence, that the soul, being free from every thing else, thinks of nothing but the account she must make, and all her powers are overcharged with the weight of the divine justice and of God Almighty's judgments. Man, therefore, lying in this miserable condition, with life behind his back and death before his eyes, he easily forgets the present, which he is going to leave, and begins to think of the future, which he is in continual expectation of. There he sees that his pleasures and delights are now at an end, and that he has nothing left him but his sins to appear against him, before the tribunal of God." S. Euseb. Homil. 1 2d Monachos. The same doctor, discoursing again upon this subject in another homily, says, "Let us consider what complaints a negligent soul will make at its departure out of this life; what tribulation and anguish will she be filled with! What clouds and darkness will she lie under, when, among those enemies that

surround her, she shall see her own conscience, attended by a multitude of sins, the forwardest to appear against her! For she alone, without any other witness, will appear before us, to convince us by her evidence, and confound us by her knowledge. It will be impossible to hide any thing from her, or to deny any thing she shall charge us with, since there will be no need of going any further than ourselves for a witness."

3. Peter Damianus handles this matter much better and more at large (Pet. Damian. c. 6. in Institut. Moniol. ad Blancam Comitissam): "Let us consider," says he, "with attention, what dreadful fears and apprehensions the soul of a sinner will be oppressed with, when she is on the point of leaving the prison of the flesh, and how the stings of a guilty conscience will prick and torment her. Then she calls to mind the sins she has committed, and sees how she has despised and broken the commandments of God; then she is troubled to have lost so much time, in which she might have done penance, and with affliction sees that the accounts she must unavoidably give, and the time of divine vengeance, is just at hand. She would willingly stay, but is forced to go; she would fain recover what she has lost, but cannot obtain leave to do it. If she casts her eyes behind her, and considers the whole course of her life, it seems no more to her than a short moment: if she looks forward, she sees there the space of an infinite eternity, that expects her. She weeps when she considers the everlasting happiness she has lost, which she might have gained in a short time of this life; and to be deprived of this unspeakable sweetness of eternal delight for a fleeting carnal satisfaction, is a great affliction to her. She is filled with confusion to consider, that, for the pleasing this miserable body, which must be the food of worms, she has neglected herself, who ought to have taken her place amongst the choirs of angels. When she reflects upon the brightness and glory of immortal riches, she is ashamed to see herself deprived of them, for having sought after such as were base and perishable. But when she has done looking upward, and cast her eyes down upon the dark and frightful valley of this world, and at the same time sees the glory of the eternal light above her, she is fully convinced, that all she loved in this world was nothing but night and darkness. O! if she could but then obtain a little time to do penance in, what austerities and mortifications would she not undergo? What is it she would not do? What vows would she not make, and what prayers would she not be continually offering up? But whilst man is revolving these things in his mind, behold the messenger and forerunners of death are just at hand, his eyes become dark and hollow, his breast heaves, his voice grows hoarse, he rattles in his throat, his limbs wax cold, his teeth turn black, he foams at

the mouth, and his face grows wan and pale; whilst these things, which serve as so many preparatives to approaching death, orderly fall out, the miserable soul sees before her all the works, words and thoughts of her late wicked life, which give a lamentable testimony against her, as being the author of them all: and though she would willingly turn her eyes away from them, she cannot, but is forced to see them. Let us add to all this, the horrible presence of the devils on the one side, and that of virtue and of the blessed angels on the other: and we may soon guess which of the two parties this prey is like to fall to; because, if the dying man carries any works of piety and virtue with him, he is immediately comforted by the invitations and caresses of the angels; but if the foulness of his sins, and of his wicked life past, require that he should be treated in another manner, immediately he trembles every joint of him; from fear he falls into despair;—and in this condition is snatched, rent and torn away from his miserable flesh, and thrown headlong into everlasting torments.” Thus far Peter Dámianus.

4. If all this be true, and must happen accordingly, what need any more, if a man has not lost his senses, to make him see how miserable the condition of the wicked is, and how carefully to be avoided, since their end is like to be so wretched and deplorable?

5. If the goods of this world could do any service at that time, as they do all the other part of life, their misery would be much easier, but there is none of them that give the least assistance. For neither can honors profit a man, nor friends help him; he can have no servants to attend him; he must expect no favor, because of his quality, no succor from his estate, nor any service from any thing whatever, but from virtue and innocence of life. For, as the wise man says, *Riches cannot profit us in the day of vengeance, but justice alone*, that is, virtue will deliver from death; Prov. xi. How, therefore, can the wicked man, finding himself so poor and destitute of all kind of help, forbear trembling to see himself thus forsaken and neglected at the judgment-seat of Almighty God?

§ I. *Of the Death of the Just.*—6. But, on the contrary, how secure are the just against all these miseries when they come to die! For as the wicked at this time receive the punishment of their sins, the just receive the reward of their deserts, according to Ecclesiasticus, who says, *He that fears the Lord shall be happy in the last days, and in the day of his death he shall be blessed* (Ecclus. i. 19); that is, he shall have the rich reward of his labors. St. John, in his Revelation, declares the same thing to us more expressly, when he tells us, *That he heard a voice from heaven which commanded him to write, and the words which it dictated were these: Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, because*

the Holy Ghost tells them the time is come that they shall rest from their labors, for their works follow them; Apoc. xiv. 13. How is it possible then for a just man, that has received such a promise as this from Almighty God himself, to be frightened at the hour of his death, when he sees himself just on the point of receiving what he has been laboring for all his life-time? For this reason, one of holy Job's pretended friends tells him, *That if there be no iniquity nor injustice found in him, he shall be as bright in the evening as the sun at noon-day, and when he shall imagine himself to be quite spent, he shall arise like the morning star; Job xi. 14, 17.* St. Gregory, writing upon these words, says, that "The reason why this morning brightness shines upon the just in the evening is, because he perceives some glimmerings, at the hour of his death, of that glory which God has prepared for him; and, therefore, when others are the most dejected, he is then most cheerful;" St. Greg. 10. Moral. c. 1. Solomon, in his Proverbs, testifies the same, when he says, *The wicked man shall be rejected because of his sins, but the just is in hopes at the hour of his death; Prov. xiv. 32.*

7. To prove this by an example; could any man have better hopes or more courage than the glorious St. Martin had on his death-bed, who, seeing the devil by him, asked him, "What dost thou do here, cruel beast? thou shalt find no mortal sin in me to glut thyself with, and therefore I shall be received into Abraham's bosom in peace." Again, what greater confidence can be, than that St. Dominick had, when he was in the same circumstances? for seeing the religious brothers all about him, bemoaning themselves for his departure, and the want they should find in the loss of him, he comforted them with these words: "Let nothing trouble or afflict you, children, for I shall do you much more service where I am going, than I shall be able to do you here." How can a man lose courage in this combat, or be afraid of death, who looked on eternal glory to be so much his own, as to be in hopes of obtaining it, not only for himself, but for his children too?

8. It is on this account the just have so little reason to be afraid of death, that they praise God when they are dying, and thank him for having brought them to their end, looking on death as a cessation from their labors, and the beginning of their happiness and glory. Whereon St. Augustine, on St. John's Epistle, says, "It is not to be said of him that dies in peace, but of him that lives in peace, and dies with joy, that he desires to be dissolved and be with Christ;" St. Aug. 9. in Ep. Joan. Thus we see the just man has no reason to be troubled at death; but we may with justice say of him, that, like the swan, he goes singing out of the world, praising and glorifying God for calling him to himself. He is not afraid of death, because he has feared God, and whosoever

has done that, has nothing else to be afraid of. He is not afraid of death, because he has been afraid of life; the fear a man has of death, being only the effects of a bad life. He is not afraid of death, because he has spent all his life in learning how to die, and in preparing himself against death; and he that stands always on his guard has no need to fear his enemies. He is not afraid of death, because the whole employment of his life has been to seek after those that might assist and stand by him at this hour, that is, virtue and good works. He is not afraid of death, because the many services he has done his judge will make him kind and favorable at that time. He is not, in fine, afraid of death, because death is no death, but only a slumber to a just man, it is no death, it is but a change; it is no death, it is but the last day of his toils and labors; it is no death, but only the way that leads to life, and the step by which he must mount to immortality; for he knows that when death has passed through the veins of life, it loses the bitterness it had before, and takes up the sweetness of life.

9. Nor can any other of those accidents which usually happen at this time terrify him; for he knows they are nothing but child-bed pangs, which gave him birth to that eternity, that love of which has made him continually long for death, and suffer life with patience. He is not frightened with the remembrance of his sins, because he has Jesus Christ for his Redeemer, whom he has always been acceptable to; nor does the rigor of God's judgments dishearten him, because his Redeemer is his advocate; neither does he shrink at the sight of the devils, because Jesus Christ is his Captain; nor can the horror of the grave make any impression upon him, because he knows "that he must sow a fleshly and corruptible body in the earth, that it may afterwards spring up incorruptible and spiritual;" 1 Cor. xiii. 44. If it be true that the end crowns the work; and if, as Seneca says, "we must judge of all the rest by the last day, and, accordingly, pass sentence on the whole life past, because all that is past is condemned or justified by it" (Senec. Ep. 12); and if the death of good men be so peaceable and quiet, and that of the wicked, on the contrary, so disturbed and painful, what need have we of any other motive, than barely this difference, which is between the death of the one and of the other, make us resolve against a bad life, and to commence a good one?

10. Where is the benefit of all these pleasures, all this prosperity, and all these riches, all the titles and honors in the world, if, after all, I should be plunged headlong into hell fire? And, on the other side, what hurt can all the miseries of this life do me, if, by means of them, I can make a happy end, and bring with me the pledges of eternal glory? Let the wicked man manage

his point in the world with as much cunning as he pleases, what will he get by all his craft, but just to know how to acquire such things as will serve to make him more proud, more vain, more sensual, more able to sin, more unable to do good, and to make death so much the more bitter and unwelcome, as life was the more pleasant and delightful? If there is any sense and wit in the world, certainly there is none greater than to know how to order life well against this last hour, since a wise man's chief business is to understand what means are the most proper for him to use, in order to arrive at his end. If, therefore, we look on him as a skilful physician, who knows what remedies to prescribe for the recovery of health, which is the end of his science, we must of necessity think him truly wise, who knows how to govern his life, in order to death; that is, in order to the making up of his accounts well, when death, to which he is to direct all his life, shall come.

§ II. *The foregoing Section proved by some Examples.*—11. For the better explaining and confirming of what I have said, and to give the reader a little spiritual recreation, I think fit to add here a few famous examples of the glorious death of some saints, taken out of the holy pope Gregory's Book of Dialogues, (Greg. L. 4. Dial. c. 13), by which we may plainly perceive how pleasant and how happy a thing death is to the just. If I enlarge a little on this point, I shall not think my time ill spent, because the saint, at the same time that he relates these passages, gives a great deal of wholesome advice and instruction.

12. "He tells us, that, during the time the Goths were in Italy, there was a certain lady called Gala, of very considerable quality in Rome, daughter of one Symmachus, a consul. She was married very young, and became both wife and widow in one year. She had all the invitations imaginable from the world, her youth, and her fortune, to the taking of a second husband, but she chose to be the spouse of Christ; and to celebrate a marriage with him, that begins with sorrow, but ends with joy, rather than with the world, where it begins with joy, but ends in sorrow, because one of the two must unavoidably see the death of the other. This lady was of a warm constitution, and, therefore, the physicians told her that if she did not marry again, she would certainly have a beard like a man, which, accordingly, happened. Yet the holy woman, charmed with the inward beauty of her new bridegroom, was not troubled at her outward deformity, well knowing it would not be offensive to her heavenly spouse. Therefore, laying aside her worldly dress, she gave herself entirely up to the service of God, and entered into a monastery, near St. Peter's church, where she lived for several years in great simplicity of heart, and in the frequent

exercise of prayer and charity to the poor. • The Almighty being resolved at length, to reward the labors of his servant with eternal glory, she was troubled with a cancer in the breast, which grew to such a height that she was forced to keep her bed, where, as she lay, she had always two lamps burning by her, being so great a lover of light, as to have a horror, not only of spiritual but also corporal darkness. Finding herself one night very much out of order, she saw the blessed Apostle St. Peter standing between the two lamps: not at all disturbed at the vision, nay, her love on the contrary emboldening and encouraging her, she, with a deal of cheerfulness and joy, asked him,—Great apostle, are my sins pardoned me yet? To which he answered, with a smiling countenance, bowing down his head, Yes, they are pardoned you—come along with me. But the holy woman, having contracted a strict tie of friendship with another religious woman of the same monastery, called Benedicta, replied immediately, I beg that sister Benedicta may go along with me; the apostle told her she was not to come yet, but that another sister whom he named, should bear her company, and that sister Benedicta should follow her within thirty days. After which he vanished, and the sick lady, sending for the prioress, gave her an account of all that happened, and both she and the other, whom St. Peter named, died within three days after, and at the end of thirty days, the other she had asked for. The memory of this passage is still preserved in that monastery, and the younger religious women, who received it from their mothers, recount it with as much fervor and devotion as if they themselves had been eye-witness to it.” This is St. Gregory’s own relation; the reader may observe how glorious an end this was.

13. After this the saint gives us an account of another example, no less wonderful (chap. 14): “There was a certain man, says he, at Rome, called Servulus, very poor as to the world, but very rich in merits. His usual station was under a porch before St. Clement’s church, where he begged, being so crippled by the palsy that he could not rise, nor sit in his bed, nor so much as lift his hand to his mouth, or turn from one side to the other: His mother and brother always kept him company and assisted him, and all the alms he could conveniently spare he desired his mother or his brother to distribute among the poor. He could not read, yet he bought some books of Scripture, and when any devout persons came to see him, would desire them to read to him; by this means he got some insight into holy writ. Besides, he always used to bless God in the midst of his torments, and to employ himself day and night in singing of hymns. But the time drawing nigh when the Lord intended to reward his

great patience, the holy man fell extreme sick, and when he perceived he was just going out of the world, he called together all the strangers thereabout, desiring them to join with him in praising God for the hopes he had given him of his being at the end of his labors.

14. "But as he was singing amongst the rest, he interrupted them on a sudden, crying out with a loud voice, Silence! do you not hear the songs and hymns of praises and thanksgiving which fill the heavens? And listening thus with the ear of his heart to the voices he heard within himself, he died. As soon as he had given up the ghost, such an extraordinary fragrancy was smelt all over the place, that all those present were delighted with its sweetness, by which they understood he really heard the songs of praise and joy with which he was received into heaven. A religious man of our convent, who is still living, and who was present when this happened, often, with tears, tells me, that those who were there when he died never lost the sweet smell till the body was buried."

15. I will add another memorable example out of the same saint, where he gives a faithful testimony, as being himself nearly concerned in it (chap: 16); "My father (says he) had three sisters, who all consecrated their virginity to God; the eldest was called Tarsilla, the second Gordiana, the youngest Emiliana. They all three offered themselves to God at the same time, with an equal fervor, devotion and resignation, living together in their own house under the religious observance of a very rigorous rule. After they had lived thus for a very considerable time, Tarsilla and Emiliana began to increase every day more and more in the love of their Creator, and arrived to such a degree, that, though their bodies remained on earth, their souls were continually conversant in heaven. But Gordiana, on the contrary, growing every day more and more cold in her affection for God, was proportionably inflamed with the love of the world. All this while Tarsilla used frequently to tell her sister Emiliana, with a deal of sorrow, I see that our sister Gordiana is not well pleased with our way of living; I perceive she is wholly bent upon outward things, and that she observes not in her heart her religious vows. Whereupon the other two sisters made it their whole business to advise her, with all the sweetness and tenderness they could, to lay aside her light behaviour, and be modest and grave as became her habit. She received this admonition with a very serious countenance, but as soon as it was over, laid aside that counterfeit gravity. Thus she spent her time in idle discourse, delighting in the company of worldly women, nor could she endure to converse with any other. One night, my great-grandfather Felix, who had been pope, ap-

peared to Tarsilla, who had made a much greater progress than her sisters in continual prayer, corporal austerities, and fasting, in modesty, in gravity, and in all kinds of piety, and, showing her a habitation of eternal brightness, said to her, 'Come hither to me, for I am to receive you into this habitation of light.' Within a few days after, Tarsilla fell sick of a burning fever, and was past all recovery; and as it is customary for much company to visit a person of quality that lies a dying, to comfort the kindred of the party that is expiring, so that several persons of note were there, and amongst the rest my mother. Then the sick lady, lifting up her eyes towards heaven, saw her Saviour coming to her; and, struck with admiration, began to cry out, 'Stand aside, for Jesus Christ is coming.' And having fixed her eyes steadfastly on her Saviour, whom she saw, she soon after breathed out her blessed soul; and immediately such a fragrancy was smelt by all there present, as sufficiently evinced that the Author of all sweetness had really been among them. When they uncovered her to wash her body, as is usually done with the dead, they found her knees and elbows as hard as a camel's, with continual prostrating at her prayers; so her dead flesh gave a testimony of the employment of her spirit during life. All this happened before Christmas, and as soon as Christmas-day was over, Tarsilla appeared to her sister Emiliana in the night-time, and said to her, 'Come, my dear sister, let us keep the feast of the Epiphany together, since I have kept that of Christmas without you.' But Emiliana, being concerned at the danger her sister Gordiana would be exposed to if she were left alone, answered, 'If I go along with you, to whose care shall I recommend our sister Gordiana?' Tarsilla, with a heavy countenance, replied, 'Do you come with me; as for Gordiana, she is reckoned amongst the people of the world.' Immediately after this vision, Emiliana fell sick, and growing every hour worse and worse, died before the day her sister had named. Gordiana seeing herself now left alone, became more and more wicked every day, and by degrees quite losing the fear of God, and neglecting her modesty, her devotion, and the vows by which she had consecrated herself to God, went and married a man that had farmed her estate of her." This is all taken out of St. Gregory, who, by the examples of those of his own family and blood, shows us how happy and prosperous the end of virtue is, and how sorrowful and mean that of light and inconstant persons. I will conclude with one example more on this subject, out of the same saint, which happened in his time, and which he delivers in this manner:—

16. "About the time when I entered into a monastery, there was an ancient woman at Rome, called Redempta, who wore a religious habit, and lived just by our blessed Lady's. She had

been formerly under the care of a certain holy virgin called Hirundina, who, they say, was in great esteem for her virtue, having led a solitary life on the Prenestin mountains. This same Redempta had two other young virgins, that came to her to be her disciples; the name of one of them was Romula; as for the other, who is still living, I know her by sight, but cannot tell her name. These three virgins lived a very poor but holy life, all in the same house. But Romula outstripped her other companion in all kinds of virtues and graces, as being a woman of wonderful patience, of most perfect obedience, of an extraordinary recollection, a very strict observer of silence, and very much given to prayer and contemplation. But sometimes those who appear perfect in the eyes of men are not without some imperfections before God, as we often see unskilful persons commend a statue, before it is finished, as a complete work, and yet the master, who knows there is much more to be done to it, does not lay it aside, because of their extolling it, nor neglect to finish it, because of their commendation. Almighty God dealt after the same manner with Romula, whom he thought fit to refine and perfect, by afflicting her severely with the palsy, which obliged her to keep her bed for several years without any use of her limbs. All her pains and sufferings could never move her to the least impatience, nay, on the contrary, the want of the use of her limbs made her increase more and more in virtue; so that, the less able she was to do any thing else, the more she exercised herself in her devotions and prayers. At length she called her mother Redempta to her, who had brought up these two disciples of hers as if they had been her own children, and said to her, ‘Come hither, my dear mother, come hither.’ Redempta immediately went to her with her other disciple, according to the relation, which they have both of them since made to several persons, so that the thing is now become public, and I myself had an account of it at the time it happened. As they were sitting, about midnight, by her bedside, there appeared a light from heaven on a sudden, which filled the whole chamber. The brightness of it was so great, that they were astonished at it. Afterwards they heard a noise, as if a great many persons were coming into the cell, so that the door cracked as if it was pressed by the throng. Then they heard many come in, but, through fear and the extraordinary brightness, could see nothing, for their hearts were no less damped with fear than their eyes were dazzled by the light. After this there followed a sweet smell, which comforted and refreshed them as much as the light had frightened them before. They being no longer able to bear with the extraordinary brightness of that light, the sick woman began to comfort her mistress, who sat there trembling and shaking, and said, ‘Be not afraid, my dear mother, for

I am not dying yet.' And as she often repeated these words, the light lessened by degrees, till it was quite gone; but the sweet smell continued still for the space of three days as fresh as when they first smelled it. The third day being over, she called her mistress again, and desired the viaticum, that is, the blessed sacrament; which, after she had received, Redempta and her other companion were no sooner gone from her bed-side, than they began to hear two choirs of musicians at the entrance of the door, which, as near as they could judge by their voices, consisted of men and women. The men sung psalms, and the women answered them. And whilst they were thus performing the rites of this celestial funeral, this holy soul, leaving the prison of her body, began her journey heavenward, the divine music and fragrancy going away with her, so that the higher she mounted, the less they were perceived here below, till such time as they were both quite lost." Hitherto the words of St. Gregory.

17. Many more examples might be brought to this purpose, but these will suffice to show us how quiet, how sweet, and how easy the death of the just generally is. For though such evident tokens as these are do not always appear, yet, inasmuch as they are all the children of God, and since death is the end of all their miseries, and the beginning of that happiness they expect to be rewarded with, they are always, in this extremity, strengthened and encouraged by the help of the Almighty's grace, and by the evidence their own good consciences give in favor of them. Thus the glorious St. Ambrose comforted himself on his death-bed, saying, "I have not lived so as to have any reason to be sorry, that I was ever born; nor am I afraid to die, because I know I have a favorable Master;" *In vita D. Ambrosii*. But if any man imagines these favors and graces are incredible, let him reflect on the incomprehensible immensity of God's goodness, the effect of which is to love, honor and favor the good, and he will acknowledge, that all I have here asserted is but little in comparison with what the thing itself is. For if the infinite goodness has stooped so low as to take our flesh, and to die on a cross for the salvation of man; what greater matter is it to comfort and honor the good when they are dying, since their redemption has cost him so dear? And what wonder is it, that he should bestow such graces on those persons when they are dying, whom he is to receive into his own house, and to make partakers of his glory when they are dead.

§ III. *The Conclusion of the Second Part.*—18. Those we have mentioned are the twelve privileges granted to virtue in this life, and are like the twelve fruits of that most beautiful tree St. John, in his Apocalypse, saw planted by a river-side, which brought forth twelve fruits every year, according to the number

of the months. For, next to the Son of God, what other tree could bear such fruit but virtue, which is the tree that brings forth fruits of life and holiness? And what fruits can be more precious than those we have here given an account of? What more delicious fruit than the fatherly care and providence which God has over those that serve him? What more pleasant than his divine grace, than the light of wisdom, the consolation of the Holy Ghost, the joy of a good conscience, the help of a secure confidence in him, the true liberty of the soul, the inward peace of the heart, the being heard by him in our prayers, the being consoled by him in our tribulations, the having of our temporal necessities supplied, and, in fine, the comfort of a sweet and quiet death at last? Any one of these privileges is doubtless so great in itself, that, were a man but thoroughly acquainted with it, he would need no other motive to embrace virtue and make a change of life. This alone would sufficiently convince him of the truth of that saying of our Saviour, "That whosoever should leave the world for the love of him, should receive even in this life a hundred fold, and hereafter life everlasting" (Mark x. 29), as has been shown above.

19. Consider what good this is we invite you to. Think whether you would have any cause to repent, should you quit all the things of the world for it. The only reason why it is not valued by the wicked is because they know not its value. Therefore, the Saviour of the world said, "That the kingdom of heaven was like a hidden treasure" (Matt. xiii. 44); for it is a real treasure, but hidden from others, not from the owner. The prophet understood the value of this treasure, when he said, "My secret is for myself, my secret is for myself;" Isa. xxiv. He did not much care whether others knew of his happiness. For this is not like other goods, which are not goods unless they are known; because, being in themselves no longer goods than whilst the opinion of the world makes them such, it is requisite the world should know them, or else they will never have so much as the name of goods. But this good on the contrary, makes him good and happy that possesses it; and though none but himself know of it, yet he has as much true comfort and satisfaction with it, as if all the world knew it.

20. But neither my tongue, nor all that has hitherto been said, is sufficient to unfold this secret; because all that the tongue of man is able to express falls far short of what it truly is. The only key, therefore, to explain it, is the divine light, and the long experience and use of virtue. Beg this light of our Lord, and you will soon find this treasure and God himself, in whom you will find all things; and you will see with how much reason the prophet said, "Blessed is the people that have God for their Lord"

(Ps. cxliii.); for what can he want, that is in possession of this good? We read in the first book of Kings, that Halcanah, Samuel's father, seeing his wife Anne troubled, because she had no children, said to her, "Anne, what makes you weep? Why is your heart troubled? Am I not worth to you more than ten children?" 1 Kings i. Now if a loving husband, who to-day is, and to-morrow is not, be worth more to his wife than ten children, how much more must God be worth, do you think, to the soul that really possesses him? Blind and senseless men! what is it you do? What is it you are about? What is it you seek after? Why do you leave the fountain of paradise for the muddy lakes of this world? Why do you not take the advice of the prophet along with you, when he says, "Taste and see how sweet the Lord is?" Ps. xxxiii. 8. Why will you not once at least try this food? Why will you not taste this meat? Do but believe what God has said, do but once begin, and you will find yourselves undeceived of all your errors as soon as ever you enter into this path, as soon as ever you take this business in hand. The serpent, Moses' rod was turned into, looked frightful at a distance, but, as soon as he touched it with his hand, became a harmless rod again; Exod. vii. It was not without reason, that Solomon said, "It is dear, it is dear, says the buyer; but when he has got the goods into his own hands he is glad of the bargain;" Prov. xx. This happens every day to men in this sort of purchase, for they, through their want of skill in spiritual affairs, are at first ignorant of the value of this commodity, and, therefore, think it is set at too great a price, because they are carnal. But when once they have tasted how sweet the Lord is, they are immediately pleased with their purchase, and confess a man can never give too much for so great a treasure. How glad was the man in the gospel, that he sold all his estate to purchase that piece of ground in which he found a treasure! Matt. xiii. 24. Can the Christian, then, who has heard of the name of this good, not so much as try what it is? It is strange, that if a merry companion should affirm to you, that a great treasure was hid in some part of your house, you would not fail to dig there to discover the truth, and yet, when you are assured by the infallible word of Almighty God himself, that you may find an inestimable treasure within your own breast, you have not the courage or will not take the pains to look for it. O that you did but know how much truer this news is, and how much greater this treasure! O that you did but know with how little trouble you might find it! O that you did but see, "How near the Lord is to those that call upon him, if they call upon him in truth!" Ps. cxliv. 19. How many men have there been in the world, who, by a true sorrow for their sins and begging pardon for them, have, in less than a week's time, discovered land, or

rather have found out a new heaven and a new earth, and have begun to perceive the kingdom of God within themselves! And what wonder is it, that the Lord, who has said, "In whatsoever hour the sinner shall be sorry for his sin, I will remember it no longer" (Luke xv.), should work such an effect as this is? What wonder is it to see him do this, who scarce gave the prodigal son leave to make an end of the short prayer he had studied, before he fell about his neck, embraced, and received him with so much joy and welcome return? Return, therefore, to this tender father: rise a little in the morning, and continue for some days to beg and cry at the gates of his mercy, and assure yourself, that if you persevere with humility, he will answer you at last, and discover the hidden treasure of his love to you; and after having had some proof of it, you will immediately cry out, with the spouse in the Canticles, "If a man should give all that he is worth for love alone, he would think what he has given as worth nothing;" Cant. viii.

THE SINNER'S GUIDE.

BOOK I.

PART THE THIRD.

WHEREIN ARE ANSWERED ALL THOSE EXCUSES MEN GENERALLY
MAKE FOR NOT FOLLOWING VIRTUE.

CHAPTER I.

*Against the first Excuse of those who defer changing their
Lives, and advancing in Virtue, till another Time.*

1. THERE is no doubt, that what we have hitherto said should be more than enough for the obtaining the chief end we have proposed to ourselves, which is to excite men to a sincere love of virtue, Almighty God's assisting grace cooperating; but though all this be true, yet the malice of man is not without its excuses and apparent reasons, either to defend or comfort itself when it does amiss. As Ecclesiasticus affirms in these words: "The sinner will avoid correction, and will find out some excuse, according to his own will;" Eccl. xxxii. 21. And Solomon says to the same purpose, "That he who has a mind to forsake his friend, is seeking out for occasions to do it" (Prov. xviii. 1); so the wicked that desire to separate themselves from God have always some excuse or other ready. For some there are we see, that defer this business of salvation to another time; others, again, defer it till their death; others say they are afraid of setting on an undertaking so hard and laborious; some again there are, that comfort themselves with the hope of God's mercy, whilst they persuade themselves, that without charity they may be saved by faith and hope; and others, in fine, enamored with the world, cannot quit the happiness they have in it, even for obtaining of that which God has promised them. These are the most frequent deceptions and amusements the enemy of mankind makes use of to

infatuate men, that he may keep them all their life-time under the slavery of sin, that death may surprise them in that miserable state. We shall now expose those frauds in this last part of the book, and first answer those who put off this grand concern till another time, which is their most frequent practice.

2. Some, therefore, there are, who own all that has been said to be true, and that there is no way so secure as that of virtue, which they design to follow, though they cannot do it at present, but they shall have time enough hereafter, to do it better, and with more ease. St. Augustine tells us, it was thus he answered God before his conversion: "Stay but a little longer, O Lord; just now, just now, I will leave the world;" St. Aug. L. 8. Conf. c. 5. Thus the wicked deal continually with God, first appointing one day, and then another, still shifting the time of their conversion.

3. It will be no hard matter to prove, that this is a manifest artifice of the old serpent, who has been very well used to lying and deceiving of men; and this once made out and granted, all the controversy ceases. For we are already convinced there is nothing in this world which every Christian ought to desire more than his salvation, and that for the obtaining it, a sincere conversion and a perfect amendment of life is absolutely necessary; for without these there is not salvation to be expected. What we have, therefore, to do is, to see when this conversion ought to be. All the business at present is the appointing of the time; as to the rest, it is what every body is agreed on. You say you will begin your conversion very shortly; I say you are to begin it at this very moment. You say it will be easier to do it hereafter; I say, it will be easier to do it now. Let us see which of the two is in the right.

4. But before we speak of the easiness of conversion, I desire you will tell me, who is it that has given you security for an after conversion? How many do you think have been deceived by this hope? St. Gregory tells us, "that God, who has promised to pardon a sinner if he does penance, has not promised that he shall live till to-morrow;" Homil. 12. in Evang. St. Cæsarius has something to the same purpose: "Somebody perhaps will say, When I come to be old, then I will make use of the physic of penance. How can human weakness have the impudence to presume so far of itself, when it has not so much as the promise of one day?" St. Cæsar. Homil. 13. Tom. 2. Biblioth. Patr. As for my part, I cannot but think that the number of those souls that have been lost by this means is infinite. It was thus the rich man in the gospel was damned for ever. St. Luke says of him, that seeing he had as good a crop one year as he could have desired, he began to consider with himself, and to say, "What shall I do because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said,

this will I do ; I will pull down my barns, and will build greater : and into them will I gather all things that are grown to me, and my goods. And I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer." Luke xii. 17, 18, 19, 20. But, as this unfortunate wretch was computing what he was worth, he heard a voice which said to him, "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee : and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ?" What greater folly then can there be, than for a man to dispose of *hereafter*, with as much authority as if he had time itself in his own hands, whereas there is none but God that can dispose of it ? St. John says of God, "He has the keys of death and life," to open and to shut them when and on whom he thought fit ; with what face, then, can a vile worm dare to usurp such a power ? This insolence alone deserves for its punishment never to have an opportunity of doing penance for the future, that so the fool may pay for his folly, in not taking his advantage of the time God gave him.

5. And since the number of persons who meet with this kind of punishment is so great, it will be but prudent to learn to be wise at other men's expenses, and to let their misfortunes teach us how to secure ourselves pursuant to this wholesome advice of Ecclesiasticus : "My son, defer not thy conversion to God, and do not put it off from day to day. For his wrath will come on a sudden, and will destroy thee in the day of his vengeance." Eccclus. v. 8, 9.

§ I.—But after all, put the case that you shall live as long as you imagine ; whether do you think it will be easier to begin from this very moment to amend your life, or to defer it till another time ? For the clearer understanding of this point, we will sum up, in short, the chief reasons which make a present conversion seem so difficult. The difficulty does not proceed from those obstacles which men fancy, but from the bad habit of their wicked lives past, which they had rather die than change. For this reason St. Jerome said, "That which makes the way of virtue so hard and narrow, is the long custom of sinning ; because custom, being a second nature, there is no overcoming it, without overcoming nature herself, which is the greatest victory a man can possibly gain;" Epist. 14. ad Celentian. And, therefore, St. Bernard tells us, "That when once any vice is well rooted by a custom of many years' standing, there is no overcoming it without a very extraordinary, nay, even miraculous assistance of the Almighty's;" St. Bern. c. 47. De Modo Bene Vivendi. So that a Christian ought, on this consideration, to be afraid of nothing more than a bad habit in any vice ; because vices, in some manner, claim prescription, as well as the affairs of the world ; and when once they have got so far as this, you will find it no easy matter to over-

come them, unless, as St. Bernard says, "God assists you by his particular grace."

7. Another cause of this difficulty is, the power of the devil, who has an absolute command over a soul in sin. He is the strong man in arms the gospel speaks of, that keeps all he has in his power with such care and security; Luke xv. This difficulty also proceeds from the Almighty's withdrawing himself from the soul polluted with sin. For though he stands sentinel on the walls of Jerusalem, yet he retires still further from a soul in sin, as the number of its sins increases. And what miseries and afflictions a soul is oppressed with, on account of this separation, we may learn from God himself, who has declared by the mouth of one of his prophets, "Wo be to them, because they have departed from me;" Osee vii. 13. And in another chapter he says, "Wo be to them, whensoever I shall depart from them" (ch. ix. 12.), which is the second *wo* St. John speaks of in his Apocalypse, ch. xi.

8. The last cause of this difficulty is the corruption of the faculties of our soul, which are very much impaired by sin, not, indeed, in themselves, but in their operations and effects. For as vinegar corrupts and sours wine, as worms rot the fruit, and in fine, one contrary spoils another, just so is sin the greatest enemy the soul has, and the thing which is most directly opposite to her, spoils and ruins all her powers and faculties: for sin darkens the understanding, weakens the will, disorders the appetite, and makes the free-will more infirm and less able to govern itself, and the operations that belong to it, though it can never entirely lose either its being or its liberty. Now these faculties of the soul being the instruments our soul makes use of for the doing any good, and the wheels of the clock, which is a virtuous and regular life, if these wheels and instruments are out of order, what can be expected from them but disorder and trouble? These, therefore, are the chief causes of this difficulty, and they all of them originally spring from sin, and increase in proportion to the crimes we commit.

9. The case being thus, how can you possibly imagine that your conversion and the reformation of your life will be easier to you, when the continual increase of your sins shall have increased the occasion of these difficulties? It is certain the greater the number yoursins shall be, the less you will be disposed to leave them: nay, your deferring will but give the devil a greater power over you, and oblige God to withdraw himself so much the further from you. Hereafter your soul will be the more depraved of all its powers and faculties. Now, if this difficulty arise from these causes, what man of sound judgment will ever fancy that, when the causes of it increase on all sides, it will be less troublesome to remove them than when they are fewer?

10. For it is evident that, if you continue every day to commit

new sins, you will in time add other knots to those you were tied down by before: you will increase the chains that bound you, by adding other new ones to them, and make the weight you groaned under before much more heavy: hereafter the habit of sin will blind the understanding, make the will less able to do any thing that is good, strengthen the appetite in its desire of evil, and render the free-will more weak in defending itself. Since, therefore, things stand thus, how can you persuade yourself you shall find less trouble in this business hereafter? If you say, you cannot pass over this ford till it grows deeper, how will you be able to get over when it has swelled into a rapid stream? If you find it so hard a matter to pluck up the plants of your vices when they are but newly set, how much more troublesome will it be to remove them when they shall have taken deep root? that is, if now, whilst your vices have but little force, you say you cannot overcome them, how shall you be able to get the better of them when they are more fixed and strengthened? You have now perhaps a hundred vices to fight with, and some time hence you may have a thousand; now perhaps you resist bad habits of a year or two standing; hereafter perhaps they will be of ten. Who tells you, that you may with more ease carry your burden hereafter, when you have added a deal more weight to it, since you are not able to carry it without stooping now? How can you be so blind as not to see that all these are the artifices and deceits of a bad paymaster, who puts you off from time to time, because he has no mind to discharge the debt? How can you choose but see that these are the impostures of the old serpent, who by his lies seduced our first parent, and is continually endeavoring to play the same trick on us?

11. If this be true, how can you imagine that these difficulties, which seem impossible to break through now, should become much easier when their strength and number is increased? How can a man think, that the more his crimes are, the easier it will be to get a pardon; or that the cure will be the easier, when the disease is grown more desperate? Have you never read in Ecclesiasticus, "that an old disease puzzles the physician, whereas that which is taken in the beginning is soon cured"? Eccl. x. 11, 12. This kind of cheat was discovered by an angel to one of the holy fathers of the desert, as we read in their lives; for, taking him by the hand, he led him into a field, and there showed him a man that was gathering faggots: after he had made up a great bundle, he endeavored to carry it away on his shoulder, and finding it too heavy for him, he fell to cutting again, to make his bundle still bigger; but perceiving himself less able to carry it now than he was before, he went on, nevertheless, a third time to increase his former bundle, imagining that adding more to it was the way to make it lighter. The holy man wondering at

what he saw, the angel told him that those men were guilty of no less folly, who, finding themselves unable to bear up under the weight of their sins, which press so heavily on them, yet increase their load every day, by heaping sin on sin, supposing they shall be better able to carry the load hereafter, when it shall be much bigger, though they cannot carry it now.

12. Amongst all these things, which are such hinderance to our conversion, what shall I say of the force of ill custom in particular, and of the power it has to keep us in our sins? For it is certain, that as a man, when he is striking in a nail, drives it the farther every stroke he gives, and that the deeper it goes, the harder it is to be plucked out again; in the same manner, every bad action we do is like a fresh stroke with a hammer, that drives our vices deeper into our souls, and by degrees fixes them so fast there, that it is as much as man can do to get them out again. This is the reason why so many persons, who spent their youth in debauchery and vice, are frequently subject to the same sins even in their old age, though their years and the weakness of nature itself have cast them off. So that, when nature is quite tired and worn out with sin, custom still runs in the same track, and makes this sort of men seek after pleasures, which they are out of all possibility of enjoying: so tyrannical and arbitrary is the power which evil custom alone exercises over those that are carried away by it. For this reason, we read in the book of Job, "That the bones of a wicked man shall be filled with the sins of his youth, and that they shall sleep with him in the dust;" Job xx. 11. By this we may see that such kind of vices as these have no other end but death, the common end of all things; nor do they end here, but continue for all eternity; and, therefore it is said, they *sleep with him in the dust*. For an old custom, which is changed into nature, imprints the very inclinations to vice so deep into the bones and marrow, that, like a slow fever in a phthisical man, it sets the very bowels into a flame, and makes him quite despair of any ease or comfort. This is what our Saviour himself has taught us by his raising of Lazarus to life again, after he had been dead four days: it was with cries and a great many tears that he raised him, notwithstanding he had with much ease restored several dead to life before. This was to give us to understand, what a miraculous work it was for God to raise a man to life, that had been four days dead and almost corrupted; that is, who had been a long time accustomed to sin, and habituated in it. For, according to St. Augustine's exposition, the first of these four days is the pleasure of the sin, the second is the consent given to it, the committing of it the third, and the fourth is the custom of sinning; and he that has once arrived to this degree, is the Lazarus that has been four days dead, that cannot be restored to life again but by our Saviour's sighs and tears.

13. This plainly demonstrates how difficult that man makes his conversion, who always puts it off from time to time, and how, the longer he defers, the more painful he makes it. It is, therefore, a folly and deceit in those men who say, it will be much easier for them to amend their lives hereafter, than it is at present.

§ II.—14. But let us put the case now, that all fall out as you imagine, and that your hopes meet with no disappointment: yet what will you say to all the time you lose before your conversion, in which you might merit such mighty treasures? What folly would it be, to speak according to the world, for a man, when the town was taken by storm, and the soldiers plundering up and down, and loading themselves with wealth, to be playing in the market among the children: your folly is much greater; for whilst the just are busying themselves on good works, that they may, by virtue of them, purchase the kingdom of heaven, you lose this opportunity, and spend your time in the follies and trifles of the world.

15. And what will you say, not only to those goods you lose, but to the evils you commit in the mean time? Is it not certain, as Saint Augustine says, "That a man ought not, for the world, to commit one venial sin?" Lib. 4. *Samendaciud.* c. 1. How can you then consent so easily to commit so many mortal during all this time, when you ought not to commit any one sin whatsoever, though it were for the salvation of a thousand worlds? How can you dare to sin against and provoke him to wrath, at whose gates you must knock, at whose feet you are to fall, from whose hands you are to expect your eternal lot, whose mercy you pretend to obtain at last by your sighs and tears? How can you dare, with so much treachery, to offend him whom you will one day stand so much in need of, and whom you must expect to find so much the less favorable to you, as you shall have offended him the more? Against such persons as these, St. Bernard reasons excellently well, when he says, "Tell me now, you who reckon so falsely, continuing still in your evil courses, whether you think that God will pardon you your sins or not. If you imagine he will not, what greater folly than to sin on without hopes of pardon? And if you persuade yourself he is so good and merciful as to pardon you, notwithstanding you have so frequently offended him, tell me what greater ingratitude and malice can there be, than to make that the occasion of offending, which ought to excite you the more strongly to love him?" How can a man answer this argument?

What will you say of the tears, the sins you now commit will cost you hereafter? For if God should call and visit you hereafter (and your condition will be very miserable if he does not), be assured that every mouthful you eat now will be more bitter to you than gall, that every sin you have committed will cost you

continual tears, and that you will, one day, wish you had suffered a thousand deaths rather than have offended so good a God. The time king David spent in unlawful pleasures was but short, and yet his grief and sorrow for it was such, that he himself tells us, "Every night I will wash my bed, and water my couch with my tears;" Ps. vi. 7. His tears flowed from him with such excess, that St. Jerome's translation, instead of saying, "I will wash my bed," renders it, "I will make my bed swim in my tears;" to give us a lively representation of those streams that flowed from his eyes, because he had not observed the law of God. Why then will you spend your time in sowing such seed as can never bring you any other fruit but tears?

16. You ought further to consider, that you do not only sow tears for the future, but raise difficulties to obstruct a good life, through the settled habit of living ill. For as a lingering distemper is scarce ever so perfectly cured, but that it leaves some of its ill symptoms behind, even so does the habit of sin, which is of long continuance, weaken a man on that side, and expose him the more to the attacks of his mortal enemy. Moses made the children of Israel drink the very ashes of the calf they had adored, in punishment of their crime; Exod. xxxii. 20. The ordinary punishment Almighty God inflicts for some kind of sins is, to permit them, by a just judgment, to remain in our very bones, as if we had drank them up, and to let them become our executioners which were the idols we adored before.

17. Add to all this, the bad choice and distribution you make in setting apart old age to do penance, and suffering the prime and flower of your years to slip away; without making any advantage of it. What folly would it be for a man, who has many beasts of burthen, and several loads to put on them, to lay all on the weakest beast and to let the rest go light? Such is the folly of those who leave the whole burthen of penance for their old age to carry, and let their youth and vigorous days pass away without laying any weight on them; whereas youth is fitter to bear this load than old age, which is scarce able to support itself. It was a good saying of the great philosopher Seneca, "That whoever defers his being virtuous till he comes to be old, does as good as tell us, he will spend no other time on virtue but that which is good for nothing else;" Sen. lib. de Brevitate vitæ, c. 15. Consider, further, how great this satisfaction is, which the divine Majesty requires for those offences committed against him. This satisfaction is so great, as St. John Climachus tells us, "That man can scarce satisfy to-day for the sins of to-day, and so balance his daily account." Why then will you be all your life-time increasing your debts, and defer the payment of them to old age, which will have enough to do to wipe off its own scores? This crime is so heinous, that St. Gregory looks on it as a sort of trea-

son. That man (says he) comes very short of the allegiance he owes to God, who expects old age to do penance in. Nay, he has much reason to fear his falling into the hands of justice, for having presumed so rashly on mercy." Grad. 5.

§ III.—18. But let us put the case now, that nothing of what we have said happens; yet, if there be any honesty, and reason or justice in the world, is not the greatness of the benefits you have received, and of the glory you have a promise of, a sufficient motive to make you less sparing of the time you spend in the service of him who has been so liberal in rewarding you? It was with a deal of reason Ecclesiasticus said: "Let nothing hinder you from praying at all times, and be not afraid of doing justice even unto death, because the reward which God gives remains forever;" Eccl. xviii. 22. If, therefore, the continuance of the reward be so long, why should you desire your service to end so soon? If the reward is to remain as long as God shall remain in heaven, why should not your service continue as long as you live on earth? Your whole life, at best, is but one small point, and yet you will cut off the two thirds of it, and leave God no more than a mere puff or breath.

19. Besides all this, if you have any hopes of your salvation, you are to suppose that God has predestinated you from all eternity for this salvation. If, then, God has been so forward as to love you from all eternity, to make you a Christian, to adopt you for one of his children, and to make you an heir of his kingdom, how can you neglect to love him till the end of your days, who has loved you from all eternity, which has no beginning? How can you resolve to do him so little service, who has resolved to confer so many favors on you? It is but reasonable that, since the reward is to last forever, the service should do so too, if it be possible. But since it can last no longer than life, why will you, out of so short a space, take so much time which would have been spent in God's service, leaving him so little, and that the worst part of it. For, as Seneca says, "The little that is left at the bottom of a vessel is nothing but dregs." Thus you see how small a share you have for God: "Cursed be the deceitful man," says God to his prophet Malachy, "who has a male in his flock, and yet sacrifices an infirm creature to me; because I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name is terrible amongst the nations;" Mal. i. 14. As if he had said more plainly, There are none but great services due to so great a Lord as I am, and it is an affront to such a majesty to offer it the refuse of any thing. Why, therefore, do you reserve the better and more beautiful part of your life for the service of the devil, and are willing to give God no other part but what the world will not accept of? God has said, "There shall not be in your house a greater measure and a less, but your weight shall be true and just;" Deut. xxv.

14, 15. And yet, in contradiction to this law, you will keep two unequal measures, a great one for the devil, whom you treat as your friend, and another very little one for God, whom you deal with as an enemy.

20. Above all this, I earnestly desire, that if these benefits cannot move, you would at least reflect on the inestimable favor the eternal Father has conferred on you, in giving you his only begotten Son to redeem your soul, by laying down that life which was worth infinitely more than all the lives of men and angels together; so that, had you all those lives in yourself, and an infinite number more, you ought to give them all to him that has given his life; and yet all this would be too small a return for it. On what account, with what face, and by what privilege, can you refuse him, who has laid down so precious a life for you, such a poor and miserable one as yours is? What is worse, you take away the best and most noble part of it, and leave him nothing but the lees and dregs.

21. We will conclude this chapter as Solomon ends his Ecclesiastes, where he exhorts man to be mindful of his Creator in his youth, and not to put off a business of such concern till old age comes on, which is unfit for any kind of corporal labors; and whose infirmities and inabilities he describes under obscure and wonderful parables. "Remember," says he, "thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the time of affliction comes and the years approach, of which thou mayst say, they do not please me; before the sun and light, with the moon and stars, grow dark, when the guards of the house," that is to say, the hand, "shall tremble; when the stoutest persons shall quake," that is to say, the legs, which bore all the weight of this building; "when there shall be but few teeth left, and those quite useless; and when those faculties, which see through the windows of the eyes, shall grow dark: when they shall shut the gates in the street," because the organs and instruments of all the other senses will fail too; "and when a man shall awake at the crowing of the cock," by reason of the little sleep men generally take when they are at this age; "when all the daughters of music shall become deaf," because all the vessels, which form the voice, shrink up and grow narrow; "when there is no strength left for to go upright, nor to walk in a rugged or slippery way;" when, on the contrary, "a man is apt to stumble upon smooth and even ground; when the almond tree shall be blossomed," that is, when the head shall be covered with gray hairs; "when there shall be nobody left to carry the burden, be it ever so light and easy; when man shall be deprived of all things," because the faculties of the soul, where the seat of the appetites is, grow weaker and weaker every day; for man shall go to the house of his eternity," which is the grave, "and his friends shall go up and down in the streets to bewail

him; when," in fine, "The dust shall return to its earth, from whence it came, and the spirit shall go towards God that gave it;" Eccl. xii. 8. Thus far Solomon.

22. Follow, therefore, this advice: remember your Creator whilst you are yet young, and do not put off doing penance to those heavy years when nature itself fails, and the vigor of all the senses weakens and decays, and man is fitter to supply the defects of nature, by making much of himself, than to embrace the toils and hardships of penance, when virtue seems rather a necessity than a choice, and when vices gain a reputation by us, because they quit us sooner than we quit them; though, for the most part, we are the same when we grow old as we were when young, according to the saying of Ecclesiasticus: "How shall you find in your old age what you never laid up in your youth?" Eccl. xxv. 5.

23. This is the wholesome advice we have from Solomon; and Ecclesiasticus gives us the same, when he says, "You shall confess and praise God whilst you are alive; whilst you are alive and in good health you shall praise God, and you shall be glorified in his mercies;" Eccl. xvii. 27. It is a very mysterious thing, that all of the sick that were near the pool, he who first went in after the motion of the waters, found a most certain cure (John v. 4), to give us to understand, that all our salvation depends on our ready compliance with and submission to the Almighty's inward motions. Run, therefore, and make all the haste you can; "And if," as the prophet says, "you shall hear the voice of God to-day" (Ps. xciv. 8), do not put off your answer till to-morrow, but begin from this very moment the work of your salvation, which you will find so much easier to finish, as you shall begin the sooner.

CHAPTER II.

Against those Persons who defer their Penance to the Hour of Death.

1. THERE is another sort of men, who put off their penance to the hour of their death; but what we have said, in the foregoing chapter, might serve to make them ashamed of their folly. For if it be so dangerous to defer it but for a short time, what must be the consequence of deferring it till the very moment that man is going to leave the world? This being so universal an error, and many souls being lost by it, it is necessary we should speak of it in a more particular manner. And though it is to be feared, that the treating of this subject may be an occasion to some weak

persons of despair and discouragement, yet the consequence is much worse if men should remain ignorant of the danger they expose themselves to, by deferring their conversion to the hour of their death: so that, if we weigh these two dangers together, we shall find the latter far the greater, because there are many more souls, which perish through an indiscreet confidence than an immoderate fear. It is, therefore, requisite, that we, who are placed on Ezechiel's watch-tower, should forewarn them of these dangers, that so they, who will follow our advice, may not be drawn headlong into this error, and that they, who are resolved to destroy themselves, may not lay their blood at our doors. But because all the light and truth we are capable of in this life can be no other than what we receive from the Scripture, the holy fathers and doctors, let us see what they say on this point, for I do not think that any man will be so rash as to prefer his opinion before theirs. To proceed, then, in this method, we will first deliver what the saints of ancient times, and then what the Scripture teaches on this subject.

§ I. *The Opinions of the ancient Fathers concerning Death-bed Repentance.*—2. Before we enter into this dispute, we must presuppose, what St. Augustine and all other doctors say, that as true penance is the work of God, so it is in its power to inspire it whenever he pleases; and, therefore, whensoever we are touched with a true sorrow for our sins, it has force and power enough for the working out of salvation, though we were lying on our death-bed. But to let you see how rarely we have any examples hereof, there is no need of believing either yourself or me; do but believe the saints, for it is by their mouths that the Holy Ghost has spoken, and it is highly reasonable we should give credit to their works and testimony. In the first place, then, hear what St. Augustine says to this purpose, in his Book of True and False Penance: "Let no one defer his doing penance till such time as he is able to sin no longer, because God requires we should perform this action with cheerfulness and freedom, not with restraint and of necessity; and, therefore, he that lets his sins leave him before he will get rid of them, does not seem to leave them so much out of choice and freely, as out of mere necessity. This is the reason why those persons, who would not return to God when they had the power of doing it, and yet confess their sins when they are out of the capacity of sinning any more, will not so easily obtain their desires as they imagine they shall." Aug. de falsa et vera Penit. And a little lower, speaking of the nature of this conversion, he says, "That man is truly converted to God, that returns to him with his whole heart, who is not only afraid of punishment, but uses his utmost endeavors to obtain Almighty God's graces and favors. Should any one, though at the end of his life, be converted to God after this manner, we should have no reason to despair of his pardon.

But because we scarce ever, or at least but very seldom, meet with such a perfect conversion as this is in these days, we have a deal of reason to fear for him, who stays so long before he returns to God; because it is hard for a man to make true satisfaction, when he finds himself overcharged with the pains his sickness put him to, and frightened with the apprehension of punishment; and this especially if he sees his friends before him, for whom he has such ardent love, and reflects on the world, which he is just going to be taken out of. Now, because there are many things, which hinder a man from doing penance at this time, it is certain there can be nothing more dangerous, nor which exposes him more to ruin, than his deferring till death the seeking of proper remedies to cure him. What is more yet, I make bold to say, that in case such a man should obtain pardon for his sins, he would not, therefore, be acquitted from the punishment due to them, for he must be purged and cleansed first by the fire of purgatory, for having reserved the fruits of satisfaction for the next world; and though this fire is not to last forever, as that of hell is, it is, notwithstanding, extremely great, and far beyond all the torments one can possibly suffer in this world, since never did man endure so much in this life; no, not even the martyrs themselves, notwithstanding the exquisite pains they have undergone; nor any criminals whatsoever, that have been put to the greatest tortures, that either human wit or cruelty could invent. Let him, therefore, omit no opportunity of returning from this wicked life, that he may, by this means, escape those dreadful torments, which he must otherwise expect to suffer after death."

3. These are St. Augustine's own words, by which you may see what danger that man exposes himself to, who defers deliberately doing penance till his dying day.

4. St. Ambrose also, in his book of Penance, which some attribute to St. Augustine, is very copious on this matter, and amongst many other things has these words: "If any man desire the sacrament of penance as he lies on his death-bed, and receives it, and dies, I own we do not refuse him what he asks, but I dare not give you any assurance of his going the right way. I tell you again, it is more than I dare affirm, nor will I give you any promise of it, because I will not deceive you. Will you then have this doubt cleared? Do you desire to avoid such an uncertainty as this is? Do penance for your sins whilst you are in good health and able to do it, and then I will give you my word for it, that you are in a good way, because you have done penance for your sins when you might have increased the number and quality of them: but if, on the contrary, you defer your penance till such time as you are able to sin no longer, it is not you that leave your sins, but your sins leave you." St. Aug. 50. Hom. 4. 52.

5. St. Isidore has almost the same thing, though in other words: "Let that man, that has a mind at his death to be certain of having his sins pardoned him, do penance for them whilst he is well and able; let him bewail and deplore his offences; but if, having lived wickedly all his life-time, he expects to obtain his pardon when he is dying, he runs a great hazard; because, though he is not sure he shall be damned, he has a deal of reason to doubt of his being saved;" St. Isid. L. 2. sent. c. 13.

6. These authorities of the saints are sufficient subjects of our fear; but what Eusebius tells us St. Jerome, his master, said, a little before he died, as he lay prostrate on the ground and covered with sackcloth, will put us into greater fright and apprehension. But because it is so terrible that I dare not relate it with all the rigor and severity that the saint spoke it, for fear of giving those souls that are but weak an occasion of despair, I will refer such as desire to read it to an epistle of Eusebius's to Damascus, a bishop, on the death of this glorious doctor: they will find it in the fourth volume of the saint's works. After many other things he says, "He that has persevered all his life-time in his sin, may say, When I am ready to die, I will do penance and be converted. O, what a melancholy comfort is this! For he that has spent his whole life wickedly, without so much as ever thinking of penance, unless, as it were, in a dream, will be very uncertain of its success at that time. For being at this time entangled with worldly affairs, afflicted with the pains of his distemper, and distracted with the thought of his friends he must part with, and with the love he has for the goods of this life, which he has no hopes to enjoy any longer, how is it possible he should be in a disposition to raise up his heart towards God, and to true penance, when he is surrounded by so many afflictions and troubles? It is what he never did as long as he had any hopes of living, nor would he do it now, if he thought he should recover again. Besides, what kind of penance must that be which a man performs when life itself is going to leave him? I know some of the rich men of this world, who have recovered the health of their bodies after dangerous sicknesses, but have grown worse and worse in that of their souls. I believe, therefore, and am of opinion (for it is what I have had sufficient experience of), that for a man that has always led a vicious life, that has never been afraid of committing any sin whatever, and that has always been a slave to pride and vanity; after all this to make a happy end, it is no less than an extraordinary miracle." You may see, by these words of Eusebius, how this holy doctor feared and doubted of the penance which a man, that had never done any all his life-time before, began to do on his death-bed.

7. Nor was St. Gregory less afraid of what generally happens in this conjuncture; for writing on these words of Job, "What

nope can the hypocrite have, if he takes away what belongs to another? Will God hear his cry when tribulation shall come upon him?" Job xxvii. 8, 9. He speaks thus: "If a man does not hear God's voice when he is in prosperity, God will not hear him in the time of his adversity. For it is written, 'The prayer of that man that turns away his ear from hearing of the law, shall be cursed;'" Prov. xxviii. 9. Holy Job, considering how all those that neglect now to do good, when they are ready to die, turn themselves towards God, and beg pardon of him for their crimes, says, "What! will God hear the cries of such a people?" Which words of his come very near those of our Saviour, The foolish virgins are come at last, and cry out, 'Lord, Lord, open to us' (Matt. xxv. 11), but immediately answer was given, 'Verily, I say unto you, I know you not;' ver. 12. Because, the greater mercy God shows now, the greater severity he will exercise then; and the rigor with which he will punish then, will be so much the heavier, as his goodness is the sweeter and more merciful now." Thus much St. Gregory. And Hugh of St. Victor shows us he is of the same opinion with these saints, when he tells us, in his second Book of the Sacraments, "It is very hard for that penance to be true which comes late, and we have a deal of reason to suspect it when it is forced;" Lib. 2. De Sacr. Part 14. c. 5. Every man can witness for himself, that he has no desire to do that which is out of his power to do; for we may easily judge of the will by the power; so that, if you do not do penance when you are able, it is a sign you have no mind to do it.

8. This is the opinion of the master of the Sentences, when he says, "Since true penance is the work of God, he can inspire it when he shall think fit, and reward, out of his mercy, those whom he might have condemned by his justice. But because there are many things at that time which divert men from this business, it is very dangerous, nay, even sinful, to defer the applying of the remedy of penance till the very utmost extremity. Nevertheless, it is an extraordinary grace of God to inspire a man with these dispositions as he lies on his death-bed, if there be any so inspired." Lib. 4. dist. 20. Observe how dreadful these words are. What madness is it, then, to expose the greatest treasure to the most imminent dangers? Is there any thing in the world of greater consequence to you than your salvation? What madness, then, to hazard so precious a jewel!

9. This is the sentiment of all these great doctors; by which you may judge what madness it is to be so secure, where so many skilful pilots have shown so much concern. The art of dying well ought to be the study of our whole life; for, at the hour of death, we have so much to do to die, that we have scarce any time to learn to die well.

§ II. *The Opinions of the Schoolmen on the same Matter.*—

10. For the further confirmation of this truth, we must see what have been the opinions of the schoolmen on this matter. But, above all the rest, Scotus, in his fourth Book of Sentences, treats this question the most to our present purpose, which he concludes thus: "The great difficulty a man has to do penance at the hour of death, makes the penance he does then to be hardly a true penance;" Scot. 9. 4. dist. 20. art. 1. This he proves by four reasons.

11. The first is, the pains his distemper brings on, and the presence of death to him, are obstacles to the lifting up his heart to God, and to the exercising himself in the duties and obligations of sincere penance. To make this the plainer, you are to understand, that all the passions of our soul have a deal of force to draw a man's reason and free-will which way they please. And, according to the maxims of the philosophers, the passions that excite sorrow are much stronger than those that are the causes of joy; so that the passions and affections of a man ready to die are strongest; because, as Aristotle says, "Death is of all terrible things the most terrible," by reason of the pains and torments the body is in, of the disquiets and troubles of the soul, which are numerous, of the grief and sorrow which the thoughts of leaving children, wife and the world then rack a man with. Now, whilst the passions are so strong and turbulent, where must the dying man's thoughts and reasons be, but where such violent griefs and passions as these convey them?

12. We see by experience, that even a virtuous man, if he be but troubled with a violent fit of the cholic, or with any other sharp pain whatever, whilst he is in this condition, can scarce have his thoughts fixed entirely on God, but, generally speaking, lets them go wheresoever his pains carry them. If it be thus with a good and just man, what will become of him that never knew what it was to think of God, and who, being always accustomed to love his body better than his soul, is the more easily inclined to run to his greater friend than to his less, for help and succor, when he is in any danger? One of those four things, which St. Bernard says are impediments to contemplation, is the indisposition of the body, because the soul is at that time so taken up with the thoughts of what the flesh suffers, that she can hardly think of any thing else: Serm. 5. de Assum. If this be true, what folly is it to expect the greatest indisposition of the body, in order to treat of the greatest affairs of the soul?

13. I knew a person myself, who, being ready to die, and advised to prepare himself as well as he could for death, was so surprised and troubled at the nearness of it, that all his business was to desire, with the more eagerness and solicitude, such remedies as were the most proper for keeping off the stroke, if it were

possible; as if he had imagined he could have pushed death away with his hands, when it was so near him. A priest that was by, seeing him so forgetful of what ought to have been at that time his chief concern, advised him to lay aside those cares and solitudes, and to call on God: The sick man looking on this good advice as troublesome, answered the priest after such a manner as least of all became one in that condition, and at such a time; immediately after which he died; and yet this same person had passed for a man of virtue all his lifetime. From hence you may see how troublesome the nearness of death will be to men who have loved this life too well, since it has been so unwelcome to those who, whilst they lived, seemed not to have any extraordinary affection for it.

14. I heard of another person, who being very ill, and imagining he had not long to live, desired to entertain himself before he died with none but God, and prevent his Judge by the fervor of his devotion; but the violent and continual pain he was in, gave him no kind of ease or respite for the accomplishing his desire. What man, then, will be so mad as to defer the reform of his whole life, till such a time, when he shall find himself so ill disposed for this business?

15. The second reason this doctor brings is, that true penance ought to be voluntary, that is, to proceed from a free notion of the will, and not to be done purely out of necessity. And, therefore, St. Augustine says, "That a man should not only fear his Judge, but love him too, and do what he has to do freely and willingly, not out of necessity;" *De Civit. Dei. L. 14. c. 10.* So that, according to this, he that never did true penance all his life, but has deferred doing it till he is ready to die, seems to do it only out of necessity, not freely and willingly. And if this be the only reason of his doing it, it is certain his penance is not purely voluntary.

16. It was such a penance as this that Semei did for the offence he had committed against David, when he fled from his son Absalom (2 Kings xvi. 19); for seeing him return home with victory after his flight, and being sensible of the misfortune that might befall him on that account, he went out at the head of a great many men to receive the king, and with submission to beg pardon for what he had done. Whereon Abisai, one of David's relations, seeing him, cried out, "What! shall Semei by these words escape death, after having cursed the Lord's anointed?" 2 Kings xix. 21. But David, who knew better than Abisai, that his submission would do Semei but little good, prudently dissembling his displeasure for that time, did not let the crime go unpunished; for as he lay on his death-bed, out of the zeal he had for justice, not out of revenge, he commanded his son Solomon, as if it had been his last will, to deal with the traitor according to his deserts;

3 Kings ii. 8, 9. It is such a penance as this, several Christians may be said to perform, who, after having, without any interruption, offended the majesty of God during their whole lives, when the time of giving up their accounts comes, seeing death just before them, with the grave open, and themselves just ready to appear before their Judge, and at the same time that there is no force that can resist this supreme power, and that the moment is just come which is to determine nothing less than eternity, they prostrate themselves before their Judge, begging and entreating him with all kind of humility, and making all the protestations imaginable, which, supposing them to be sincere, would be profitable; but we may guess what they are by the success they commonly meet with. For we have seen by experience that several of these persons, after having escaped the danger they were in, have immediately neglected all their former promises, have taken up all their ill courses again, and put themselves a second time under the yoke which they seemed before to have been freed from, as if they did nothing out of a motive of virtue and for the love of God, but only because they saw themselves in danger, which was no sooner over than the good effects which were caused by it ceased.

17. By which it appears that this kind of penance is just like that of seamen when they are in a storm: for every one then makes many promises and purposes of a change of life, and for laboring for the acquisition of solid virtue; but as soon as ever the storm is past and they out of danger, they fall to cursing and blaspheming again just as they did before, and trouble their heads no more about what is past, as if all their promises had been nothing but mere talk and words of course.

18. The third reason is, because the evil custom of sinning, which a wicked man has lived in all his days, generally speaking, is his constant companion till death, as the shadow is that of the body; for custom is like a second nature, which it is very hard to conquer. Thus we see, though with grief, several persons so entirely forgetful of their souls at that time, so covetous notwithstanding they are dying, so charmed with the love of life, that they would give any thing in the world to recover it again, as much slaves to the world, and every thing in it they had any affection for, as if they were not reduced to the miserable extremity they unhappily find themselves in. Have you never seen even old men sometimes as greedy and as covetous, as busy about the securing of every little insignificant trifle, and as much proof against charity as ever they were before? Nay, have they not as great a desire of those things they know they cannot carry with them?

This is a sort of punishment which God frequently inflicts on sin, permitting it to go along with its author to the very grave, as St. Gregory expresses thus: "God punishes a sinner after this

manner, permitting him to forget himself at his death, because he never thought of God during his whole life; so that one forgetfulness is punished by another: that which has all along been a sin is punished by that which is at the same time both a punishment and a sin;" Homil. 2. in Evang. and in Ezech. Item. Lib. 20. Moral. c. 15. This is what we have daily proofs of: and we have often heard of persons who have died in the very arms of lewd women whom they have loved to their own ruin, and would not quit the company of them, not even at the very moment of their death, because, by a just judgment of God, they have neither been mindful of themselves nor of their souls.

19. The fourth reason is grounded on the worth of those actions that are done at this time, for it is plain, at least to one that has any knowledge of God, that he is much less pleased with the service done him at this time, than with that we do him at another; "Because it is no great matter," as the holy virgin and martyr St. Lucy said, "to be profuse of that which you will be forced to leave behind;" Surius Dec. 13. What is it for a man to forgive an affront, when it would be a dishonor not to pardon it? What is it to turn away his mistress, when a man can keep her no longer?

20. From these reasons this doctor concludes, that it is very hard to perform a sincere penance at that time; nay, he adds more yet, and says, "that the Christain who designedly defers his penance till he is ready to die, commits a mortal sin, because he does a great injustice to his own soul, and exposes himself to the danger of losing his salvation." Is there any thing, then, in the world we have more reason to be afraid of than of this?

§ III. *The same Thing proved by the Authority of the Holy Scripture.*—21. But because the decision of this question depends chiefly on the word of God, which there is no appealing from, nor any exception to be brought against, hear now what it says on this point. Solomon, in the first chapter of his Proverbs, after setting down the words the Eternal Wisdom makes use of for calling men to repentance, immediately adds those which it will pronounce against such persons as shut their ears to this call, thus: "Because I have called, and you have refused to come, I have stretched out my hand, and there was no one that would take any notice; because you have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reproofs, I will also laugh at your destruction, and mock you when that which you were afraid of shall befall you. When a sudden calamity shall rush upon you, and death shall come upon you like a storm when you least expect it; when tribulation, as misery, shall encompass you: then they shall call upon me, and I will not hear them, they shall rise up in the morning, but shall not find me, because they have hated correction, and have not had the fear of God before them, nor followed my advice, but have resisted all my reproof." Prov. i. 23—31.

These are So omon's words, or rather the words of God himself, which St. Gregory, in his Book of Morals, cited before, turns to our present matter. What answer can you make to all this? Will not these threats, as coming from God himself, be of force to make you afraid of falling into such a danger, and prepare yourself in time against this dreadful moment?

22. If this will not suffice, give ear to another authority, no less clear than this. Our Saviour, in the gospel, speaking of his coming at the day of judgment, with much earnestness advises his disciples to be ready against that day, and to this purpose brings several comparisons, to make them understand how important this concern was. "Happy," says he, "is that servant whom his master, when he comes, shall find watching. But if the bad servant shall say in his heart, It will be a great while before my master will come, and shall begin to beat his fellow servant, and shall eat and drink with drunkards; the master of that servant shall come at a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour that he is ignorant of; and he will separate him, and will give him a share amongst the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xxiv. 46—51. By this we may see that our Saviour was acquainted with the designs of the wicked, and the ways they use to cloak their crimes. And for this reason he meets them, as it were, and tells them what shall befall them, and what are like to be the effects of their vain confidence. Now what is it we are treating of but this very business? and what do I say, but what our Saviour himself said? You are this bad servant, who are conceiving the same designs in your heart, and have a mind to take hold of this delay of your Master, as an opportunity of spending your time in eating and drinking, and of continuing still in your sins. How comes it you do not dread this threat which is made by God, who is as able to put every thing he says in execution as he is to say it? It is to you he speaks, it is you he treats with, it is to you he directs his voice; awake, then, unhappy man, and amend your life while you have time, for fear of being torn to pieces when the hour of this dreadful judgment shall come.

23. Methinks I spend too much time about a thing so clear; but what shall I do when, notwithstanding all this, I see the greatest part of the world make use of this unhappy pretence? That you may, therefore, have a clear sight of the greatness of this danger, hear what our Saviour says to this purpose in another place. He had no sooner made an end of the above-mentioned words, but he adds these which follow: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be like to ten virgins, five of which were wise, and five were foolish ones;" Matt. xxv. 1. He says *then*, and when will this *then* be? When the Judge comes, when the hour of judgment shall draw nigh, and not only the general, but each

particular judgment, as St. Augustine explains this passage : because the same sentence that shall be passed at the particular judgment will stand good at the general ; Aug. Ep. 80. ad *Æsychium*. This is the time when what happened to the virgins, says our Lord, shall happen to you. " There were five wise and five foolish virgins, that were waiting for the bridegroom ; the wise ones furnished their lamps with oil betimes, to go out to receive him, but the foolish ones neglected to do it. At midnight," the time of the deepest sleep, that is, when men are not at all solicitous and think least of death, " a noise was heard, the bridegroom is coming, let us go out and receive him." Immediately these virgins all rose up, and they that had prepared their lamps entered with him to the marriage, and the door was shut ; but those that had not got their lamps ready began then to dress and to fill them, and to call upon the bridegroom, saying, " Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered them, Verily, I know ye not." With these words the evangelist ends the parable, and immediately after tells us the meaning of it, saying, " Watch, therefore, because you neither know the day nor the hour ;" as if he had said, You have seen how those virgins prospered, who had got all things ready, and how unhappy, on the contrary, they were, that had not. Therefore, since you neither know the day nor the hour of his coming, and since the business of your salvation depends on your being ready, watch and be always prepared, for fear of being taken before you are aware, like these foolish virgins, and of perishing as they did. This is the literal sense of the parable, according to Cajetan, on this place, when he says, " That from this example alone we may draw this consequence, that the penance which is deferred to the very hour of a man's death, when he hears these words, ' behold the bridegroom is coming,' is not sure. On the contrary, it is looked on in this parable as false, because, generally speaking, it is so." And at the end he makes this the result of the whole parable, saying, " The moral of this doctrine is to let us know that the five foolish virgins were rejected, because they were not prepared when the bridegroom came, whilst the others, being ready, were admitted. And, therefore, it is requisite we should be always so, since we are ignorant both of the day and hour when he will come. What could be better expressed than this ? I wonder, therefore, that, after so plain a proof of this truth, men dare comfort themselves with so vain a hope. Were not this truth so clear, I should not wonder if they believed the contrary, or endeavored to deceive themselves : but after our great Master has decided this business, after the Judge himself has explained his laws and judgments by so many examples, and has told us how we are to be judged, who can be so senseless as to think this business will fall out quite otherwise than as he who is to pronounce the sentence has declared it shall ?

§ IV. *Some Objections answered.*—24. But perhaps in answer to all this you will say, What! was not the good thief saved by one sentence at the hour of death? St. Augustine answers this question in the book above cited, where he says, “That the confession the good thief made was all at once the hour of his conversion, of his baptism, and of his death; whence it follows, that as he who dies immediately after having been baptized goes directly to heaven, as has happened to several persons, so it fared with this happy thief, because the hour of his death was the same to him as that of his baptism;” *De vera et falsa Pœnit.*

25. We may answer this query another way, which is, that so wonderful an action as this, like all other miracles of the same nature, was reserved to the coming of the Son of God into the world, for a testimony of his glory; and, therefore, it was requisite, that at the time of our Saviour's passion, the heavens should be darkened, the earth quake, the graves be opened, and the dead arise, because these prodigies were all kept against this time, as so many proofs of the glory of him who suffered, and amongst them we may reckon the salvation of the good thief; but we must here take notice, that this man's confession was no less wonderful than his salvation; for he confessed the kingdom of heaven, even on the cross; he publicly preached the faith of Christ present, when the apostles had almost lost theirs, and praised and glorified our Saviour when all the world was cursing and blaspheming him. Since, therefore, this miracle, as well as the rest, was for the manifesting of our Saviour's dignity and glory at his death, it is folly to expect, that should generally be done at all times which was particularly reserved for that.

26. Besides, we see in all governments there are ordinary and extraordinary methods and ways of proceeding; the ordinary are common to all, the extraordinary for some particular persons. The same is practised in the divine government of God's church; for that is a regular and common method, which the apostle speaks of, that the end of the wicked shall be answerable to their works, to signify that generally a good death follows a good life, and an ill death an ill life; 2 Cor. xi. The ordinary way of proceeding is, that those who have done good works shall go into life everlasting, and those who have done evil shall be condemned to eternal flames. This is what we find frequently repeated in the Holy Scriptures; it is sung by the psalmist, declared by the prophets, published by the apostles, and preached by the evangelists. This is what David has explained in a few words, when he said, “The Lord has spoken once, and I have heard these two things, that power belongs to God, and that mercy is thine, O Lord, because thou wilt reward every man according to his works;” Ps. lxi. 12, 13. This is the sum of all Christian philosophy. Now, according to this, we say it is usual for the wicked, as well as for the just, to be rewarded at

the end of this life according to their deserts, which are to be measured by their works. Not that this law is so universal, but that God can show a particular favor to some persons for his own glory, and grant those the happiness of dying the death of the just, who have lived the lives of sinners; as it can, on the contrary, happen, that a man may, by a secret judgment of God, die the death of a sinner, that has lived all his life-time like a just man; as a merchant, after a prosperous voyage, may be lost as he is entering the port. For which reason Solomon said, "Who knows whether the spirit of the sons of Adam mounts upwards, and if that of beasts goes downwards?" Eccl. iii. 21. Because, though it generally happens that the souls of those men who live like beasts go down to hell, and that the souls of those who live like rational creatures mount up to heaven, yet, by some special judgment of God, the contrary may fall out in both respects; but notwithstanding all this, the secure and general doctrine is, that whosoever lives well shall die happily. For this reason, no one ought to rely on the examples of particular graces, since they do not make any general rule, nor belong to all indifferently, but to a very few indeed, and those unknown; so that you can have no assurance of your being of this number.

27. Others make use of another pretence, and say, the sacraments of the new law make contrition of attrition, and that they shall be in this disposition, at least when they are dying, which, joined to the virtue of the sacraments, will suffice for the obtaining of their salvation. My answer is, that it is not any sort of sorrow that will suffice for that kind of attrition, which, joined to sacraments, produces grace in those persons that receive them. For it is certain there are several sorts of attrition and sorrow, and that it is not any kind of it that changes a man's attrition into contrition, but only that which is known by no one but by him who is the Giver of all grace.

28. The holy doctors have not been unacquainted with this truth, and therefore it is that they have spoken of penance with so much fear and apprehension, as we have shown already. And St. Augustine, in the first authority cited in confirmation of this doctrine, speaking of him that receives penance, and is reconciled by the sacraments of the church, says expressly, "We administer the sacrament of penance to the sinner, but we give him no assurance;" De 50. Hom. 42.

29. But if, after this, you should urge further, and object the penance of the Ninevites to me, which proceeded from the apprehension they were in of being destroyed within forty days, I would have you reflect not only on the rigorous penance they performed, but the change of their lives; and do you change your life as they did theirs, and you will not fail of finding the same mercy they did. But when I see you have no sooner

recovered your health than you return to your former evil courses, and neglect all the good resolutions you made during your sickness, what would you have me think of such penance as this is?

The Conclusion of this Chapter.—30. All we have said here has not been to shut the gates either of salvation or hope on any one: which the saints have not done, nor ought any of us to do it. Our only design is to turn the wicked out of this strong hold, in which they always take shelter, that they may continue in their sins with the more security. Tell me now, I beseech you, by the love of God, how dare you expose yourself to so imminent a ruin, when you have all the doctors and saints of the church, when you have reason itself, nay, and the Holy Scriptures, continually admonishing you of the danger of this penance? What is it you have to trust to at the last hour? Is it to the legacies you bequeath in your will for pious uses? Is it to the prayers and masses you order to be said for you? Alas! you have seen how solicitous the foolish virgins were to supply themselves with what was requisite, and what entreaties they used at the door with the bridegroom, but all to no purpose, because nothing of all this proceeded from a true penance. Do you trust to the tears you shall shed then? Tears, it is true, have great force at all times, and happy is the man that weeps without hypocrisy and constraint; but consider what floods of tears it cost him who sold his birthright to satisfy his gluttony, and yet the apostle tells us, “That he had no place for penance, though it was what he sought after with so many tears” (Heb. xii. 17); for it was not for God’s sake that he wept, but for the loss he had suffered. You, perhaps, rely on the good resolutions you shall make at that time. These go a great way when they are sincere; but call to mind the good designs which king Antiochus promised to himself, as he lay on his death-bed; he made such great promises to God, that we cannot so much as read them without admiration and astonishment, and yet, after all, the Scripture says, “That this wicked man prayed to God, from whom he was not like to obtain any mercy;” 2 Macch. ix. 13. And why, but because all he promised was not out of a motive of love, but of servile fear; which, though it is good, is not yet sufficient of itself for the gaining of the kingdom of heaven; for a dread of hell’s torments is what may proceed from the natural love and affection every man has for himself; but for a man to love himself is not a means whereby he can possibly arrive at this kingdom. So that as no person had admittance into king Ahasuerus’s palace that was clothed in sackcloth, so no one can enter into the kingdom of heaven in the dress of a slave; that is, by the means of this servile fear alone, unless he be clothed with his wedding garment, which is love; Esther iv. 2.

31. Consider, therefore, seriously, now whilst you have time before you, that you must without doubt be one day or other in

this condition; nay, the time cannot be far off, for you see what haste the heavens make to finish their courses. This mortal life of ours, which is no more than a small flock of wool, will be soon spun out, whilst the wheel is perpetually turning round with so swift a motion. For this reason Moses says, "That the day of perdition is nigh, and that the seasons come upon us very fast;" Deut. xxxii. 35. When you have run this short course, will follow the fulfilling of these prophecies, and then you will see how true a prophet I have been in all I have foretold you; you will find yourself surrounded with pains, disturbed by cares, tormented by the presence of death, and in continual expectation of the lot which is immediately to befall you. O doubtful lot! O dreadful passage! O terrible trial, in which is to be passed the sentence, either of eternal life or of eternal death! Who will be able then to change their lot? who will put a stop to this sentence? It is at present in your own power to do it; do not neglect the opportunity. You have now a convenient time to make your Judge merciful, now you may gain his favor. Take, therefore, the advice of the prophet along with you, who says, "Seek the Lord whilst he is to be found, call upon him while he is near;" Isa. iv. 6. He is now near to hear us, though we cannot see him; when we are to be judged we shall see him, but he will not hearken to us, unless we now do something to deserve it.

CHAPTER III.

Against those who continue in their Sins confiding in the mercy of God.

1. THERE are others who continue in their wicked lives, confiding in God's mercies, and in the merits of our Saviour's passion, whom it is requisite to undeceive, as well as the rest. You say the mercy of God is great, since he died on the cross for the salvation of sinners: I confess it is very great, since it bears with so great a blasphemy as in making his goodness the motive of your wickedness, and turning the cross, which he made use of as his instrument for the destroying the kingdom of sin, into an instrument for establishing and promoting it; and whereas you are obliged to lay down a thousand lives, if you had them, in return for that which he laid down for you, you take occasion from thence to deny him that single life you have received from him. This crime was a greater affliction to our Saviour than the death he suffered; for though he never complained of his sufferings, yet he does of this injury by the prophet, saying, "Sinners have built upon my back, they have extended their iniquity?" Ps. cxxviii. 3. Who is it that taught you to deduce

this consequence, that, because God is good, you will take the liberty of sinning, and escape without being punished? The Holy Ghost does not teach us to argue after that manner, but thus: Because God is good, he deserves to be honored, obeyed and loved above all things; because God is good, it is just I should be so too, and that I should hope in his mercy for the pardon of sins, though they be ever so great, if I do but return to him with my whole heart; because God is good and infinitely good, it will be the greater crime in me to offend so much goodness; and for this reason, the greater you suppose this mercy, which you put your trust in, so much the more heinous is every sin you commit against it. Nor is it just that such a crime should go unpunished; nay, it belongs to divine justice to take care it should not; neither is this justice, as you falsely persuade yourself, opposite to the divine goodness, but is its sister and protectress, and cannot by any means consent that such a crime should pass unpunished.

2. This sort of excuse is not new, but has been long used in the world. This was the dispute between the true and false prophets; for those coming from Almighty God threatened the people with the execution of his justice; these, speaking of their own head, promised them a false peace and mercy; and as soon as ever God's heavy judgments had discovered the truth of the one, and the lies of the others, the true prophets said, "Where are now your prophets who prophesied to you and said, The king of Babylon (that is, Nabuchodonosor) shall not come upon you?" Jer. xxxviii. 18.

3. You say God is very merciful; but believe me, whosoever you are that say so, he has not opened your eyes yet to let you see how great his justice is; for, if he had, you would cry out with the prophet, "Who is there, O Lord, that knows the power of thy wrath, and who can measure the greatness of thy indignation for fear?" Ps. lxxxix. 11.

4. That you may the more clearly perceive the danger of this mistake, let us go hand in hand together awhile. Neither you nor I have ever seen God's justice, as it is in itself, to know how far it reaches, nor have we any other way of knowing God in this world but by his works. Let us then go now into this spiritual world of the Holy Scriptures; and when we have been there awhile, we will come into this terrestrial world we live in, to take a view, in each of them, of the effects of the divine justice, that we may be the better able to know what it is.

5. This journey will be very advantageous to us; for besides the end we propose to ourselves, we shall receive another very considerable benefit, which is, the exciting and nourishing of the fear of God in our hearts, which the saints tell us is the treasure, the defence, the ballast of our soul. So that a vessel is not safe unless it will be poised and ballasted, because any gust of wind may upset her, so neither can the soul be secure if it wants the

weight of this fear. It is fear keeps her from being carried away and overturned by the winds either of human or divine favors; whereas, let her be ever so richly fraught, she is perpetually in danger of being cast away whilst she wants this ballast. It is necessary, then, that not only those who are just entered into God's service, but even those who have been a long time in his family, should live continually in fear; nor is this virtue required in sinners only, who have motives enough to excite them to it, but also in the just, who have not done so much as the others have to be afraid of; the subject of those persons' fear is, because they have fallen already; the motive these have is, lest they should fall; the one ought to be afraid, because of their past sins, and the others, upon the account of the dangers they may probably be exposed to.

6. If you would know how this holy fear is to be produced within you, I tell you, that when it is once infused into your soul by grace, it is preserved and increased there, by frequent reflections on the effects of God's justice, which we are now going to treat of. Let these be the frequent entertainment of your thoughts, and you will find this fear will by degrees be formed in you.

§ I. *Of the effects of the divine Justice mentioned in the Holy Scriptures.*—7. The first effect of God's justice, which the Holy Scripture speaks of, is the reprobation of the angels. The beginning of the ways of God was first shown on the prince of devils, as we find in the book of Job (ch. xl. 14); "for since all the ways of God are mercy and justice" (Ps. xxiv. 10), his justice, till this first crime, had never manifested itself. It was shut up in the bosom of God, like a sword in a scabbard, which the prophet Ezechiel was frightened at, when he considered what destruction it would make; Ezec. xxi. This first sin it was that made God draw the sword: and consider what a terrible blow the first was. Do but look up, and you will see what a deal of hurt it did; you will see one of the richest jewels of God's house, one of the greatest ornaments of heaven, a draft which gives so lively a representation of the divine splendor and beauty, "fall down from heaven like a flash of lightning," for one proud thought; Luc. x. 18. He that was before the prince of angels, was made the chief of devils; he that was before so very beautiful and glorious, became as oppositely deformed and ugly; he that was crowned before with the greatest glory, was condemned to the severest torments; he that was before God's greatest favorite, was changed into his greatest enemy, and so will continue for all eternity. What a subject of admiration must this be to those heavenly spirits, who well know from whence and whither that so noble a creature fell! With what astonishment will they repeat these words of Isaias (ch. xiv. 12); "How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, you who rose in the morning!"

8. Descend from heaven to the terrestrial paradise, and you will

there see another fall, no less terrible than the former, had it no been retrieved; Gen. iii. For if the angels fell, every one of them had committed an actual sin, which was the occasion of his fall. But what actual sin has an infant been guilty of to deserve to be sent into the world a child of wrath and indignation? There is no need of any actual sin for this; it is enough to be descended from one who sinned, and by sinning infected the very root of all human nature, which was in him, that so the child is born with that sin; so great is the glory and majesty of God, that a creature, for one offence committed against it, deserves no less a punishment than this is. If Aman, Ahasuerus's creature (Esther iii.), did not look on himself as satisfied, when he was revenged of Mardocheus, whom he imagined to be the man that had injured and abused him; but, on the contrary, thought his greatness obliged him to destroy all the Jews, for the affront which one single man had offered him; what great matter, then, is it, for Almighty God's glory and infinite greatness to exact such a punishment? Consider, then, the first man turned out of paradise for eating of one morsel, for which the whole world has been ever since condemned to hunger and want. After the revolution of so many ages, the infant child carries the mark of his father's wound along with him, and is made a child of wrath, not only before he is capable of committing any sin, but even before he is born. This injury is not put up yet, though it is so long since it was done, though it has been divided among so many millions of men, and has been so often and so severely punished. On the contrary, all those torments that have been suffered in the world to this day, all the deaths that have been hitherto, and all the souls that have been burning in hell fire since the fall of the angels, or that shall burn there for all eternity, are nothing but so many effects of the first crime, and so many proofs of the divine justice. Nay, what is still more astonishing, it continues, notwithstanding the redemption of the world by the blood of Christ. And yet, if man had not had this remedy applied to him, there would have been no difference at all between him and the devil, because the one would have had as great a probability of obtaining his salvation as the other. Are not these proofs of the divine justice strong enough to convince you?

9. But as if this yoke, which the sons of Adam have so long groaned under, were not heavy enough, there have been from that time downward, new additions of punishments on punishments for new sins, which have taken their rise from this first sin. The whole world was drowned by the deluge; Gen. vii. God rained down fire and brimstone from heaven on five lewd cities; Gen. xiv. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan and Abiron alive for contending with Moses; Num. xvi. Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abiu, for omitting one single ceremony in their sacrifice, were burnt on a sudden by the fire of the sanctuary,

without finding any mercy, either on the consideration of their own dignity, as priests, or their father's sanctity, or the familiarity which Moses, their uncle, had with God; Levit. x. We read in the New Testament, that Ananias and Sapphira, for lying to St. Peter, in a matter which did not seem to be of any very great moment, fell down dead both of them on the spot; Acts v.

10. What shall I say of God's dreadful judgments? Solomon, the wisest among the children of men, for whom God had such a tender love that he commanded him to be called the "beloved of the Lord," came at last, by God's unsearchable judgments, to fall into the worst and greatest of all sins, viz. the adoring of idols; 2 Kings xii. 24; 3 Kings xi. Can there be any thing more dreadful than this is? And yet if you did but know how many judgments of the same nature happen every day in the church, you would perhaps be no less surprised at them than at all that has been said. For you would see a great many stars fallen from heaven, you would see several persons that have been invited to God's table, and have been fed with the bread of angels, brought into such a miserable condition, as to long after the food of swine to satisfy their hunger (Luke xv.); you would see a great number of chaste souls more beautiful and more glorious than the sun, sullied all over and darker than the midnight sky; all which was occasioned by the sins and offences they fell into; for God's decrees and judgments lay no necessity on men's actions, nor deprive them of their free-will.

11. But what is still more: could there be a greater proof of this justice, than that God should not be satisfied with any less satisfaction than the death of his only begotten Son, to purchase pardon for mankind? Can any words be more moving than those of our Saviour to the women who followed him when he went to be crucified? "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep over me, but weep over yourselves and your children; for behold the days shall come in which they shall say, Happy those women that are barren, and the wombs which have not conceived, and the breasts which have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall upon us; and to the hills, Cover us. Because if they do these things to the green-wood, what will they do to the dry?" Luke xxiii. 28—31. As if he had said more clearly, If this tree of life and of innocence, on which there has never been any worm or rust of sin, burns thus, by the flames of the divine justice, for the sins of other persons, what will become of the barren and dry tree, which not charity, but malice, has overloaded with its own crimes? How rigorous, therefore, must God's justice be in those other works of his, in which mercy does not exert itself, since it is so severe in this, which is the effect of his infinite goodness?

12. But if you are so dull as not to see the force of these arguments, reflect on the eternity of hell-torments, and consider

how terrible this justice is, which, for a sin of but one moment, condemns the soul to nothing less than pains everlasting. This dreadful justice suits very well with the mercy you so highly commend. Can any thing be so dreadful as to see how this great God, seated on the throne of his glory, will from thence look down on a soul after it has been tormented millions of years in such a terrible manner, without being moved to the least pity and compassion? On the contrary, he will take pleasure in such a soul's sufferings, and will never put an end or limit to them, nor give it any hopes of ever finding ease. O wonders of the divine justice! O subject of our astonishment and admiration! O the unfathomable depth of this abyss! Who is there so unreasonable and senseless as not to tremble at the thoughts of so dreadful a punishment?

§ II. *Of the Effects of the divine Justice which are to be seen in this World.*—13. Let us now leave the Holy Scripture, and come to the visible world, and we shall there find other effects of a most terrible and most severe justice. They who are ever so little enlightened with the knowledge of God, live, whilst they are in this world, in such fear and apprehension of these effects of justice, that, though they are able to conceive all the rest of God's works, yet they cannot do so in respect of this, but are forced to content themselves with a sincere and humble act of faith. Who is there that is not surprised to see the whole face of the earth covered over with infidelity? To see what a nursery the devil has here to people hell? To see that the greatest part of the world has been as much overshadowed with the darkness of its errors, even since our Saviour's death, as it was before? What is all the Christian world in comparison to what the infidels possess, and to what is discovered every day? All the rest is under the tyranny of the prince of darkness, without the least glimmering of the sun of justice. There the light of truth has never shone out; there no more rain or dew falls down from heaven than used to do upon the mountains of Gelboe; 2 Kings iii. From thence the devils still continue to carry off a great number of souls every day to everlasting flames, as they have done ever since the beginning of the world. For as in the time of the deluge no one escaped, that was not in Noe's ark (Gen. vii.); as none of the inhabitants of Jericho were saved but Rahab and her family, so neither can any one be saved but those of the house of God, that is the church; Jos. vi. 2; Pet. iii.

14. Consider again, in this little spot of the world, which the Christians possess, how each one behaves himself, and you will see, that in all this mystical body there is scarce one proud part, from the soul of the feet to the crown of the head; Isa. i. Lay aside but a very few of the chief cities, where you may see some marks of sound doctrine, and run over all the other towns and countries, where they have no notion of the true worship, and

you will find many places of which we may truly say what God said once of Jerusalem, "Go round about the ways of Jerusalem, and look in the streets, to see if you can find a man that is truly just, and I will show mercy towards him;" Jerem. v. 1. I do not desire you to run up and down the market-places, or to public houses, which are for the most part full of nothing but lying and deceit. Do but consider what passes in your neighbor's families, and, as Jeremy says, "Do but give an ear to what they say, and you will scarce hear any one good word amongst them;" Jerem. viii. 6. Go where you will, and you will hear nothing but murmuring, detracting, swearing, blaspheming, quarrelling, coveting and fighting. In fine, the tongue and the heart entertain themselves every where with the things of this world, and with the ways of promoting their interests, while at the same time God and heavenly things are what they trouble themselves about but little, unless it be in blaspheming and swearing by his holy name. Such a remembrance as this God himself complained of by his prophet, saying, "They remember me, but not in truth and justice, but only in swearing falsely by my name;" Isa. xlviii. 1; Zach. v. So that a man can hardly tell, at least by what he sees, whether these persons are Christians or heathens, except perhaps by the high towers and steeples he sees at a distance, and by the oaths and perjuries he hears when he comes nearer. What pretence, then, have such persons to reckon themselves in the number of those of whom Isaiah said, "All that shall see them shall know them, because they are the seed which the Lord has blessed?" Isa. lxi. 9. If, therefore, the life of a Christian ought to be such, that every one that sees shall acknowledge him to be a child of God, what rank shall we put those in, who rather seem to despise and laugh at Jesus Christ, than to live as become Christians?

15. How can you choose but see by this the effects of God's justice, since the crimes of the world are so many and so great? For that the permitting men to fall into sin is one of the greatest punishments, and one of the most manifest signs of God's anger, is a truth as undeniable, as that the preserving a soul from sin is one of the greatest favors he is capable of receiving from God. Thus we read in the book of Kings, that God's anger was kindled against the children of Israel, and, therefore, he permitted David to fall into the sin of pride, of ordering Joab to go number the people; 2 Kings xxiv. We read in Ecclesiasticus, "That God will preserve the merciful men from all evil, and will not permit them to be entangled in their sins;" Eccl. xxiii. 16. For as one part of the reward due to virtue is the increase of virtue itself, so it frequently happens that the punishment of one sin is the permission to fall into another. Thus we see the severest punishments inflicted for the most heinous sin that ever was committed

in the world, to wit, the putting of the Son of God to death, was that which the prophet threatened the authors of this crime with, when he said, "Add iniquity, O Lord, to their iniquity, and let them not enter into thy justice" (Ps. lxxviii. 28); that is to say, permit them not to keep and obey thy commandments. And what follows from all this? The same prophet tells us himself, in the next verse, where he says, "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and let them not be written amongst the just;" Ibid. ver. 29.

16. If, therefore, God's punishing of one sin by permitting another be so severe a punishment, and so great a proof of his anger, how is it possible you should not see the marks of the divine justice amongst such a number of sins as are even in fame and reputation in the world? Turn your eyes which way you please, and you shall scarce see any thing but sins, like men in the midst of the sea, who have no other object but sky and water. And can you see all these sins without seeing justice too? Can you be in the middle of the ocean, and see no water? And if all this world is nothing but an ocean of sins, it must needs be an ocean of justice. There is no need of going down into hell to see how the divine justice manifests itself there, we may see it plainly enough in this world.

17. But if you can see nothing beyond yourself, at least look into yourself: consider that if you are in the state of sin, you are under the stroke of this justice, and are then most exposed to it when you think you are most secure. St. Augustine was once in this condition, as he himself acknowledges, when he says, "I was drowned in the depth of sin; your anger was provoked against me, and I knew nothing of it. I was quite deaf to the noise which the chains of my mortality made, and this ignorance of your anger and of my fault was a punishment of the pride of my soul." Conf. l. 2. c. 2. Now if God has inflicted this kind of punishment on you, and has permitted you to remain blind for so long a time, and to be drowned in your iniquities, how can you falsely imagine yourself to be in so happy a condition, when all things go so ill with you? Let him who is in favor with God talk of his graces and mercies; but he who suffers the rigor of his justice should talk of nothing but his justice. Will God, out of his mercy, permit you to live so long in your sins, and not permit you to run headlong into hell, out of his justice? O that you did but know how small the distance is between sin and the punishment, and between grace and glory. When a man is in the state of grace, what great matter is it to make him partaker of glory, or to punish him when he has committed any sin? Grace is the beginning and purchase of glory; so sin is an introduction and highway to hell.

18. Besides, what can be more terrible than to see that though the pains of hell are so dreadful, as we have described them

God should permit so great a number to be damned, and so few to be saved. But that you may not think I design to impose on you, when I say that this number is so very small, "He that counts the stars in the heavens, and calls them by their names," will tell you the same; Ps. cxlvi. 4. Can any man, without astonishment and fright, hear these words of our Saviour, which are so well known, and yet so little understood and regarded? They are in his words to his disciples, when he answered them the question, whether the number of the elect were small or not: "Enter," says he, "at the narrow gate, because broad is the gate and open is the way which leads to destruction, and many there are that walk in it: how narrow is the gate and how straight is the way which leads to life, and there are but few that find it!" Matt. vii. 13, 14. Who can imagine how our Saviour was moved, when he cried out, not in a cold and indifferent manner, but with such an emphatic exclamation, "How narrow is the gate, and how straight is the way!"

19. All the world was destroyed by the waters of the deluge, and only eight souls were preserved in Noe's ark (Gen. vii.), which, according to St. Peter, represents the small number of the elect, in comparison of the reprovèd; 2 Pet. ii. 5. God brought six hundred thousand men out of Egypt, without counting their wives and children, to lead them into the land of promise; and for this end he assisted and favored them in several respects, in a peculiar manner (Exod. xii.); yet, after all, they by their own fault, lost the land which God of his grace had offered them, and only two men of this great number had the happiness to go into it; Num. xiv. 30. From whence all the holy fathers unanimously conclude, that this is a figure of the great number of those that are damned, and of the few that are saved; which is the meaning of these words, "that many are called, but few are chosen;" Matt. xx. 15. For this reason, the just, in several places of Holy Scripture, are called *precious stones*; to give us to understand that just men are as rarely to be found in the world as precious stones, and that the number of the wicked as far exceeds that of the good, as the number of the ordinary stones does that of the precious; as Solomon declared to us, when he said, "The number of fools is infinite;" Eccles. i. 15. If, therefore, the number of the elect is so small, and so soon counted up, as the figure represents it to us, and as truth itself tells us (for you see how many persons were by a just judgment of God, deprived of the happiness they were called to); how can you stand so unconcerned in this common danger and universal deluge? If the number of the elect were equal to that of the damned, you would still have sufficient reason to fear for yourself; but what do I talk of being equal? for to be damned to hell for all eternity is a misery so great, that though there were but one person out of the whole race of mankind to be sent

thither, each particular man ought to tremble for himself. When our Saviour told his disciples, as he was at supper with them, that "one amongst them was to betray him" (John xiii. 21), they all began to be afraid, though their consciences told them they were innocent: because, when a crime is very heinous, though it touch but few, every one is afraid lest he should have some share in it. If a great army of men were standing in a field, and should understand, by divine revelation, that a thunderbolt was to fall and take one of them off, none knowing who it was to be, every one would be afraid lest he should be the person, and look on the danger as his own. What, then, would their apprehension be, if half the army, or the greater part, were to be destroyed by this thunderbolt? Tell me now, you that are so wise in worldly affairs, but senseless to what regards your salvation, since God here reveals to you that the thunderbolt of his divine justice will fall on so great a number of persons, and so few shall escape it, how can you live so unconcerned and fearless, when you know not which of the parties you belong to? Is hell to be dreaded less than thunder? Has God given you any security for your salvation? There is nothing that can give you any certainty of it. Your own works condemn you, and as the case now stands, unless you turn over a new leaf, you are one of the reprobates, and can you still be unconcerned at your danger?

20. You say God's mercy encourages you: that is no answer to what has been said; on the contrary, if the permitting of so many persons to be damned be not incompatible with his mercy, why may it not as well suffer you to be one of that number, if you live as they have done? Do not you perceive, unhappy creature, that self-love deludes you, making you think better of yourself than of all the world besides? What privilege have you above the rest of the children of Adam, not to go where all those, whose works you imitate, have been sent before you?

21. If, as proved already, God is to be known by his works, I may safely say, that though we may make a great many comparisons between his mercy and his justice, in which his mercy will be always superior, yet we shall find at last that there are more vessels of wrath in the race of Adam, from which you descend, than there are of mercy; because the number of the damned is so far greater than that of the elect; 2 Tim. ii. 20; Rom. ix. 22, 23. Now, this does not happen for want of God's grace and assistance (for he, as the apostle tells us, would have all men saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth), but through the fault of the wicked, who will not make their advantage of God's mercies.

22. All I have hitherto said, has been to convince you, that if it is not incompatible with that infinite mercy of God you talk of, to permit so many infidels in the world, and so many bad Chris-

tians in the church, and to suffer all these infidels, and so great a number of these Christians to be lost forever, it will be no less agreeable to it that you should perish with them, if you behave yourself like them. Did the heavens smile at your birth, or were the decrees of God, and the laws of the gospel, changed in favor of you, that you should expect to be singular in the world? If it be no prejudice to this great mercy, that hell should enlarge its womb, and that so many thousands of souls should be swallowed up in it every day, what greater prejudice will it receive, if you, who live as they did, should be swallowed up amongst them? And lest you should say, that God was severe and rigorous then, but is mild and merciful now, consider that, notwithstanding all his mildness, there is nothing of what you have heard, which he does not permit to this very day; so that you may have just cause to fear punishment though you be a Christian, if you are a bad one.

23. Will it be any lessening to God's glory, if you alone should fail of being admitted to it? Have you any extraordinary qualities, which God stands particularly in need of, to make him bear with you and all your faults? Or have you any particular privilege above all other men, which secures you from being damned, as well as they, if you are wicked? Since David's children, who were favored in consideration of their father's deserts, were punished by God, according to their crimes, whenever they did wickedly, and several of them came to unfortunate ends, can you be puffed up with a vain confidence, and imagine yourself to be secure? 3 Kings ii. 4 Kings xiv. Absalom, Ammon, Adonias. You deceive yourself, unhappy man, you deceive yourself, if you think this is hoping in God: this is not hope, but presumption; for hope is a confidence that God will forgive all your sins, though ever so many or so great, if you repent and amend. But it is presumption to believe, that though you persist in a wicked life, your salvation is secure. And do not think this is an indifferent sort of sin, for it is accounted one of those against the Holy Ghost, because it is an abuse and affront to the goodness of God, which is particularly attributed to the Holy Ghost, which sins, our Saviour has told us, are not forgiven in this world, nor in the next; to signify that it is very hard to be forgiven, because they, as much as in them lies, shut up the gate of grace, and offend the Physician that is to heal us.

The Conclusion.—24. We will conclude this matter with the discovery which the author of Ecclesiasticus makes us of this error, in these words; "Do not lose the fear which you ought to be in, on account of your sins being pardoned you; and do not say, the mercy of the Lord is great, he will not remember the multitude of my sins. For his anger and his mercy are very near to one another, and his wrath looks upon sinners:" Eccl. v. 6, 7. If we are commanded to be afraid, even for those sins which have been pardoned already, tell me how is it possible you should be

free from fear, who daily increase the number of your sins? Reflect well on these words, "The wrath of the Lord looks upon sinners," because the understanding of this whole discourse depends on it. To this end, you are to know, that though the mercy of God extends itself to sinners as well as to the just, and that every man partakes of it, either by being preserved by it, as some are, from falling into sin, or by being reclaimed from sin, as others are, and expected to do penance; notwithstanding all this, those extraordinary favors which God promises in his Scriptures belong particularly to the just, to whom he is, in every point, as good as his word; because they have not failed in their promise to him, which was to observe his commandments with all the exactness and fidelity imaginable; and because they have been obedient and dutiful children to him, therefore he shows himself a loving and tender Father to them. But as for all those threats and curses which you may read in the Holy Scriptures, and all those rigors and severities of the divine justice, persuade yourself that they are aimed at you, and all such as are like you. How great, then, must your blindness be, if you are not afraid of those threats, which are addressed immediately to you; but, on the contrary, feed yourself up with the hopes of those favors which were not promised to you! Take you what falls to your share, and let the just have what belongs to him. Anger is for you, therefore fear; love and friendship are for the just, let him, therefore, rejoice. Would you have this made plain to you? consider what David says: "The eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and his ears are open to their prayers. But his face is towards those that do evil, to blot the memory of them out of the earth." Ps. xxxiii. 16, 17. And in the book of Esdras you will find these words: "The hand of God" (that is, his fatherly providence) "is over all those that seek him, as they should do; but his power, and strength, and fury is against all those that forsake him;" Esdr. viii. 22.

25. If all we have said here be true, how can you go on thus deceiving yourself, unhappy wretch, who continue still in your sins? How can you stand idly thus with your arms across? Why do you change and confound the order of things? Those words are not directed to you. Is it to you that the sweetness of the divine love and friendship is promised, whilst you continue thus in the state of anger and enmity? This belongs to Jacob, not to Esau. This inheritance is for the good; what pretence, therefore, can you, who are wicked, have to it? Cease to be so, and it is yours. Cease to be so, and God will direct his love and his paternal providence to you; but hitherto you have only usurped what is another man's right, and desire to enter into the possession of what you have nothing to do with. "Hope in God," says David, "and do that which is good;" Ps. xxxvi. 3. And in another psalm. "Sacrifice a sacrifice of justice, and hope in the Lord;"

Ps. iv. 6. This is the right way of hoping, and not to continue in your sins, and think of gaining heaven by jesting with the Almighty's mercy. The true hope is to forsake your sins, and to have recourse to God. But if you remain obstinately in them, it is then no longer hope, but presumption. This is not to hope, it is rather to offend mercy, and thereby render yourself unworthy of ever obtaining it. Nor as being a member of the church is any advantage to him who, relying on her, takes no notice of her precepts, but lives wickedly, so it is but just that he should reap no benefit of God's mercy who lays hold of it to do evil.

26. This ought to be duly considered by the ministers of the word of God, who very often, not regarding to whom their discourse is directed, give wicked men encouragement to continue in their sins. They ought to consider that the more you let a man eat, the more hurt you do him; so the more you encourage and exhort those persons that are obstinate in their sins, to this kind of confidence, the more ye encourage them to continue in their evil courses.

27. I will end this discourse with an excellent sentence out of St. Augustine, who says, "that men go to hell by hope as well as by despair; by hoping ill whilst they lived, and by despairing worse at their death;" Serm. 147. De Verb. Dom. I advise you, therefore, O sinner, whosoever you are, to lay aside this presumptuous confidence, and to remember that God has his justice as well as his mercy; so that, as you consider his mercy to encourage your hope, you are likewise to reflect on his justice for the exciting of your fear. For, as St. Bernard says, "God has two feet, the one of mercy and the other of justice, and no one ought to embrace either of them without taking hold of both; that so justice alone, without mercy, may not fright us into despair, nor mercy without justice, flatter us into presumption;" Serm 80. in Cantic.

CHAPTER IV.

Of those Persons who excuse themselves from following Virtue by saying the Way to it is rough and uneasy.

1. THERE is another excuse worldly men make use of for not following virtue, which is, that she is difficult and uneasy, though they know this does not proceed from virtue itself, because, being a friend to reason, she is suitable to the nature of a rational creature, but from the evil inclination of our flesh and appetite, derived from sin. This it was that made the apostle say, *The flesh covets in opposition to the spirit, and the spirit in opposition to the flesh; for these two resist one another*; Galat. v. 17. And in another place he says, *I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man; but I see another law in my mem*

bers, that resists the law of my spirit, and captivates me to the love of sin; Rom. vii. 22, 23. The apostle by these words gives us to understand, that virtue and the law of God agree well with and are comformable to the superior part, or the soul, which is all spiritual, as being the place where the understanding and the will reside; but we are hindered from observing this law by the law of our members, that is, by the evil inclination and corruption of our appetite, with all its passions, which rebelled against the superior part, or the soul, at the same time that it rebelled against God, which rebellion is the cause of all this difficulty. Therefore it is that so many persons reject virtue, though they have a great esteem for it, like sick men, who, though they desire to recover their health, yet hate the medicines because they are unpleasant. If we could disabuse men of this mistake, it would be a great work; for it is this that chiefly drives them from virtue, in which every thing is to be esteemed and valued.

§ I. *That the Grace, which is given us through Jesus Christ, makes the Way of Virtue smooth and easy.*—2. You must understand that the chief cause of this mistake is, men considering nothing but the difficulty that is in virtue, without so much as ever reflecting on the assistance God gives us for the overcoming of it. It was such an error as this the prophet Eliseus's servant was in: for seeing his master's house beset with the Syrian army, but not perceiving the forces which God had prepared to succor the prophet, he was quite dismayed till such time as God, at the prophet's intercession, opened his eyes, and let him see there were more forces on his side than on the enemy's. Those we here treat of are deceived after the same manner; for finding in themselves the difficulty there is in virtue, without having had any proof of the favors and assistance they may receive from God, in order to acquire the same, they look on the enterprise as very hard, and, therefore, lay it quite aside.

3. But if the way of virtue be so difficult, what can the prophet mean when he says, "I have taken as much delight in the way of thy commandments as in all riches;" Ps. cxviii. 14. And in another place: "Thy commandments, O Lord, are more desirable than gold and precious stones, and sweeter than honey and honey-comb;" Ps. xviii. 11. So that he not only allows virtue what we all grant it, that is, extraordinary worth and excellence, but that which almost all the world denies it, pleasure and sweetness; whence you may conclude, that they who represent this as a heavy load, though they be Christians, and live under the law of grace, have not so much as tasted of this mystery. Unhappy creature that you are, who talk so much of being a Christian! For what did Christ come into the world? What was the end of the shedding of his blood? What did he design by instituting the sacraments? Why did he send down the Holy Ghost? What signifies the gospel? What signifies the word grace?

What means the name of JESUS? What can this most holy name of that Lord whom you adore signify? If you are ignorant of this, ask the evangelist, who says, "You shall call his name JESUS; for he shall deliver his people from their sins;" Matt. i. 21. What is it, then, to deliver us from our sins, but to deserve pardon for us for past sins and to obtain grace for us, whereby we may be able to avoid sin for the future? What, therefore, was the end of our Saviour's coming into the world, but to help us in the work of our salvation? For what reason did he die on the cross, but that he might thereby destroy sin? Why did he rise again afterwards from the dead, but only to make you rise again to this new kind of life? What did he pour out his blood for, but to make a medicine of the same, for the healing of your wounds? Why did he ordain the sacraments? It was for a remedy and assistance against your sins. What is one of the chief advantages of his passion and of his coming, but the making that way, which before was rough and difficult, smooth and easy for us? Isaias told us as much when he said, "That at the coming of the Messiah the crooked ways shall be made straight, and the rugged ways shall be made even;" Isa. xl. 4. For what reason, in fine, did he send down the Holy Ghost, but to change you from flesh into spirit; and why did he come in the form of fire, but to kindle, enlighten and enliven you, to transform you into himself, and to make you mount up towards heaven from this earth of ours? What is the use of grace, with the infused virtues that proceed from it, but to make the yoke of Christ sweet and delightful, to make the practice of virtue easy, to make you joyful in your afflictions, to make you hope in your dangers, and to give you a victory over all your temptations? This is the whole design of the gospel, viz: that as an earthly and sinful man, to wit, Adam, made us earthly and sinners, so another man, that was heavenly and just, to wit, Christ Jesus, has made us become so too. What else do the evangelists treat of? What else have the prophets promised us? What else have the apostles preached to us? This is the sum of all Christian divinity; this is the word which God spoke on earth; this is the accomplishment and abridgement, which the prophet Isaias says, "he had from the mouth of God" (Isa. xx. 2, 3); from whence such vast treasures, so many virtues, and so much justice immediately flowed into the world.

4. To make this the plainer I ask you, What is the cause of that difficulty which we meet with in virtue? You will tell me, the evil inclinations of our hearts, and the flesh that is conceived in sin: because the flesh resists the spirit, and the spirit the flesh, as things contrary to one another; Gal. v. 17; Rom. vii. Let us put the case that God says to you, Come hither, O man! I will take away this wicked heart of yours, and will give you another

new heart, and with all strength to mortify your evil inclinations and appetites. Should God make you that promise, would the way of virtue be then difficult to you? It is certain it would not. What is it less than this, that God has so often promised in his Holy Scripture? Hear what he says by the prophet Ezechiel, addressing himself particularly to those who live under the law of grace: "I will give you," says he, "a new heart, and I will put a new spirit into your bowels; and I will take away your heart of stone, and I will give you a heart of flesh; that you may walk in my precepts, and observe my laws, and comply with them; and that you may be my people, and that I may be your God;" Ezech. xxi. 19, 20. These are the words of the prophet. What can you doubt of after such a promise? Can you be afraid that God will not be as good as his word? or can you doubt of your being able to observe his law, if he stands to his promise of assisting you? If you affirm the first, you make God a liar, which is one of the greatest blasphemies you can be guilty of. If you say you cannot observe his law, even with his assistance, you make him unable to provide for us as our necessities require, because, having intended to cure man, he has applied such a remedy as was not fit to do it.

5. Besides all this, God will give you power to mortify these evil inclinations which rise up against you, and make this way so hard. This is one of the chief effects of the tree of life, which our Saviour has sanctified by his blood, according to the apostle's confession, when he says, "Our old man has been crucified with Jesus Christ, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and that we may be slaves to sin no longer;" Rom. vi. 6. The apostle calls here the *old man*, and the *body of sin*, our sensual appetite, with all the vicious inclinations that proceed from it. He says that he was crucified on the cross with Jesus Christ, because our Saviour has, by this most august sacrifice, obtained for us such grace and strength as may enable us to overcome this tyrant, and free ourselves from the oppression of our own evil inclinations, and from the slavery of sin, as we have said elsewhere. This is the victory and the extraordinary favor which the same Lord promised us by Isaias, saying, "Fear not, because I am with you; retire not from me, because I am your God. I will strengthen and assist you, and the right hand of my just one (which is the Son of God himself) shall support you. Behold, they shall be all confounded and put to shame that fight against you; they that contend with you shall be as nothing, and shall perish. You shall seek after those who have rebelled against you, and you shall not find them; they shall be as if they never had been. And those who are at war with you shall be consumed. Because I am the Lord your God, I will take you by the hand, and will say to you, Fear not; I will stand by you." Isa. xli, 10, 11, 12, 13. These are God's words by the prophet Isaias. Will any

man, therefore, be discouraged when he is so strong? Will any man now sink under the fear of his own vicious inclinations, when grace gets such a glorious victory over them?

§ II. *Some Objections answered.*—6. You will tell me, perhaps, that after all this, the just are never without their private failings, “which are the wrinkles, that (as Job says) accuse and bear witness against them;” Job xvi. 9. The same prophet whose authority we have just cited, answers this in short, saying, “that they shall be as if they never had been;” Isa. xli. 12. Because, if they remain, it is only to keep us in continual exercise, and to prove us, not to hinder or to shock us; they remain to excite and rouse us, not to lord it over us; they remain to give us perpetual occasions of merit, not to draw us into the snares of sin; they remain for us to triumph over them, not that they may overcome us; they remain, in fine, for those ends that are most proper and convenient for our trial, for our humiliation, for the knowledge of our own weakness, for God’s glory and the honor of his grace, so that their continuing thus turns to our interest. For as wild beasts, let them be ever so fierce, and of their nature so great enemies to man, when once they have been tamed, are serviceable to him; so our passions, after having been moderated and subdued, assist us very much in our improvement in virtue.

7. Tell me now, if God supports, who will be able to overturn you? “If God is for you, who will be against you!” Rom. viii. 31. “The Lord (says David) is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defender of my life, whom shall I be afraid of? Should my enemies encamp themselves against me, my heart shall not dread. If an army should rise up against me, I will place my hopes in him.” Ps. xxvi. 13. You must needs be a great coward if such promises do not encourage you to serve God; if you will not rely on those words, it is a sign you are very faithless. It is God that says, he will give a new being; “that he will change your heart of stone, and give you another of flesh for it” (Ezec. xi. 19); that he will mortify your passions, and bring you to such a pass that you shall not know yourself; that you shall look for your evil inclinations and shall not find them, because he will weaken all their forces. What can you desire more? What do you want but a lively faith and hope, that you may place your confidence in God, and cast yourself entirely into his arms?

8. All the objection I imagine you can make to this is, that your sins are very great, and, therefore, it is likely they will be the occasion of God’s refusing you this grace. To which I answer, that this is one of the greatest affronts you can offer to God; because, by this, you persuade yourself either that God cannot or will not assist his creatures, when they return to him and beg his help. I do not desire you should believe me in this particular; do but believe the holy prophet, who seems to have thought

on you, and, as it were, to have prevented you, when he wrote these words: "If," says he, "all these curses which I have reckoned up should light upon you for your sins, and you should be afterwards touched with a sorrow for them, and should return to him with your whole heart and with all your soul, the Lord your God will bring you out of your captivity, and will have compassion on you; and though you should be carried away to the farthest parts of the world, he will bring you back again, and will lead you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall inherit the same." He adds further, "The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your posterity, to the end that you may love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul;" Deut. xxx. 1, 6. O that this Lord would at present circumcise your eyes, and remove the mist that is before them, that you might see plainly what kind of a circumcision this is! You cannot be so dull as to take it for a circumcision of the body, because the heart is not capable of it; what sort of circumcision is it, then, that the Lord promises in this place? It is, without doubt, the retrenching of that superfluity of passions and evil inclinations which flows from the heart, and which hinders it from placing its love where it ought. These are the superfluous and hurtful branches which he promises to lop off with the knife of his grace, that the heart, being thus pruned and circumcised, may shoot forth all its virtue by this only branch of the love of God; John i. 47. Then it is that you will be an Israelite indeed; it is then you will be truly circumcised, when he shall see the love of the world cut off from your soul, and no other love remaining in it but the love of him.

9. I could wish you would consider with attention how God, in another place, commands you to do that yourself which he promises here he will do for you, if you will but return to him. His words are these: "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts;" Jerem. iv. 4. Why, O Lord, do you command me to do what you yourself promise to do for me? If I must do it, why do you promise that you will? The glorious Augustine clears this difficulty by these words: "Give me grace (says he), O Lord, to do whatever you command me, and command me to do whatever you please;" Conf. L. 10. c. 31. So that it is he who commands me all that I am obliged to do, and assists me with his grace to do it. Thus the command and the promise meet here both together, and God and man produce the same effect; God as the principal cause, and man as the less principal. Thus it is that God deals with men as a painter that should guide the pencil in his scholar's hand, and he, by this means, comes to draw a fine piece: that they both made, it is clear; but it would not, therefore, follow that they both deserve the same honor, or the one had as good a hand as the other. It is just so God does in our present case, and that without preju-

dice to the liberty of free-will, that man may have nothing to take a pride in when the work is done, but may give all the glory of it to the Lord, and say, with the prophet, "Thou, O Lord, hast wrought in us all the works that we have done;" Isa. xxvi. 12.

10. Reflect, therefore, on this sentence, and by the means of it you will come to have a perfect understanding of the commandments of God, because he promises to be with you in doing all he commands you. And thus, as he says, when he bids you circumcise your heart, that he will circumcise it for you; so, when he bids you love him above all things, he will give you grace to do it. This is the reason why it is said that "God's yoke is sweet" (Matt. xi. 30); because there are two to carry it, that is, God and man; so that, by this means, God's grace makes that easy which nature by itself made very difficult. And, therefore, Moses, immediately after the words above cited, goes on thus: "The command, which I lay upon you this day, is not above you, nor at any great distance from you; nor is it placed in heaven, that you should say, Is there any one of us that can go to heaven, and bring it from thence to us, that we may obey it and comply with it? Neither is it placed beyond the sea, that you should have any reason to say, Who is there amongst us that can go over the sea and bring it away to us, that we may obey and do all that is commanded? On the contrary, it is just by you, in your mouth and in your heart, to the end that you may observe it." Deut. xxx. 11, 12, 13, 14. By which words the holy prophet designed to remove those difficulties and impediments which sensual men find in the law of God; because, considering the law barely, without the gospel, that is to say, looking on what is commanded without regarding the grace which is given to enable them to perform it, they reflect on the law of God as hard and unpleasant, without considering they flatly contradict St. John in this point, who says, "True charity consists in our keeping of God's commandments, and his commandments are not burthensome; because all that is born of God overcomes the world" (John v. 3, 4); meaning that they who have received the spirit of God in their souls, by the means of which they have been regenerated, and made the children of him whose spirit they have received, have God within them, who dwells in them by grace, and enables them to do much more than all the world could besides; so that neither the world, nor the devil, nor all the powers of hell, can prevail against them. Whence follows that, though God's commandments were very heavy, the new force, furnished by grace, would make them light.

§ III. *That the Love of God makes the way to Heaven easy and pleasant.*—11. If, to all that has been said, we add the assistance we receive from charity, how light and easy will virtue be then! For it is evident that one of the chief qualities of charity is to make the yoke of God's laws very delightful; because, as St. Augustine says, "They who love think no labors painful; nay,

they delight in them, as men that love fishing, hunting or hawking do in the toils and fatigues of those sports;" St. Aug. Trac. 48. in Joan. What is it that makes a mother not regard the pains she takes in bringing up her children, but love? What is it that makes a virtuous wife attend her sick husband day and night, without any intermission? What is it that makes even beasts and birds take so much pains for the nourishing of the young ones, so as almost to starve themselves to feed them to labor hard, that they may take their rest, and to expose themselves to danger, with a great deal of courage to defend and secure them? It is nothing else but love. What else was it that made the apostle St. Paul speak these generous words, which we read in his epistle to the Romans: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword? I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God." Rom. viii. 35, &c. What was it else, but the force of this love; that made the holy father St. Dominick thirst so ardently after martyrdom? What was it that made St. Laurence so cheerful, whilst he was broiling upon the grid-iron, as to cry out that the very flames refreshed him, but the excessive desire he had of martyrdom, kindled in him by this love? "For the true love of God," as St. Chrysologus says, "thinks nothing hard, nothing bitter, nothing heavy. What iron, what wounds, what pains, what death is there, which true love cannot overcome? Love is an armor of proof; it turns the arrows, repels the darts, despises dangers, and laughs at death. In fine, love carries all before it." St. Chrysologus's Serm. 147. de Incarnat.

12. Nor is perfect love satisfied with overcoming such labors and difficulties as occur, but desires to meet with more, for his sake that is beloved. Hence proceeds that eager thirst of perfect men after martyrdom; that is, to shed their blood for him who first shed his for them. And because they martyr their bodies, and torment them with hunger, they cannot obtain their desires, they are enraged against themselves, and become their own executioners. Therefore they martyr their bodies, and torment them with hunger, thirst, cold, heat, and with many other mortifications, and thus they find a great deal of comfort in their sufferings, because they, in some measure, obtain what they desired.

13. This language they that love the world do not understand, nor can they conceive how any man can love what they so much abhor, or have a horror for what they so passionately love. We read in the Holy Scriptures that the Egyptians had beasts for their gods, and as such adored and worshipped them: but the children of Israel called these things abominations which the Egyptians called gods, and sacrificed such creatures as they adored for gods,

in honor of the true God; *Exod. vii. 26, 28.* The just, in the same manner, like true Israelites, call those abominations which the world worships as its gods; such are honors, pleasures and riches, which it adores and offers sacrifice to; they despise and make a sacrifice of those false gods, as of so many abominations, to the glory of the true God. So let him, who would offer an acceptable sacrifice to God, observe what the world adores, and offer that; on the contrary, let him embrace, for the love of God, whatsoever he sees the world detest and abhor. Did not they do so, who, after receiving the first fruits of the Holy Ghost, were glad to have been carried before the council, and to have suffered injuries for the name of Christ? *Acts v.* Is it possible, then, that what made prisons, scourges, gridirons and flames delightful, shall not be able to make the keeping of God's commandments sweet and pleasant to you? Can that, which is every day powerful enough to make the just bear, not only the burden of the law, but the additional weight of their fasts, their watchings, their hair-shirts, their nakedness and their poverty, want force to make you carry the bare burden of the law of God and of his church? Alas! how much are you deluded! How ignorant you are of the force of charity and of the grace of God!

§ IV. *Of some other Things which make the Way of Virtue pleasant to us.*—14. What has been said might suffice to remove this objection so many make use of. But, supposing there were nothing of what we have urged, supposing there were many hardships in this road, what wonder were it you should, for the salvation of your soul, do some part of what you do for the health of your body? What mighty matter would it be to do something to escape eternal torments? What do you think the covetous rich man, who is now burning in hell-fire, would not do, if he were to have the liberty of returning to the world, to do penance for his sins? There is no reason but you should do as much now as he would do, were it in his power; because, if you are wicked, the same torment is prepared for you, and, therefore, you ought to have the same desire.

15. Besides, if you did seriously consider how much God has done for you, and how much more he promises you; if you did reflect on the many crimes you have committed against him; upon the toils and hardships which the saints have undergone, and particularly upon those which the Saint of saints has endured for your sake; you could not but be ashamed and blush, not to suffer something for the love of God; nay, you would even be afraid and jealous of every thing that pleased you.

This it was that made St. Bernard say, “that all the tribulations and torments we can possibly suffer in this life bear no proportion with either the glory we hope for, or the torments we fear, or the sins we have committed, or the benefits God has bestowed on us.” Any one of these considerations ought to suffice

to make us undertake this life, though ever so laborious and troublesome.

16. But to deal ingenuously with you, though there be troubles and difficulties in all places, and in all sorts of lives, yet the hardships that occur in the way of the wicked are incomparably more than in the way of the just. For though it is troublesome to go a long journey afoot, pick your way out as well as you can, because you will be tired before you get at your journey's end; yet it is certain that a blind man, who stumbles every step he takes, will find it much more troublesome than he that walks with his eyes open, and minds where he treads. Since, therefore, this life of ours is but a journey, it is impossible to avoid all those troubles that are in it, till we arrive at our resting-place. But the wicked man, not guiding himself by the rules of reason, but according to the impulse and bent of his passions, it is a plain case that he walks on as if he were blind, since there is nothing in nature so blind as passion. On the contrary, the good and virtuous man, following in all things the dictates of reason, discovers these precipices at a distance, and avoids the same, continuing on his journey, by this means, with less trouble, and much more security. Solomon the wise was sensible of this, and acknowledges it to be so, when he says, "The path of the just, like a bright light, goes on and increases till it come to full day. But the way of the wicked is dark; so that they do not know where the precipices are, that they may fall down." Prov. iv. 18, 19. It is not only *dark*, as Solomon says, but *slippery* too, according to David (Ps. xxxiv. 6); so that by this you may see how often that man must, of necessity, fall, who walks in such a way as this is, in the dark, and himself quite blind; and by these comparisons you may perceive what vast difference there is between the two ways of the wicked and the just, and between the difficulties both parties meet with.

17. And what is yet more, the just have a thousand helps that lessen and ease this little trouble they are at, as has been observed before. For, first, they have the assistance of God's fatherly providence, which directs and guides them: they have the grace of the Holy Ghost, that strengthens and encourages them; they have the virtue of the sacraments, which sanctifies them; they have the divine consolations, which refresh them; they have the examples of good men to excite them; they have the writings of the saints to instruct them; they have the joy of a good conscience to comfort them; they have the hope of everlasting glory to nourish them; with a thousand other favors and assistances which the Almighty gives them: by means of which, this way becomes so pleasant to them that they come at last to cry out, with the prophet, "How sweet are thy words, O Lord, to my mouth! they are sweeter than honey."

18. Whosoever will but reflect on this, will immediately see

now several passages of the Holy Scriptures, some of which make the way of virtue rough and troublesome, and others again smooth and easy, are to be reconciled together. For the royal prophet says in one place, "For the love of the words of thy lips I have walked through hard ways;" Ps. xvi. 4. And in another, "I have been delighted in the way of thy testimonies, as in all riches;" Ps. cxviii. 14. For it is true to say that both these things, to wit, difficulty and ease, are in this way; the first comes from nature, and the other from the virtue of grace; and thus what was difficult on account of one, becomes easy by means of the other. Our Saviour himself signified as much to us, by these words: "My yoke is sweet and my burden is light;" Matt. xi. 30. For by giving it the name of a *yoke*, he expressed the heavy weight, and by calling it *sweet*, he showed us with how much ease we might carry it by the help of grace.

19. But if you should ask me, how is it possible this can be a yoke, and at the same time sweet, it being the nature of a yoke to be heavy: I answer, it is because God makes it light, according to his promise by the prophet Osee; "I will be to them as one that supports their burden, and takes it from their shoulders;" Osee xi. 5. What wonder is it, then, that this yoke should be easy when God makes it so, and when he himself helps us to carry it? If the bush was a fire without being burnt, because God was in it, why should we be astonished at a burden's being light, when God himself is under it? Exod. iii. 2. Would you see them both in the same person, hear what St. Paul says: "We suffer tribulation in all things, and are not troubled; we are in distress, but not despair; we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken; we are cast down, but are not confounded;" 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. Consider here, on the one side, the weight of these labors, and on the other, how light God used to make them.

20. Isaias signified this more expressly to us, when he said, "They that hope in the Lord shall change their strength; they shall take wings like eagles; they shall run, and shall take no pains; they shall walk, and shall not faint;" Isa. xli. 13. You see here the yoke flung off by the virtue of grace; you see the strength of the flesh changed into that of the spirit, or rather the strength of man turned into that of God; you see the holy prophet did not pass over in silence either the labor, the rest, or the advantage which one has over the other, when he said, "They shall run, and shall take no pains; they shall walk, and shall not faint." So that you ought not to go out of this road, because it is rugged and troublesome, since there are so many things in it which make it smooth and easy.

§ V. *Some Examples to prove what has been said.*—21. If all these reasons cannot convince you, and your incredulity remains, like that of St. Thomas, who would not believe any thing

but what he saw with his own eyes, I will comply with you in this point too, not fearing that such a good cause-as this is can want a defence. Let us, for example, take a man that has run through all the courses of this life, that has been for some time very vicious and worldly, and has afterwards, through the pure mercy of God, changed these evil practices, and become quite another thing; such a man as this is a proper judge, because he has not only heard, but seen and had the experience of both these conditions. You may desire this man to tell you, which of these two he found to be the sweeter? Several of those, whose business it is to examine into the consciences of others, will give you good testimonies of this truth; "because they are the men who descend in ships into the sea, and see the wonderful works of the Lord in the deep;" which are nothing else but the effects of his grace, and those extraordinary changes which are wrought every day by virtue thereof, and which are, without doubt, subjects of more than common wonder. For it is certain there is nothing in the world which better deserves our admiration, if we would but consider it well, than to see the effects which grace produces in the soul of a just man; to see how it transforms him, how it bears him up, how it strengthens him, how it comforts him, how it composes him all over, both within and without, how it makes him change the customs of the old man, how it alters all his affections and pleasures, how it makes him love that which he hated before, and hate that which he had before a love for, how it makes him relish that which before he looked on as unsavory, whilst at the same time he loathes that which he sought so much after before. Who can conceive what strength it gives him for fighting, what joy, what peace, what light for the knowing of the will of God, the vanity of the world, and the true value of spiritual things which he used to despise? But what is yet more wonderful than all the rest is, to see in how short a time all these things are performed; for there is no necessity of spending several years in the schools of philosophy, nor of staying till we are old men, that age may help us to recover our senses and the mortifying our passions; a man may be changed in the very heat and vigor of his youth, and in the space of a very few days, so as to be scarce able to know himself. Therefore it was St. Cyprian said, "That this is a thing which may sooner be felt than learned; and that it is not to be gained by many years' study, but by a turn of grace which produces it all in a very little time;" St. Cypr. ad Donat. We may, therefore, call grace a kind of spiritual charm by which God changes men's hearts, to make them have a passionate love for those things which before they had a horror of, as, for example, the practice of the several virtues, and the greatest aversion imaginable to those things they desired so eagerly before, to wit, the delights and pleasures that are in sin.

22. This is one of the most considerable advantages those confessors gain by their function, who discharge it with true spirit and devotion; for they daily see several of these miracles, by which God seems to requite the trouble they undergo in rendering him that service. And this return, which God makes them, is so generous that we have known several confessors changed themselves by seeing such changes in others; and these frequent examples have been the occasions of their advancing in the way of virtue. So that these persons, whilst they are silent like another Jacob, hear Joseph's mysterious words, and value the same at their just rate, whilst the simple infant that relates, does not know what price to set upon them.

23. But for the greater confirmation of what I have said, I will here add the example of two great saints, who lived in this same error for some time, but afterwards discovered the deceit. God has thought fit, that they should both of them leave us in writing an account of the same, for our instruction and example. The glorious martyr, St. Cyprian, writing to his dear friend Donatus, to acquaint him with the beginning and manner of his conversion, delivers himself thus:—

24. “During the time in which I walked in darkness and in an obscure night, when I was tossed up and down, like one in a storm by the inconstant waves of this world, and was sunk very deep into the mire, knowing nothing at all of my own course of life, and deprived of the light of truth, I looked on all that as very hard to be effected, which God had promised me, in order to my salvation, which is, ‘That a man could be born again, and by the virtue of baptism receive a new life, so as to be changed from what he was before, and he made a new man within, though the substance without remained still the same;’ John iii. 5. How, said I, is it possible, that such a conversion should happen, as that we should immediately and on a sudden shake off that which has been a long time rooted in us, either by the corruption of our nature, or by long use and custom? How can he live sparingly, who has been used to keep a great table? When will he wear a plain dress, who has been always clothed in silks and scarlet? He that has always carried a great retinue with him, and has been attended by a train of servants, will never endure to go by himself. He that has placed all his delight in great employments, can never live like a private man. He cannot but be always wrought on by those things he used to be charmed with; intemperance will solicit him, pride will puff him up, anger will inflame him, covetousness torment him, cruelty press him, ambition please him, and lust hurry him blindly away. I frequently reflected on these things with myself, for being engaged in so many different sins of my past life, which I thought I should never be freed from; I myself encouraged the vices which stuck fast to me, and, despairing of ever growing better, I

favored my crimes as if they had been of my own house and family. But as soon as the stains and filth of my former life were washed off by the water of baptism, a heavenly light shone down upon my soul, now cleansed and purged from all its sins. As soon as I had received the Holy Ghost, I was, by the means of a second birth, so changed into a new man, that what I before doubted of, I immediately looked on as most certain; what was shut up against me before, was immediately opened; that which was dark became light; I thought those things easy which before seemed to be so hard, and what used to seem impossible I looked on as quite contrary; I saw clearly, that what was born of the flesh and liable to frequent failings, was earthly, and that what the Holy Ghost had animated, came from God, and not from man. You know very well, my dear Donatus, what this holy spirit has taken from me, and what he has bestowed on me; he who is the death of sin and the life of all kinds of virtues. You know all this, nor do I boast of any thing now; it is odious to boast of such things for to get praise and commendation; though for a man to talk of what he has received from the pure mercy of God, and what he cannot by any means ascribe to himself, is so far from boasting, that, on the contrary, it is but justice and gratitude; for it is plain, that the forsaking of sin is no less the effect of divine grace, than the committing of it is the effect of human frailty." S. Cypr. Ep. 2. L. 2.

25. These are the words of St. Cyprian, which plainly discover the mistake that you and many are under, who, measuring the difficulty of virtue by their own strength, look on the acquiring of it as not only difficult, but impossible, and never so much as consider, that if they will but cast themselves into the arms of God, and resolve fully to forsake their sins, he will receive them into his grace, which makes this way so smooth, as appears by this example. For it is certain there is no falsehood in all this, nor will that grace be denied you, which was granted to this saint, if you will return to God as sincerely as he did.

26. Hear another example, no less wonderful than the former. St. Augustine, in the eighth book of his Confessions, tells us, that he had no sooner began to think seriously with himself of leaving the world, but a great many difficulties offered themselves to him in this change; whilst at the same time he thought, on the one side, that all his former pleasures came and stood before him, and said to him, "What, will you part with us, and shall we from this moment never see you again for all eternity?" Conf. L. 8. c. 11. On the other side, he said, that virtue appeared to him with a serene and cheerful countenance, accompanied with a great many good examples of virgins and widows, and of other persons who had lived chastely in all kinds of states and ages, and that they said to him, "Cannot you do as much as these men and women have done? Have they done any thing of themselves?

Is it not God that has done all in them? Whilst you rely on yourself, you must of necessity fall. Cast yourself on him, be not afraid, he will not go away from you, and let you fall; cast yourself on him with confidence, he will receive and cure you." Ibid.

27. This great saint says, that as he was in the heat of this combat, he began to weep bitterly, and going a little aside, laid himself down under a fig-tree, and there giving way to his tears, cried out from the bottom of his heart, saying, "And thou, O Lord, how long? How long, O Lord; wilt thou be angry at me? Be not mindful of our past iniquities. How long, O Lord, how long will this to-morrow, to-morrow last? Why not now? Why shall there not be an end of my disorders this very hour?" Ibid. c. 12; Ps. lxiv.; xii. 1; Ps. lxxviii. 8; Isa. lxiv. 9.

28. As soon as the saint had made an end of these and such complaints, he says, his heart was so changed on a sudden, that from that very moment he never had any further affection for the sins of the flesh, nor for the delights and pleasures of the world. On the contrary, he perceived his heart entirely freed from all its former irregular desires. And having recovered his liberty, he begins in his following book to thank his Deliverer, saying, "O Lord, I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid. Thou hast broken my bones asunder; I will offer up to thee a sacrifice of praise. Let my heart and my tongue praise thee, and let all my bones say, Who is like unto thee, O Lord?" Ps. lxxxvi. v. 2. Where has my free-will been for so many years, O Jesus Christ, my Helper and my Redeemer, since it has not returned to thee? From what deep abyss hast thou drawn it in a moment, that I might put my neck under an easy yoke, and my shoulders under thy light burden? How am I on a sudden delighted with being deprived of the trifling pleasures I have so long run after, and what a satisfaction is it to me to part with those follies I was afraid of losing before! Thou, O solid and chief delight, hast driven all those other false ones from me; thou hast driven them away, and hast taken up their places; thou art more delightful than all other delights, and more beautiful than all other beauties together." L. 9. c. 1; Ps. cxv. 16, 17. Thus far St. Augustine.

29. Tell me now, since the case stands thus, and since the power and efficacy of God's grace is so great, what is there can still enslave and keep you from doing as much as this glorious saint has done? If you believe that what I relate is true, that it is in the power of grace to work such a change as this of St. Augustine's, and that this grace is denied to no man that shall seek after it with his whole heart, God being the same now that he was then, without any respect of persons, what hinders you from getting out of this miserable slavery, and from embracing this sovereign good, which is so freely offered you? Why had you rather gain one paradise by another? Be not dejected nor dis-

couraged. Try, once at least, whether this be true or not, and put your confidence in God, that as soon as ever you will begin, he will come and meet you, to receive you with open arms, as he did the prodigal son; Luke xv. It is a strange thing that if a notorious cheat should teach you the art of finding out the philosopher's stone, or of turning brass into gold, you should endeavor to learn it, whatsoever it cost you; and yet Almighty God here gives you his word, that he will teach you how you may change yourself from earth into heaven, from flesh into spirit, from a man into an angel, and you will not so much as try the experiment.

30. In fine, since you must of necessity, either sooner or later, either in this life or in the next, acknowledge this truth, I beg of you that you would consider seriously how you will find yourself deceived at the making up of your accounts, when you shall see yourself damned for all eternity, for leaving the path of virtue, because you falsely imagined that it was uneven and difficult; you will then, but alas! too late, perceive that it was a much more pleasant way than that of sin, and the only road that led to everlasting delight.

CHAPTER V.

Against those who refuse to walk in the Way of Virtue, because they love the World.

1. If we did examine all those who refuse to walk in the way of virtue, we should perhaps find the deceitful love of this world to be one of the chief causes of their faint-heartedness. I call that love of the world deceitful, because it is grounded on a false, imaginary and apparent good, which seems to be in the things of the world, and makes ignorant persons set so great a value on them. For as creatures that are naturally timorous always avoid some particular objects, imagining there is danger in them, even when they are farthest from them; so these men, on the contrary, love and run after the things of the world, because they fancy they are pleasant and delightful, though in reality they are not so. And, therefore, as those who would break such creatures of that imperfection, make them go close by these things they were afraid of, that they may see they were frightened at nothing but a shadow, so it is requisite now we should lead these persons through the mere shadows of worldly things they so passionately affect, that they may look on them with other eyes, and perceive how they had placed all their love on a mere vanity, and acknowledge that these false goods no more deserve to be beloved, than those dangers we have spoken of, deserve to be feared.

2. If we, therefore, seriously reflect on the world and its happiness, we shall find these six kinds of evils in it, to wit, shortness,

misery, danger, blindness, sin and deceit. These are the inseparable companions of all the world's felicity, which plainly show what it is. We will speak here briefly of each of these evils, according to their order.

§ I. *How short the Happiness of this World is.*—3. To begin with the shortness, you cannot deny but that all the happiness of this world, though ever so great, is but of short continuance; for man's felicity can last no longer than his life. Now how long this life is, we all know, since the longest scarce ever arrives to the hundredth year. But how few are there that ever reach to this? I have seen bishops that have not lived above two months, popes that have not outlived one, and new-married persons that have died within a week after their marriage; we read of a great many such examples in former times, and see as many at present every day. Put the case: your life may be one of the longest. "Let us grant (says St. Chrysostom) that a man may have a hundred years to spend in the pleasures of the world. To this let us add another hundred, nay, two hundred more, if you will—what is all this in respect of eternity?" "If," says Solomon, "a man should have a great many years, and during all this time should enjoy all kinds of pleasures, he ought to remember the time of darkness and the days of eternity, which, when they come, all that is past shall appear to have been vanity;" Eccl. xi. 8. For all happiness whatever, let it be ever so great, will appear to be but vanity as it really is, when compared with eternity. This is what even the wicked themselves confess, in the book of Wisdom, when they say, "We are no sooner born than we immediately cease to be;" Sap. v. 13. Consider how short all the time of this life will seem then to the wicked; they will imagine they have scarce lived one day; they will think they were hurried away immediately from the womb to the grave. Whence it follows, that all the pleasures of this world will then seem to be only imaginary and which appeared to be a pleasure, but were not so. The prophet Isaias has given us an excellent description of this in these words "As a man that is hungry dreams that he eats, but when he awakes finds himself still empty; and as a man that is thirsty dreams that he drinks, but after he is awake he still faints with thirst, and is as empty as he was; so shall it fare with all the nations who have waged war against the mountain of Sion;" Isa. xxix. 8. Their prosperity shall be so short, that as soon as even they shall open their eyes, and this little time shall pass away they shall find that all their joys were nothing but mere dreams. For what other name will you give to the glory of as many princes and emperors as have ever lived in the world? "Where," says the prophet, "are the princes of the nations, and those who rule over the beasts of the earth, who sport themselves with the birds of the air?" Bar. iii. 16, 17. Where are those who have piled up mountains of silver and gold, in which they place their confi-

dence? Where are all those who have taken so much pains in making rich vessels of gold and silver, that it is almost impossible to count all their different designs and inventions? What is now become of all these persons? where is it that they live? They are now turned out of their palaces, they are thrown down into hell, and others have taken their places. What is become of the wise man? What is become of the scholar? What is become of him that used to search into the secrets of nature? What is become of all Solomon's glory? Where are now the mighty Alexander and the glorious Assuerus? Where are all the famous Roman Cæsars? Where are all the other princes and kings of the earth? What have they got by their vain-glory, by the power they had in the world, by the great number of their attendants, by their false riches, by their mighty armies, by those crowds of buffoons, of fawning parasites and flatterers, which were perpetually about them? All this has been nothing but a mere shadow, a mere dream, a fleeting happiness of but a moment's continuation. Consider, then, how short the happiness of this world is.

§ II. *Of the great Miseries worldly Delights are mixed with.*
 —4. This happiness, besides its being so short, has another evil, which is, that it is always attended by a thousand miseries not to be avoided in this life, or, to speak plainer, in this vale of tears, in this place of banishment, in this tempestuous sea. For the miseries which man perpetually lies open to are, in truth, many more than the days, nay, than even the hours of his life; because every day ushers in fresh cares and solitudes, and he is every hour threatened with new miseries, which no tongue can be able to express. Who can count all the infirmities of our bodies, all the passions of our souls, all the afflictions caused by our very friends, with all the other disasters of our lives? One goes to law with you for your estate, another endeavours to take away your life, a third robs you of your reputation and honor; some men pursue you with hatred, some with envy, some with fraud, some with designs of revenge, some with calumnies, some with arms, and others, in fine, wound you mortally with their tongues, more dangerous and more hurtful far than even arms are. Besides all these miseries, there is an infinity of others, for which we have no names, because they are unexpected accidents. One man has an eye thrust out, another has an arm cut off, another falls from a window, another from his horse, another is drowned, another loses his estate, another is ruined by being bound for friends. If you would know more of these miseries, ask the worldly man to give you a true account of the pleasures and displeasures he had in his way of living. If they were both put into equal scales, you would see how much the one would outweigh the other, and how, for one moment of pleasure, there are a hundred hours of trouble and discontent. If therefore, man's whole life is so short, and so great a part of it filled with such miseries, what room can there be for true happiness?

5. But as for these miseries which I have here reckoned up, they are such as happen to the good as well as to the bad; for since they are all aboard the same vessel, and sailing in the same sea, they must needs be exposed to the same storms. There are other miseries which are more sensible than these, and particularly belonging to the wicked, as being the effect of their sins. The knowledge of these will be much more to our purpose, inasmuch as it makes the lives of such men as are exposed to them more abominable. The wicked themselves inform us of the greatness of them, in the book of Wisdom, saying, "We have been tired in the way of iniquity and perdition; our ways have been hard, and we have been ignorant of the way of the Lord;" Sap. v. 7. So that as the good have a paradise even in this life, and hope for another in the next, and go from one sabbath to another, that is, from one joy to another; so, on the contrary, the wicked have a hell in this life, and expect another in the next, because they go from the hell of a bad conscience to that of everlasting torments.

6. These calamities happen to the wicked several ways. God sends them to some; for he, as being a just Judge, will not permit the evil of the crime to pass over without the due punishment, which, though it be generally reserved for the next life, yet often begins in this. For it is certain that God's providence, as it is over the world in general, so is it over each person in particular. And, therefore, we see that when there are more than ordinary sins committed in the world, they are followed by more than ordinary punishments, as famine, wars, plagues, heresies and such other calamities. It frequently happens, too, that God punishes man according to the sins which he is guilty of. For this reason he said to Cain, "If you do well, you shall receive the reward of it; but if you do ill, you shall find your sin at your door" (Gen. iv.); that is, the punishment which your sin deserves. And in Deuteronomy, Moses told the people of Israel, "You shall know that the Lord your God is a strong and faithful God, keeping his word, and showing his mercy to those that love him and keep his commandments, even to a thousand generations; and immediately punishing those that hate him, so that he destroys them, and does not defer any longer immediately giving them what they deserve;" Deut. vii. 9, 10. Consider how many times in this place he repeats the word *immediately*; by which we may understand, that besides the punishment due to the wicked in the next life, they are often punished in this, since the Scripture in this place so often repeats that they shall be punished immediately. This is the cause of the many calamities and torments they endure, still rolling in a perpetual wheel of disquiets, fatigues, necessities and hardships. Now, supposing that they are sensible of them, yet they do not know from whence they come; so that they look

on them rather as the necessary conditions of nature, than as punishments inflicted on them for their crimes. For as they do not reckon the common benefits of nature as the effects of God's mercy, and, therefore, do not thank him for them, so neither do they regard the calamities he sends them as the strokes of his anger, nor are they the better for them.

7. Other miseries befall them, which come from God's vicegerents, the ministers of his justice, who often meet with the wicked and punish them with imprisonments, banishments, fines, infamies, forfeiture of estates, and other kinds of torments, which make the pleasure of their sins prove bitter and dearly bought, even in this life.

8. Other pains and miseries are brought on them by the inordinate appetites and passions of their hearts; for what can be expected from an immoderate affection, from a vain fear, from a doubtful hope, from an irregular desire, from a solicitous sorrow, but a thousand cares and perplexities, which deprive them of the peace and liberty of heart, which make their whole life uneasy, which excite them to sin, which hinder them from praying, which disturb their rest in the day. Man himself, that is, the irregularity of his passions, is the cause of all these miseries. You may judge by this what he has to hope for from any thing else, who has such a harvest of his own as this is, and with whom he can be at peace, who is at such war with himself.

§ III. *Of the great Snares and Dangers of the World.*—9. If there were none but pains and torments of the body in the world, there would not be so much reason to fear; but, alas! there are dangers of the soul much more to be apprehended, because they touch us more to the quick. These dangers are so great, that the royal prophet says, "God shall rain down snares upon sinners;" Ps. x. 7. What a vast number of snares must he see in the world, to compare them to drops of rain! He says expressly "upon sinners," because, being so little watchful over their hearts and their thoughts, so unconcerned about avoiding the occasions of sin, and thinking so little of providing themselves with spiritual remedies, and, what is worse than all this, walking continually in the midst of the flames of the world, how can they choose but walk among infinite dangers? It is on account of these many dangers the prophet said, "that God will rain snares upon the wicked." Snares in youth and snares in old age, snares in riches and snares in poverty, snares in honor and snares in dishonor, snares in company and snares when a man is alone, snares in adversity and snares in prosperity; in fine, every one of a man's senses, as the eyes, the ears, the tongue, and the rest, lay snares in his way. There are so many, in short, of these snares, that the prophet cries out aloud, saying, "Snares upon you, O inhabitants of the earth;" Jerem. xlviii. 43. Would God but open our eyes a little, as he did St. Anthony's, we should see all the world

full of snares, entangled one in another, and should cry out with him, "O, who shall be able to avoid them all?" It is this that is the destruction of so many souls as perish every day. And, therefore, St. Bernard says, with tears, "that there is scarce one ship in ten cast away in the sea of Marseilles;" whilst, on the contrary, there is scarce one soul in ten that is not lost in the sea of this world. Who, then, will not fear so dangerous a world? who will not endeavor to avoid so many snares? who can, without trembling, go barefoot among so many serpents? who will run unarmed amongst so many enemies, unprovided amongst so many occasions of sin, without a medicine amongst so many mortal diseases? who will not endeavor to get out of this Egypt? who will not fly from this Babylon? Exod. xii. Jerem. li. Who will not endeavor to be delivered from these flames of Sodom and Gomorrah, and to save himself in the mountain of a good life? Gen. xix. Since this world is full of so many snares and precipices, and burns in the flames of so many vices, who will think himself secure? "Can any one (says the wise man) hide fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? Or can he walk over hot coals without burning the bottom of his feet?" Prov. vi. 27, 28. "He that toucheth pitch (says Ecclesiasticus) shall be defiled therewith, and he that hath fellowship with a proud man shall be like unto him;" Eccl. xiii. 1.

§ IV. *Of the Blindness and Darkness of the World.*—10. To this infinite number of snares and dangers add another evil, which makes them greater, and is the blindness and darkness of worldly men, excellently represented to us by the Egyptian darkness, which was so thick that they could feel it with their hands; and during the three days it continued, no person stirred out of the place he was in, nor could see his neighbor, though he stood just by him; Exod. x. Such, and much more, if possible, is the darkness that covers the world. For what greater blindness than for men to believe, and yet live as they do? To make so much account of their fellow creatures, and to take so little notice of God? To be so careful of observing the laws of the world, and so negligent in keeping God's commandments? To take so much pains about the body, which is at best but dust, and to be so little concerned for the soul, which is no less than the image of the divine Majesty? To lay up so much store for this life, which will perhaps be at an end to-morrow, and to provide nothing for the next, which must last for all eternity? To be solicitous about raising a fortune on earth, and not to move so much as one step for the acquiring of heavenly good? What greater blindness than to live so negligently, as if life were never to end, when we know we are to die, and that moment to decide what shall be for ever? For what is it that sinners, who are to die to-morrow, do less than if they were never to die at all? What greater blindness than to lose the inheritance of heaven for the satisfying of a hungry appe-

tite? To be so careful about an estate, and to have so little regard for conscience? To desire that all things should be good, except only a man's own life? You will find the world so full of such blindness, that you will believe almost all mankind is enchanted and bewitched, so as not to see, though they have eyes, nor hear, though they have ears; and, though they are as sharp-sighted as eagles to discover the things of the earth, yet they are as blind as beetles to those of heaven. Thus it happened with St. Paul, when he went to persecute the church; for as soon as ever he fell to the ground, he could see nothing, though he had his eyes open. This is what happens to all those unhappy wretches who, having their eyes wide open to the things of the world, yet keep them shut to all that is of God. •

§ V. *Of the Multitude of Sins there are in the World.*—Since, therefore, there are so many snares in the world, and so much darkness, what can a man expect here but to be continually stumbling and falling? Of all the miseries in the world this is the greatest, and that which ought to give us most aversion to it. This was the only argument St. Cyprian made use of, to persuade his friend to a contempt of the world; L. 2. Ep. 2. ad Donat. He supposes, to this end, that they were both of them on the top of a very high mountain, from whence they had a prospect of all the world; he pointed out to his friend, as it were, with his finger, all the seas and all the countries, all the markets and all the courts of judicature, full of those several sins and injustices which are to be found in all parts; that so beholding, as it were, with his eyes, so many and so great evils as there are in the world, he might understand what a horror and dread he ought to have of it, and how much he was obliged to Almighty God for having withdrawn him from them all. Do you, in imitation of this proceeding, get up to the top of this same mountain, cast your eyes a little on all the market-places, all the palaces, all the courts and all the assemblies in the world, you will there see so many sorts of sin, so much corruption, so many detractions, so many cheats, so many perjuries, so many robberies, so much envy, so much flattery, so much vanity, and, above all, such an entire forgetfulness of God, and so great a neglect of man's salvation, that you cannot but be amazed at so much disorder. You will see the greater part of men living like beasts, following the bent and impulse of their passions, without having any more regard to the laws, either of justice or of reason, than heathens, who have no knowledge of God, and who think man has nothing else to do but to live and die. You will see the innocent oppressed, the guilty acquitted, the virtuous condemned, and sinners honored and promoted. You will see the poor and humble trampled on, whilst favor and interest get the better in all things of virtue. You will see justice sold, truth slighted, shame lost, arts ruined, offices abused, and all sorts of employments, for the most part,

corrupted. You will see many knaves that deserve to be severely punished for their villanies, become rich, honored, and courted, and this by their thefts, their cheats, and a thousand other unlawful means. You will see these and many others, who have scarce any more than the shape of man, filling the greatest places and preferred to the most honorable employments. You will see, in fine that men love and adore their money more than they do God, whilst all laws, both divine and human, are violated; and almost all the world over, there is nothing of justice to be seen, but the mere name and shadow of it. When you have seen all these things, you will understand how much reason the prophet had for saying, "The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there is any one that understands or seeks after God. But they are all gone astray and are become unprofitable: there is no body that does what is good, no, not so much as one." Ps. xiii. 2, 3. Nor does God complain less by his prophet Osee, when he says, "There is no truth, there is no mercy, there is no knowledge of God upon the earth." But, on the contrary, "malice, and lies, and man-slaughters, and thefts, and adulteries, are spread like water all over the face of it, and blood has followed blood." Osee iv. 1, 2.

11. In fine, that you may the better see what the world is, cast your eyes on the head that governs it, and by that means you will perceive the condition of the thing so governed. For if it be true, as Jesus Christ said, that the devil is the prince of this world, that is, of wicked men, what must we expect from a body that has such a head, and from a commonwealth that has such a ruler? This alone is enough to let you understand, that the world itself must be like those who are lovers of it. What kind of place, then must it be but a den of thieves, an army of cut-throats, a sty full of swine, a galley full of slaves, a lake full of serpents and basilisks? Now if the world be such a thing as this, why, says a philosopher, shall we not desire to leave such a filthy place, so full of treacheries, deceits and sins, that there is scarce room left for honesty, piety or justice? a place where all kinds of vices reign, where one brother takes up arms against another, where a son wishes for the death of his father, a husband for the death of his wife, and the wife for that of her husband? where there are so few persons, that do not either steal or cheat, since great men, as well as little ones, have their ways of robbing and defrauding, though under some specious pretences? where, in short, there are so many fires of lust, of impurity, of anger, ambition, and many other vices, continually burning? Who will not desire to fly from such a world? It was, without doubt, the desire of the prophet, who cried out, "Who will carry me into the desert, or into some place that is out of the way of passengers, and I will forsake my people, and will retire from them, because they are all of

them adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men?" Jerem. v. 2. All that has been said of this matter hitherto belongs to the wicked in general, though no one can deny but there are several good men in the world; of all states and conditions, and it is for their sake that God bears with the rest.

12. When you have weighed all these things, consider how reasonable it is to abhor and detest so great an evil, in which, had God but opened your eyes, you might have seen more devils, and more sins, than there are atoms in the rays of the sun; and with this consideration nourish and increase in your souls the desire of leaving this world, in spirit at least; sighing with the royal prophet, and saying with him, "Who will give me wings like a dove's and I will fly and take my rest?" Ps. liv. 7.

§ VI. *How deceitful the Happiness of the World is.*—13. These, and many more like them, are the disappointments and crosses that attend the wretched felicities of this world, by which you may perceive how much more gall there is than honey, and how much more wormwood than sugar: I forbear to take notice of several other miseries. This happiness and delight, besides being so short and miserable, is also filthy, because it makes men carnal and impure: it is brutish, inasmuch as it makes men brutish; it is foolish because it makes men fools, and often deprives them of their sense and reason; it is inconstant, because it never continues in the same state; it is, in fine, treacherous and false, because, when we seem to want it most, it leaves us and vanishes into air. But I will not omit speaking of one evil that attends it, which perhaps is worse than all the rest, viz. its being fraudulent and deceitful, for it appears to be what it is not, and promises what it has not to give; so that, by this means, it draws most men after it to their eternal ruin. For as there is true and false gold, as there are true and counterfeit jewels, which look as if they were of value and are not, so there are true and false goods, a true happiness and a false one, which are nothing at all of happiness, but the bare appearance. Such is the happiness of this world, which deceives and cheats us with its outside gloss and color. For as, according to Aristotle, it often happens that lies, notwithstanding their falsehood, have a greater appearance of truth, than even truth itself, so it is worth observing, that there are some evils, which, though they are real evils, look more like good than even some things that are really good." Such is the happiness of the world, and, therefore, ignorant persons are easily deluded by it, as birds are decoyed, and fishes caught with bait. It is the nature of worldly things to present themselves to us under a pleasant appearance, and with a flattering and deceitful look, which promises a deal of joy and satisfaction; but as soon as experience has undeceived us, we perceive the hook was hid under the bait, and see clearly, that all is not gold that glitters. This, you will find by experience, happens in all worldly things.

Do but consider the pleasures of a new-married couple; you will see their happiness generally last but for a few days, and then follow discontents, troubles and cares. They soon find afflictions from children, diseases, absence, jealousy, discord, miscarriages, misfortunes, grief, and, in fine, from death itself, which is inevitable, and sometimes surprises them early, and changes their wedding joys, not yet completed, into the tears of widowhood. What greater deceit and hypocrisy than this? How contentedly does a young woman go to the marriage-bed, because her eyes are only open to that which appears outwardly; but alas! how much more reason should she have to cry than laugh, if she did but see the train of miseries that follows? Rebecca desired to have children; but when she found herself pregnant, and perceived the conflict that was between the two infants in her womb, she said, "If this must have happened to me, what need was there of my conceiving?" Gen. xxv. 22. O how many have been thus deceived, when, having obtained what they wished for, they find it to be quite another thing than what they expected!

14. What shall I say of employments, of honors, preferments and dignities? How delightful they appear at first sight, yet when the false lustre is worn off, what trains of passions and solitudes, what envy, what hardships then discover themselves! What shall I say, again, of those who are engaged in unlawful love? How pleasant do they find the entrance into this dark labyrinth at the beginning! but when once they have got in, what hardships are they to undergo! How many unhappy nights must they endure! How many dangers must they expose themselves to! because the fruit of this forbidden tree is guarded by the fury of a venomous dragon, that is, by the cruel sword, either of a parent or of a jealous husband, in which action a man often loses his life, his honor, his estate, and his soul all in a moment. You may, in like manner, take a view of the lives of covetous and worldly men, of those who aim at glory, either by their arms or by favor, and you will find, in all these, the tragical effects of fortunate and pleasant beginnings, which have been followed by unhappy ends. For the nature of this cup of Babylon is to be gilt without, but to be full of poison within; Apoc. xvii. 4.

15. What, then, is all the glory of the world but a siren's song, which lulls us asleep? a sweet poison that carries death along with it? a viper, finely party-colored without, and full of venom within? If it delights, it is only to deceive us; if it raises us up, it is to cast us down again; if it diverts us, it is to make us melancholy. It expects an unreasonable interest for whatever it bestows. If you have a child born, and it should happen to die, you would be ten times more troubled at its death than you were pleased at its birth. Any loss is always the occasion of much more grief than gain is of joy; sickness is much more afflicting than health is comforting; an affront discontents a man more than

honor pleases or charms him: for nature has been so unequal in disposing of pains and pleasures, that those are more able to torment us, than these are to give us any ease and comfort. A thorough consideration of all this will make us plainly see how false and deceitful this happiness is.

§ VII. *The Conclusion of all that has been said.*—16. Consider here the true figure of the world, notwithstanding its outward appearing to be what it is not, and consider what its happiness is; it is short, miserable, dangerous, blind and deceitful. If so, what can the world be but a magazine of labors, as a philosopher wisely terms it; a school of vanities, a market of deceit, a labyrinth of errors, a prison of darkness, a highway full of robbers, a muddy lake, and a sea that is in perpetual storm? What is this world but a barren soil, a field full of stones, a wood full of thorns, a green meadow full of snakes and serpents, a garden that has flowers, but no fruit, a river of tears, a fountain of cares, a sweet poison, a serious comedy, and a pleasing phrensy? Are there any delights in it which are not false, or any miseries which are not real? Its ease is full of troubles, its security has no grounds to build on, its fears are without reason, its labors without any advantage, its tears without any effect, its designs without success, its hope vain, its joy counterfeit, and its grief true.

17. You see how lively a representation this world is of hell; for if hell be nothing but a place of torments and of sin, what is there the world abounds in more? The royal prophet was of this opinion, when he said, “His iniquity shall encompass him on all sides day and night, and labor and injustice shall be in the very middle of him;” Ps. liv. 11. This is the fruit the world produces, this the merchandise that is sold in it, this the trade that is settled in every corner of it, viz. *labor* and *injustice*, which are the evils of pain and the evils of guilt. If, therefore, hell is nothing but a place of torments and of guilt, why do we not call this world, in some measure at least, a hell, since we see so much of both in it? St. Bernard looked on it as such, when he said, “This world would appear to be almost as miserable as hell, if it were not for the hopes we have whilst we are in this life of obtaining a better;” Sermon 4. de Ascens.

§ VIII. *That true Felicity and Content are to be found no where but in God.*—18. Having hitherto taken so clear a view of the misery and deceit of worldly happiness, our next business will be to consider that the true happiness and rest, which the world cannot give us, is to be found in God. Were worldly men but thoroughly convinced of this, they would not, as they do now, take so much pains in pursuit of worldly pleasures. In short, my design, therefore, is to prove the importance of this truth, not by the authorities and testimonies of faith, but purely by the force of reason.

19. For effecting of this, you are to understand that no creature whatever can enjoy a complete and perfect happiness

till it obtains its last end, that is, the last perfection which is proportioned to its being and nature. For as long as it is without this, it cannot but be unquiet and dissatisfied, because it is sensible it wants something that is necessary for it. I put the question now, what man's last end is, on the possession of which all his felicity depends, and which divines call "his formal beatitude." That this is God, is undeniable; who, as he is his first beginning, so is he his last end. Now as it is impossible for a man to have two first beginnings, it is no less so to have two last ends, because this would be to have two gods. If, therefore, God alone is man's last end and ultimate happiness, and if it is impossible for him to have two last ends, there is, consequently, the same impossibility of his finding any happiness but in God. For as the glove is made for the hand, and the scabbard for the sword, so that there is no putting them to any other use; in like manner, man's heart, having been created for God, cannot find rest but in him. It is with him alone that he is content and satisfied, and without him poor and miserable. The reason of it is, because the understanding and the will, which are the two noblest faculties, being the principal seat of bliss, whilst they are disturbed and uneasy, man cannot possibly enjoy peace and quiet. And it is a plain case that these two faculties cannot be at rest, but in the enjoyment of God. For, as says St. Thomas, "our understanding cannot know or understand so much as not to be capable and desirous of knowing more, if there be more to be known; so our will can never love or enjoy so many goods as not to be capable of more, if more be given it;" S. Thom. 1. 2. Qu. 2. Art. 8. Therefore these two powers will never be satisfied till they shall find a universal object, in which all things are contained; and which, as soon as ever it was known and loved, there remain no more truths to be known, or more goods to be enjoyed. Hence it follows, that no created being whatsoever, though it were the possession of all the world, is able to find and satisfy man's heart; there is none but God, for whom he was created, can do this. Thus Plutarch writes of a private soldier, who, from one elevation to another, came to be emperor; and seeing himself raised to this honor he had so long desired, and yet wanting the satisfaction he expected, he said, "I have lived in all states and conditions, and have found no satisfaction in any of them;" by which we may perceive it is impossible for him to find any rest but in God, who has been created for none but God.

20. That you may understand this the better, look on the needle of the compass, and there you will see a lively figure of this necessary doctrine. The nature of this needle is to point always to the north, when it has been once touched to the lead-stone: God, who created this stone, gave it such a natural incli-

nation to turn always that way. And you may see by experience what a violent motion it is in, and how restless, till it points exactly thither, and then it immediately stops and remains fixed. It is not to be doubted, but that God has created man with the same natural inclination and tendency toward him, as toward his pole, his centre and his last end; and therefore it is, that, like the needle, he is continually disturbed and unquiet, as long as he is turned from God, though he should enjoy all the riches in the world: but as soon as, like the needle, he returns to him, he ceases from his violent motion, and enjoys perfect and entire rest, because it is in God he is to find his peace. Whence we may infer, that he alone is happy who possesses God; and that the nearer a man is to God, the nearer he is to this happiness. And therefore the just, though the world is unacquainted with their happiness, are the only happy men, because, whilst they are in this life, they draw as nigh as they can to Almighty God.

21. The reason is, because true felicity does not consist in sensible and worldly pleasures, as the Epicurean philosophers would have it, and after them the Mahometans, and, lastly, the followers of both these sects, that is, wicked Christians, who in words renounce the law of Mahomet, but follow it in their actions, and in this world seek no other paradise than his. For what is it the great and rich men of the world spend their time in, but in hunting after all manner of pleasures and amusements; and what is this but to make Epicurus's pleasure our last end, and to look for Mahomet's paradise in this world? O unhappy scholars of such masters! If you detest the names of these men, why do you not hate their lives and manners? If you will enjoy Mahomet's paradise in this life, you must expect to lose our Saviour's in the next. Man's happiness does not consist either in the body, or in the goodness of it, as the Turks pretend, but in the spirit, and in spiritual and invisible goods, as was the opinion of the great philosophers of old, and it was what Christians still hold, though after quite another manner.

The royal prophet signified the same to us, by these words: "All the glory of the king's daughter is within, where she glitters with gold, and is clothed with several colors" Ps. xlv. 14, 15); and where she enjoys so much peace and comfort, as never all the kings of the earth have had, or are ever like to have; unless we will say, that they have more satisfaction than the friends of God; which many of them will deny, who very cheerfully quitted great kingdoms and riches as soon as they tasted of God. Pope Gregory the Great will also deny it, who had sufficient experience of both states, and was placed by force in St. Peter's chair, on which he always sighed, and wept for the poor cell he left in his monastery, as a slave in Barbary sighs for his country and liberty.

§ IX. *Examples to prove all that has been said.*—22. But

because this mistake is so great and so universal, I will add one reason more, as convincing as the former, that the lovers of the world may discover by it, how impossible it is to find that happiness they look for in the world. To this purpose you are to presuppose, that there is much more goes to the making of a thing perfect, than to leave it imperfect; because, for effecting of the first, it must necessarily have all those conditions, which are absolutely requisite for its perfection; whilst, on the contrary, any one single imperfection makes the whole piece imperfect. It is also to be presupposed, that a man must have all things according to his own desire, to make himself completely happy; and that one thing contrary to his wish goes a great way further towards making him miserable, than the enjoyment of all the rest towards making him happy. I have myself seen several persons, of very considerable rank and fortune, lead the most unhappy lives; because the satisfaction they had in what they enjoyed was nothing comparable to the torment of not being able to obtain what they desired. For it is certain, that this latter, which is like a thorn stuck into the very heart, is more grievous and troublesome than the other is acceptable and pleasing; for it is the obtaining of his desire, not the possession of goods, that makes a man happy. - St. Augustine, in his Treatise of the Customs of the Church, explained this point very excellently, in these words: "I do not think a man can be said to be happy, who does not enjoy what he loves, let it be ever so mean and ordinary; nor do I look on that man any happier who does not love what he enjoys, though the thing be ever so good and excellent; nor is he in a better condition than either of the other two, who does not desire that which is worth his desiring; because he that cannot get what he desires, is in a deal of torment; he that has what is not worth his desiring, is notoriously cheated; and he who does not desire that which is worth his desiring, is a mere fool and madman. From whence we conclude, that our happiness depends upon the possessing of no other good but the sovereign good, without which there is no such thing as happiness." S. De Morib. Eccl. Cath. c. 3. So that possession, love and sovereign good, these three things put together, make a man completely happy, without which no man can be so, though he possesses ever so much.

23. Though I could bring many examples to prove this, I will bring only that of Aman, king Assuerus's creature and favorite. This man, being highly offended, that Mardocheus, one of the guards at the palace-gate, did not pay him the respect he looked for, sent for all his friends and his wife, and made this short discourse to them: "You all know what a rich man I am, how many children I have, and how much I am in favor with the king, and to what places and dignities he has promoted me, before any of his courtiers or subjects. Besides all this, the queen

has invited none but the king and myself to come and dine with her to-morrow. And yet, though I have all these things, I seem to have nothing at all, as long as I see Mardocheus, who stands before the palace-gate, refusing me the respect I look for." Esther v. 10, &c. Do but consider how this small affront was the occasion of much more discontent and trouble, than all his riches and honors were of happiness and satisfaction. Consider, likewise, how far man is from being happy, as long as he is in this world, and how near he is, on the contrary, to misery, since there are many goods required to the obtaining of the first, whilst the want of any one is enough to make us fall into the latter. Now if this be true, who can avoid being unhappy in this world? Is there any king, any emperor, so powerful as to have all things according to his own will, and never to meet with any contrary to his inclinations? Let us put the case: should he never receive any contradiction from men, who can secure himself against all the strokes of nature, against all the infirmities of the body, or all the fears or vain imaginations of the soul, which is frequently so apprehensive when there is no reason for it, and disturbs herself without any cause? Poor, unhappy, miserable man! how can you think of finding any content in the ways of the world, when it is more than what the greatest princes and monarchs of it have been ever able to do? If all goods whatever must necessarily contribute to the acquiring of this one good, when shall you, who are at such a distance from God, ever be so happy as to stand in need of nothing in the world? There is none but God can give you this happiness; and if there be any man that does in some manner enjoy it in this life, know it is only he who loves and enjoys God; because it is a condition of friendship, "that all things are in common amongst friends."

24. If all these plain and evident reasons cannot convince you, but that you are more easily wrought upon by experience, address yourself to Solomon, so celebrated for his wisdom, and desire him, since he has sailed in this sea, and was more successful than any other in discovering all sorts of worldly grandeurs and delights, to give you an account of what he discovered, and whether he could find any thing that could satisfy him: and you shall have no other answer from him, but "vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, and all is vanity;" Eccles. i. 2, &c. c. xii. 8. Do not doubt to give credit to such an experienced man as Solomon was, who speaks to you not on bare speculation, but from certain knowledge; and do not think that you, or any one else, could discover more than he has done. For what prince in the world was ever wiser, richer, better attended, more glorious or more revered than he? Who ever tried more different sorts of debaucheries and pleasures than he? And yet, after having tried all, he made no other advantage of them but what you have heard. Why will you make a fresh trial of what so many have

tried before you? Do not fancy you can find what Solomon could not; since you have no other world to search in, nor any better means to find what you seek than he had; and since he could never satisfy his longings from so plentiful a board, do not persuade yourself you shall ever be able to do it with the bare gleanings. Seeking pleasure was the employment of his time; and it is very probable, as St. Jerome observes, in a letter of his to Eustochium, "that this was the occasion of his fall." And will you be so mad as to cast yourself headlong after him? But because men rather believe experience than reason, therefore God has perhaps permitted this king to try all the goods and pleasures of this world, that he might, after trying, give us a character of them; that thus the misery of one man might be an example to all the rest, and prevent their falling into the like misfortune.

25. Now if this be so, I may, with a deal of reason, exclaim with the prophet, "Sons of men, how long will you have your hearts hardened? Why do you love vanity, and seek after a lie?" Ps. xl. 3. He does well in giving it the name of *vanity* and a *lie*; because if there were nothing else in worldly things but vanity (which signifies no more than to be nothing), there were no great hurt in them; but there is something still much worse than this, which is, a lie and a false appearance, by which we are persuaded to believe them something, when in effect they are just nothing. For this reason Solomon says, "that comeliness is deceitful, and beauty vain;" Prov. xxxi. 30. To be vain had been no great matter, had it not been deceitful too; because vanity, when once known, can do but little harm; the greatest danger is in that which truly and really is vain, though it does not appear to be so. By this we may see, how great a hypocrite the world is. For as hypocrites endeavor to hide the faults they have been guilty of, so the rich men of this world do all they can to conceal the miseries they continually groan under. Some, though they are sinners, would pass for saints, and others for happy men, though they are miserable. If you call this into question, do but come a little nearer to one of those, who seems outwardly to be so happy; feel his pulse a little, and then put your hands on his heart, and you will see what difference there is between that which appears on the outside, and that which is hid within. There are some plants in the fields which look very pretty at a distance, but when you come and touch them, cast forth such an ungrateful smell, that a man is forced immediately to fling them away: thus, when the hands touch, they correct the mistake of the eyes. Such are most of the rich and mighty men of the world. For if you consider their great estates, their noble houses, and their retinues, you might take them to be the only happy men on earth; but if you go a little nearer, and search into the recesses of their souls, and into the secret corners

of their houses, you will find them not the same they seem to be. So that several of those, who at first aimed at great estates, when they considered them at a distance, no sooner had a nearer view of them, but they entirely refused them, as many heathens (according to several histories) have done. And in the lives of the emperors we read, that there have not been wanting some who, notwithstanding their being heathens, have refused to accept of the empire, though they have been elected by the general consent of the whole army; and this because they knew that this flower, which seemed to be so fine and beautiful, had nothing but thorns and briars underneath it.

26. Why, then, O ye children of men, who are created according to the likeness of God, who are redeemed with his blood, who are designed to be the companions of angels, why do you love vanity and seek after a lie, imagining with yourselves, that you shall receive any comfort from those false goods, which never were, nor ever will be able to give you the least satisfaction imaginable? Why have you left the table of angels for the food of beasts? Why have you refused the delights and sweet smells of paradise for the bitterness and stench of this world? How is it possible that so many calamities and miseries, as you are daily sensible of, should not suffice to make you deny any farther allegiance to so cruel a tyrant as this is? We seem herein to be like certain lewd women, that give themselves entirely up to some debauched fellow, who devours and spends all they are worth, and then beats and kicks them every day, and yet they are fond of their slavery, and doat on him that makes it.

27. Wherefore, from all that has been said, I conclude, that if there are so many reasons, so many examples, and so many experiments, to prove that the happiness and ease we look for in the world, is to be found no where but in God, why do we not seek for it in him? It is what St. Augustine advises, in these words: "Compass the sea and earth, and go where you please; but assure yourself, that wheresoever you go, you will be miserable, if you do not go to God."

CHAPTER VI.

The Conclusion of all that is contained in this First Book.

1. WE may plainly gather from all that has been hitherto said, that there is no kind of good whatever, which is not included in virtue; which shows it to be so great and so universal a good, that there is nothing, either in heaven or earth, to which we can better compare it than to God himself. For as God is so universal a good, that the perfections of all other goods are found in him, so are they in some manner to be found in virtue. We see that,

amongst created things, some are modest, others beautiful; some honorable, others profitable; some are agreeable, and others, again, have several perfections; now those of all are most perfect, and the most worthy of our love, which have the greatest share of all these different perfections. If this be true, what esteem, what love ought we to have for virtue, in which none of all these perfections are wanting? For if we consider modesty, what can be more modest than virtue, which is the very source and fountain of all modesty? If we look for honor, what can deserve honor and respect, if virtue does not? If we have an esteem for beauty, what can be more beautiful than virtue is? Plato, speaking of its beauty, says, "that if we could but see it, it would draw the whole world after it." If we have any concern for profit, what can we expect any greater profit from than virtue, since it is by it that we are to acquire the chief good? *Length of days* (with the good of eternity) *is in its right hand, and riches and glory in its left*; Prov. iii. 16. If pleasure be all that you long for, what greater pleasure than that of a good conscience, of charity, of peace, of the liberty which the children of God enjoy, and of all the consolations of the Holy Ghost, who never fails to keep company with virtue? If credit and reputation be the object of your aim, *the just man shall be remembered for all eternity, but the name of the wicked shall grow rotten and vanish away like smoke*; Ps. iii. 7; Prov. x. 7. If you seek for knowledge, what deeper knowledge than knowing God, and understanding the best means for directing of your life to your last end? If we have a mind to gain the love and affection of men, what can be more lovely than virtue, or more conducive to this end? For, according to Cicero, as beauty of body, which we so much admire, consists in the exact symmetry and due proportion of limbs and members, so from the exactness and regularity of life is formed such a beauty, as is not only agreeable to God and his angels, but even charms the wicked and man's greatest enemies.

2. This is the good which is so absolutely and completely good, as not to have the least mixture of evil in it. It was with a deal of reason that God sent this short, but glorious embassy, to the just, which we have mentioned in the beginning of this book, and with which we are now going to conclude the same, *Say to the just man, it is well*; Isa. iii. 10. Tell him he was born happily, and shall die happily; tell him he shall be blessed in his death, and in what is to come after it, as he has been in his life; tell him he shall have success in all things, in his pleasures, in his pains, in his labors, in his rest, in his credit, and in his disgrace: *because all things turn to the advantage of those who love God*; Rom. viii. 28. Tell him he has nothing to fear; for though the whole world should be disturbed and troubled, though the elements should be in confusion, and though the heavens themselves should fall in pieces, he may then lift up his head, because the

day of his redemption is at hand. *Tell him it is well*, because the greatest of all goods, which is God himself, is prepared for him, and because he is delivered from the company of the devil, which is the greatest evil of all. *Tell him it is well*, because his name is written in the book of life, because God the Father has adopted him for his son, because God the Son has taken him for his brother, and the Holy Ghost for his living temple. *Tell him it is well*, because the way he has taken, and the party he has followed, is advantageous to him in all respects, advantageous to the body and advantageous to the soul, advantageous in consideration of God, advantageous in consideration of men, advantageous for this life and for the next; *because all good things shall be bestowed upon those who seek the kingdom of God*; Luke xii. 31. And though perhaps his temporal affairs go not so well with him, yet this will turn much more to his advantage, if he does but take it patiently; because to those that are patient, losses prove gains; labors and sufferings are the occasions of merit, and combats bring crowns and trophies. As often as Laban lessened Jacob's wages, with an intention to benefit himself thereby, and to prejudice his son-in-law, his design was thwarted; and what he thought would benefit him and hurt the other, proved quite the contrary; Gen. xxxi.

3. Why, then, will you be so cruel to yourself, and so much your own enemy, as to refuse to embrace that thing which is every way so advantageous to you? Can you take any better advice, or follow any better party than this? *Happy are the unspotted in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Happy are those who search into his commandment, and seek him with their whole heart.* Ps. cxviii. 1, 2.

4. If, therefore, as the philosophers say, good is the object of our will, and if, of consequence, the better a thing is, the more it deserves our love, who has corrupted your will so as to make it neither relish nor enjoy so universal and so great a good? O how much greater an esteem had king David of it, when he cried out, *Thy law, O Lord, is in the very midst of my heart*; Ps. xxxix. 9. Not in a corner, not on one side, but in the very middle, the most worthy and honorable place of all. As if he had said, this is my greatest treasure, this is the most important business I have, and the chief of all my concerns. Worldly men proceed in direct opposition to this, because vanity has the first place in their heart, and the law of God the last. But this holy man, notwithstanding his being a king, and having much to preserve and to lose, trampled all under his feet, and placed nothing but the law of God in the midst of his heart, as knowing that if he was but careful in the keeping of this, all the rest was sufficiently secure.

5. What can hinder you now from making a resolution to follow this example, and to embrace so great a good? For if you

look on the obligation, is there any greater than what we all of us owe to Almighty God purely on account of what he is? All other obligations of the world do not so much as deserve to be so called, if compared with this. If you look for benefits, what greater can there be than those we have received from him; since, besides his having created and redeemed us with his own blood, every thing either in us or out of us, as the body, soul, life, health, estate, grace (if we have it), every hour and moment of our lives, all the good designs and desires of our soul; whatsoever, in fine, has the name either of being or of good, proceed originally from him, who is the fountain of all beings and of all good. If interest be your aim, let all the angels and all mankind declare, whether we are capable of any greater interest than that of receiving eternal glory, and of being delivered from everlasting pains and torments; for this is the reward of virtue. If we pretend to the enjoyment of present goods, what greater goods can we possess than those twelve privileges above mentioned, which all good men enjoy in this life, the least of which is much more able to content and please us than all the conditions and treasures of the world! What more can we put into this balance than what is here promised us? All the excuses worldly men are used to bring against us are now quite baffled, and I see no hole for them to creep out at, unless they wilfully and obstinately stop their ears and shut their eyes against so clear and manifest a truth.

6. What, then, remains, but that, having seen the perfection and beauty of virtue, you repeat these words with the wise man, speaking of wisdom, virtue's sister and companion: *I have loved her, and sought after her from my very youth, and I desire to have her for my spouse, and I was in love with her beauty. Her nobility appears, by God Almighty's familiarity with her; and he who is the Lord of all things has loved her. She it is that teaches the doctrine of God, and that chooses his works. And if riches are desired in this life, what is richer than wisdom, who works all things? But if wisdom does all things, can there be any thing more ingenious than she is? And if any one love justice, its works produce great virtues; for it teaches temperance and prudence, justice and virtue, than which there is nothing profitable to men in this life. I have resolved, therefore, to take her for the companion of my life, as knowing that she will make me partaker with her in her goods; and she shall be my comfort in all my distress and trouble.* Sap. viii. 2—10. These are the words of the wise man. What, then, remains but to conclude this matter, as the blessed martyr, St. Cyprian, concludes a most elegant epistle he writes to a friend of his, on the contempt of the world, as follows:—

7. "There is (says he) but one quiet and tranquillity, but one solid and perpetual security, which is, when a man, being freed

from the storms of this world, and laid up in the secure haven of salvation, lifts up his eyes from earth to heaven, and being already admitted into the company and favor of the Lord, is glad to see himself despise and undervalue from his heart whatever the world has such an esteem for. A man in such a condition cannot desire any thing in this world, because he is already greater than the world itself." And a little lower he goes on, saying, "There is no need of being very rich, or having any honorable employments for the obtaining of this happiness; it is a pure gift of God, bestowed on the devout soul; for God is so liberal and free, that, as the sun heats, as the day gives light, as the fountain flows, and as the water falls down from a steep place, so this divine spirit communicates himself freely to all persons. For this reason do you, who are already listed in this heavenly army, use all your endeavors to be faithful in the observance of the discipline of this warfare, by acts of piety and devotion; let prayer and holy reading be your continual companions; sometimes do you speak to God, and at other times hearken to what God has to say to you. Let him instruct you in his commandments; let him have the disposing and ordering of all the concerns of your life; let nobody look on him as a poor man whom God has once enriched. It is impossible for the soul to suffer hunger and thirst, that has been filled with the blessings and abundance of heavenly things. Then the most stately buildings, crusted over with marble and laid over with gold, shall be no more esteemed by you than dirt and clay; then you will understand that your chief business is to adorn and beautify yourself, and that this is much the more magnificent and noble structure wherein God reposes, as in a living temple, and in which the Holy Ghost has taken up his habitation. Let us paint this building over, but let it be with innocence; and let the lights of the painting be no others than those of justice. Time and age shall never be able to deface these colors; and when the paint and gilding of the material wall shall be quite worn off, these shall look as fresh and lively as ever. Artificial and mixed things are all frail and perishable, and they, in whose possession they are, can never assure themselves that they shall keep them long, because it is no true possession; but this remains with its colors always lively, with its reputation untainted, and with a settled love and charity; it cannot either decay or be blasted, though it may be improved or made more beautiful at the resurrection." Epist. 1. 2. ep. 1. ad Donat. Thus far St. Cyprian.

If any one, through the grace and inspiration of God, without which it is impossible for man to do the least good, is convinced and persuaded, by all the reasons and arguments we have brought in this book, so as to desire to embrace virtue, the following book will instruct him in what is to be done, for the obtaining of his desire.

THE
SINNER'S GUIDE.

BOOK II.

THE DOCTRINE OF VIRTUE; WITH NECESSARY INSTRUCTIONS AND
ADVICE FOR MAKING A MAN VIRTUOUS.

PREFACE.

FORASMUCH as it is not sufficient to persuade man to be virtuous, unless we teach him how to be so; therefore, having, in the foregoing book, urged so many and such weighty reasons to excite our hearts to the love of virtue, it will be requisite to come now to the use and practice of it, by giving such instructions as are necessary to make a man truly virtuous. And because, according to the saying of a wise man, the first virtue is to avoid all vice, after which a man may apply himself to the practice of virtue, we will, therefore, divide this book into two parts: in the first of which we will speak of the most usual or common vices, and the remedies against them; and in the second, of the virtues. But before we enter on this point, we must lay down two principles, which must be presupposed by him that resolves to follow this way.

§ I. *Of the first Thing to be presupposed by him that desires to serve God.*—He that resolves to offer himself up to the service of God and to change his life, must, in the first place, and above all things, have a good opinion of the design he has in hand, and put such value on it as it deserves: I mean, that he should look upon this as the most important business, the greatest treasure he can have, as the best and most prudent action he can undertake. Nay, I would have him persuade himself there is no treasure, no other business, no other prudence in the world, but this: it is the advice the prophet gives us, when he says, *Learn, O Israel, where prudence, where strength, where understanding is, that you may at the same time know where length of life is, and an abundance of all things, where the light of the eyes and peace is*; Baruch iii. 14. God upon the same account says, by the prophet

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Jeremiah, *Let not the wise man take a pride in his wisdom, let not the strong man take a pride in his riches; but he that takes a pride in any thing, let it be in his knowing and understanding me* (Jerem. ix. 23, 24), for this is the sum of all goods. *And if there is any one among the children of men, of a consummate wisdom, if he hath not this wisdom too, he shall not be esteemed at all;* Sap. ix. 6.

2. The Holy Scripture, which so seriously recommends and praises this business to us, excites us to it in a very peculiar manner. It is this we are invited to by all creatures in heaven and earth, by the voice and cries of the church, by all kind of laws, both divine and human; by the example of all the saints, who, being enlightened from heaven, despised the world, and pushed on the design they had of embracing virtue with such vigor and love, that many suffered themselves to be torn in pieces, to be broiled on gridirons, and to undergo a thousand torments, rather than commit the least offence against God, and be out of his favor, though but for a moment. It is this, in fine, that whatever has been treated of in the foregoing book, invites and obliges us to, because there is nothing there but what is in favor of virtue, and what shows us of how inestimable a value it is. Each of these things, duly considered, is sufficient to convince us of the importance of this affair; and if so, what effect should all of them together have on us? So that he who resolves to follow virtue may by this perceive how great and how glorious a design he undertakes, and how reasonable it is, as we shall show hereafter, to give himself up entirely to it. Let this, therefore, be the first thing to be presupposed in this affair.

§ II. *Of the second Thing to be presupposed by him that desires to serve God.*—1. The second thing to be presupposed is, that since it is a business of such worth and merit, you prosecute it with all the vigor imaginable, and with a resolution and steadiness to bear up against all the contradictions and difficulties you may probably meet with, in pursuit of your design. You are to look on all these troubles as little or nothing, in comparison with so glorious an undertaking as that you have in hand, and to consider that it is the order of nature, that the acquisition of any thing that is honorable should cost much labor. For no sooner should you resolve on this business, but hell itself will raise its power and forces against you. The flesh, which loves any thing that is delightful and charming, which from its birth is bent upon all kinds of evil, and has been so ever since it was first infected with the poison of the old venomous serpent, will continually and with much importunity press and invite you to all its usual delights and pleasures. Depraved custom, which is as strong as nature itself, will immediately oppose this change, and will represent it to you as a thing very difficult. Because, as the turning

of a river from its ordinary course and channel is a laborious work, so the turning of a man out of the way, which evil custom has for a long time led him in, to make him take another, is, in some manner, as hard and toilsome. Besides, the world, that most powerful and cruel monster, armed with the authority of all the bad examples that are in it, will invite you with its pomps and vanities, tempt you with the evil practices of others, and frighten you with the persecutions and reproaches of the wicked; and, as if all this were nothing, the devil, that cunning and old deceiver, will set on you, and, according to his custom with all that are newly converted, make his utmost efforts upon you, for forsaking his party.

2. You are, then, to presuppose and conclude, you shall meet with all these difficulties and contradictions, that so, whenever they occur, you may not be surprised, but reflect on the advice of the wise man when he says, "My son, at your beginning to serve God, live in fear, and prepare your soul against temptation" (Eccl. ii. 1); and, therefore, you must not imagine you are invited to entertainments, to sports and pastimes, but that you are called on to take up the shield and spear, and to arm yourself for fight. For notwithstanding the assurance we have of powerful assistance, it is not to be denied, but that there is always a great deal of difficulty at the beginning.

He that resolves to serve God is to presuppose and to foresee all this, that so nothing may seem strange or unexpected to him; and to be persuaded that the jewel he fights for is of such a value as to deserve much more than he can give for the purchase of it. And, lest all these enemies should discourage you, remember there are many more for you than against you; because, though sin raises up all these adversaries, yet virtue comes in to your assistance, with more powerful succors. For you have God's grace against corrupt nature, God himself against the devil, good custom against bad, many good spirits against many evil ones; you have the examples and exhortations of the saints, against the bad examples and persecutions of the wicked; and against the delights and pleasures of the world, you have the consolations of the Holy Ghost. It is plain, therefore, that each of those that are for you is stronger than his adversary. For grace is certainly stronger than nature, God than the devil, the good angels more powerful than the bad, and spiritual delights and pleasures incomparably more charming and more winning than sinful pleasures.

PART THE FIRST.

WHICH TREATS OF VICES, AND OF THE REMEDIES TO BE APPLIED
AGAINST THEM.

CHAPTER I:

*Of the firm Resolution a good Christian is to make, never to
commit any mortal Sin.*

1. THESE two principles being presupposed as the main foundations of this spiritual building, the first and chief thing which he that is seriously resolved to give himself up to God's service, and to the study of virtue, ought to do, is to fix in his soul a sincere resolution never to commit any mortal sin. For by this alone we lose the grace and friendship of our Lord, and with it many other favors and benefits. This is the chief basis of a virtuous life; by this we are to keep ourselves in God's favor, and to preserve his friendship, and the right we have to the kingdom of heaven. In this consists charity, and the spiritual life of the soul depends on it. It is this makes men the children of God, the temples of the Holy Ghost, and the living members of Jesus Christ; and, consequently, as such, partakers of all the privileges of the church. As long as the soul keeps this resolution, she remains in charity and in the state of grace; but as soon as ever she falls from it, she is immediately blotted out of the book of life, and put down in that of perdition, and banished into the kingdom of darkness.

2. This matter being duly considered, it appears that, as all things, whether natural or artificial, are composed of substance and accidents, with this difference, that the substance always remains, though the accidents be changed; as a house is said to be still standing (when the carved work and painting is quite defaced), though not so perfect as it was at first; but when the house falls, all fall; so the soul, as long as it stands firmly to this resolution, still retains the substance of virtue; but when once this fails, all the structure falls to the ground: the reason of it is, because the whole, being of a virtuous life, consists in charity, that is, in loving God above all things. And he loves God after this manner, who hates mortal sin above all things; there being nothing but this that can make a man lose the love and friendship of God. So that as there is nothing more injurious than adultery to a marriage-bed, there is nothing more prejudicial to, and more destructive of a virtuous life, than mortal sin, because it destroys charity, which maintains and nourishes life.

3. This is the reason why all the martyrs willingly endured

such dreadful torments ; for this cause they suffered themselves to be burned, to be impaled alive, to be racked, to have their flesh pulled off with pincers, and to be torn in pieces rather than commit a mortal sin, which would in a moment have deprived them of the friendship and grace of God. They knew that if they had sinned mortally, they might have repented of their crime and have obtained pardon, as St. Peter did for denying our Saviour ; and yet they rather chose to undergo all the torments in the world, than to be ever so short a space out of God's favor.

4. We have three great examples of this sort in three noble women ; one in the Old Testament, the mother of seven sons, and two in the New, called Felicitas and Symphorosa, who had also each of them seven sons. These holy women were all of them present at the sufferings and martyrdoms of their own children, and were so far from being frightened at the lamentable sight, when they beheld them torn in pieces before their faces, that, on the contrary, they exhorted and encouraged them to die bravely for the faith and service of God ; and gave up their own lives with them, with courage and resolution, for the same cause.

5. St. Jerome, in his Life of St. Paul, the first hermit, gives us an example (I am doubtful whether not preferable to these) of a young man, whom, after having tried all other means, the tyrants would have forced to offend God ; and to this purpose they laid him on his naked back on a soft bed, under a shade of trees, in a very fresh and pleasant garden, tying down his arms and his hands with silken cords, that he might neither fly nor defend himself ; then they sent a lewd woman to him, richly dressed, to use all the arts they could think of, to overcome his resolution and constancy. What could the soldier of Christ do in this distress ? What course could he take to avoid such a disgrace, when he was naked, and had his hands and feet tied ? Yet the power of Heaven, and the presence of the Holy Ghost, did not forsake him ; for he was immediately inspired to deliver himself from his present danger, by a stratagem more strange and heroic than any we read of either in the Greek or Roman historians. For out of the great fear he had of offending God, and out of the horror of sin, he bit off his tongue with his teeth, the only part of him then at liberty, and spit it into the impudent woman's face : thus, by so strange and unheard-of an action, terrifying and obliging her to fly, and at the same time cooling the natural heat of the flesh by the pain he put it to. This is sufficient to let us briefly see, to what a degree all the saints have hated and abhorred mortal sin. I could here give you the examples of some persons, who rolled themselves quite naked among briars and thorns ; and of others who have flung themselves into the snow, in the very depth of winter, to quench the fire of lust, which the enemy had kindled in them.

6. He, therefore, that designs to walk in the same path, must endeavor to fix this resolution deep in his soul, esteeming the friendship of God more than all the treasures of the world, and choosing, when occasion offers, to part freely with things of small value, for those that are of inestimable worth. Let this be the very basis of his life ; it is to this all his actions are to tend ; it is what he ought to beg earnestly of God in all his prayers ; it is for this he is to frequent the sacraments ; this is the fruit he must reap, by hearing sermons and reading good books ; it is the lesson he is to learn from the form and beauty of the world, with all the creatures that are in it. This is the chief benefit he is to make of the passion of our Saviour, and of all the rest of the Almighty's favors and graces, to wit, never to offend him to whom he is so infinitely indebted ; and it is this holy fear and firm resolution by which he is to measure his progress in virtue, looking on himself to have advanced so much the more or less, as he has been the more or less observant of his resolution.

7. And as a man that would drive a nail up to the head, is not content to give it three or four strokes, but continues hammering till he has drove it in ; so it is not enough to make this resolution any how, but a man must endeavor every day to apply whatsoever he shall see, hear, read or meditate on, to his further advance in the love of God, and in detestation of sin ; because the greater progress he makes in this hatred, the more forward he advances in that love, and consequently in all sorts of virtue.

8. He is, for his greater confirmation in this design, to be thoroughly convinced, that if all the ill accidents and all the pains that have ever been in the world, from its creation to this very day, with all the torments that the damned suffer in hell, were put together in one scale, and mortal sin into another, this would, without doubt, weigh down all the torments, as being a much greater evil, and, by consequence, such a one as deserves more to be avoided than all these pains and torments ; though the dreadful blindness and darkness of this Egypt make men imagine these things to be quite different from what they are in effect. But, after all, what wonder is it, that neither the blind should see so great an evil, nor the dead be sensible of so deep a wound, since it is impossible for the blind to see any thing, though ever so great, or for the dead to feel any wound, though it be mortal?

§ I.—9. The subject of this second book being the doctrine of virtue, to which sin is directly opposite, the first part of it shall be spent in treating of the horror we ought to have of it, and of such particular remedies as may be applied to it ; because, if we can but once root these bad weeds out of the soul, it will be no hard matter to set the plants of virtues in their places ; whereof we will treat in the second part. We will seek here, not only of mortal but of venial sins ; not that these take away

the life of the soul, but because they weaken and dispose it for death. And for this same reason we will here speak of the seven *capital* or *deadly sins*, which are the very heads and sources of all others; not that they always happen to be mortal, but that they very often are so, when a commandment of God or of the church is broken, or any thing done contrary to charity.

10. In this doctrine, he that finds himself powerfully tempted by any vice may find remedies for all his distempers. Some of them, it is true, are general against all kinds of sins spoken of in the Memorial of a Christian Life, where I have given fifteen or sixteen remedies against sin; others are particular and applicable only to particular sins, as to pride, covetousness, anger and the like. These are what we shall treat of at present, by applying to every peculiar vice its proper remedy, and by furnishing those persons, who are resolved to fight against sin, with spiritual weapons.

11. But you must here carefully observe, that, for fighting of this battle, we have more need of eyes to see what is done, than of hands to fight, or feet to run away. The eyes are the chief weapons man can use in this war, which is carried on, not against flesh and blood, but against the evil angels, which are spiritual creatures. The reason of this is, because the very first root of all sin is the error and deceit of the understanding, which counsels and directs the will; and, therefore, our adversary's chief endeavor is to pervert the understanding. For if this be perverted, the will, which is governed by it, must necessarily go the same way. For the better effecting of this, they color evil over with the appearance of good, and make vice pass for virtue, and cover the temptation so cunningly, that it appears to be necessity and reason, not a temptation. So that if, for example, they have a mind to tempt us by ambition, avarice, anger, or the desire of revenge, they endeavour to make us believe it is highly reasonable to desire what we do, and that to do the contrary would be to act against reason. Thus they make reason serve as a cloak to the temptation, that so they may by this means the better deceive even those who follow the dictates of reason. It is necessary, therefore, on this account, that a man should have eyes to discover the hook, which lies under the bait, and not to be deceived by the base form and appearance of good.

12. It is also requisite to have eyes here, to see the malice, the deformity, the danger, the losses, and all other inconveniences, which the vice we are tempted to perpetually carries along with it, that so we may keep our appetite in, and be afraid to taste that which, if once tasted, will infallibly be death to us. For this reason the mysterious animals in Ezekiel, which are the figures of the saints, were full of eyes all over, though their other members were but single, to give us to understand how necessary

these spiritual eyes are to the servants of God, to secure them against the snares of vice; Ezek. ii. This is the chief remedy we shall make use of on this occasion; to which we will join all others, that may be thought any ways necessary, as will appear hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

Remedies against Pride.

1. HAVING promised in this first part to treat of vices, and their different remedies, we will begin with these seven, which are called *capital*, because they are the heads and sources of all the rest. For if we can but pluck up these seven vices (whence all others proceed) by the roots, the rest, which have sprung up from them, must of necessity perish; as all the branches of a tree die when the root from which they received the sap that nourished them, is cut up. This was the occasion of Cassian's taking so much pains in writing his eight books against these vices (which has also been done by several other grave authors), because he was thoroughly convinced, that if these enemies were defeated, none of the rest would be able to make any resistance.

2. The reason of it, as St. Thomas writes, is, because all sins originally proceed from self-love, for they are all committed through a desire of some particular good this self-love makes us covet; 1. 2. 9. 77. Part. 4. From this love springs those three branches, which St. John speaks of in his canonical epistle, to wit, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John ii. 16); which, to speak plainer, are nothing else but the love of pleasures, the love of riches, and the love of honor; because from the first love proceed these three, and all others come from them; for from the love of pleasures arise three capital vices, luxury, gluttony and sloth. From the love of honor comes pride, and covetousness from the love of riches. And as for the other two, anger and envy, they serve every one of these unlawful loves. For anger is caused by meeting with any obstruction in the obtaining of what we desire; and when another gets that which self-love desired for itself, then envy is excited. Since, therefore, these are the three universal roots of all evils, from which these seven vices proceed, it follows of course, that if we can but overcome these seven, all the others must be routed. We ought, for this reason, to employ all our strength in fighting with these mighty giants, if we have a mind to subdue all those other enemies, which have taken the land of promise from us.

3. The first and most considerable of them is pride, which is an inordinate desire of excelling. It is the common opinion of holy writers, that this vice is the mother and queen of all the

rest; and for this reason, holy Tobias, amongst much other good counsel which he gave his son, advised him particularly against this vice, saying, "Never permit any pride to rule over your thoughts, or over your discourse; for our perdition took its beginning from it;" Tob. iv. 34. As often, therefore, as this pestilential vice shall tempt you, you may defend yourself against it by the following considerations.

4. First of all, consider the dreadful punishment God inflicted on the bad angels for their pride and insolence; they were flung headlong out of heaven in a moment, and cast into the bottomless pit of hell. Consider how this vice darkened and obscured him who but just before shone brighter than all the stars of heaven, and made not only a devil, but even the worst of devils, of him, who before was not only an angel, but the prince of angels. If the angels were treated in this manner, what will become of you, who are nothing but dust and ashes? For neither is God contrary to himself, nor is there with him any respect of persons. Pride is as odious to him in a man as in an angel, and humility, on the other side, as acceptable. It was this gave occasion to St. Augustine to say, "that humility makes angels of men, and that pride makes devils of angels;" Tom. 12. ad Etras in semo. And St. Bernard, for the same reason, says, "That pride humbles a person down from the highest degree to the lowest. The angels, for being proud in heaven, were cast down into hell; and man, for being humble on earth, is raised above the stars of heaven." Septem. c. 2.

5. With this severe punishment inflicted on pride, consider the example which the Son of God has given you of an inconceivable humility, who has taken on him a nature so much beneath his own, for the love of you, and has for the same reason *been obedient to his Father, unto death, nay even to the death of the cross*; Phil. ii. 8. Base and miserable man! let the example of your God here teach you obedience; learn from him, O earth! to humble yourself; learn from him, O dust! to look on yourself as nothing; learn, O Christian! from your Lord and God, *who was meek and humble of heart*; Matt. xi. 29. If you think it below you to imitate the examples of other men, do not think it below you to imitate that of God, who became man as well to humble as to redeem us.

6. Cast your eyes on yourself, and you will there find motives enough of humility. Do but consider what you were before you were born, what you are since you have been born, and what you are like to be after your death. Before your birth, you were a filthy matter unworthy to be named; at present you are a dunghill covered with snow, and in a short time will be meat for worms. What have you now, O man, to be proud of? You whose birth is sin, whose life is misery, and whose end is rot-

tenness and corruption! If the temporal riches you possess are the subject of your pride, stay but a moment, death will come and make us all equal. For as we are all born equal as to our natural condition, so we shall all die equal according to the common necessity of mankind, with this only difference, that they who have had the most here, will have the largest accounts to make up after death. Whereupon St. Chrysostom, speaking to the same purpose, says, "Consider seriously the graves of the dead, and find, if you can, the least marks of all that splendor and magnificence they lived in, or of the riches and pleasures they enjoyed. Tell me now what is become of their rich furniture and costly clothes? where are all their sports and pastimes? what have they done with all their servants and attendants? their sumptuous entertainments, their merriments, their jests and worldly mirth are now all over: Do but go near any one of their graves, and you will find nothing but dust and ashes, with worms and rotten bones." This, therefore, is the end their bodies are to come to, how tenderly and nicely soever they have been treated. And I wish there were no evil beyond or greater than this. But this is not all: there is something follows, that is much more to be apprehended: it is the dreadful tribunal of the Divine Justice, the sentence which will be passed there, the weeping and gnashing of teeth, the never-dying worm, which bites and gnaws the consciences, and the fire which shall never be extinguished.

7. Consider the danger of vain-glory, pride's daughter, of which St. Bernard speaking, says, "It flies lightly, it enters lightly, but it wounds not lightly;" Serm. 6. in Psalm Qui habitat. For this reason you ought, whenever men commend or respect you, to consider immediately whether you really have those qualities they commend you for or not. For if you have not, you have no reason at all to be proud; but if you should perhaps have them, say with the apostle, "By the grace of God I am what I am;" 1 Cor. xv. 10. So that you have no reason to be proud on that account, but, on the contrary, to humble yourself, and to praise God, to whom you are indebted for all you have, that by this means make yourself not unworthy of what he has been pleased to bestow on you; for it is certain, that the respect which men pay to you, and the reason for their doing so, comes from God; and, therefore, you rob God of as much honor as you appropriate to yourself. Can any servant be more unfaithful than he that steals his master's glory? Consider, further, what a folly and madness it is to rate your worth and merit according to the opinion and esteem of men, who have the liberty of turning the scale which way they please, of taking away in a short time what they now give you, and of stripping you of the honor they at present afford you. If you build your reputation on what they say of you to-day, perhaps you will be a great man, as mean

to-morrow, and next day nothing at all; just as a company of inconstant and changeable men shall think fit to talk of you. Your business, therefore, is, never to value yourself on the commendations others give you, but only on what you know of yourself. And though they should cry you up to the very skies, hearken at the same time to what your conscience says, and be persuaded, that you are better acquainted with yourself than other men are, who have only a distant view of you, and can judge of you by nothing else but by what they hear. Take no notice of what men say or think of you, but commit your honor and glory into God's hands; he is wise enough to lay it up for you, and faithful enough to give it you back again.

8. Consider also, O ambitious man, what dangers the desire you have of commanding others exposes you to. For how shall you be able to command others, who have not yet learned to obey? What account shall you be able to give Almighty God of many others, when you are scarce able to answer for yourself? Consider what a hazard you run, by adding to your own those persons' sins who are committed to your care; for they will be all placed to your account. For this reason the Scripture says "That those who are the ministers of justice shall have severe sentence passed against them, and that the mighty shall be mightily tormented;" Sap. vi. 6, 7. Besides, who is able to express the cares and troubles those persons live in who have many others to look after? We have an excellent example hereof in a certain king, who, just as he was going to be crowned, took the crown in his hands before they placed it on his head, and, having looked steadfastly on it for a while, cried out, "O crown, much more thorny than rich! if a man did but know thee thoroughly, he would never stoop to take thee up, though he found thee lying on the ground."

9. Consider once again, O proud man, that your pride is acceptable to no person. It is not acceptable to God, because he is your enemy; for "he resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble;" 1 Pet. v. 5. It cannot but be odious to the humble, because every body sees what a horror they have of any thing that is proud and haughty; nor will those who are themselves as proud as you like it, because they hate you on the very same account that you value yourself, and can endure none that is greater than they are. And what is worst of all, you will never be satisfied with yourself in this world, if you do not but enter into yourself and reflect on your own vanity and folly; and you will have much less contentment in the next world, when you shall be condemned, in punishment of your pride, to eternal torments. God confirms this by the mouth of St. Bernard, when he says, "O man, if you were but thoroughly acquainted with yourself, you would be disagreeable to yourself, and thereon agree

able to me; but for want of knowing yourself, you are puffed up with pride, and therefore it is that I hate you." The time will come when you will neither please yourself nor me; you will not please me, because of the crimes you have committed, nor yourself, because of the torments you shall be condemned to for all eternity. There is none but the devil, that approves your pride; it was this changed him into a most hideous and deformed spirit, from a most glorious and beautiful angel, and, therefore, it is natural to him to be pleased when he sees others like himself.

10. Another motive you may use for humbling of yourself, is the consideration of the small services you have done God, such at least as are sincere and true, and consequently the little favor you are to expect from him; for there are many vices hid under the appearance of virtue, and very often those actions which are good of themselves are spoiled by the pride we take in them; and what men imagine to be as bright as noon-day, frequently proves to be dark as night before God. This most just Judge makes another judgment of things than we do; and an humble sinner is not so odious to him as a proud just man, though we cannot properly call him just who is proud. But after all, let us suppose, that you have done some good works; do but call to mind the ill actions you have been guilty of, and you will find they far outweigh the other, nay, perhaps you will find the good you have done has been so faulty and imperfect, that there would be much more reason to ask pardon than to pretend to any reward for it. And, therefore, St. Augustine said, "Wo to a virtuous life, if God should lay aside his mercy when he examines into it" (St. Aug. L. 9. Cor. c. 13); because it is not at all improbable, that he may condemn it, for those very things we thought would please him; for the evil actions we commit are entirely and purely evil, but the good we do are not always perfectly and absolutely good, being frequently mixed with a great many imperfections. This, duly considered will make you acknowledge that it is far more reasonable to fear than to value yourself on your good works. Job, holy as he was, dreaded it, when he said, "I know, O God, that thou dost not spare him that sins, and therefore I was afraid of all my works;" Job. ix. 28.

§ I. *Of some other more particular Remedies against Pride.*—
11. But because the knowledge of man's self is the chief foundation of humility, so that of pride is man's ignorance of himself; whosoever has a mind to be truly humble must endeavor to acquire this knowledge, and by this means he will know how to humble himself. For how can he choose but have a mean opinion of himself, when, looking into his own breast without partiality, by the light of truth, he finds himself full of sins, defiled all over with the dregs of carnal pleasures, under a thousand mistakes and

errors, scared with a thousand idle frights and fancies, entangled in a thousand perplexities, pressed down by the weight of a mortal body, so forward to all kind of evil, and so backward to any thing that is good? So that if you examine yourself with due care and attention, you will be easily convinced that you have nothing in you to be proud of.

12. But there are some who, though on looking into themselves they are humbled, yet they grow proud by looking on others, finding themselves on comparison better than they. They who are puffed up on this account ought to consider, that if they are better than others in some things, there are many other things, in which, did they perfectly understand themselves, they would see those others are better than they. Why, therefore, should you have a good opinion of yourself, and despise your neighbor, for being more abstemious or more laborious than he is, when, though you excel him in these virtues, he is, perhaps, more humble, more prudent, more patient or more charitable than you? So that it is your business to look not so much upon what you have, as upon what you want, and to take more notice of those virtues you observe in others, than of those you see in yourself; by this means you will preserve your humility, and excite and increase in your soul a desire of perfection. Whereas, if you look only on what you have yourself, and what others want, you will have a better opinion of yourself than of them, and will grow tepid and idle in the study of virtue. The reason is plain, because you will imagine, on comparing yourself with others, that you are something, and so you will come by degrees to be pleased with the state you find yourself in, and will not care for going any further.

13. If, after any good actions, you discover any inclination to think well of yourself, and to take pride in what you have done, your business then will be to watch more carefully over yourself for fear you should spoil and lose all the merit of it, by pride and vain-glory, the very bane of all that is good. You ought to be so far from attributing any good to your own merits, that you are, on the contrary, to thank God for all, and suppress your pride with those words of St. Paul: "What have you that you have not received? And if you have received what you have, why do you grow proud as if you had not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 7. You should endeavor to conceal all those good works you do, which are not of duty, but for your further advance in perfection, unless the state you are in requires they should be more public: you should not as much as let your left hand know what your right hand does, because we are more apt to be proud of the good works we do openly than of others. As soon as you perceive your heart but beginning to swell, you are immediately to make use of the remedy, that is, to call to mind your sins, but particu

larly one or more of the most heinous of them; and thus, like the physicians, you will expel one poison by another: follow the example of the peacock, look on that which is most deformed in you, and you will soon remove the very occasions of your vanity. The greater you are, the more humble you ought to be: for it is no great matter to be humble, if you are a mean person; but if you are a person of honor and quality, and yet are thus disposed, you will acquire a very excellent and great virtue, because humility in the midst of honor is an honor to honor itself, and one dignity added to another; but if you have no humility, your honor and dignity will fall to the ground.

14. If you desire to acquire the virtue of humility, follow the part of humiliation, for you will never be humble if you cannot endure to be humbled: and though there are several persons who pretend to be humble, when in reality they are far from being so, it is certainly true, "that the way to humility (as St. Bernard says) is humiliation; as patience is the way to peace, and study to learning;" St. Bern. ad Fratres De Monte Dei. Obey God, therefore, with all humility, and according to St. Peter's advice, "submit to every creature for the love of God;" 1 Pet. ii. 13.

15. St. Bernard would have us always keep three sorts of fears in our hearts; one when we are in the state of grace, another when we are out of it, and the third when we recover grace again. "Be afraid (says he) when you are in grace, lest you should do something unworthy of it: be afraid when you have lost grace, because without it you are deprived of the guard that watched over you to secure you: be afraid, too, if, after having lost it, you should ever recover it again, that you may not be so unhappy as to lose it a second time;" St. Bern. Serm. 1. in Cantic. Do but keep yourself continually in these apprehensions, and you will never presume on your own strength and virtue, being always thus full of the fear of God.

16. Suffer all your persecutions with patience, for it is the bearing of injuries and affronts in this manner, that shows us whether a man be truly humble or not. Never despise those who are poor and in distress; our neighbor's misery should rather excite us to compassion than to a contempt of them. Be not too curious and expensive in your dress, for it is impossible a man's heart should be always humble when he is perpetually solicitous about costly apparel, nay, he that is so cannot but make it too much his business and study to please men; for a man would never take such pains to dress himself, if he thought no one would take any notice of him. But whilst you endeavor to avoid this extreme, have a care at the same time of running into the opposite, of going meaner than your state and condition requires, otherwise you will meet with vain-glory whilst you are running from it, as several persons do, who then seek most for commen-

dations when they pretend most to despise it; thus cunningly studying to be admired, under the pretence of running from it. You ought not to disdain mean and base employments; for a man that is truly humble will be so far from refusing such, as thinking them beneath him, that he will rather seek after them with all the cheerfulness imaginable, because he is base and vile in his own eyes.

CHAPTER III.

Remedies against Covetousness.

1. COVETOUSNESS is an inordinate desire of riches; and, therefore, not only he that steals from others, but he that passionately covets what is another man's, or is too solicitous in keeping his own, is properly accounted covetous. The apostle condemned this vice, when he said, "They who desire to be rich fall into temptation, and into the snares of the devil, and into a great many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which sink men down into destruction and perdition; for covetousness is the root of all evil;" 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. He could not have exaggerated the malignity of this vice in more proper terms: for this gives us to understand, that he who is subject to this vice is a slave to all others.

2. Whenever, therefore, you are attacked by this vice, you may arm yourself against it with the following considerations: Consider, in the first place, O covetous man, that your Lord and your God, when he came down from heaven on earth, did not desire to possess such riches as those you seek after; on the contrary, he had such an extraordinary love for poverty, that he chose to take flesh of a poor and humble virgin, not of a rich and noble queen. After he was born, he would not live in great palaces, nor lie in a chamber well furnished, nor in a soft bed, but in a base and poor manger, and on a little straw; Luke ii. 7. Besides this, he had a particular love for poverty during his whole life, and despised riches, since he chose poor fishermen for his ambassadors and apostles, and not princes or persons of great quality. What greater abuse can there be, than for a base worm to desire to be rich, when the sovereign Lord of all creatures became so poor for his sake?

3. Consider, again, the vileness of your own heart, since you are willing for a little interest to throw away your soul, which was created to the likeness of God, and redeemed by his blood, in comparison of which all the world is nothing. God would not have given his life for the whole world, and yet he laid it down for man's soul; this soul, therefore, must be of much greater value than the whole world. It is not silver, nor gold, nor precious stones, that are the true riches, but virtue, the inseparable

companion of a good conscience. Lay aside the false opinion and judgment of men, and you will see that your silver and gold is nothing but a little earth, which receives all its worth from the erroneous opinions of men. Will you, who are a Christian, and are called to the enjoyment of greater goods, set such an esteem upon that which all the heathen philosophers contemned and slighted, as to make yourself its slave? for, as St. Jerome says, "He that looks after his riches like a slave is a slave to them; but he that shakes off this yoke, possesses them as lord and master;" Hierom. in c. 6. Matt.

4. Consider, also, that our Saviour says, *no one can serve two masters, God and mammon* (Matt. vi. 24), and that it is impossible for a man to contemplate God whilst he is running open-mouthed after worldly goods; he that loves temporal delights and comforts must not expect to possess the spiritual; nor is there any possibility of joining false and true things together, high and low, eternal and temporal, spiritual and carnal, so as to enjoy them both at once. Consider, that the more success you meet with in your worldly concerns, the more miserable you are like to be, because of the occasions it gives you of trusting too much to this false happiness you enjoy. Oh! that you did but know what misery attends this poor success! The very desire, which proceeds from the love of riches, is a much greater torment than the possession of them can be a delight and pleasure, because it entangles the soul in many temptations, it engages it in many cares, invites it with its empty delights, excites it to sin, and disturbs its rest and quiet: besides all this, there is no getting of riches without pains and labor, there is no keeping of them without solicitude and care, and there is no losing of them without much grief and vexation; but, what is worst of all, they are scarce ever to be heaped up without offending God; for it is a common saying, "That a rich man is either a wicked man, or else a wicked man's heir."

5. Consider what a folly it is to be continually desiring those things which it is certain can never satisfy your wish, though they were all to be joined together; on the contrary, they do but provoke and raise your desire the more; as a dropsical man, the more he drinks, still the drier he is; because, let your possessions be ever so large, you will be always coveting what you have not, and continually gaping after more. So that, whilst your heart is unhappily running after the things of this world, it tires itself without being ever satisfied; it drinks, and yet cannot quench its thirst, because it takes no notice of what it has, and thinks of nothing but how to get more: and what is still worse, that which it is already possessed of cannot give it so much ease and contentment as that, which it cannot obtain, gives it disturbance and trouble; and whilst you are filling your coffers with gold, you fill your

heart full of air and smoke. St. Augustine had a great deal of reason to be astonished at this kind of proceeding, and, therefore, he said, "How is it possible that men should be so insatiable in their desires, when even brute creatures observe a bound and measure in theirs? For they never seek their prey but when they are hungry; and as soon as ever they are satisfied, they give over. There is nothing but the covetousness of rich men that knows no limits; it is perpetually craving, and yet never satisfied." St. Aug. Serm. 25. de Verbis Domini.

6. Consider, again, where there are great riches, there are many to consume them, many to squander or steal them away. What can the richest man in the world get by all his riches, more than what is necessary for the support of life? You may, if you will, put all your trust in God, and cast yourself wholly upon his providence, be free from this care, because he never forsakes those that rely on him; for he that has subjected man to the necessity of eating, will never let him die for want of meat. How can it be thought, that God should take no notice of man, when he feeds the birds of the air, and clothes the lilies of the field (Matt. vi. 26, 28), and this especially when so little serves for the satisfying of nature? Life is short, and death is continually advancing apace; what need is there, then, of providing so much for so short a journey? Why will you load yourself with so much riches, when the less you have the more free you will be, and the better able to walk? And when you shall come to your journey's end, you will find no worse entertainment for being poor, than those that shall come hither richer fraught; you will be less troubled for what you leave, and will have the less to answer for. Whereas the rich, when they come to their journey's end, will be grieved to the heart to leave those heaps of gold they so entirely loved, and will be accountable for what they possessed, to the great danger of their souls.

7. Consider further, O covetous man, for whom you heap up all those riches, since it is a plain case, that you are to go as naked out of the world as you came into it; Job. i. 21. You were born poor in this life, and so you will be forced to leave it. This is what you are frequently to reflect on. For, as St. Jerome says, "It is an easy matter for him that thinks often of death, to despise the goods of this life;" Ad Paulinum in Prologo Bibliæ. At the very moment of your death, you must take your leave of all your temporal goods, and carry nothing away with you but the good or evil works you have done during your life; then you will be deprived of all heavenly goods, if, whilst you lived, you took but little notice of them, and spent all your time and pains in procuring the temporal: for then all you have will be divided into three parts; your body will be given to the worms, your soul to the devils, and your riches will fall into the hands of your heirs,

who will perhaps be either ungrateful, extravagant or wicked. It would be better for you, according to the advice of our Saviour, to distribute your goods amongst the poor betimes, that you may have them carried by them before you, as great men have when they travel; Luke xvi. 9. For what greater madness is there, than to leave your goods where you shall never go back to fetch them, and not to send them where you are to live for ever?

8. Consider, further, that the sovereign Governor of the world, like a discreet master of a family, disposes of his goods, and the charges under him, in such a manner as that some he constitutes to look after the rest, and others he appoints to be subject to those whom he sets over them; some he has ordered to distribute what is necessary, and others to receive the distributions. And since you are one of those who are to distribute to others, what remains over and above your own necessary expenses, can you imagine, that you are allowed to keep that for yourself which has been given you for several others? For, as St. Basil says, "the bread you lock up, belongs to the poor; the clothes you hide, are for those who have none to put on; and the money you hoard up, is to be distributed amongst those that want it;" Hom. de Diversis. Therefore assure yourself, that you have robbed as many persons as you have neglected to assist with what you had to spare, whenever it was in your power to do it. Consider, then, that the goods God has intrusted you with, are the remedies of human miseries, not the occasion of a bad life. Be sure, then, when you are in the midst of your prosperity, that you do not forget the Author of it; nor make the means you have of assisting your neighbor in his distress, the subject of your pride and vanity: do not, therefore, love the place of your banishment more than your own country: do not make a burden of the provisions and necessaries for your journey: do not prefer the light of the moon before the sun at noon-day; nor change the succors of this life into the instruments of everlasting death. Be content with the condition God has placed you in, and think of what the apostle says, *Having enough for to feed and clothe ourselves with, we are content therewith* (1 Tim. vi. 8); for, as St. Chrysostom says, "A servant of God ought not to dress himself out of vanity, or to indulge and please his flesh, but only to supply necessity and want." *First seek the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added to you.* For God will never deny you such small things as those are, when he is willing to give you the greatest you are capable of receiving.

9. Remember it is not poverty, but the love of it, that is a virtue. Those who are voluntarily poor, are like our Saviour himself, who, as rich as he was, made himself poor for our sakes. But those who are poor, and cannot help it, make a virtue of necessity, when they bear their poverty with patience, and contemn

those riches which they have not. And as they who are poor conform themselves by their poverty to Jesus Christ, so they who are rich reform themselves by their alms for Jesus Christ. For we see, that not only the poor shepherds, but that wise and great men came to him, and made him presents of their riches and treasures. Do you, therefore, who have an estate large enough to do it, give alms to the poor, for it is God that receives what you give them, and look on it for certain, that what you bestow on them now, will be laid up for you in heaven, where you are to live for all eternity: but if you should hide your riches in this world, you must not expect to find any thing there, where you have not laid it up. With what justice, then, can we call those things good, which man cannot carry along with him, and which he unwillingly parts with? But spiritual goods, on the contrary, are what we may truly call such, because they do not leave their master, even at his death, nor can they be taken from a man without his own consent.

§ I. *That no person ought to detain another Man's Goods.*—
10. A word or two of advice here, on the danger there is in detaining other men's goods, will not be amiss. To which purpose you are to understand, that it is not only a sin to take what belongs to another, but even to detain it against the owner's will. And it is not enough to have a design of restoring it hereafter, if a man is able to do it now, because he is not only obliged to make restitution, but to make it immediately. It is true that if he cannot do it presently, or is so poor that he cannot do it at all, he is not in such a case obliged either to the one or to the other, because God does not oblige a man to any thing that is impossible.

11. There is no need of any more words to prove what I have said, than those of St. Gregory, in his letter to a gentleman of his acquaintance. "Remember, sir (says he), that the riches gotten by unlawful ways are to remain here, and the sins you have been guilty of in acquiring them are to go along with you. What greater folly can you commit than to leave the gain here, and to carry the loss with you where you are going? to let another take the pleasure, whilst you undergo the torment, and to oblige yourself to suffer in the next world for that which others are to have the benefit of in this?"

12. "Besides, can there be a greater madness than to look less to yourself than to your estate? to lose your soul rather than part with your money, and to expose your body to the danger of being run through, rather than part with your coat? This is something like Judas, who, for a little money, sold justice, grace and his own soul. If, in fine, it is true, as without doubt it is, that you must make restitution at the hour of death, if you design to save your soul, how can you show yourself a greater fool than to continue here so long in sin, to sleep in sin, to awake in sin, to

confess in sin, to communicate in sin, and to lose what a man in sin loses, which is worth much more than all the riches of the world, whilst, at the same time, you are so strictly obliged to pay off whatever you owe? We cannot look on him as a man of sound judgment or reason that will run such hazards as these."

13. Endeavor, therefore, to pay what you owe to the utmost farthing, and let not any one suffer for want of your doing so; Deut. xxiv. Tob. iv. Let not the laborer's toil and sweat go unrewarded; let him not run up and down and lose his time in seeking after its wages, and to take more pains in soliciting for them, when due, than he did in earning of them, as bad paymasters often do. If you be made an executor, do not defraud the souls departed of the succor and help that is due to them, lest they should suffer their torments longer on account of your neglect; for all will fall heavy at last on your own soul. If you are indebted to your servants, endeavor to make all clear and even with them, that so you may disengage yourself; or, at least, agree with them on such terms whilst you live, that there may be no disputes nor differences after your death. Whatsoever you can perform of your own will, leave not to executors; for how can you imagine, if you are so careless in your own concerns, that other persons will be more diligent in concerns which were none of their own?

14. Endeavor to be indebted to no man, for by that means you will sleep quietly, enjoy peace of conscience, an easy life and a calm death. The means to obtain all this is, to put a stop to your irregular desires and appetites, and not to do every thing you have a mind to do; to see that your expenses do not exceed your estate, but to moderate them according to your ability, and not according to your own desires, that so you may always keep out of debt. For they are our unruly appetites which make us run into debt; moderation is worth more than a great estate and large revenues. Look on these as the chief and only true riches, which the apostle reckons as such, when he says, "Piety with content," in what condition God puts us in, "is great gain;" 1 Tim. vi. 6. Men would always live in peace, did not they desire to be greater and happier in this world than God would have them; but when they aspire to go beyond this bound, they must of necessity lose a great deal of their peace and quiet, for we must not expect that should prove successful which is not according to the Almighty's will.

CHAPTER IV.

Remedies against Impurity.

1. **IMPURITY** is an inordinate desire of unlawful pleasures. It is one of the most common, the most furious and most dangerous

vices, in its attacks; which gave St. Augustine reason to say, "That of all the encounters a Christian meets with, those in which chastity is engaged are the most difficult, for there the engagements are frequent, and the victories rare;" S. Aug. de honestate Mulierum.

2. As often, therefore, as you perceive yourself set upon by this filthy vice, you must oppose it with the following considerations; Consider, first, that this vice not only defiles the soul, which the Son of God has purified by his blood, but that it also stains the body, in which Christ's most sacred body resides, as in a holy shrine. Now, if it be so great a crime to defile any material temple dedicated to God, what must it be to profane this, in which God himself dwells? For this reason the apostle says, "Fly from the sin of fornication, my brethren, because whatsoever sin a man shall commit, it is out of the body; but he who falls into fornication, sins against his own body" (1 Cor. vi. 18), by profaning and defiling it with the sin of the flesh. Consider, again, that there is no committing of this sin, without an injury and scandal to as many others as are accomplices with you in your crime. Nothing lies so heavy on the conscience at the hour of death as this sin does. For if God, in the old law, required life for life, and tooth for tooth, what returns can a man make God for the destroying so many souls? And what satisfaction can be given for that, which the Almighty purchased at the price of his blood? Exod. xxi. 24.

3. Consider that this deceitful vice, though it begins in pleasure, produces nothing but bitterness and sorrow at the end. It is easy to be drawn into it, but nothing harder than to get free from it again. For this reason the wise man said, "That a whore is a deep ditch, and a strange woman is a narrow pit;" Prov. xiii. So that as easy as it is to fall into it, it is no such easy matter to get out again. For no vice surprises men more easily, because it appears so delightful and charming at the beginning, but after they are once entangled in it, have knit a sort of friendship, and laid aside all modesty, what means can serve to reclaim them from it? For this reason it is justly compared to a fisherman's wheel, which has the entrance wide, but the way out so narrow, that it is almost impossible for the fish, when once they are in, to get out again. By this you may understand what a multitude of sins are the consequence of this one; for it is plain, that during the whole time a man has been engaged in it, he cannot but have offended God an infinite number of times, by thoughts, actions and desires.

4. Consider how many other evils this bewitching plague brings along with it. For, in the first place, it robs a man of his reputation, which is the dearest of all things we can possess in this world; for no vice whatever is so disreputable and infamous as this is. Nor is this all, for it impairs strength, decays beauty,

destroys the good temper of the body, is prejudicial to health, and causes many foul and loathsome distempers; it blasts the gaiety, steals the freshness of youth before its time, and brings on an infamous old age too fast on us; it dulls the wit, clogs the understanding, and makes it in a manner nearly brutal; it takes a man off from all honorable employs and virtuous exercises, and buries him in the mud and filth of this base pleasure, so that he can neither think nor talk, nor treat of any thing, but what is base and filthy; it makes youth foolish and infamous, and old age unhappy and abominable. Nor is it content with all this disorder, which it causes in a man's own person—it puts all his affairs and concerns into no less confusion. For though a man be ever so rich or wealthy, this one sin of impurity will run all out in a very short time. The belly must come in for its share, and help to destroy and devour what it can. For those men that are given to the sins of the flesh, are for the most part gluttons and drunkards, and so squander away what they have in feasting and fine clothes. Besides, women think they have never enough of jewels, costly apparel, and other expensive toys, which they love much better than they do those very gallants that give them. We have an example of this in the prodigal son, who spent all his patrimony after this manner; Luke xv.

5. Consider, further, that the more you indulge yourself in carnal pleasures, the less satisfaction you will find in them. For this delight is so far from satiating, that it still creates an appetite; because the love of man for woman, or woman for man, never dies; but, though it happen to be a little smothered in embers, will break out into flames again. Consider how short and fleeting this pleasure is; whereas the punishment due to it will last for all eternity. So that it is a most unequal exchange to give the patience of a good conscience in this life, and eternal glory in the next, besides purchasing everlasting torments, for a filthy pleasure of a moment's lasting. This it was made St. Gregory say, "The delight lasts but for a moment, but the torments last for ever."

6. Consider the price and value of virginal purity, which is lost by this vice, because they who are virgins begin, even in this life, to live like angels, and the brightness of their souls makes them resemble the heavenly spirits; because, "to live in the flesh without doing the works of the flesh, is more an angelical than a human virtue;" S. Bern. in Nat. Virg. St. Jerome says, "It is virginity which resembles the estate of immortal glory in this place, and during this time of mortality; it is it alone which follows the custom of the heavenly Jerusalem, where is no such thing as betrothing or marrying, and by this means gives men a proof, whilst they are upon earth, of the conversation they are to have in heaven;" S. Hier. to 9. & 14. de Virginitatis Laude.

For this reason, there is a particular reward in heaven for virgins; of whom St. John says, in his Apocalypse, "These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes;" Apoc. xiv. 14. For since they have had the advantage in this world over the rest of mankind, of imitating Christ in his virginal purity, they shall, therefore, have a freer access to him in the next, and the purity of their bodies shall give them a particular happiness and joy.

7. Nor is it the only effect of this virtue, to make those who possess it like Christ himself, but it makes them living temples of the Holy Ghost; for as this divine lover of purity abhors nothing so much as the sins of the flesh, so he no where so willingly makes his abode as in pure and chaste souls. Wherefore the Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, had such an esteem and love for virginity, as to work the miracle of being born of a virgin mother. Do you, who have already lost your virginity, after once suffering shipwreck, dread dangers you have run through? And since you would not preserve that gift of nature entire, endeavor now, at least, to repair the loss, and turning to God after sin, employ yourself so much the more in good works, by how much you are sensible your evil actions have deserved punishment. "For (as St. Gregory says) it often happens, that a soul which, if it had remained in a state of innocence, would have been more tepid and careless, becomes after sin more diligent and fervent;" S. Greg. in Pastoral. Par. 1. And since God, notwithstanding the many sins you have committed, has yet preserved you, commit not any thing again, which may oblige him to punish you, both for what is past and for the present, lest your last crime should be much worse than your former.

8. With these and the like considerations, a man is to prepare and arm himself against this vice; and these are the first remedies we prescribe against it.

§ I. *Of other more particular Remedies against Impurity.*—

9. Besides these general remedies against this vice, there are several others, more particular and more sovereign, of which it is requisite we should speak. The first is, to resist the very first motions of it; it is an advice we have frequently given in other places; for if we do not beat this enemy off as soon as ever he sets on us, he immediately grows stronger and more vigorous; because, according to St. Gregory, "when once the irregular desire of pleasure gets the better of the heart, it will not give it time to think of any thing else, but how to enjoy its delights;" L. 7. Moral. c. 12. We must, for this reason, resist the beginning, by not giving admittance to any carnal thoughts; for as fire is nourished and kept in by wood, so our thoughts increase and inflame our desires, which, if they are good, kindle the fire of charity and if bad, that of impurity.

10. Besides all this, you must keep a strict guard upon all your senses ; but, above all, have a care of looking on any thing that has the least danger in it : for a man often looks upon a thing without any ill design, yet the soul is wounded by a glance of the eye. And because the casting of a look inconsiderately upon women may either quite bend, or at least weaken his constancy that casts it, therefore the author of Ecclesiasticus gives us this advice : “ Cast not your eyes through the corners of the city, nor through the streets or public places ; turn away your eyes from a woman that is well dressed, and behold not her beauty.” Holy Job’s example upon this occasion should suffice, who, notwithstanding his extraordinary sanctity, never neglected, as he assures us himself, to set a watch over his eye, not relying upon himself, or his long practice of virtue ; Job xxxi. 1. But if this example alone will not do, let us set that of David before us, and we shall find that he, though a very holy man, and after God’s own heart, by looking curiously upon a woman, fell into three most grievous sins, viz. murder, scandal and adultery ; 2 Kings xi.

11. Nor are you to be less careful in keeping your ears from hearing of any thing that is obscene and unchaste ; or if at any time you should hear such kind of discourse, let your looks show that you are not pleased with it ; for if a man once takes delight in hearing a thing, he will be easily wrought upon to act it. You must also keep your tongue from speaking filthy words, because, as St. Paul says, *Evil communications corrupt good manners* ; 1 Cor. xv. 13. A man’s discourse discovers his inclinations and affections, because it is the touchstone of the heart, and it is what this is full of, that the tongue generally speaks out.

12. Endeavor to have your heart always entertained with good thoughts, and your body always employed in some good exercise. “ For,” as St. Bernard says, “ the devils always put bad thoughts into an idle soul, to keep it in employ, that so it may not cease to think ill, though it ceases to do ill ;” S. Bern. de Doct. Democ. 40.

13. It will be very proper in all temptations, but especially in this, to represent to yourself your guardian angel and the devil your accuser, for both of them really take notice of all you do, and give an account thereof to the same all-seeing Judge. If this be true, as there is no doubt to be made of it, how can you dare to commit so base and so detestable a crime, which you would blush to do before the meanest man in the world, in the sight of your guardian, of your accuser, and of your judge ? Reflect, also, how terrible the divine judgment is, and how dreadful the flames of everlasting torments. For as one nail drives out another, so the apprehension we have of one punishment is overcome by the fear of a greater ; and so the fire of lust is often extinguished by reflecting upon that of hell. Besides all this, avoid, as much as

possibly you can, the discoursing alone with any woman, whose age may give the least suspicion; for, according to St. Chrysostom, "our adversary sets upon men and women with more boldness and vigor, when he sees them alone; and the tempter will come with much more assurance, when there is no fear of any one's correcting them for their disorders;" S. Chrysost. Serm. contra Concubenarios, tom. 5. It is for this reason very advisable, that you would never converse with a woman without some companion; for being alone is a great excitement and temptation to do any thing that is wicked. Do not trust your own virtue, no, not after the practice of many years; for you know how the old judges were inflamed with the love of Susanna, after having seen her several times alone in her garden; Dan. xiii. Avoid the company of all women whatever, that may give any suspicion; because the very sight of them is prejudicial to the heart, their words charm it, their conversation inflames it, their touch provokes it; in fine, there is nothing about them that is not a snare to those that keep them company. For this reason St. Gregory says, "Those who have consecrated their bodies to chastity should not venture to live in the same house with women; for a man ought not to think that the fire of his heart is quite put out, as long as he has any heat in his body;" L. i. Dialog. c. 7.

14. Have a care how you receive any presents, visits or letters from women; for all these are so many chains to entangle the poor heart, and so many blasts to blow up the fire of evil desires, when all the flame is quite out. If you have any affection for any holy and chaste woman, love her in your soul, without troubling yourself about visiting or conversing familiarly with her. Now, because the whole management of this business consists particularly in avoiding these occasions, I will give you two examples, very pertinent to the matter in hand, related by St. Gregory in his Dialogues: "There was a certain priest, in the province of Mysia, who governed a church committed to his care with a great deal of piety, and in the fear of God. There was in the same place a very virtuous woman, who looked to the church-furniture and ornaments. The good priest loved this woman as entirely as if she had been his sister, but at the same time was as much afraid of her as if she had been his enemy; so that he never permitted her to come near him, on any account whatever, and removed all occasion of familiarity or conversation with her; as it is usual for holy men to separate themselves even from such things as are lawful, that they may be at a greater distance from such as are unlawful; and for this reason he would never let her serve him in any of his necessities. The holy man being very old, for he had been a priest above forty years, was taken so violently ill, that he was just at death's door; as he lay in this condition, this virtuous woman came to his bed-side, and put her ear to his nos-

trils, to know whether he was dead. The dying man, perceiving it, was offended, and cried out as loud as he possibly could, saying, 'Get you hence, woman, get you hence; for the embers are not quite extinguished yet—therefore, take away the straw.' The woman immediately went away, and he, recovering as it were fresh strength, began to say, with a great deal of joy and cheerfulness, 'You are come, my lords, at a happy time, you are come at a good hour. How could you vouchsafe to come to so mean a servant as I am? I come, I come. I give you a thousand and a thousand thanks.' As he repeated the same words over and over again, those that were standing by asked him whom he spoke to: he wondered at their question, and made them this answer: 'What, do not you see the glorious apostles St. Peter and St. Paul?' And immediately turning himself towards them, he began again to cry out, 'I come, I come.' The words were no sooner out of his mouth, but he gave up his soul to God." Lib. 4. Dialog. c. 7. St. Gregory gives us this example of so holy a man, together with his happy death, in the Fourth Book of his Dialogues; for he that was so much afraid of offending God while he lived, could not but make a very glorious end.

15. He gives another, in the Third Book of the same Dialogues, of a holy bishop, though not so discreet and cautious, which I will here relate for a warning to those who are not so much upon their guard as they should be. The saint assures us there were almost as many witnesses of it as there were people in the town where it happened.

16. "There was in a certain city of Italy a bishop, whose name was Andrew, who, having always lived a very virtuous and holy life, permitted a pious and devout woman to live in the same house with him, as being well assured of her virtue and chastity. The devil, laying hold of this opportunity, found a way to get into his heart, and began first to imprint the form of this woman in his mind, and to excite him to impure and wanton thoughts. It happened at the same time, that a certain Jew, as he was traveling from Campania to Rome, was benighted not far from this bishop's city, and not finding any other place to lodge in, was obliged to take up in a ruinous temple of idols, where he laid himself down to sleep. But fearing some ill neighborhood, though he had no faith in the cross, yet having observed that the Christians used to sign themselves with it whenever they were in any danger, he did so too. Not being able to sleep for fear, about midnight he saw a great troop of devils come into the temple, and one above the rest, setting himself in a chair in the middle of the temple, began to ask those evil spirits what mischief each of them had done in the world. Every one of them, in his turn, having told how he had behaved himself, out stepped one of them at last and told him, that he had solicited bishop Andrew to sin, by rep-

resenting to him the form of a devout woman he had with him in his house. As the malicious devil that presided was listening very attentively to this relation, looking upon the gains the greater the more pious the person was, the evil one that gave him this account went on and told him, that the day before, in the evening, he tempted him so violently, that, coming to the holy woman with a smiling countenance, he gave her a little stroke on the shoulders. Hereupon the old enemy of mankind began to encourage this tempter to go through what he had begun, that he might receive a particular reward for so noble an action. The Jew stood still during this ceremony, and saw all that passed, trembling with fear at so dreadful a spectacle. At last the evil spirit, who was chief of the company, sent some to see who it was had been so bold as to sleep there. When they had viewed him very narrowly, they cried out, 'Alas! alas! it is an empty vessel, but well sealed;' at which the whole gang of evil spirits vanished immediately. When they were gone, up rose the Jew, and made what haste he could into the city, and there finding the bishop in the church he took him aside, and asked him if he was not troubled with some particular temptation. The bishop denying it, for shame, the Jew told him, that at such a time, naming the day, he cast a wanton eye upon a servant of God. The bishop continuing still to deny the whole matter, the Jew said to him, 'Why do you deny what I ask you, when but yesterday, in the evening, you went so far as to give her a little blow with your hand over the shoulders?' The bishop, astonished at what the Jew had told him, and perceiving himself caught in this fault, freely confessed what he had denied before; and then the Jew told him how he came to know it. As soon as the bishop had heard all, he prostrated himself upon the earth, and prayed very devoutly to Almighty God, and immediately after dismissed not only the holy woman, but all the maid-servants he had. He built a chapel in the honor of St. Andrew, in the very same temple of Apollo in which the Jew had heard this passage, and was never troubled again with any such temptation. Besides this, he converted the Jew, by whose vision and admonition he had been cured himself, to the true knowledge of God, instructed him in the mysteries of our faith, baptized and received him into the church. Thus the Jew happened to find his own salvation, whilst he was procuring another man's, and our Lord made use of the same means to bring one to good life, and to preserve another therein." L. 3. Dial. c. 7. I could instance here a great many other examples to this purpose, both of past times and of our own; but these two shall serve at present.

CHAPTER V.

Remedies against Envy.

1. ENVY is a sorrow at other men's goods, and a repining at their happiness, that is, at great persons, because the envious man sees he cannot be equal to them; at his inferiors, because they endeavor to equal him; and at his equals, because they vie with him. Thus Saul envied David, and the Pharisees Christ, to that degree as to procure his death; 1 Kings xix. For this passion is so cruel as not to spare even such persons as these. This sin is mortal in its kind, because it is as directly opposite to charity as hatred is; though it often proves not to be mortal, which, as in all other sins, so in this of envy happens, when the envy is not consummate. For as there is a downright hatred, and a sort of an aversion, which cannot be called a perfect hatred, though it is not far from it, there is also a perfect and an imperfect envy; but the latter leads to the former.

2. This is one of the most powerful and most prejudicial sins that is, and which of all others has the greatest command and rule in the world, but particularly in courts and great men's houses. Nay, there is no society, community or monastery, that can escape it. What man is there, then, that can defend himself against this monster? Who is there so happy as neither to envy others, nor to be envied himself? For when a man considers what envy there has been in former times;—I do not speak of that which was between the two brothers, Romulus and Remus, the first founders of Rome, but of that which was between the two brothers who first peopled the world, and went so far as to make one of them kill the other (Gen. iv.); of that which Joseph's brothers bore him, when they sold him for a slave (Gen. xxxvii); of that which was between our Saviour's disciples themselves, before the Holy Ghost's coming down upon them (Luke xxii); and above all, of that which Aaron and Mary, the chosen of God, bore their brother Moses; Numb. xii.;—when a man reflects upon all this, what must he think of other men in the world, who are neither so holy as these persons were, nor so nearly related to one another? This is certainly one of the vices that most predominates in the world, and does the most mischief without making any noise. For its proper effect is to persecute good men, and such as are esteemed for their virtue and other commendable qualities. This is its chief aim: for this reason Solomon says, "That men's pains and labors lie all open to the envy of their neighbor;" Eccles. iv. 4.

3. You ought, therefore, upon this consideration, to be very cautious, and to arm yourself well against this enemy, by continual prayer to God to assist you against him, and by being careful

of rejecting it upon all occasions. And if it should continue still to solicit and disturb you, be you still constant and vigorous in beating it off; for it matters not, though the malicious flesh feel the slight stroke of this weak motion, so long as the will does not consent to it. So that if at any time you should see your neighbor or friend in a happier and more thriving condition than yourself, thank God for it, and persuade yourself either you have not deserved to fare so well as he does, or, at least, that it is not requisite you should; and never forget, that to envy another man's happiness is no relief to your poverty, but rather an increase and addition to your misery.

4. But if you would know what weapons you must make use of against this vice, let them be the following considerations:— Consider, therefore, in the first place, that envious persons resemble the devils, who are extremely troubled at the good works we do, and at the eternal happiness we are capable of; and this, not because men losing this happiness can give them any hopes of obtaining it, for they are out of all hopes of ever recovering it again, but because men that are formed out of the dust of the earth enjoy what they have for ever lost. It was this that made St. Augustine say, in his book of Christian Doctrine, “God preserve not only the hearts of Christians, but of all mankind, from ever falling into this vice; because it is diabolical, particularly imposed upon the devil, and for which he will suffer for all eternity without any reprieve or respite.” For the devil is not punished for committing adultery, or for any robbery or theft he has been guilty of, but for having envied man, that stood when he was fallen. So envious men, like the devils, envy other persons not so much because they pretend to be as happy as those others are, as because they would have those others as miserable as themselves. Consider, therefore, O envious man, that you would not be the better for those goods for which you envy another, though he whom you envy had them not; so that, if his having what he has be no prejudice to you, you have no reason to be troubled at it. If you envy another man's virtue, consider you are in this point your own enemy, because there is no good work your neighbor does which you have not a share in, if you are in but the state of grace; and the more he merits, the more you gain for yourself. You have so little reason, therefore, to envy his virtue, that you ought to rejoice both of his profit and your own, since you have a share in his good. Consider, therefore, what a misfortune it is, that your neighbor's growing better should make you grow worse; whereas those very goods which you cannot have would be yours through charity, if you would but love them in your neighbor; and by this means you would enjoy the benefit of other men's labors, without taking any pains yourself.

5. Consider that envy burns up the heart, parches the flesh, wearies the understanding, robs a man of his peace of conscience, banishes all kinds of joy and pleasure from the soul, and makes him melancholy and uneasy all his life-time. It is like a worm that generates in wood, which gnaws away and consumes the very wood that gave it being. After the same manner, the first thing that envy preys on is the heart itself, from whence it receives its rise and origin. When once it has corrupted the heart, it soon disfigures and changes the color of the face; and you may guess by the outward paleness at the disturbance and trouble there is within. For there is no judge in the world so severe as this vice is against itself, for it is perpetually punishing and tormenting its own author. And, therefore, several learned men very properly call it *just*, not because it is really so, being a heinous sin, but because it is itself a punishment to him that has it, and so far does justice on him.

6. Consider also how opposite it is to charity, which is God, and how much against the common good, which every one should promote, as far as he can; for to envy another man's happiness, and to hate those persons whom God had created and redeemed, and on whom he is continually bestowing so many favors, what is this but to dislike and undo what God has done in will at least, and in desire, if not in effect and actions? But if you would have a more efficacious remedy against this poison, love humility and abhor sin, which is the mother of this plague. Because a proud man, not being able to endure any one above, or even equal to him, is easily wrought on to envy those persons who have any kind of advantage over him, persuading himself, that the higher another man rises, he must of course fall the lower. The apostle was very sensible of this, when he said, "Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, challenging one another, envying one another" (Galat. v. 26); designing by these words to disarm the envy, and therefore begins with ambition, which is the very root from whence it springs. For the same reason you should wean your affections from the love of worldly riches, and fix it upon none but the spiritual, and on the inheritance you are to have in heaven; because this treasure is of such a nature that it will never grow less, because there are many to enjoy it; for, on the contrary, the more there are to possess it, the more it increases; whereas worldly riches, the more they are distributed, the sooner they are diminished. Therefore it is that envy torments the soul of him that covets this kind of wealth, because another person, getting what he covets, either deprives him entirely of it, or at least diminishes what he would have had. For a man can scarce forbear being troubled if another carries away that which he had set his heart on.

7. Nay, it is not enough for you to be troubled at your neigh-

bor's prosperity, you must further endeavor to do him all the good you can, and pray to God that he would be pleased to assist him in what you cannot. Hate no man, love your friends in God, and your enemies for the sake of God, who has such a tender and passionate love for you, though you were first his enemy, as to lay down his life to deliver you from the power of your enemies. And though your neighbor be a wicked man, yet you are not to hate him for his being so, but in such a case you must act the part of a physician who loves his patient, though he hates his distemper; and this is nothing else but to love what God has done, and hate that which has been done by man. Never say within yourself, What have I to do with this man? or what am I obliged to that man for? I do not know him; he is no relation of mine; he never did me any good turn, but I am sure he has done me many a bad one. All you have to do is, to reflect on those infinite favors you have received from God, without ever having deserved them. All the return he requires is that you would be liberal and kind, not to him, for he has no need of any of your riches, but to your neighbor, whom he has recommended to you.

CHAPTER VI.

Remedies against Gluttony.

1. **GLUTTONY** is an inordinate love of eating and drinking. Our Saviour gave us a charge against this, when he said, "Have a care of yourselves, for fear your hearts should be overcharged with excess of eating and drinking, and with the care of your life;" Luke xxi. 34.

2. Whenever, therefore, you find yourself tempted by this vice, make use of the following considerations, in order to overcome the temptation. Consider, in the first place, that death came into the world by the sin of gluttony (Gen. iii.), and, therefore, this is to be the first battle you are to win. For the less you oppose this vice, the more powerful the rest will grow, and you at the same time the less able to encounter them. If, therefore, you would come off with victory, subdue gluttony first, for, unless you overcome this vice, you will labor against the others to no purpose. Do but destroy the enemies that are within, and you will find it no hard matter to overcome those that are without. It avails little to fight against enemies abroad, whilst there are others more dangerous at home. For this reason the devil tempted our Saviour first with gluttony, to make himself master of the gate which all other vices enter in at.

3. Cast your eyes on the extraordinary abstinence of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who dealt very severely with his most sacred

flesh, not only during his fast in the desert, but at several other times, suffering hunger for our example, as well as for our benefit; Matt. iv. Now if he who maintains the angels by his presence, and feeds the birds of the air, suffered hunger for you, it is much more reasonable that you should endure it for yourself. What pretence have you to value yourself on being Christ's servant, if, whilst he is fasting, you spend your whole life in eating and drinking? if, whilst he is undergoing all kind of hardships for you, you will suffer nothing at all for yourself? John xix. If you imagine this cross of abstinence is too heavy, reflect on the vinegar and gall which our Saviour tasted on the cross (Matt. xxvii.); because, as St. Bernard says, "There is no meat so unsavory but which may be made palatable, if mixed with the gall and vinegar of Jesus Christ."

4. Consider the abstinence of all the holy fathers of the desert, who, retiring themselves far from any human conversation, crucified the flesh with all its inordinate appetites, in imitation of Christ, and were able, by the favor of this same Lord, to live several years on nothing but roots, and observed such rigorous abstinence as seems incredible to us. If these men followed Christ so close, and got to heaven this way, how can you expect to go where they are, if you follow no other path but that of delight and pleasures?

5. Consider how many poor souls there are that would be glad of a little bread and water, to satisfy their hunger, and by this you will perceive how merciful and liberal God has been to you, in providing so much better for you than he has done for them; and how unreasonable it is to make his liberality and favors the instruments of your gluttony. Consider, again, how often you have received the sacred Host in your mouth, and never consent that death should enter in at the same gate which life comes in at. Consider that the pleasure of eating is confined to a very narrow space, and a short time. - What, then, can be more unreasonable than that the whole earth, air and sea should not suffice to satisfy so small a part of man, and so short a pleasure? Yet for this very often the poor are robbed, for this many outrages are committed, that so the hunger of the little ones may become the delight of great ones. It is a miserable case, that the satisfying of so small a part should cast man headlong into hell, and that all his members and senses should suffer everlasting torments for the greediness of one of them. Do not you perceive how grossly you err in pampering that flesh which will soon be food for the worms, and neglect the soul, which shall at the same time be brought before the tribunal of God, where, if it be found empty of virtues, though the belly be ever so full of its dainties, it shall be condemned to everlasting tortures? Nor shall the body escape when the soul is punished, because it was created for the soul, so

it shall be tormented with it. So that, despising that which is the best part of you, and making much of that which is the worst, you unhappily lose both, and destroy yourself with your own food; because you make the flesh, which was given for your help and assistance, the very snare to catch your soul in, which shall one day be the companion of your torments, as it was here of your sins.

6. Remember how poor and hungry Lazarus was, who desired to feed on the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and could not get them (Luke xvi.); yet he was carried after his death, by the hands of angels into Abraham's bosom; whereas the rich glutton, who was clothed in purple, was buried in hell. For it is impossible that hunger and gluttony, pleasure and temperance, should meet with the same success in the end; when once death comes, pleasures will be punished with miseries, and miseries rewarded with pleasures. What advantage have you reaped by all your former excesses in eating and drinking? All you have got is the remorse of conscience, which will perhaps sting and gall you for all eternity. So that you have quite lost all you have devoured with so much lavishness, and all you have kept for yourself is what you have given away to the poor; this is laid up securely for you in heaven.

7. But to prevent your falling into this vice, you must consider, in the first place, that when necessity requires to be satisfied, the pleasure which lies hid under this cloak, designs to obtain its end, and the more it covers its inordinate appetite, under the pretence of a lawful necessity, the more easily men are deceived by it. For this reason you are to use a great deal of caution and prudence in restraining the desires of pleasure, and in putting sensuality under the government of reason. If, then, you have a mind that your flesh should be subject to and serve the soul, make your soul submit itself to God; for it is requisite the soul should be governed by God, that it may by that means rule and tame the flesh. By the observance of this order we shall be very securely conducted, that is, when God shall govern reason, reason direct the soul, and the soul command the body, and thus the whole man will be entirely reformed and changed. Whilst, on the contrary, if the soul be not governed by reason, and if reason does not conform in all things to the will of God, the body will be always rising up against the soul.

8. When you are tempted by gluttony, fancy you have already enjoyed that short delight, and that it is already over; for the delight of the taste is like a past dream, with this difference, that the conscience is disturbed after the pleasure is over. Whereas, if you overcome the pleasure, your conscience continues quiet and easy. There is an excellent sentence of one of the learned ancients, which comes home to our present purpose. It is this: "If

you have had any trouble in the performance of a virtuous action, the trouble soon passes away, and the virtue remains; but if you have taken any pleasure in committing an evil action, the pleasure is soon over, and then there is nothing left but the filth of it;" Aul. Gel. Noct. Attic.

CHAPTER VII.

Remedies against Anger, and the Hatred and Enmities which arise from it.

1. ANGER is an inordinate desire of revenge against any one we imagine has offended us. The apostle has left us a good medicine against this vice, when he says, "Let all bitterness, and anger, and wrath, and noise, and blasphemy, be removed from you, with all kind of malice. Be kind and merciful to one another, as God has given you in Christ." Ephes. v. 21, 22. Our Saviour, speaking in St. Matthew of this vice, says, "Every one that is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; but he that shall call him fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire;" Matt. v. 16.

2. Whenever you find yourself in danger of running into this outrageous vice, do not forget to make use of the following considerations, and to arm yourself as much as you can against the temptation. Consider, in the first place, that even beasts live peaceably with those of their own kind. We see that elephants are friendly to one another; that sheep and oxen are in their flocks and herds, that the little birds fly together; that cranes take it by turns to stand sentry in the night; that storks, stags, dolphins, and many other creatures, do the same; every body knows the friendships there is between the ants and the bees; nay, even wild beasts, be they ever so cruel, are at peace with one another. The lion does not vent his fury on lions, bears do not fight with bears, one wolf does not devour another, nor do dragons fall out amongst themselves. In fine, the very devils, the first authors of all our discord, have their mutual ties, and exercise their tyranny by common consent. Man, whom peace most becomes, and who stands most in need of it, is the only creature that entertains an inveterate hatred against his own kind. Nor is it less remarkable, that nature has furnished all other creatures with arms to fight, as the horse with his feet, bulls with horns, boars with tusks, bees with stings, birds with beaks and talons, and even gnats and flies are not without the power of biting; but thou, O man, whom she has designed for peace and concord, she sent into the world naked and unarmed, that thou mightest have nothing at all to do harm with. Reflect, then, how unnatural it

is for you to endeavor to be revenged, or to return an injury that has been offered you, especially with weapons sought without yourself, which nature denied you.

3. Consider, in the next place, that anger and the desire of revenge is a vice that becomes none but wild beasts, of whose savage fury Solomon says, God gave him the knowledge, and that you consequently degenerate and fall very low from the generosity and nobleness of your condition, as often as you imitate the fury of lions, serpents and other wild creatures; Sap. vii. Ælian relates a passage of a certain lion, that had been wounded once with a lance in a chase. A twelvemonth after, the person that had given him the wound passed by the same way in company with king Juba, who had a great train attending him; the lion knew the man again, and breaking through the guards, notwithstanding all their endeavors to beat him off, made no stop till he came up to the man that had hurt him, fell on and tore him to pieces. We see bulls do the same every day to those that vex them. Men that are given to anger and revenge imitate these brutal motions, for when they might quiet their fury with reason and human discretion, they choose rather to follow the fury and impulse of beasts, and to make use of that baser part of their souls, which even brutes have as well as they, neglecting at the same time that part of them which is more divine, and which they share in with angels. If you say it is very hard to quell and tame a heart when once it is provoked, why do not you consider how much harder that is which the Son of God has undergone for your sake? What were you when he shed his blood for the love of you? Were you not at that time his enemy? Why do you not consider how patiently he bears with you, notwithstanding the sins you are hourly committing against him, and with what mercy he is ready to receive you when you return to him? You will say, perhaps, your enemy does not deserve to be pardoned: do you deserve any better that God should pardon you? You will have God show his mercy to you, whilst you yourself will exercise nothing but justice upon your neighbor. Consider that if your enemy does not deserve to be forgiven, you yourself are unworthy of pardon, and Jesus Christ is most worthy that you should pardon your enemy for the love of him.

4. Consider that as long as you keep any malice in your heart, you cannot make God any offering that he will accept of. Our Saviour, for this reason, says, "If you offer your present at the altar, and should there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go first and be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift;" Matt. v. 23, 24. This sufficiently shows what a grievous crime brotherly discord is, because, as long as it continues, you are one of God's enemies, and do what you will in this state,

you will never be able to please him: whereupon St. Gregory says, "That all our good actions can have no merit, unless we suffer with patience the injuries that are offered us;" 21 Moral. c. 16.

5. You are also to consider what he is whom you look on as your enemy, for he must of necessity be either a just man or a sinner. It is certainly a very deplorable thing to wish any ill to such a one, and to reckon him your enemy whom God looks on as your friend; but if he be a sinner, it is a case no less lamentable to desire to be revenged of another man's wickedness, by being wicked yourself, and by making yourself judge in your own cause, to commit an injustice yourself that you may the more easily punish another man's. If the other person should endeavor to revenge his injuries as much as you do yours, when will your quarrels be at an end? The apostle teaches us a much more generous way of overcoming our enemies, when he says, "Overcome evil with good" (Rom. xii. 21); that is to say, another man's bad actions by our own good ones. For whilst you are endeavoring to return evil for evil, and are unwilling to yield in any points whatever, you may often happen to be shamefully foiled, whilst you are carried away by anger and overcome by your passions; whereas if you had resisted it, you would have shown yourself much stronger than him who should have taken a town by force of arms. For the taking of a city, which is a thing without you, is not half so considerable a victory as is the subduing of the passions that are within you, the putting of yourself under your own equitable laws, and the bridling and stopping of your anger in its heat and its most vigorous sallies. For if you do not suppress it in time, it will rise up against you, and make you do that which you will afterwards be sorry for. And, what is worst of all, you will scarce be able to know what mischief you do, because an angry man thinks that whatever he does in order to revenge himself, he has always justice on his side; nay, he is often deceived so far as to imagine, that the very heat of his anger is nothing but a zeal for justice, and thus vice hides itself under the color of virtue.

§ I.—6. One, therefore, of the most sovereign remedies for the better overcoming this vice, is to endeavor to pluck up this evil root of an inordinate love for yourself, and of every thing else that belongs to you; otherwise the least word, spoken against either you or yours, will make you fly out into a passion; and besides the more naturally you shall find yourself inclined to anger, you ought to labor so much the harder for the acquiring of patience, by considering beforehand, and preventing all kinds of grievances which you are like to meet with in your affairs. For the foreseeing of any misfortune lessens the influence it would otherwise have had over us. For this reason you are to make a strong resolution, as often as you shall perceive yourself breaking out into a passion, not to say or do any thing whilst you are in

that condition, nor to believe even your own self, but to suspect whatever your heart shall at that time dictate to you, let it seem ever so just and reasonable; put off the execution till such time as your passion is over, or say the Pater Noster once over or oftener, or some other devout prayer. Plutarch tells us of a very eminent and learned philosopher, who, taking his leave of a prince, his greater friend, advised him never, when he was in a passion, to order any thing to be done till he had first said the letters of the alphabet over; to give him to understand what rash and inconsiderate actions the heat of anger would excite him to.

7. And it is very observable that though this is the worst time that can be for a man to resolve on any thing he has to do, yet at no time has he a stronger desire to do any thing in than this, which obliges you to be very prudent and rigorous in the resisting of the temptation. For as a man that is drunk is incapable of acting according to reason, and afterwards repents him of what he has done, as is written of Alexander the Great; so that he that is drunk with the wine of anger, and blinded with the vapors of this passion, cannot follow any advice or counsel to-day, but let it appear ever so sound and wholesome, he will dislike and condemn it to-morrow. For it is certain that the worst counsellors in the world are anger, wine, and the desires of the flesh. And, therefore, Solomon says, "That wine and women make wise men beside themselves." Where, by wine, he means not only real wine, which is wont to blind the reason, but any violent passion, which in some manner blinds the senses; and yet whatsoever a man does in such a disposition is, nevertheless, a sin.

It is very advisable, whenever you are angry, to employ yourself about something else, and to put the thing out of your mind which was the occasion of your passion; because, if you take away the fuel that nourishes the fire, the flame must, of necessity, go out. Endeavor also to love what necessity obliges you to suffer; for, if suffering and love do not go together, the patience which appears on the outside is very often turned into hatred. Whereupon St. Paul having said, "Charity is patient," immediately adds, "It is kind;" because true charity never fails to have a kind and tender love for those persons who suffer patiently. In fine, it is further advisable to give your neighbor time to let his anger work off; for if you will but retire a little when you see him in a passion, you will give him room to overcome it by degrees: or, at least, in such a conjuncture you must answer him with a great deal of civility and mildness; because, as Solomon says, "A soft answer appeases anger;" Prov. xv. 1.

CHAPTER VIII.

Remedies against Sloth.

1. SLOTH is a laziness of mind in performing of any thing that is good, and, particularly, a loathing and distaste of spiritual things; Cassian. L. 10. We may guess at the danger which attends this vice, from the words of our Saviour, "Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit, shall be cut down and thrown into the fire;" Matt. vii. 19. And in another place he advises us to live with a great deal of care and diligence, a virtue directly opposite to this vice: "Watch and pray, because you do not know when God will come;" Mark xiii. 35.

2. Whenever, therefore, you perceive yourself tempted to this sin, defend yourself against it, by the following considerations:—Consider, in the first place, what toils and hardships Christ underwent for your sake, from the very beginning of his life to the end of it; how often he spent whole nights, without taking any rest, in continual prayer, how he travelled up and down, from town to town, instructing and curing men of their infirmities and corporal ailments; how his employ was upon such things as conduced to our salvation, and, what is much more than all this, how, at the time of his passion, he carried the heavy burden of the cross on his most sacred shoulders, bending under the weight of all those bitter torments which he had been put to but just before. If, therefore, the God of majesty himself has taken so much pains to procure your salvation, how much more are you obliged to labor for the same end? It was to free you from your sins that this most tender Lamb suffered so much, and will not you undergo the least trouble in the world, to be discharged from the guilt of them? Consider what pains the apostles took, when they travelled all the world over to preach the gospel; consider how much the martyrs, how much the confessors, how much the virgins, how much all the holy fathers, that retired into deserts from the conversation of men, underwent; how much, in fine, all the saints now reigning with God have suffered; they who, by their doctrine, by their labors and sweat, have defended the true faith of Christ, and increased the holy Catholic church to this very day.

3. Consider that there is nothing in nature altogether idle; for the blessed troops of saints and angels in heaven are continually singing God's praises, and adoring him; the sun, moon and stars, with all the heavenly bodies, are in a perpetual circle of labor to serve us; the plants and trees are always increasing, from a small root, till they come to their just proportion and bigness; the ants are busy all summer getting in corn, to maintain them in winter; the bees employ themselves in making their honeycombs, and are careful to turn out the drones, and such as will not work; we

find the same in all other creatures whatever. And can you, O man, who are a rational creature, give yourself up to laziness and sloth, and not be ashamed of it, when you see there is not an irrational creature but has a horror of this vice, by bare instinct of nature?

4. Again, if merchants and tradesmen take such pains to gather their perishable riches, the preserving of which wants as much care and solicitude as the scraping of them together did, what pains should not you take, who are to trade for heaven, about the acquisition of eternal treasures, which are never to be lost when once gained?

5. Consider that if you are unwilling to labor now, while you have time and strength, the time may come hereafter, when you shall have neither the one nor the other. It is what we have daily examples of in others; the time of this life is short, and full of a thousand encumbrances, and, therefore, you ought to have a care of losing the opportunities you have of doing good, through your own idleness and sloth; "for the night will come wherein nobody shall be able to work;" John ix. 4.

6. Consider that the multitude and grievousness of your sins require a very rigorous penance, and a great deal of fervor and devotion to satisfy for them. St. Peter denied our Saviour three times, and wept all his life after for it, though he was already pardoned; Matt. xxvii. St. Mary Magdalen bewailed, to the last moment of her life, the sins she had committed before her conversion; and yet she heard our Saviour himself, with sweetness and mercy, say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" Luke vii. I omit here, for fear of being too tedious on this matter, the examples of several others, who set no shorter bounds to their penance than those of their life, though they had never offended God so heinously as you have done. And can you, who every day heap sins on sins, think any pains or labor too much, that is required from you, in satisfaction for your crimes? Let it, therefore, be your chief employ, during the time of grace and mercy, to bring forth worthy fruits of penance; that so you may, by the labors you endure in this life, buy off the torments you must otherwise suffer in the next; for though all our endeavors and actions seem mean and inconsiderable, yet they are very meritorious, inasmuch as they are the effects of grace; and, therefore, though they are but temporal, if we consider only the labor, they are at the same time eternal, if we have a regard to the reward; they are short, indeed, as to their continuance, but the crown they are rewarded with will last for ever.

Let us not, therefore, suffer the time which is given to merit in, pass away without reaping any good from it; let us set before our eyes the example of a certain holy man, that used to cry out, every time he heard the clock strike out, "O my Lord and my

God, here is another hour gone, out of the number of those you intended for the making of my life, and for which I am to give you an account."

7. As often as we find ourselves surrounded with troubles, let us remember it is by the way of tribulations that we are to enter into the kingdom of heaven, "and that none will be crowned, but he that fights courageously;" 2 Tim. ii. 4, 5. But if you imagine you have taken sufficient pains, and fought long enough already, remember what the Scripture says: "He that perseveres to the end shall be saved;" Matt. xiv. 13. So that all our actions will prove unprofitable, and our labors go unrewarded, without this virtue of perseverance; neither shall he that runs get the prize, nor he that serves God obtain the last favor, if he does not persevere. For this reason our Saviour would not come down from the cross, when the Jews desired it, that the work of our redemption might not be left imperfect; Matt. xxvi. And the same reason obliges us, if we intend to tread in the steps our Head has marked for us, to use our utmost diligence, and not leave off our work till death, because the reward which God will give us is to last for all eternity. Let us not cease from doing penance; let us not lay down the cross we have taken up after Christ; for if we do, what profit shall we get by a long and prosperous voyage, if we be cast away at last in the very haven? Eccl. xviii.

8. You are not to be frightened at the difficulty of the labors, nor at the dangers of the combat, for God, who encourages you to fight, helps you to overcome, sees the battle, supports you when you faint, and crowns you when you conquer. But if at any time you should faint under the weight of your labors, you may make use of this remedy to bring you to yourself again. Do not make any comparison between the trouble of virtue, and the pleasure that is in its opposite vice; but between the pain you find in virtue, and that which you must feel, if you should commit the sin. Compare the delight the crime may give you, whilst you are committing it, with the joys you will one day receive in eternal glory; and by this you will perceive how much more advantageous it is to follow virtue than vice. When you have won one battle, do not become negligent, for it often happens that success makes us careless; but rather be always on your guard, as if you expected another alarm every moment, because it is as impossible for a man to live without temptations, as it is for the sea to be always in a calm. Besides, a man is generally exposed to the most violent temptations at his beginning to lead a new life, for the enemy does not think it worth his while to tempt those whom he is master of already; he sets on them that are out of his jurisdiction and power; so that it is your business to be always on your guard; to be never unprepared, or without your arms in your hands, as long as you are posted on the frontiers.

And if you should at any time perceive your soul wounded, you must not think then to stand with your arms across, or fling your shield and sword away, and deliver yourself up to the enemy; you are rather to imitate brave soldiers, who, looking on it as a disgrace to be defeated or forced to fly, set on the enemy again, and, the more they are wounded, the more vigorously they return the strokes. And thus, recovering new strength by your fall, you will soon see those persons fly from whom you fled before, and you yourself will pursue those who before pursued you. But if, as it often happens in an engagement, you should be wounded a second time, you are not, therefore, to be discouraged, but remember that resolute and brave men do not fight with hopes of never being wounded; but with a resolution never to surrender themselves up to their enemies; for we cannot say that a man is overcome, when he has received many wounds, but when, after having been wounded, he flings his arms away, and loses all his courage. If, therefore, you should ever receive a wound, endeavor to heal it as soon as you can; because it is much easier curing one than many, and a green wound is sooner closed up than one that is old and rankled.

9. Do not think you have done enough in resisting a temptation, but rather endeavor to draw from the temptation incentives to virtue; and so, by your own diligence and God's grace, you will not be worse, but the better for having been tempted, and turn all to your own benefit and advantage. If you should be tempted either by impurity or gluttony, lessen a little of the good cheer you were used to before, though it never went beyond what is lawful and allowable, and increase your fasting and devotion. If avarice should assault you, be more frequent in alms and good works. If you should be set on by vain-glory, humble yourself so much the more in all things. If you do so, the devil may perhaps be afraid to solicit you again, for fear of giving you an opportunity of bettering yourself, and of doing good works, when it is his desire that every act you do should be evil. Let your chief business be to fly idleness, and never to be so much out of employment as not to attend to something that may be for your advantage, nor so much employed as, in the midst of your business, not to endeavor to lift up your heart to God, and to treat sometimes with him.

CHAPTER IX.

Of some other Sins which every good Christian must endeavor to avoid.

1. BESIDES these seven capital sins, there are several others that spring from them, which every good Christian ought to avoid as carefully as those we have already spoken of. One of the chiefest

of these is the taking of God's name in vain, because this sin points directly at God, and is in itself much more heinous than any we commit against our neighbor, let it be ever so great. Nor is this true only when a man swears by God's own name, but when he swears by the cross, by any of the saints, or by his own salvation; because any of these oaths is a mortal sin, if brought to assert or favor a lie, and severely censured in holy writ as highly injurious to the divine Majesty. It is true that when a man swears to a lie, without reflecting on it, he does not sin mortally; because where there is no determination of the will, and where reason does not pass a judgment on the matter, there can be no mortal sin. But this is not to be understood of those persons who have a custom of swearing without any kind of scruple, without considering either how or what it is they swear, and without making the least endeavor towards breaking off the bad habit. Such men as these, being accustomed to swear to a lie, without ever reflecting on it, are by no means free from sin, because it is what they both might and ought to have been careful in. Nor can they allege, for their excuse, that they did not think of what they said, or did not design to swear to a lie; because, since they will not break off this habit, it is not their will to avoid the effects of it, and, therefore, these and such like inconveniences are always looked on as voluntary sins.

2. For this reason, every Christian ought to labor for the rooting out of this evil custom, that so these inadvertences may not be reckoned as mortal sins. The best method for effecting this is to take the advice given us by our Saviour, and after him by his apostle St. James: "Above all things, my brethren, do not swear; neither by heaven, nor by the earth; swear not in any other manner whatever. But let your discourse be yea, yea; nay, nay; that you may not fall under the judgment" (Matt. v. 34; Jac. v. 12); which is, that you may not be wrought on by custom to swear to what is false, and to be condemned to everlasting death. Nor is a man only to endeavor to avoid this sin in himself; he is obliged to excite in his children, his servants, and in all his family, a horror and detestation of the same vice, and to reprove his acquaintance and companions for it. And when he happens himself to be careless in this point, let him, in punishment of his neglect, give some alms, say a Pater Noster or an Ave Maria, not so much in penance for this fault, as for a memorial and advertisement to him never to fall into it again.

§ I. *Of Detraction, Scoffing and Judging rashly.*—3. Another sin we are to be very diligent in avoiding is, that of detraction, as much used in the world as the former; for there is no house so strong, no society so religious, or place so sacred, as to escape the lash of a licentious tongue. But though this vice is familiar to all sorts of persons (for the world, as it gives good men sufficient reason to weep by its daily follies, so it supplies the weak

with matter of calumny and slander), yet there are always some persons to be met with, that are more naturally and more passionately inclined to this vice than others. For as there are some palates that can relish nothing that is sweet, and love nothing but what is bitter or sour, so there are some kinds of men so corrupt in themselves, and so full of a heavy and melancholy humor, that no subject of virtue, nor any commendation of one's neighbor, savors well with them, but they only delight in railing, scoffing and detraction. So that they are, as it were, asleep and dumb to all other discourse; but as soon as any man happens to touch on this string, they are presently awake again, and ready to lash out on this subject.

4. That you may, therefore, conceive a great hatred of so hurtful and execrable a vice as this is, consider three great evils it draws after it. The first is, that it is not very far from mortal sin, for there is but a very little distance between censuring and detraction; and these two vices being so near neighbors, it is easy to pass from the one to the other; as the philosophers say, that those elements which agree in any one quality may be easily converted into one another. Thus we see how often it happens, that men, when they begin to censure, descend without any scruple from general imperfections to particular, from public to private, and from little to great ones. By this means they blemish their neighbor's reputation, and leave it without endeavoring to wipe off the spot. For when the tongue is once going, and the desire or itch of magnifying things once prevails, it is as hard a matter to suppress the motion of the heart, as it is to stop the violence of the flame when blown on by the wind, or to keep in a hard-mouthed horse, when once he has got his head: then the railer has no respect for any man, and never stops till he discovers the most hidden secrets. This was the reason why the author of Ecclesiasticus desired so earnestly to have a guard set at this little gate, when he said, "Who will set a guard over my mouth, and a strong seal upon my lips, that they may not be the occasion of my fall, and that my own tongue may not condemn me?" Eccl. xxii. 33. He that said it, very well knew the great consequence and the difficulty of this affair, because he expected his cure from none but God, who is the only Physician that can cure this distemper. According to these words of Solomon: "It is for a man to prepare his soul, but it belongs to God for to govern the tongue" (Prov. xvi. 1); so weighty a concern this is.

5. The second evil which attends this vice is, its being very prejudicial and dangerous; because there are three evils in it, at least, which cannot be avoided. The first concerns him that speaks, the second those that hearken and consent to it, and the third concerns the absent who are talked of. It is a common saying, that walls have ears, and words have wings, and men

love to seek new friends, and to ingratiate themselves with others, by carrying tales and stories, under pretence of being concerned for the honor of those persons ill spoken of; and so when these things come to the ears of the party that has been defamed, he is offended, and falls into a rage and passion against the man that defamed him; whence follows irreconcilable enmity, and sometimes duels and bloodshed. For this reason the wise man said, "The tale-bearer and the double-tongued shall be cursed; because he has disturbed a great many that were at peace;" Eccl. xxviii. 15. And all this, as you see, comes from a word spoken out of season: for, according to the expression of the wise man, "A fire proceeds from but one spark;" Ibid xi. 34.

6. This vice, upon account of these great damages, is compared in the Scripture sometimes to a *razor*, which shaves the hair without being felt (Ps. li. 2); sometimes, again, to bows and arrows, which shoot at a great distance, and wound those that are absent (Prov. 18); at other times to serpents, that make no noise when they bite, yet leave their poison in the wound; Ps. vii. The Holy Ghost is pleased to give us to understand by these comparisons the malice and evil of that vice which is so great that the wise man says, "The stroke of a whip leaves a mark on the skin, but that of a bad tongue bruises the bones;" Eccl. xxviii. 21.

7. The third evil that attends this vice is, its being most abominable and infamous against men: because every body flies as naturally from a detractor as from a poisonous serpent. And, therefore, the wise man says, "A man that is profuse of his tongue is terrible in his city;" Eccl. ix. 25. Are not these evils great enough to make you abhor a vice which is at once so hurtful and so unprofitable? Why will you make yourself odious in the sight of both God and man, without reaping any advantage by it? especially by a sin that is so frequent and usual that you can scarce speak one word without exposing yourself to the danger of falling into it. Look upon your neighbor's life as a forbidden tree, which you should not so much as touch. You are to be careful in endeavoring never to speak well of yourself, nor ill of others, because the one is vanity, the other detraction. Talk of all persons as if they were virtuous men, and men of honor, and let all the world believe there is no wicked man in it by your discourse. Thus you will avoid many sins, scruples and remorses of conscience; you will gain the favor both of God and man, and be respected as much by others as you respect every body else. Put a bridle in your mouth, and be always ready to repel and swallow down those words which you perceive will be too sharp and biting. Be assured that it is one of the most prudent and discreet actions you can do to curb your tongue, and that there is scarce any empire so great as that which a man has when he knows how to command and govern this member.

8. Do not think you are free from this vice when you use craft in your detraction by praising a man first, when you design to decry him. For there are some detractors, like surgeons, who chafe the vein gently before they open it, that their lancet may find the easier passage and the blood spurt out more freely. The royal prophet, speaking of such persons, says, "Their words are smother than oil, but at the same time they are arrows." Ps. liv. 22.

9. And as it is a great virtue to forbear all detraction, so it is a much greater not to rail at those who have done us any injury. So that the more we find ourselves inclined to say any thing against them, the greater generosity it will be to say nothing, and to subdue this passion; for where the danger is greatest, there the most precaution is to be used.

10. Nor is it enough to forbear yourself from murmuring and detracting; you must also shut your ears against all that do so, following the advice of Ecclesiasticus: "Stop your ears (says he) with thorns, and hearken not to a backbiting tongue;" Eccl. xxviii. 23. He thinks it not sufficient for you to stop your ears with cotton or with any thing that is soft; he would have you do it with thorns, that so the words which otherwise you would have heard with pleasure, may not only make no impression upon your heart, but may prick the heart of him that delivers them, when he sees by your looks that you are displeased at what he has told you. Solomon gives us the same advice in clearer terms, when he says, "The north wind scatters the clouds, and a severe countenance puts a stop to a detracting tongue;" Prov. xxv. 23. "Because (as St. Jerome says) an arrow out of a bow cannot enter into a hard stone, but, on the contrary, flies back again, and sometimes returns upon the man that shot it;" Epist. 2. ad Nepotiam.

11. For this reason you are to impose silence upon any one that detracts, if he is your inferior, or of such a condition and rank that you may do it without offence; if you cannot do this, you must, at least, use some cunning to divert the discourse; or if that will not do, let the severity of your countenance make him ashamed of what he has said. By this means, being civilly told of his fault, he will turn his discourse and talk of something else. But should you, on the contrary, countenance him in the least, you will encourage him to go on, and so make yourself as guilty by hearing him, as he is by talking; for as it is a very criminal action to set a house on fire, it would be very blameable for another to stand warming his fingers by it, when charity bids him fetch water to help to put it out.

12. But of all detractions the greatest is, when a man speaks ill of virtuous persons, because it is the ready way to discourage those that are but weak and faint-hearted, and to give an absolute repulse to such as have no courage at all, so as to deter them

from entering into the way of virtue. This would be laying a stumbling-block in their way that are but just beginning to walk, though those that are quite grown up know how to pass over it. And that you may have no reason to say this is but a small and inconsiderable scandal, reflect upon these words of our Saviour: "Whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him to have a mill-stone hung about his neck, and to be sunk to the very bottom of the sea;" Matt. xviii. 6. You are, therefore, to account it as a kind of sacrilege to make scandalous reflections on the servants of God; for, supposing they are such as the wicked represent them, yet the character they bear should make you have a respect for them, especially since God Almighty, speaking of the love he has for them, says, "Whosoever shall touch you, touches the apple of my eye;" Zach. ii. 8.

13. Whatever we have here said against detractors and backbiters may be applied to those that jeer and scoff at others; and with much more reason, because this vice, besides it having all in it that the other has, is never without a tincture of pride, presumption and contempt of others. So that, upon this consideration, we are more obliged to avoid this vice than the former. God, in the old law, has given us a particular caution against it, in these words: "Be not a backbiter, nor a scoffer amongst the people;" Levit. xix. 16. And, therefore, there is no need of saying any more of the deformity of it, for what has been said may suffice.

§ II. *Of rash Judgments, and of the Commandments of the Church.*—14. To these two sins we may add that of rash judgment, as coming very near to them, because detractors and jeerers not only speak ill of things which really are, but whatever they imagine or fancy. And that they may never want something to be biting upon, they furnish themselves with matter whenever there is occasion, by rash judgments and secret suspicions, by turning the worst side of a thing outwards, when they might as easily turn the best; and this is in opposition to what our Saviour has commanded us, saying, "Judge not, and you shall not be judged; condemn not, and you shall not be condemned;" Matt. vii. 1. This may often happen to be a mortal sin, if the matter a man passes his sentence upon is of concern and weight, and the judgment grounded on a shallow and weak foundation. But if it proves to be rather a suspicion than a judgment, it will not then be a mortal sin, because the act is not entire and perfect.

15. Besides these sins against God, there are those which a man commits against the five commandments of the church, which oblige us by precept; as hearing mass on Sundays and holidays, confessing our sins once a year, communicating at Easter, fasting all days appointed by the church, and paying of

tithes. The commandment of fasting binds from one-and-twenty years of age and upwards, more or less, according to the discretion of the confessor or curate, if a man is not sick, or very weak, or old laboring men, nurses that give suck, or women that are with child, and such as are not able to afford themselves one good meal a day; and so there may be other lawful impediments.

16. As to the hearing of mass upon Sundays and holidays, a man must endeavor to assist there, not only in body but in spirit, having his mind recollected, and with a profound silence, with his heart fixed upon God or upon the mysteries of the mass, or busied with some other pious thoughts, or saying some devout prayers.

17. And as for those persons who have servants and children, and a family to look after, they should be very careful and diligent in seeing that all under their charge hear mass upon holidays: and if they cannot let them go to high mass, because of their being employed about necessary business, at least they must make them go some time in the morning to hear a private mass, that so they may comply with their obligation. There are many masters of families very blameable and negligent in this point; and they will answer for it to God. It is true, when there is any just and pressing necessity that hinders a person from hearing mass, as his looking after a sick person or any such employment, it will not be then imputed to him as a sin, because necessity excuses a man from this law.

18. These are the most usual sins which man generally falls into. It is our duty always to endeavor to avoid them all: some because they are mortal, others because they are very near to mortal sins, and others, again, because they are more heinous of themselves than other common venial sins. This is the way to preserve our innocence, and those white garments which Solomon requires of us, when he says, "Let your garments be always white, and let not your head ever want oil" (Eccl. ix. 8), that is, the unction of divine grace, which enlightens and strengthens us upon all occasions, and which instructs us in and encourages us to all kind of good.

CHAPTER X.

Of venial Sins.

1. **THOUGH** these be the chief sins you are carefully to avoid, yet do not think you are, therefore, allowed to run freely into all venial sins. On the contrary, I earnestly entreat you, not to be one of those who make no scruple of committing a sin when once

they know it is not mortal. Consider what the wise man says: "He that despises small things, will fall by degrees into greater;" Eccl. xix. 1. Think of the old proverb, For want of a nail we lose a shoe; for want of a shoe we lose a horse, and for want of a horse a trooper. Houses that fall with age begin their decay with some little flaw, which by degrees grows bigger, till the whole building comes to the ground. Consider that though in reality neither seven thousand venial sins, nor seven thousand to those, can make up one mortal, yet that which St. Augustine says is true, viz. "Do not despise venial sins, because they are but little; but be afraid of committing them because they are many: we often see, that little animals may kill a man, when there is a great number of them: is not a grain of sand a very small thing? and yet if you overload a vessel with it, it will certainly sink. How small are drops of water! yet they make the greatest rivers, and bear down the most stately edifices in the world." Super Joan. Trac. 12. ad fin. Tom. 9. et L. de decem chordis, c. 11. et L. de Medicina. Pœnitentium ad fin. Tom. 9. c. 2. The meaning of this sentence of St. Augustine is, not that many venial amount to a mortal sin, but that they dispose the soul to mortal sin, and very often make a man fall into it. Nor is this only true, but that also which St. Gregory says, "That to fall into small sins is sometimes more dangerous than to fall into great ones;" In Pastora, p. 3. c. 33. Because the greater a fault is, the more it discovers itself, and is, by consequence, the more easy to be remedied; whereas little faults, being looked upon as nothing, the more securely a man commits them, the greater danger he is in of falling frequently into the same again.

2. In fine, venial sins, though ever so little, are very prejudicial to the soul, because they take away devotion, disturb the peace and quiet of conscience, extinguish the heat of charity, weaken the heart, destroy the vigor of the soul, impair the strength of the spiritual life, and, in short, resist in some manner the Holy Ghost, himself, and hinder his operations in us. For this reason we are obliged to use the utmost diligence for avoiding of these sins, since it is certain there is no enemy, how mean soever, but may be able to do us much harm, if we do not secure ourselves against him.

3. Now, if you would know wherein these sins particularly consist; I answer, that, in a little anger, gluttony or vanity, in idle words and thoughts, in immoderate laughing and jesting, in the loss of time, in sleeping too much, in lies and flatteries, and the like.

4. We have here described three sorts of sins; one which is generally mortal, another that is commonly venial, and a third that lies, as it were, between these two extremes; so that they are sometimes mortal, and sometimes only venial. It is requisite

we shun all these in general, much more than those which are in the middle, and most of all those that are mortal; because by those alone our peace with God is disturbed, our friendship violated, and by the same we lose all the goods of grace, and all the infused virtues; though faith and hope, it is true, cannot be lost but by the contrary acts.

CHAPTER XI.

Of some other shorter Remedies against all sorts of Sins, but particularly those Seven called Capital.

1. THE several considerations we have here set down will serve to keep the soul in good order, and well armed against all kinds of sins; yet during the engagement itself, that is, when you are tempted to any of these sins, you make use of these short sentences, found amongst the writings of a certain holy man, who used to arm himself thus, upon all occasions, against every one of these vices.

2. When pride assaulted him, he said, "When I consider with what an excess of humility the most high and glorious Son of God has humbled himself, for the love of me, no creature in the world can despise me so much, as to make me think I do not deserve to be much more contemned and despised."

3. If covetousness set upon him, his saying was, "Having once understood, that nothing can satisfy my soul but God alone, I cannot but persuade myself that it must be a great folly to seek any thing besides him."

4. As often as impurity attacked him, he said, "Being sensible of the great dignity my body is raised to, when I receive my Saviour's most sacred body, I should account myself guilty of a horrible sacrilege, should I defile the temple he has consecrated to his service, with the filth of carnal sins."

5. If he was tempted to anger, he said, "No man could ever injure him so far as to disturb and trouble him, when he reflected upon the injuries he had offered God."

6. His defence against hatred and envy was, "I cannot wish any hurt to my neighbor, or refuse to pardon any man, knowing with what mercy my God has vouchsafed to receive such a sinner as I am."

7. Against gluttony, he said, "That if any man would but call to mind the potion of vinegar and gall which they gave the Son of God for his last refreshment, in the midst of all the torments he suffered for us, he would be ashamed to endeavor to please his palate with dainty meats, being obliged to undergo something for his own sins."

8. His saying against sloth was, "Since I have been taught, that, for a little toil and trouble here, I may purchase for myself everlasting glory, all the pains I can possibly take, for the obtaining of this happiness, seem very inconsiderable."

§ I.—9. St. Augustine gives us another sort of short remedies against all vices, though some persons attribute them to St. Leo the pope: he shows us, in the same, how, on the one side, each particular vice tempts us, and what proposals it makes us; and, on the other side, he supplies us with such considerations and reasons, as we are to make use of against it, which I will here set down, looking upon them as very useful and beneficial.

10. Pride, therefore, begins first to speak to us, after this manner: Certainly you excel others in knowledge, in eloquence, in wealth, and in several other good qualities; it is, therefore, reasonable you should have but little esteem for others, as being so far above them. But humility answers, that you are but dust and ashes, mere rottenness and corruption at present, and designed to be the companion and food of worms in a very little time. And supposing you are as great as you imagine, yet the greater you are, if you do not humble yourself the more, you will soon cease to be what you were. Are you greater than the angel that fell? Do you shine brighter upon earth than Lucifer did in heaven? Now, if his pride was the occasion of his falling from so high a state of glory, into such an abyss of misery, how can you think of rising from such an excess of misery to such a height of glory, when you are in all respects as proud as he was?

11. Vain-glory comes next, and says, Do all the good you can, and let every body know it, that they may take you for a good man, that the whole world may reverence and honor you, and that no one may show you the least disrespect. The fear of God answers: It is a most notorious folly to fling away the purchase of eternal glory, for a little temporal honor. Endeavor, therefore, to hide all the good actions you do, at least in desire, because, if you have a real desire to conceal them, it will be no vanity in you if they should come to be known; for that cannot be called public which in your wishes is secret.

12. Hypocrisy says, Since you have nothing in you that is good, endeavor at least to make a man believe you have what you have not, that you may not be hated by all the world. Sincerity answers, It is the proper duty of a true Christian not to endeavor to pass for a good man, but to labor to make himself so; for all that you can get by imposing on others is your own condemnation and ruin.

13. Contempt and disobedience say, Who are you, that should be subject to others inferior to you? It is but just you should command and they obey, since they do not come up to you, either in wit, judgment or virtue. It is enough for you to keep

the commandments of God ; you need not trouble your head with those of men. Subjection and obedience answer, The same reason that obliges you to an observance of God's commandments obliges you to submit to what men decree ; because God himself has said, " Whosoever hears you hears me, and he that despises you despises me ;" Luke x. 16. But if you say that this stands with reason and justice when he that commands is a good man, and not otherwise, hear what the apostle says against this opinion : " There is no power but what comes from God, and all things that come from God are ordained ;" Rom. xiii. 11. So that it is none of your business to know what kind of men your superiors are ; all you are to do is to know what they command, and to put their orders in execution.

14. Envy says, In what are you less than this or that man ? Why, then, should not you have as much respect showed you as they have, or more ? How many things can you do which they cannot ? It is, therefore, unjust that they should be made equal to you, or set over you. Brotherly love answers, If you are more virtuous than others, you will be much securer in a low place than in a high one ; because, the higher the place a man falls from, the more dangerous will be his fall. Put the case that there are many men as rich or richer than you ; what are you the worse for it ? You ought to consider that, whilst you envy another that is in a better station, you make yourself like him of whom it is said, " By the envy of the devil death came into the world, and all those who are of his side imitate him ;" Wisd. ii. 24, 25.

15. Hatred says, God Almighty can never expect you should love him that is always contradicting and opposing you in all things ; that is always detracting and backbiting you ; that is always upbraiding you, to your face, with all your failings ; that is, in fine, perpetually thwarting you in all your words and actions ; for it is certain he would never thus trample on you if he did not hate you. True love answers, Supposing these things are detestable in a man, must you, therefore, hate the image of God that is stamped on him ? Did not Jesus Christ, even when he hung on the cross, love his enemies ? Did he not advise us to the same, a little before his departure out of this world ? Banish, therefore, all the bitterness of hatred from your breast, and instead of it take in the sweetness of love ; for, besides the eternal considerations and reasons that oblige us to it, there is nothing in this life more pleasant, nothing more sweet, than love ; and nothing, on the contrary, more bitter, nothing more distasteful, than hatred, which, like a canker, is always preying on the bowels that first gave it being.

16. Detraction is always crying, Who can endure this ? who can conceal the crimes such or such persons have committed, without being accessory to them ? Brotherly correction answers,

We are neither to publish nor consent to our neighbor's sins (Matt. xvii. 15); but he that has done amiss is to be corrected with charity, and to be borne with patience. Besides, it is sometimes convenient to take no notice of a man when he has committed a fault, that you may afterwards have a more favorable opportunity of reproving him.

17. Anger says, How can you have patience to endure the injuries that are offered you? Nay, it is a sin to bear any longer; and, if you do not resent them, you will have greater affronts put on you every day. Patience answers, If you would but reflect on our Saviour's passion, there is no wrong which you would not be willing to put up with. For, as St. Peter says, "Christ has suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps; who, when he suffered, never was angry with, nor threatened them that used him ill;" 1 Pet. ii. 21. We are, therefore, more particularly obliged to imitate our Saviour in this point, considering that what we suffer is so little in comparison of what he underwent for us; for he was affronted, despised, buffeted, scourged, crowned with thorns and crucified; and yet we sinful and miserable wretches fly into a passion at every little word, and the least incivility that is, touches us to the quick.

18. Hardness of heart says, How can you speak kindly to men that are as stupid, ignorant and senseless as mere beasts, and who very often grow proud and saucy, the kinder you are to them? Meekness answers, Your advice is not to be taken in this point, but the apostle's, who says, "It does not become the servant of God to quarrel, but to carry himself meekly to all persons;" 2 Tim. ii. 24. This fault of replying and wrangling, it is true, is much more dangerous in inferiors than it is in superiors; because it often happens that they lose the respect they should have for those that are put over them, when they are too kindly dealt with, and laugh at and ridicule the humility and sweetness their superiors show them.

19. Presumption and rashness say, God in heaven is witness of all your actions, and, therefore, you need not trouble your head about the opinion men have of you. Our duty to our neighbor answers, You are not to give other persons occasion of murmuring, or of revealing all they think and suspect of you; but if, what they find fault with you for is true, tell them sincerely you have done amiss; if false, you are with humility to deny it.

20. Sloth and idleness say, You will soon lose your sight if you give yourself thus continually to study, prayers and tears; if you spend a good part of the night in performing of these exercises, you will soon be distracted; if you tire yourself out with too much labor, you will become unfit for any spiritual exercise. Diligence and labor answer, Why do you promise yourself many years to undergo these hardships and labors? Who has given

you security that you shall live till to-morrow, nay, till this very hour be over? Have you forgot what our Saviour said, "Watch, because you neither know the day nor the hour;" Matt. xxv. 23. It is your business, therefore, to shake off all idleness and sloth; because the kingdom of heaven is not for the slothful and tepid, but for such only as are diligent and resolute.

21. Covetousness says, If you give away what you have to strangers, what will be left to maintain your own family? Mercy answers, Remember what happened to the rich man in the gospel, that was clothed in purple and the finest linen: he was not condemned for taking away another man's goods, but for not giving away his own; Luke xvi. For this he was condemned to hell-fire, and reduced to such extremity there as not to be able to obtain one drop of water, though he begged it with so much earnestness, for not giving the crumbs that fell from his table to a poor man that was begging at his door.

22. Gluttony says, God created all things for our nourishment; if, therefore, you refuse to eat, you slight God Almighty's favors. Temperance answers, What you say is true in one respect, for God created all things that men might not die for hunger. But to prevent his committing any excess, he commanded him to be abstemious; and not being so is reckoned one of the chief sins that drew down God's judgments upon the unhappy city of Sodom, and was the occasion of its utter ruin; Ezech. xvi. For that reason, a man, though he be in good health, is to take his meat as a sick man does his physic, that is, only to supply the present necessity. So that, if he would quite break himself off that vice, he must, besides prescribing himself a certain quantity, and no more, despise all dainties, unless either want of health or charity oblige him to the contrary.

23. Empty joy says, Why do you conceal and smother the joy of your heart? Let every body be sensible of your joy, and talk pleasantly and merrily with your companions, to divert them, and to make them laugh moderately. Gravity answers, What is the meaning of all this mirth and pleasantry? Have you overcome the devil? Is the time of your banishment expired, and are you called home to your own country? You have forgot, perhaps, what our Saviour said, "You shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; nevertheless, your sorrow shall be turned into joy;" John xvi. 20. Put a stop, therefore, I advise you, to this vain delight; for you have not yet weathered all the storms that are so frequent on this dangerous sea.

24. Talkativeness says, There is no hurt in talking much, if a man talks well; as, on the contrary, he is not free from sin, though he speaks but little, if what he says be ill. Discreet silence answers, What you say is true; yet it often happens that, when a man would say many good things, he makes a bad end

of what he began well. And, therefore, the wise man says, "Where there is much talk there will be sin;" Prov. x. 19. And if you should be so fortunate, in talking much, not to speak any thing that is hurtful, it will be very hard to avoid all idle words, which you must give an account of at the day of judgment. You must, therefore, be moderate in your talk, be it ever so good, lest excess should make it quite otherwise.

25. Impurity says, Why do you not enjoy pleasures and delights, since you do not know what may happen to you? It is unreasonable to lose such a favorable opportunity, when you cannot tell how soon it may pass away. For, if God had not designed that men should enjoy these pleasures, he would never have created men and women at the beginning. Chastity answers, I would not have you be ignorant of what is prepared for you after this life. For, if you will but live purely and chastely here, you will enjoy such pleasures and delights as shall never have an end; but if, on the contrary, you live lewdly here, you shall be condemned to torments for all eternity hereafter; and the more sensible you are of the short duration of these false pleasures, the more reason you have to live chastely; for how wretched an hour's pleasure is that which is purchased at the expense of a life that is to last for ever!

26. All that has been hitherto said may serve to furnish us with such spiritual weapons as are necessary for this combat; by the help of which we shall obtain the first part of virtue, which is to abstain from sin, and to maintain the post which God puts us in, and in which he himself lives, that it be not surprised by the enemy. If we defend it with resolution, we shall have the honor of entertaining this heavenly guest; because, as St. John says, "God is charity, and he that remains in charity remains in God, and God in him;" 1 John iv. 16. And that man is in charity who never does any thing contrary to it, and nothing is contrary to it but mortal sin; against which, all that we have said in this book is to be applied as a remedy and preservative.

BOOK II.

PART THE SECOND.

CONTAINING SUCH RULES AS ARE REQUISITE FOR THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE.

CHAPTER I.

Of three Kinds of Virtues, wherein consists the Fulness of all Justice.

1. HAVING, in the first part of this book, spoken of those vices which pollute and darken the soul, let us now treat of such virtues as adorn and beautify it with the spiritual ornament of justice. And as it is the property of justice to give every one his due, whether it be God, our neighbor or ourself, so there are three sorts of virtues that compose it; some are particularly for the performance of the duty man owes to God, some, again, for that he owes his neighbor, and others for that he owes to himself. This is all he has to do, in order to satisfy the obligations of virtue and justice; that is, for the making of himself truly just and virtuous, the only thing we pretend to here.

2. If you would know, in short, how that is to be done, and have it made more plain by a few familiar comparisons, I say, a man will comply exactly with these three duties, if he has but these three things:—the heart of a son towards God, the heart of a man towards his neighbor, and that of a judge towards himself. In these three points of justice, the prophet placed the very perfection of our good, when he said, “I will show thee, O man, what good consists in, and what the Lord requires from thee; it is that thou do judgment, that thou love mercy, and that thou walk humbly with him;” Mich. vi. 8. The doing of judgment shows a man what he owes to himself; mercy, what he owes to his neighbors, and walking humbly with God, what his obligation is to him, since all our good depends on these three things; 1 Par. Tra. 4. c. 3. We will handle them now at large, having only spoke of them briefly in the Memorial of a Christian Life, with a design to explain them more fully in this place.

CHAPTER II.

Of Man's Duty to Himself.

1. SINCE charity begins at home let us now begin as the prophet did, that is, with the doing of justice or judgment; which

is the part of a judge, and which every man ought to act towards himself. The duty of a good judge is to see that the state be orderly and reformed. And because in this little state or commonwealth of man there are two principal parts to reform, that is, the body with all its members and senses, and the soul, with all its affections and powers, it is requisite those things should be all governed and directed according to the rules of virtue, which we shall here lay down; and thus man will perform his duty to himself.

§ I. *Of the Reformation of the Body.*—2. The first thing to be done in order to reforming of the body, is to settle a just decorum, observing what St. Augustine says, in his rule, “That there should be nothing in our gait, our posture, our dress, or in any thing else, that may give offence to our neighbor; but that every thing in us should be conformable to the sanctity of our profession;” V. Cassian. L. 5. c. 12. To this end, he that serves God must endeavor to carry himself towards all men with that modesty, with that humility, with that sweetness and meekness, that every one he converses with may profit and be edified by his good example. The apostle would have us be like sweet perfume, which immediately communicates its scent to every thing that touches it, and makes the hands it has once been in smell like itself; for such ought to be the discourse of those that serve God, such their actions, their behavior and their conversation, that every body who has any thing to do with them may be edified and improved by their example; 2 Cor. ii. 15. This is one of the greatest benefits that flows from modesty, and an outward composure which is a kind of silent sermon, by which we invite men by our good example, and without the least noise of words, to praise God and to love virtue, according to what our Saviour commanded us, when he said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven;” Matt. v. 16. What Isaias says comes to the same purpose: “The servants of God shall be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified;” Isa. lxi. 3. Yet we are not to think this gives us any privilege to do good works on purpose that they may be seen: “We ought rather,” according to St. Gregory’s rule, “to publish the good we do in such manner, that the intention may be still unknown, that so our good actions may be a pattern for our neighbors, and the intention we have of pleasing none but God, may make us always desire secrecy;” Lib. 29. Moral. c. 18.

3. The second advantage reaped by this outward composure of the body, is the security of the inward man, and the preservation of devotion. For the union and tie that is between these two is so close, that what one has the other immediately partakes of, and so on the contrary. For this reason, if the spirit is in good

order, the body immediately is so too, and that naturally; and if, on the other side, the body is uneasy and irregular, the spirit grows irregular and uneasy. So that one of them is like a glass to the other. For as you may see all you do in a glass that stands before you, so all that passes in either of these two is immediately represented in the other; and this is the reason why an outward composure and modesty is so great an assistance to an inward; and it would be a matter of wonder to find a recollected mind in a troubled and distracted body. On that account the wise man says, "He that runs too fast will fall" (Prov. xix. 2); giving us to understand by this, that those persons who fall from the gravity and steadiness that Christian discipline requires, are frequently subject to stumble, and cannot but often fall into a great many failings, as those who walk too fast make frequent trips.

4. The third good effect of this virtue is, the maintaining a man in the authority and greatness that belongs to his person and employ, if he be a man in any dignity or considerable charge, as holy Job kept up his, who tells us himself, in one place, "That the light of his countenance," amidst all his several accidents, "never fell to the ground;" Job xxxix. 24. In another place he says, that his authority was so great, that young men, "when they saw him, hid themselves; and that the old men rose up to pay him respect; that princes gave over speaking, and put their fingers upon their mouths," out of the reverence they had for him; Ibid. ver. 8, 9. The holy man backed this authority of his, which had not the least appearance of pride in it, with so much sweetness and mildness, that he says of himself, "That even when he sat like a king, with his army round him, he was the comforter of the afflicted;" Ibid. ver. 24.

5. You may observe from hence, that the want of this modesty and composure is not condemned by wise men for a great fault, so much as it is for a sign of levity; because the immoderate looseness of the outward man is a proof of the lightness and unsettledness of the inward. And, therefore, the author of Ecclesiasticus says, "A man's clothes, his way of laughing, and his gait, show us what he is;" Eccl. xix. 26. Solomon affirms the same in his Proverbs, where he says, "As men see their faces when they look into the water, so wise men discover plainly the hearts of others," by the exterior actions they observe in them. Prov. xxvii. 19.

6. These are the great benefits that the modesty we have spoken of bestows on such as endeavor to acquire it. For which reason I cannot think well of the too great liberty of some persons, who, to avoid being called hypocrites, laugh and talk, and give themselves over to a great many things, which deprive them of all these benefits. "For," as St. John Climachus says, "the monk is not to lay aside his fasts, for fear of vain-glory" (Grad

14); so neither is it reasonable, that a man should want the fruit of this virtue, out of human respect and consideration; for we are not any more to lay aside any virtue out of respect to others, than we are not to commit one vice for the overcoming of another.

7. This is what belongs in general to the composing of the outward man, at all times, and in all places. But because it is to be observed more exactly at feasts and public entertainments, we shall show, in the following section, how this is to be done.

§ II. *Of the Virtue of Temperance.*—8. To proceed with what belongs to the government of the body; that which serves particularly for this end, is the treating of it with rigor and severity, not caressing and making much of it. For this flesh of ours, if we pamper and indulge it, will soon corrupt and swell with the vicious pleasures it is allowed, whereas mortification and hard usage keep it steady and even in virtue, just as dead flesh is preserved by myrrh, which is very bitter to the taste, but swarms in a little time with worms, if this be not applied to it. It is, therefore, requisite, upon this consideration, that we should say something of abstinence, as being one of the chief virtues, upon which the acquisition of all the rest depends, though it is very hard to be attained, because of our natural aversion to it. And though what has been said against gluttony might suffice to discover the value of temperance, because the understanding of one contrary makes the other known; yet for the better clearing of this point, it will be proper to speak of it separately, to show the use and practice of it, and what means are fittest for obtaining it.

9. To begin, therefore, with that modesty and decency which ought to be observed at table; we are instructed upon that matter by the Holy Ghost himself, in the book of Ecclesiasticus, in these words: "Use those things which are set before you like a temperate man, that you may not be hated by others for eating too much. Give over before every body else has done, for good order sake; and if there should be a great many at table, be not you the first to hold your plate up, and do not call for drink before others." Eccl. xxxi. 19, 20. These are instructions very necessary for man, and worthy of the sovereign Lord, that observed so perfect an order and union in making of all things, and it is his pleasure we should do so too.

10. St. Bernard teaches us the same doctrine in these words: "When we eat," says he, "we ought to consider the manner, the time, the quantity and the quality. The manner is not to fix all our affections upon those things that are before us; the time is to be the usual hour of our repasts; the quality is to be satisfied with that which others eat, and not to seek after dainties, unless in case of necessity." Epist. ad Fratres de Monte Dei. This is the rule the saint prescribes in few words.

11. St. Gregory, in his *Morals*, speaks much to the same effect, thus: "It belongs to abstinence not to anticipate the ordinary time of meals, as Jonathan did when he ate the honeycomb; it is its duty not to long for such things as are most palatable and dainty, as the children of Israel did in the desert, when they wished for the fleshpots of Egypt; it is for it not to desire that every thing should be nicely dressed, to eat like the Sodomites to satiety; nor too greedily like Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of lentils;" Lib. 1. Moral. 1 Reg. xiv. 27. Num. xii. 16. 1 Reg. ii. Gen. xix. and xxv. Thus far St. Gregory, comprising much in a few words, and those backed by proper examples.

12. But Hugh of St. Victor handles this subject more fully, who, in his *Book of Monastical Discipline*, teaches us how to behave ourselves at meals in these words: "Two things," says he, "require to be moderated and regulated whilst we are at table; the one is the meat, and the other he that eats. For he that eats should neither talk nor look too much about him, nor be guilty of any indecency in the comportment of his body; so that he shall bridle his tongue, and not let it bolt out every thing that comes upwards; he shall keep his eyes in from gazing about upon every object, and keep all his other members and senses in a due decorum and recollection. For it is the nature of some persons, as soon as ever they are set down to table, to discover their intemperance and the unruliness of their appetite, by the disturbance of their minds, by a perpetual unsettledness and disorder of all their members, shaking their heads, tossing their arms, and stretching out their hands, as if nobody else was to eat any thing there but themselves; and thus, by their looks and gestures, they expose their gluttony and intemperance; though they are confined to one place, yet their eyes and hands seem to be every where, so that they call for wine, cut bread, and lay hold of the dishes all at the same time; and, like a general that designs to besiege a town, they view every part, and then stand considering where they shall begin first, because if they could they would set upon all at once." Hugo de St. Vincent de instit. Novic. c. 18 and 19. He that eats must avoid all these indecencies in his person; but, as to his meat, he is to observe what and how he eats, as has been said already.

13. Though a man should always come to table with such dispositions as these, yet the hungrier he is, the more particularly he ought to be prepared, especially when he finds his appetite raised by the delicacy of what he sees before him: for in such a case, the good disposition of the organs of the taste, and the excellency of the object itself, are stronger incentives to gluttony. It would be well then, to consider, that he is not to give ear to gluttony, which would make him believe he is hungry enough to eat the very plates and dishes. St. John Climachus has an ex-

cellent sentence to this end: "Gluttony," says he, "is a mere hypocrisy of the belly, which, even when it is too full, is still craving more; and when it is just ready to burst, fancies it shall die for hunger; but the cheat is soon discovered, for man is satisfied with much less;" Deg. 14. Par. 2.

14. To put a stop, therefore, to this evil, let him reflect upon the advice of a heathen philosopher as often as he goes to table, which is, "That we have two guests to provide for, the body and the soul, each of them is to have its particular nourishment; the body must have what is necessary, and the soul its proper food, observing modesty and temperance, which produce virtue, the proper sustenance of the soul."

15. Another good remedy against intemperance is, to bring the advantages of temperance into the balance with the short continuance of the pleasure of gluttony, to convince man how unreasonable it is to forfeit such mighty advantages for so beastly and short a pleasure.

16. It is convenient, for the clearer understanding of this, to consider, that, of all the senses of the body, those of feeling and tasting are the meanest. Because there is no creature in the world, how imperfect soever, but has these two senses, though there are many that want the other three, seeing, hearing and smelling. If, therefore, these two senses are the meanest and the most brutal, it cannot but follow, that the pleasures and delights which proceed from them must be the meanest too, because there is no creature whatever but is capable of enjoying them: nor are they the vilest only, but the shortest; for the pleasure they afford lasts no longer than whilst their object is materially joined with them; so the pleasure of tasting is gone as soon as ever the meat is out of our mouths. If, then, the satisfaction we receive is so base and brutish, and so short and fleeting, how can any man debase himself so much, as to be prevailed upon by so poor a pleasure, to neglect so great and so advantageous a virtue as that of temperance? This alone ought to be sufficient to overcome this appetite; but much more, if we should urge several other things, that oblige us to the same. Let, therefore the true servant of God put the baseness and short continuance of this pleasure into the scale, against the beauty of abstinence, the benefits it produces, the examples of the saints, the toils and labors of the martyrs, who have made their way to heaven through fire and water; the remembrance of his past sins, the torments of hell, with those of purgatory, and he will find, upon balance, that every one of these things tells him it is necessary to take up the cross, to mortify the flesh, to subdue the sin of gluttony, and to satisfy God for the pleasure he has taken in sin, by the pains of penance. He that sits down to table with these dispositions, will find how easy it is to renounce all manner of delicacy and niceness.

17. But if there be occasion for all this caution in eating, how much more is requisite in drinking of wine; because there is nothing so prejudicial and so destructive to chastity as wine is, nor any thing this virtue is more afraid of, looking upon it as its mortal enemy; since the apostle tells her, "There is luxury in wine" (Ephes. v. 18); and it is then particularly most dangerous, when the blood is boiling with the heat of youth. This it was made St. Jerome say, "That wine and youth are two incentives to lust;" *Ad Eustoch. de Custodia Virginis*. Why, then, will we throw oil into the fire? Why are we so mad as to lay more wood on, when the flame is too high already? For wine, being of its own nature so hot, it sets all the humors and parts of the body on fire, but especially the heart, which is the place it goes directly to, and the seat and residence of all the passions, which are immediately set in a flame, and heightened by it. So that when a man has once warmed himself with wine, his joy, his love, his anger, his hatred, are greater than before, and all his other passions are raised much higher. It is, therefore, a plain case, that since one of the chief employs of the moral virtues is the subduing of the passions, and the keeping of them down, wine must have a quite contrary quality, inasmuch as it kindles and inflames what virtue is to put quite out. Let every man judge by this, how much he is obliged to moderation in the use of it.

18. Besides all this, wine makes a man very lavish of his tongue; it is the cause of excessive laughter, of quarrelling, of cheating, of wranglings, of revealing secrets, and of many such disorders; and all this, not only because the passions are then much stronger, but because reason itself is clouded and overcast by the fumes and vapors of wine. Add to this, the occasion a man takes of running into these excesses, by seeing others do the same. Now these reasons, put all together, cannot but occasion such extravagances. It is, therefore, a pretty saying of a philosopher, "That the vine bears three sorts of grapes; the first for necessity, the next for delight, and the other for madness;" giving us by this to understand, that wine moderately taken, is to supply the necessities of nature; that the least excess serves more for the exciting of pleasure, than for the relief of our necessities; but to drink without any moderation or bounds is to become downright mad. Therefore, a man in this condition ought to suspect every design he has, and every resolution he makes; because, generally speaking, it is not his reason, but wine, that puts him upon them; and what a bad counsellor wine is, every body knows. Nor is it less convenient, for the shunning of all these dangers, to avoid too much talk or disputes at table; because a contention, that begins peaceably, very often ends in quarrelling, and a man in his cups often bolts out something he would afterwards wish he had let alone. For, as Solomon says, "There is no secret where wine reigns;" *Prov. xxxi. 4.*

19. And though any profusion of the tongue is blameable at this time, yet the worst of all is when men talk of nothing but the meats that are before them, when their discourse is in praise of the wine, the fruit, the fish, and every thing else that is brought to table : or when they are continually finding fault with what is served up, or talking of the different meats of such and such a country, and the excellent fish of such and such rivers. All this discourse is a strong argument of an intemperate mind, and of a man that would be always eating, not only with his mouth, but with his heart, his mind, his memory and his tongue.

20. But above all things, we ought to be careful not to devour our neighbor's life and conversation, for there is nothing so dangerous : "Because," as St. Chrysostom writes, "this is not eating the flesh of beasts, but of men, which human nature abhors." It is written of St. Augustine, that being always afraid of this vice, which very few tables are free from, he had two verses written in his dining-room, which were these :—

Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam

Hanc mensam vetitam noverit esse sibi.—In Vita Aug. c. 22.

21. It is also to be observed, that, as St. Jerome says, it is much better to eat a little every day, than to fast for several days, and then to eat to excess. "Rain (says he) does the earth a great deal of good, if it falls gently, in its proper season ; but great storms and tempests quite spoil it ;" S. Hier. Ep. 7. ad Læc. de Inst. Filiæ. Consider, as often as you eat, that you do not live to be a slave to your belly, but that you are soon after either to read, study or employ yourself about some good work or other, which you render yourself wholly unfit for when you eat so much that it is a burthen to you. Let temperance, therefore, and necessity, not appetite, or the craving of an immoderate stomach, prescribe you how much you should eat ; nor is pleasure to be regarded in this case. Not that I would advise you here to starve yourself, but not to do the business of pleasure under the pretence of necessity. For you have as much need of something to maintain and nourish your body as any other creature, but, at the same time, it is to be kept under by mortification, or otherwise it will turn on you. And, therefore, St. Bernard says, "A man should mortify his flesh, but not destroy it ; he must not let it grow proud, but humble it : he must make a slave of it, and not let it be mistress ;" Ep. ad Fratres de Monte Dei.

This may suffice to show us, what belongs to this virtue. He that would inform himself better of the advantages of it, and how beneficial it is in all respects, not only to the soul, but to the body, that is, to health, life, honor and estate, may read a treatise I have composed on this subject, at the end of my book of Prayer and Meditation.

§ III. *Of the Government of the Senses.*—22. After subduing and regulating the body, our next business is to reform the senses, over which the true servant of God must keep a strict hand, but particularly over the eyes, which are, as it were, the gates at which all vanities enter into our souls, and the windows of perdition, through which death itself gets in. Those who are much given to prayer have great reason to set a strict guard on this sense, both for the security of their chastity, and for the keeping their hearts from distraction; for without such care the ideas of things, which enter into our souls by this way, leave so many different forms and impressions behind them, that they can neither pray nor meditate without a thousand distractions and disturbances, nor think of any thing but what is just before them. For this reason, devout persons endeavor always to keep their eyes so steady, as that they think it not enough to turn them away from such things as may be hurtful, but they will not so much as look on any noble piece of building, any rich suit of hangings, or any thing of that nature, that they may keep the imagination more free and pure against the time of their converse with Almighty God; because this is so nice and ticklish an exercise, that not only sins, but even the representation of the images and figure of things that are not at all bad in themselves, are a hinderance to it.

23. You should be no less careful in the sense of hearing than in that of seeing; because it is the gate at which many things get admittance into the soul, that disturb and defile it. Nor should we only shut out bad discourse, but all kinds of news and relations of what happens in the world, and every thing else that is beside our own business. Because they who do not watch the passage of the ear so narrowly, as not to entertain such things as these, will be sensible of them afterwards, when they should be more recollected, and thinking of something else. The images of those things, which they heard others talk of before, are represented to their imaginations, and work so powerfully on their mind, that they do not so much as think of God without a great deal of interruption.

24. I need not say any thing of the sense of smelling; for to be in love with perfumes and sweet scents, besides it favoring so much of luxury and sensuality, is a reproach to a man, because it is effeminate vice, and such as few but ill women delight in.

25. As to taste, more might be said, but it has been spoken of above, when we treated of temperance.

§ IV. *Of the Government of the Tongue.*—26. There is a great deal to be said concerning the tongue; for the wise man tells us, "That it has the power of life and death;" Prov. xvii. 2. By these words he gives us to understand, that all the happiness and misery of a man depends on the good or bad manage

ment of this member. St. James looks on it as a thing of very great moment, when he said, "That as great ships are governed by a little helm, and headstrong horses kept in with a small bridle, so he that looks very narrowly to his tongue shall be able to govern and rule all the actions of his life;" Ja. iii. It is necessary, then, for the well governing of this part, as often as we speak, to remember those four things, *what, how, when, and to what end* we speak.

27. First, then, as to what we speak, or the matter of our discourse, it is requisite we take the advice of the apostle: "Let not any evil words come out of your mouths, but only such as are good and fit to edify those that hear them;" Ephes. iv. 29. And in another place, explaining more at large what he means by evil words, he says, "Let not any immodest discourse, or foolish talk, or scurrilous jesting, which is not the purpose, be so much as named amongst you;" Ephes. v. 3. 4. So that as skilful sailors have all the shelves that may endanger their ships marked down in their charts, to avoid striking on them, so it is his business that serves God to observe all kinds of bad words, that he may, by this means, be out of all danger of using them. Nor should a man be less careful in keeping of a secret he is intrusted with; nay, he is to look on it as a rock altogether as dangerous as the former, to discover any business he has been intrusted with.

28. As to how we are to speak, or the manner, we are to take care not to speak either too bashfully or profusely, not too hastily nor too formally, but with gravity, sweetness, simplicity and care. It also belongs to this method of speaking, not to be obstinate or positive; because very often this disturbs the peace of conscience, destroys charity, and makes us lose our patience and our friends. It is the part of a generous and noble spirit, not to suffer itself to be overcome in such contentions as these, and of prudent men to follow the counsel of the wise man, who says, "You should behave yourself in several things, like one that knows nothing, that listens with silence, and asks of them that are knowing;" Eccl. xxxii. 12.

29. Besides observing the manner, we must be careful to speak in due time, which is the third condition. For, as the wise man says, "A wise saying out of a fool's mouth will not be taken notice of, because he does not bring it in due time;" Eccl. xx. 21.

30. In the last place, it is convenient we consider, for what end and what intention it is we speak, because some do it only to be looked on as wise men, others to be thought witty and well discoursed; in the first, it is no better than hypocrisy and deceit; in the latter, it is folly and vanity. We should, therefore, take care, not only that what we say be good, but that the

end of our speaking be so too; by aiming at nothing else in our discourse but God's honor, and the good of our neighbor.

31. Besides it is proper to observe the company; for young men ought not to talk before their elders, the ignorant before the learned, laymen before priests and religious persons; nor ought any thing to be said where it may be taken ill, or where it may look like presumption. In all these cases, it is convenient and commendable to be silent.

32. He that speaks is to observe all these rules, that he may not err. And because all persons cannot judge of all these conditions, the best remedy is to be silent; that so, attending to what others say, they may comply with all these duties. It was on this account the wise man said, "Even a fool shall pass for a wise man, if he holds his tongue; and for a man of understanding, if he will but keep his lips close;" Prov. xvii. 28.

§ V. *Of the Mortification of the Passions.*—33. Having thus regulated the body, and all its senses, the next thing we have to do, which is the main business, is to regulate the soul; with all its faculties. The first thing we are to begin with is the sensitive appetite, which contains all our natural affections and inclinations, as love, hatred, joy, sadness, desire, fear, hope, anger, and the like.

34. This appetite is the meanest part of the soul; and consequently, that which makes us like the beasts, which are governed by these appetites and natural propensities: this it is that debases and brings us nearer to the earth, and removes us the further from heaven. It is the very source of all the evils in the world, and the cause of our ruin: because, as St. Bernard says, "Do but take away self-will (that is, the desire of this appetite), and there will be no such thing as hell;" Serm. 3. de Resur. S. Tho. 2. 2. 9. 77. P. 4.

This is, as it were, the magazine of sin, whence it is supplied with arms and ammunition to do us hurt. It is another Eve, that is the weakest part of our soul, and most inclined to sin; by whose means the old serpent tempts our Adam, that is, the superior part, the seat and residence of the understanding and will, to cast an eye on the forbidden tree. Here we may more plainly discover the force of original sin, for here he has bestowed the malignity of its poison; here are the battles, overthrows, victories and crowns; that is, here are the overthrows of the weak, the victories of the strong, and the crowns of the conquerors: it is here, in conclusion, that virtue is trained up and exercised; since the chief business of the moral virtues is the taming and governing of these fierce and cruel beasts.

35. This is the vine we are to be always pruning; this the garden we must be always cultivating; and these the weeds we are to pluck up by the roots, to plant all sorts of virtues in place of them.

36. So that, according to this, the main business of the true servants of God is, to be always in this garden, hoeing up weeds; or, to make use of another comparison, to sit like him that drives a chariot, with the reins of his passion in his hand, to loose or check them, not according to their own will, but as reason directs.

37. This is the chief employment of the children of God, who follow none but the motions of the Holy Ghost, and will not permit themselves to be led away by the inclinations and desires of flesh and blood. It is this distinguishes spiritual from carnal men; for whilst these, like beasts, are hurried away by their passions, those, like true rational creatures, are led on by the Holy Ghost, and observe the directions of reason: this is the mortification and the myrrh so much commended in holy writ: this is the death and the grave the apostle so often invites us to; it is the cross and self-denial the gospel preaches to us; it is the doing of judgment and justice so often repeated in the Psalms and the prophets. And, therefore, it is convenient, that all our labors, all our strength, all our prayers, and all our employs, should be particularly directed this way.

38. To this purpose it is requisite that every man be well acquainted with his own natural bent and inclination, and keep the strictest guard where he sees the greatest danger. And though we are always to war against our appetites, yet we are more particularly to make our efforts against the desires of honors, pleasures and temporal goods, because these are the three chief fountains and roots of all that is evil.

39. We must also take care not to be conceited, always desiring to have our will, and please our appetites, a vice very apt to bring us into much disturbance and trouble, and very familiar among great persons, and such as have always been used to have their pleasure observed in all things. The best way, then, to break ourselves of it will be, by frequently forming what we find ourselves least inclined to, and denying our own will, though it should desire nothing but what is lawful and allowable; that we may, by this means, the more easily and more boldly refuse it what it should not have. Such trials and exercises as these are as necessary for instructing us in the ready and dexterous use of our spiritual arms, as well as of the corporal; nay, they are of much more requisite, as a victory over ourselves and over the devil is greater than a victory over every thing besides. We should accustom ourselves to mean and low employs, and not trouble our heads with what the world shall say of us, because all that it can either give or take from us is very inconsiderable to him that has God for his treasure and his inheritance.

§ VI. *Of the Reformation of the Will.*—40. There is nothing helps so much to the acquiring of this mortification as the governing and adorning of the superior will which is nothing but

the rational appetite, and which we are to adorn with these three holy dispositions, humility of heart, poverty of spirit, and a holy hatred of ourselves. For these three things make the business of mortification the easier. "Humility (as St. Bernard defines it) is the contempt of a man's self, arising from a true and deep knowledge of his own failings;" S. Bern. Lib. de Grad. humilit. c. 2. The main business of this virtue is to cut down all the branches of pride, with all desires of honor, and to place itself in the lowest station below all other creatures, believing that any other who had received from God the same helps to live well as he has done, would have made better use of them, and been more thankful. Nor is it sufficient that a man have this knowledge and contempt within himself, but he must endeavor exteriorly to treat himself in the most plain and humble manner that he possibly can, according to his condition, taking no notice of what the world thinks or says to the contrary. To this purpose it is convenient that all things belonging to us have a tincture of poverty and humility, and that we subject ourselves, not only to our betters and equals, but even to our inferiors, for the love of God.

41. The second condition required is poverty of spirit, which is a voluntary contempt of worldly things, and a satisfaction in the condition God has placed us in, be it ever so poor. This virtue at one stroke cuts down concupiscence, the root of all evils, and gives a man such a solid peace and happiness, that Seneca was not afraid to say, "He that has shut the door on the desire of concupiscence may dispute his happiness with Jupiter himself;" to signify, that since the happiness of man consists in fulfilling his heart's desires, he that has once quieted and calmed them has attained the height of happiness, or at least is very near it.

42. The third condition is a holy hatred of ourselves. Our Saviour, speaking of that virtue, says, "He that loves his life shall lose it, and he that hates his life in this world preserves it for life everlasting;" John xii. 25. This is not to be understood of an evil hatred, such as men have when they are reduced to a very miserable and desperate state, but of that aversion which the saints had for their own flesh, as being the cause of many evils, and the occasion of neglecting many good things; and for this reason they dealt with it according to the rules and prescriptions of reason, not according to its own inclinations and desires. Now, reason frequently commands us to keep it low, to use it very hardly, and to make it a slave to the spirit, which is to make such use of it as is most reasonable: otherwise we must expect that what the wise man says will happen: "He that makes much of his servant when he is young, will afterwards find him rebellious and stubborn;" Prov. xxix. 21. To prevent this he advises us,

in another place, to deal with it as we would do with a wild beast, to keep it always in, to put fetters on it, and employ it continually, for fear it should grow idle, and by that means become proud and malicious. Now, this holy hatred is of singular use as to the business of mortification, that is, as to the mortifying and retrenching all our evil desires, though ever so painful and troublesome to us. For how will it otherwise be possible to cut to the quick, to fetch blood, and to strike deep where we have so much love? For the arm of mortification borrows its strength, not from the love of God, but from a holy hatred of man's self; and these give it the heart, not of a tender but of a hardy surgeon, to cut off from the other members whatever is corrupted and putrified, and this without any kind of mercy or pity. Much more might be said of these three virtues of humility, poverty of spirit and a holy self-hatred, as likewise of the mortifying of those several passions we have already spoken of in the spiritual life; but having treated of them elsewhere, especially in the Memorial of a Christian Life, more at large, we will say no more of them in this place.

§ VII. *Of the Government of the Imagination.*—43. Besides these two faculties that belong to the appetite, there are two more that belong to knowledge, the imagination and the understanding, which answer the two former, that each of these two appetites may have such a suitable guide and knowledge. The imagination, then, the meanest of the two, is, of all the faculties of the soul, that which has been the most weakened by sin, and left the least subject to reason. This is the cause of its quitting our service, like a runaway slave, without our leave, and of its rambling all the world over before we miss it. It is also a faculty that is apt to busy itself with every thing that comes in its way, like greedy dogs that smell to and turn over every thing they meet with, snapping and biting at whatever they see, and will soon return to it again, though you drive them away with a cudgel. It is, moreover, a faculty that loves its liberty, and is very unconfined, always running up and down from mountain to mountain, like a wild beast, and cannot endure to be fettered or confined, or to be subject to its own master.

44. Besides these ill qualities it has of its own, some persons make it much worse through their neglect, by their treating and pampering it like a child, and leaving it entirely to its own will, without any restraint or contradiction. So that, when they would fix it to the consideration of heavenly things, it will not obey, because of the bad habit it has got. We should, therefore, since we are acquainted with the qualities of this wild beast, keep it as short as we can; we should, therefore, tie it up to the manger, that is, restrain it to the consideration of such things only as are good or necessary, and enjoin it to perpetual silence, as to every

thing else; so that we are to confine it to such thoughts as are good and holy, and to keep it shut up from all that are not so, as we have tied up the tongue from all kinds of words, that are not either good or necessary.

45. To this purpose, it is requisite we use all the care and caution imaginable, in examining thoroughly whatsoever presents itself to our thoughts, to see whether it is to be entertained or not; that, if it is, we may receive it as a friend; if not, we are to look on it as an enemy. Those who are negligent in this point, very often admit of such things into their minds, as not only destroy devotion and the fervor of charity, but even charity itself, which is the very life of the soul; 2 Kings iv. 5, 6. Isboseth had his head cut off by two thieves, who entered the house whilst the portress, that winnowed the corn, was asleep at the door of his anti-chamber. Thus it happens with us, whensoever we suffer prudence to fall asleep, whose office it is to separate the chaff from the corn, that is, the good thoughts from the bad, for then bad desires come into the soul, which very often take its life away.

46. Nor is this diligence good only for the preserving of this life of the soul, but for the obtaining of silence and recollection during the time of prayer; because, as the imagination, when it rambles and flies abroad, will not permit us to pray in quiet, so, on the contrary, when it is restrained and accustomed to good thoughts, it is no hard matter to make it continue in them without being uneasy and troublesome.

§ VIII. *Of the Government of the Understanding.*—47. After these powers and faculties of the soul comes the understanding, the noblest and greatest of them all, which, besides many other virtues, is to be adorned with that which excels them all, that is, prudence and discretion. This virtue is, in the spiritual life, what the eyes are in the body, the pilot in a vessel, the king in a kingdom, or the coachman on the box; for it is his business to have the reins always in his hands, and to turn the horses which way he would have them go. The spiritual life is, without this virtue, quite blind and helpless, and full of nothing but confusion and disorder. And, therefore, the glorious St. Anthony, in a conference he had with several other holy monks, in which they discoursed on the excellence of the different virtues, gave the first place to this, as the mistress of all the rest; Cassian, 2. Collet. de Descret. c. 2. It belongs, then, to all those who love virtue, to keep this virtue always in perfect view, that they may by this means make a greater advance in every other.

48. This virtue is not limited to any one particular duty, but extends itself to all employs and exercises; because it is not a particular but a general virtue, that is engaged in the exercises and practices of all the other virtues, ordering and prescribing

what is most requisite to be done in each of them. We will consider it, therefore, under this general acceptation, and speak here of some actions that belong to it as such. In the first place, then, it is the duty of prudence (faith and charity being presupposed) to direct all our actions, so as that they refer to God, as to their last end. It is by it that we may make a nice scrutiny into the intention with which we perform all our actions, that we may see whether what we aim at be God or ourselves. For it is the nature of self-love, according to a certain devout author, to be very subtle, and to seek all things, even in those that are the most pious and holy; Imit. Chr. lib. 3. c. 39.

49. It is a point of prudence to know how to behave ourselves towards our neighbors, so as to benefit and not offend them by our conversation. In order to this, it is convenient to observe men's humors and dispositions, and to feel how every one's pulse beats, that we may accordingly carry ourselves so as may be most to their advantage.

50. Another piece of prudence is to know how to bear with other men's failings, and to take no notice of their weaknesses; it is not good to search too deep into their wounds. It would be very well to consider that all human things are made up of an act and a power, that is, of perfection and imperfection: so that it is consequently impossible not to find many defects and failings in our lives, especially since the great fall nature received by sin. "Wherefore," as Aristotle says, "he is not a wise man, who looks for an equal certainty and demonstration in all things, because some will bear an evident proof, and others will not: so it is not the part of a prudent person to desire that all things should be so complete and perfect, as to have nothing amiss in them; for some things are capable of this perfection, and others are not. And he that should endeavor by force to produce the contrary would, perhaps, do more mischief, with the means he would make use of to compass his design, than he could do good, though he compassed his end."

51. It is prudence for a man to know himself, and to understand all that is within him, that is, all his failings, his desires, his evil inclinations, and, in fine, his ignorance and want of virtue. This keeps him from presuming vainly on himself, and tells him what sorts of enemies he is perpetually to oppose till he has driven them quite out of the land of promise, which is his soul; and it teaches him how solicitous and careful he is to be in his business.

52. It is prudence to know how to govern our tongues, according to the rules and circumstances already spoken of, and to know what we should say, and what we ought to let alone, and how to time both the one and the other. Because, according to Solomon, "there is a time of speaking, and a time of holding our peace;" Eccl. iii. 7. And it is certain, that it is more commendable for a

prudent man to be silent than to talk at table, at public entertainments, and in such like places.

53. It is prudence, again, not immediately to make confidants of all sorts of persons, nor to discover one's self to every body when well warmed with talking, or to give one's opinion of things to every body that asks it; for, as the wise man says, "He is a fool that opens all his heart, but a wise man contains himself, and keeps things for another time;" Prov. xxix. And he that trusts himself with one that he should not, shall be always in danger, and a slave to him he so rashly confides in.

54. It is prudence to know how to prevent a danger, to be forearmed against what may happen, and be provided against all the accidents by prayer and meditation. This is what the author of Ecclesiasticus advises, when he says, "Apply the remedy before you are sick;" Eccl. xviii. 20. So that whensoever you go to any feast or entertainment, whensoever you have any concern with quarrelsome and turbulent men, whensoever you go to such places as may expose you to any danger, you should always foresee what is most likely to happen, and accordingly prepare yourself against it.

55. Another part of prudence is to know how to treat our body with discretion and moderation, so as neither to pamper and indulge, nor to ruin and destroy it, so as not to give it what is superfluous, or to deny it what is necessary; to keep it under correction, but not so as to kill it; and to manage it so as that it may not fail us through too much weakness, nor be strong enough to throw us; S. Thom. 2. 2. q. 168. a. 2.

56. It is also a great part of prudence to know how to behave ourselves with moderation in our employments, be they ever so good and virtuous; so as not to be so intent upon them as never to give ourselves breath and respite. St. Frances, in his Rules, says, "that all things are to serve the spirit, and that we should not be so busy upon outward things as to prejudice the inward, nor apply ourselves so much to the love of our neighbors as to lose that we owe to God." For if the apostles themselves, who had the capacity and ability to do all things, disengaged themselves of lesser things, that they might not fail in those that were of greater moment, no man should presume so much of himself as to be persuaded he can do all things, since we generally see that he who undertakes too many things at once scarce ever succeeds in any of them; Acts vi.

57. It is no less a part of prudence to discover the designs of our enemy, and disappoint his stratagems; not to believe every spirit, nor be led away by every shadow of good: 1 John. iv. 1. Because the devil very often transforms himself into an angel of light, and is always endeavoring to deceive good men under the pretence of virtue; 2 Cor. xi. 14. And, therefore, there is no

danger we should be more afraid of, than of that which comes under the appearance of good. It is certain that the devil chooses this way to attack those that are eagerly bent upon piety.

58. To conclude, it is prudence to know how to fear and how to attack, when we get the better by giving ground, and when we lose by pressing forward; but above all, to know how to slight the opinions and judgments of the world, the cries of the multitude, and the noise of those that are perpetually barking without any reason, reflecting upon those words, "If I should please men, I should not be the servant of Jesus Christ;" Gal. i. 10. It is certain that the greatest folly a man can be guilty of, is to let himself be governed by such a many-headed beast as the multitude is, who never reflect upon any thing they say or do. It also concerns us not to give any scandal, to be afraid when there is no reason to fear, and not to be whistled about by every wind. It is the part of true prudence to keep a medium between all these extremes.

§ IX. *Of Prudence in our Business.*—59. There is no less need of prudence for succeeding in our undertakings and for preventing of mistakes, not to be rectified without many inconveniences, which often make us lose our peace of conscience, and put our whole life into confusion and disorder. The following instructions will serve us as remedies against this evil.

60. The first is that of the wise man, who says, "Let your eyes be fixed upon those things that are just, and let your eyelids consider the way that you are to go" (Prov. iv. 25); where he advises us not to undertake any thing rashly, but to do every thing with deliberation and good advice. Five things are necessary for this purpose; the first is, to recommend our business to God; the next is, to consider what we are going about, and to weigh with discretion, not only the substance of it, but every circumstance, because the least failing is enough to undo all again. For though an action should succeed well, and not have any ill circumstance in it, yet the doing of it out of season is sufficient to cast a blemish upon it. The third thing is, to take the advice of others along with us upon what is to be done, yet so as to consult with but few, and those choice and prudent persons. For though it is good to hear the opinions of others, in order to decide the matter, yet we are to follow but few in the determination of it, for fear of failing in the execution. The fourth thing, and that very necessary, is, to take time enough for deliberation, and to consider for some days upon the advice that shall be given before we proceed any further. For as long conversation gives us a better experience of persons, so some days' consideration makes us see further into advice. A man very often seems to be of a different temper, after a little acquaintance with him, than we imagine he was at first sight; and just so it is with advice,

which, though at first sight it seemed to be advantageous, after a little deliberation proves to be quite otherwise. The fifth is, to be upon your guard against four great enemies to this virtue of prudence, which are precipitation, passion, selfishness and vanity. For precipitation will not consider what it has to do, passion is blind, selfishness will not admit of good advice, and vanity, wheresoever it gains admittance, spoils all.

61. It belongs to this virtue to shun all extremes, and keep a mean for virtue and truth, to fly excess, and to be confined to just bounds and measures. So that we should neither approve of nor reject all, we should neither affirm nor deny every thing, we should neither believe nor disbelieve all, we are not to condemn a great many for the faults of some few, nor, because some men are holy, must we think they are all so. We must in all things stand to the decision of reason, and not suffer ourselves to be hurried away to extremes by the force of prejudice and passion.

62. Another rule of prudence is, not to like or dislike things for being new or old, because there are several things of old standing that are very bad, and others, again, that are new, and yet very good. For antiquity is not sufficient to justify what is bad, nor is novelty to cry down what is good. We ought in all things to consider what they are worth in themselves, and not how long they have been in use and practice. It is no advantage at all to vice that it has been of long continuance, for this makes it the more incurable, and all that virtue loses by being new is, that it is not so well known.

63. There is another rule of prudence, which is, not to be deceived by the appearance and outside of things, so as immediately to pass sentence upon them; because, "all is not gold that glitters," nor is that always good which appears as such. We often find gall covered over with honey, and frequently run our hands amongst nettles whilst we are gathering flowers. Remember what Aristotle says, "That sometimes falsehood appears more like truth than truth itself;" *Lib. de Anima*. So vice may happen to look more like virtue than virtue itself. Above all, you must be thoroughly convinced that as gravity and the weighing of affairs is the companion of prudence, so easiness and levity are inseparable from folly. Therefore you must take care not to be over easy in these six things, in believing, in granting, in promising, in resolving, in conversing lightly with men, and in giving any way to anger. There is manifest danger in all these things, if a man is too easily prevailed upon to do them. For to be too forward in believing, is lightness of heart; to be too easy in promising, is losing a man's liberty; to grant without considering, is to do what a man may afterwards repent; to be too hasty in resolving, is to put one's self in danger of committing an error, as David

did in Miphiboseth's affair (2 Kings ix.); an over freeness in conversation brings contempt; and to give way to anger is a plain sign of folly, according to that of the wise man: "He that is patient is guided by much prudence, but an impatient man discovers his folly;" Prov. xiv. 29.

§ X. *Of some Means necessary for the obtaining of this Virtue.*

—64. Amongst other means that contribute toward the acquiring of this virtue, there is scarce any more successful than the experience of past failings, and of the proper methods tried by ourselves or others upon the like occasions, whence many rules of prudence may be taken. Therefore it is a common saying, "That the remembrance of what is past is the mistress and governess of prudence, and that the present day learns of that which is gone;" because, as Solomon says, "What will be is what was, and what was is what will be again;" Eccl. i. 9. So that we may judge of the present by the past, and of the past by the present.

65. But that which most advances the obtaining of this virtue is a true and profound humility; as, on the contrary, the greatest hinderance it has is pride, because it is written, "Where humility is, there wisdom is;" Prov. xiv. 2. Besides all, the Scripture tells us, "That God instructs the humble; that he is the master of the little ones, and that he discovers his secrets to them;" Ps. xi. Not that humility should submit to every one's opinion neither, or suffer itself to be carried away by every wind; for then it would be no longer humility, but an unstableness and weakness of heart (1 Pet. v. James iv.), against which the wise man has advised us, saying, "Be not humble in your own wisdom" (Eccl. xiii. 11); to signify, that a man should be resolute in maintaining of those truths which he knows to be grounded on a just and universal bottom, and that he should not, as some weak persons are, be disturbed at the sight of a straw, nor suffer himself to be wrought on by all sorts of opinions.

66. The last thing that is serviceable for the procuring of this virtue is humble and devout prayer; because since it is one of the chief graces of the Holy Ghost, to enlighten the soul with knowledge, wisdom, counsel and understanding, with the greater devotion and humility a man shall make his address to him, and the more he has of the heart of a scholar and child, the more plainly he shall be instructed, and obtain the greater fulness of these heavenly graces and favors.

67. We have enlarged more than ordinarily on this virtue of prudence, because, being the mistress of all other virtues, it will be convenient to endeavor that that which guides the rest should not be blind itself, lest the whole body of virtues should be deprived of sight. But because all this serves for the justifying and governing of man in regard to himself, which is the

first duty of justice we laid down above, it is necessary we should speak now of the second, which teaches us how we are to behave ourselves towards our neighbor.

CHAPTER III.

Of Man's Duty towards his Neighbor.

1. THE second point of justice is, for a man to behave himself as he ought to do towards his neighbor, and to show him the mercy and charity that God has commanded. None but he that has read the Holy Scriptures can believe how great a duty this is, and how earnestly recommended to us: read the Prophets, the Gospels, the sacred Epistles, and you will admire to see how strictly this is enjoined. God, in the prophet Isaias, makes a part of justice to depend on charity, and on using our neighbors well. So that, when the Jews made their complaints, saying, "Why have we fasted, O Lord, and thou hast taken no notice of us? Why hast thou not regarded us when we humbled our souls?" his answer to them was, "Because on the day of your fast you follow your own wills, and not mine, and wreck your debtors: behold you fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. Is not this the fast I have chosen? to lose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burden, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? to distribute your bread to the hungry, and to receive strangers and the poor into your house? When you see the naked, cover him; and hide not yourself from your own flesh." Isa. lviii. 3, 4, 6, 7. Then it is, that I will bestow such favors on you which the prophet reckons up throughout the remaining part of the chapter. See here wherein God places a great part of true justice, and how much it is his desire we should be charitable to our neighbors.

2. What shall I say of St. Paul, who recommends no virtue more earnestly to us throughout all his epistles than this? 1 Cor. xiii. What is there he does not say in commendation of charity? How highly does he cry it up? How particular is he in giving us all its excellences? How far does he carry it beyond all other virtues? He tells us, "There is no better way to heaven than this" (Rom. xii. 20); and, not thinking this enough, he assures us, in another place, "That charity is the tie of perfection" (Colos. iii. 14); and elsewhere, "That it is the end of all the commandments;" and again, "That he who loves his neighbor, has fulfilled all the law;" Rom. xii. 8. Could a man say more in praise of any virtue than the apostle has done of this? And can any man, after this, who desires to know what kind of works are most acceptable to God, choose but admire and be enamored with this

virtue? Can he any longer choose to refer or direct all his actions to the acquiring of it?

3. Besides this, we have St. John, the beloved disciple's canonical epistle, wherein he repeats nothing so often, praises nothing so much, and recommends nothing so earnestly as he does this virtue. And the history of his life says, "That as long as he lived, he made it the perpetual subject of his discourse, as well as the practice of his actions. And being asked one day why he repeated the same thing over and over again, he made answer, 'Because, this duly complied with; was alone sufficient for salvation.'" St. Hierom. in cap. 5. Ep. Galat.

§ I. *Of the Duties of Charity.*—4. He, therefore, that sincerely desires to serve God perfectly, ought to understand, that one of the things which contribute most to this end is the observance of this precept of love. Yet so, that this love is not to be dry and barren, but must have all those effects which proceed from a true love, for otherwise it will not deserve so much as the name of love; if we will believe the same evangelist, when he says, "If any man is rich in this world, and should see his brother in want, and should shut up his bowels against him, how does the love of God dwell in him? My little children, let us not love in words and in expressions only, but in deed and in truth." 1 John iii. 17. According to this, besides many other things, there are six particularly comprised under this name of love, to wit, to love, to advise, to assist, to bear with, to pardon, and to edify. There is so great a connection between these words and charity, that the more or the less a man has of those, he has the more or the less of this. For some say they love, but then this love goes no further; others love their neighbors, and give them good advice and instruction, but will not put their hands into their pockets to relieve their necessities; some will do all these three, yet have not patience enough to suffer an affront or injury, or to bear with the infirmities of others, not following the advice of the apostle, who says, "Take one another's burthens upon you, and by this means you will fulfil the law of Christ;" Gal. vi. 2. Some persons will make no difficulty of putting up with an affront patiently, but cannot pardon it freely; and though they have no malice in their hearts, yet they cannot give their neighbor so much as a good look. These, it is true, comply with the first condition, but at the same time neglect the second, and so are far enough from perfect charity. There are others, in fine, that will perform every one of these duties, who yet cannot edify their neighbors, either by their words or actions; and yet this is one of the principal duties of charity. Let every man, then, examine himself on this, that he may see how short he comes of the perfection of this virtue, or how near it reaches to it. For we may say, that he who loves is in the first degree of charity; he tha

loves and advises, in the second ; he that assists, in the third ; he that can bear an injury, in the fourth ; he that can forgive it, in the fifth ; and he that, besides all this, edifies his neighbor by his good life and conversation, which is the duty of perfect and apostolical man, is come to the perfection of it.

5. These are the positive or affirmative acts, that are included in charity ; by which we see what we are to do for our neighbor. There are yet, besides these, others that are negative, which show us what we should not do ; such, for example, as not judging any body, not detracting, not meddling with another man's goods, his honor and his wife ; giving nobody scandal either by abusive or bad words, or by an uncivil and impertinent behaviour ; but, most of all, by bad advice or example. Let a man be careful in avoiding these things, and he will fulfil the duty of this divine command.

6. If, for the more easy remembering of all this, you would have me give it to you in short, endeavor to carry yourself towards your neighbor with the tenderness of a mother, and you will not fail of complying perfectly with all I have said above. Consider how a kind and careful mother loves her child, how she advises him against dangers, how she assists him in his necessities, how she deals with him in his failings, sometimes putting up with them with patience, other times correcting him for them with justice, and, as occasion requires, passing them over, and winking at them with prudence : for charity, the queen and mother of all the virtues, makes use of these. Consider how glad she is at his prosperity, and how concerned for his adversity ; how she looks on his misfortune as her own, how zealous she is for his honor and interest, with what devotion she prays for him to Almighty God, and, in conclusion, how much more careful she is of him than of herself, and how hard she is to herself, that she may be the more tender and kind to him. If your love of your neighbor is such as this, you are arrived already to the height of this virtue : but, putting the case, that you cannot attain this pitch, you must at least aim at it in desire, and refer all the actions of your life to it, for it is certain that the higher you endeavor to climb, the further you will be from being low.

7. But perhaps you would ask me, How can I have such an affection for a stranger ? I answer, that you are not to look upon any man as such, but to esteem him as an image of God, as the work of his hands, as his child, and as a living member of Jesus Christ ; since St. Paul so often tells us, " That we are all of us members of Christ Jesus ; and that to sin against our neighbor is consequently the same as to sin against Christ, and to do good to the one is to do good to the other ; " 1 Cor. xii. 28 ; Ephes. v. 20. So that you should not consider your neighbor as a man in general, or as such a man, but as Christ himself,

or as a living member of him; and though he is not such as to the body, that matters not, since he is so as to the participation of the spirit, and the greatness of the reward; our Saviour himself assuring us that he will requite this favor as if it had been done to him.

8. Consider also what we said above, in commendation of this virtue, and how much Jesus Christ himself recommends it to us; so that, if you have any true desire of pleasing God, you may omit no care nor pains requisite for the procuring of a thing that is so acceptable to him. Consider also what a love relations have for one another, upon no other account but the communication of a little flesh and blood; and blush that grace should not have as much power over you as nature, or the spiritual alliance as the carnal. If you should say, that this is a union and participation from the same root and the same blood, which is common to both parties, consider how much more noble those alliances are, which the apostle has put between the faithful; since they have all one father and one mother, one Lord, one baptism, one faith, one hope, one nourishment, and one spirit that enlivens them; they have all one Father, which is God; one mother, which is the church; one Lord, which is Jesus Christ; one faith, which is a supernatural light, of which we all partake, and which distinguishes us from the rest of mankind; one hope, which is the same inheritance of glory, in which we shall all have but one heart and but one soul; one baptism, by which we have been all adopted for the children of one and the same father, and consequently made brothers to one another; one nourishment, which is the most adorable sacrament of the body of Christ, by which we are all united to and made one and the same thing with him; just as of several grains of corn is made a loaf, and the same wine of a great many bunches of grapes. And besides all this, we partake of the same spirit, which is the Holy Ghost, who resides in all the souls of the faithful, either by faith alone, or by grace and faith joined together, enlivening them and supporting them in this life. Now if the members of one body, notwithstanding the difference of their employments and of their forms, have such a love for one another, because the same rational soul animates them all, how much more consonant to reason must it be, to have the faithful to do the same, as being all animated by this divine Spirit, who, the more noble he is, the greater power must he have to unite those things in which he himself remains? If, then, the bare union of flesh and blood be enough to make relations love one another so entirely, how much more force ought so many and such straight unions and alliances have over us!

9. But, above all, cast your eyes upon the singular and unparalleled love Jesus Christ had for us; he loved us so passionately, so tenderly, so constantly, so far from any interest of his own, or

any desert of ours, that, encouraged by so great an example, and obliged by such a favor, you should dispose yourself to love your neighbor as much as possibly you can, after the same manner, that so you might faithfully comply with the precept, which he himself, upon his leaving the world, gave you, with such a particular caution about the observing of it. His words are, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you;" Jo. xiii. 34. He that would, besides what has been said, know how great a virtue that of alms-deeds, and of compassion for his neighbor is, and how excellent and meritorious, may read a Treatise of mine upon this subject, at the end of my Book of Prayer and Meditation.

CHAPTER IV.

Of Man's Duty to God.

1. HAVING spoken of our obligations to our neighbors and ourselves, it is convenient we should speak now of what we owe to God; it is the principal and most noble part of justice, and that to which the three theological virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity, tend, which have God for their object, and hither looks that virtue which the divines call *religion*, whose object is the worship of God.

2. The way, therefore, to perform all the duties belonging to every one of these virtues, is to have such a heart for Almighty God as a dutiful child has for his father; so that as he that behaves himself like a judge to himself, discharges the obligations that are due to himself, and as he that looks upon his neighbor with the tender heart of a mother, acquits himself of all that he owes to him; so he that comes to God, with the heart of a son, will perform all his duties to him; since one of the main duties of the spirit of Christ is to give our heart thus entirely to God.

3. Consider, then, with yourself what kind of a heart it is that a son has for his father, what love he bears him, with what fear and reverence, with what obedience he serves him, with what zeal for his honor, and with how much disinterestedness; with what confidence he runs to him in all his necessities, with what humility he receives his corrections, how submissively he bears his reprimands, and how willingly he embraces all that comes from him. Do but give God such a heart as this is, and you will perfectly discharge the part of justice.

4. But to the making up of such a heart there are, in my opinion, nine virtues, necessarily required, which are, love, fear and reverence, confidence, zeal for God's honor, purity of intention in the services you do him, prayer and recourse to him in

all your necessities, gratitude for his favors, an entire submission and conformity to his will, humility and patience in all the afflictions and mortifications he shall send you.

§ I.—5. To begin, then, in order, the first and principal thing we are to do, is to love God as he himself commands we should; that is, “with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength;” Deut. vi. 5. So that there is nothing in man but what must in its way love and serve this Lord of all things. The understanding, by thinking of him; the will, by loving him; the passions, by always tending to what concerns the love of him; the force of all our members and senses, by employing themselves in performing whatsoever this divine love shall prescribe. But because we have treated of this matter expressly, in the Memorial of a Christian Life, I refer the reader thither, to inform himself more fully in this point.

6. What we are to desire next, after this holy love, is fear, which is nothing but an effect of this love; because the greater love we bear another, the more we are afraid, not only of losing but of offending him, as we see a dutiful son does with his father, and a loving wife with her husband; for the more she loves him, the more careful she is that nothing be done to give him the least offence. By this fear innocence is secured, and, therefore, it concerns us very much to imprint it deeply in our souls. This is what David begged so earnestly, when he said, “Pierce my flesh, O Lord, with the fear of thee, because I have been afraid of thy judgments;” Ps. cxviii. 120. So that, according to this, the holy king did not think it enough to have the fear of God engraven in his soul; he desired it should be stuck into his very flesh and bowels, that the lively sense he had of it might be like a nail driven into his heart, to put him continually in mind of not failing in any thing that might be grateful to him whom he had such a dread of. For this reason it is justly said, “The fear of the Lord expels sin” (Eccl. i. 27); because it is consonant both to nature and reason, when a man fears another much, to be very much afraid of whatsoever may displease him.

7. From this fear arises another, which is, to be afraid not only of bad actions, but even of good ones, if they happen not to be so pure, nor attended with such good circumstances as in reason they ought; by which means those actions, which are good in themselves, become naught through our faults. And on this account St. Gregory said, “That a good soul would fear where there is no fault at all.” Holy Job shows he was possessed with this fear, when he said, “I was afraid, O Lord, for all my actions, as knowing that thou wilt not spare a sinner;” Job. ix. 82. Another effect of this fear is to be afraid whensoever we are assisting at the divine office in the church (above all, if the blessed sacrament is there), to talk or walk up and down, or to stare

and gaze about us, as many do. We are to behave ourselves there with an awful and reverential regard to the Supreme Majesty, before whom we stand; and which is in a more particular manner present in that place. These, and many more, are the ordinary effects of this holy fear.

8. Should you ask me how this holy fear is formed in our souls, I answer, that the love of God is the chief root from which it springs. Next to which, servile fear is necessary in some manner for the acquiring of this other; for it is the beginning of a filial fear, and brings it into the soul, as the needle does the silk into the stuff we are sewing. Another thing besides this, that goes a great way towards the procuring and increasing of this fear, is the consideration of these four things:—the greatness of God's majesty, the depth of his judgments, the rigor of his justice, and the multitude of our sins; to which we may add, the resistance we make against the divine inspirations. It will, therefore, become us, to employ our minds upon the consideration of these four things, because they assist us so much for obtaining and cherishing of this holy effect in our souls, whereof we have spoken more copiously in the former book.

§ II.—9. The third virtue necessary for this end is confidence; that is to say, as a child, that has a wealthy and able father, assures himself, that his father will not fail to assist him and provide for him, if he should ever be reduced to necessity, or fall into any misfortune; so man must in this respect have the heart of a child towards God; and considering he has him for his Father, who has the power both of heaven and earth in his hands, he must put such trust in him, that whatsoever tribulations shall befall him, this heavenly Father of his will, out of his mercy, deliver him from them, if he does but either address himself to him with an humble confidence, or at least will turn them to his greater advantage and interest. For if a son have such confidence in his father, as to build all his security and quiet on it, with how much better assurance should man rely on him, who is more a father than all the fathers in the world, and richer than all mankind together! And if you say, that your having done no service, your want of merit, and the multitude of your sins discourage and deject you, your remedy in this case is, to consider not your own failings and unworthiness, but God himself and his eternal Son, our only Saviour and Mediator, that you may be strengthened again by him. So that when any one in crossing a rapid river, grows giddy with the violence of the stream, we call out to him, and bid him not to look down on the water, that is in such perpetual motion, but lift his eyes towards heaven, and so he will pass over with safety; we are, after the same manner, to advise those that are weak in this respect not to reflect on them

selves during that time, nor on their past sins. But then you will ask me, from whom you are to expect this strength and confidence. First, then, my answer is, that you must consider the infinite goodness and mercy of God, who alone gives a remedy to all the miseries in the world, and reflect on the truth of his word, by which he has promised his favor and assistance to all those who shall call on his holy name with humility, and put themselves under his protection. Consider also the innumerable benefits you have received from his charitable hand, and learn from his mercy, which you have already had such proofs of, to rely on the same for the future. But above all things, consider Jesus Christ, with all his labors and merits, which are the chief rights and titles we have for the begging any favor from God; because we are sure, on the one side, that there are no merits which exceed or even come up to his; and that, on the other side, they are the treasures of the church, given for the relief and supply of all her necessities. These are the chief encouragements and supports of our confidence; and it was by these that the saints remained as strong and as immovable in what they hoped for, as the mountain of Sion; Ps. cxxiv. 1.

10. But it is much to be lamented, that having such motives to confide in, we should be so weak in this particular, as to be out of heart as soon as ever we but see the danger, even to run to Egypt for help, under the shelter of Pharaoh's chariots. So that you will find many persons that serve God, who fast and pray much, and give considerable alms, and are endowed with several other virtues; yet there are but very few who have the confidence of the holy Susanna (Dan. xiii. 42), who, after they had condemned her to death, and as they were leading her to the place of execution, continued still, as the Scripture observes, to put all her confidence in the Lord. All the Scripture may be applied to persuade this virtue, but particularly the Psalms and the prophets; for there is scarce any thing so often repeated in them, as a confidence in God, and the certainty of his assisting those that hope in him.

§ III.—11. Zeal for God's honor is the fourth virtue, that is, our main business should be, to look to the promoting and advancing of God's honor, to the glorifying of his holy name, and to see that his will be performed both in heaven and on earth. And nothing should concern or touch us more to the life, than to behold men not only neglect his will, but act contrary to it. The saints had all of them this zeal; and it was in all their names that these words were spoken: "The zeal of thy house, O Lord, has eaten me up;" Ps. lxxviii. 9. Because they were so troubled on this account, that the grief of their souls weakened their bodies, corrupted their blood, and showed itself in all the outward man.

If we had but the same zeal they had, we should immediately have the glorious mark, which Ezechiel speaks of, the stamp on our foreheads; by the means of which we should be free from all the corrections and scourges of the divine justice; Ezech. ix. 4.

12. The fifth virtue is purity of intention; its office is to make us not seek ourselves, nor our own interest only, in whatsoever we do, but God's glory, and the observance of his pleasure, assuring ourselves that the less we endeavor to promote our own interest with God, the greater advantages we shall reap, and so on the contrary. This is one of those things we are carefully to examine into, in the performance of all actions, and it is what becomes us to have a zealous concern for: we must be very cautious lest our eyes should fix upon any thing but God; because self-love is, of its own nature, very subtle, and seeks itself and its own ease in all its actions. There are several persons very rich in good works, and yet, when they come to be weighed in the scale of God's justice, will find themselves very light, for want of this purity of intention; which is the eye the gospel speaks of, and which, if it is light itself, makes the whole body so, or darkens it all over if it be dark; Matt. vi. 22, 23.

13. There are many, not only laymen, but even ecclesiastics, who, when they are promoted to any considerable dignities, and observe how virtue is always taken notice of, and honored in such kind of employs, use their utmost endeavors to make us become virtuous, and to live like pious and good men, clearing themselves from all kind of defilement, and from every thing that may cast the least stain upon their honor. But their end of doing all this is only to keep up the reputation they have got, to continue in favor, that so they may be taken notice of for the exact discharge of their employs, and promoted to greater: so that these actions do not proceed from a lively sentiment of the love or fear of God; nor is his glory, and the obedience that is due to him, the end of them; all they regard is their own honor and interest. He, therefore, that acts after this manner, though he appear something in the eyes of the world, is nothing better in the sight of God than the very smoke and shadow of justice: moral virtues are nothing before God, as considered in themselves, nor all the corporal macerations and austerities man can possibly use, not though he should sacrifice his own children; all that God values is the spirit of love sent down from heaven, and whatsoever springs from this root. There was nothing in the temple but was either gold or gilt. So it is just there should be nothing in the living temples of our souls, that is not either charity or gilt with it. Wherefore it concerns him that serves God, to cast his eyes on what he designs to do, and not upon what he does; because the meanest actions become noble, when the intention is so with

which they are done, as the greatest, on the contrary, degenerate into mean ones, when they have something that is mean for their object. Because God does not regard the action itself so much as the intention of doing it; and this proceeds from love.

14. This is in some degree to imitate that most noble and most generous love which the Son of God has shown us, who desires us in the gospel, "to love him as he loved us" (John xiii.); that is, freely and sincerely, and without mixture of interest. As amongst the several circumstances of this divine charity, this is the most to be admired in the Son of God, happy will that man be, who makes it his business in all his actions to imitate him. And whosoever shall do so, may assure himself, that he is very acceptable to God, as one that represents him in the height of virtue and in purity of intention; for resemblance is generally the cause of love. Man ought, therefore, when he is doing any good, to turn away his eyes from all kind of human considerations, and fix them upon God. Let him never consent, that an action, which has God for its reward, should serve for a temporal end. For as it would be a great shame to see a noble and beautiful young princess, fit to match with a king, given away to a man of very mean extraction; so it is a much greater subject of tears to see virtue, which is worthy of God himself, employed in acquiring of worldly goods.

15. But because it is no easy matter to obtain this purity of intention, it concerns a man very much to beg it of God earnestly in all his prayers, and particularly in that petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." So that as the whole exercise of the heavenly choirs is the performing of God's will with a most pure intention only to please him, so should the inhabitant of the earth, as long as he lives here, imitate this custom of heaven as far as possibly he can: not that it is not good and just to aspire to the enjoyment of his kingdom, next to pleasing God, but because the less self-interest appears in any of our actions, the more perfect it will be.

§ IV.—16. The sixth virtue is prayer; by means whereof, like children, we are to have recourse to our father when any thing troubles or afflicts us, that through it we may continually remember our heavenly Father, walk in his presence, and often discourse with him; because this is the practice and duty of good children towards their fathers. But having handled this virtue at large elsewhere, we will say no more of it here.

17. The seventh virtue is thanksgiving; whose post is to excite us to gratitude for all God's favors, and to employ our tongues in perpetual acknowledgments of them. It is this virtue that makes us cry out with the royal prophet, "I will praise the Lord at all times; his praise shall always be in my mouth;" Ps. lxxxiii. 1. And in another place, "Let my mouth, O Lord, be filled with

praise, that I may sing thy glory all the day long ;” Ps. lxx. 8. For if God is always giving us our life, if he is always preserving us in the being he has given us, and continually pouring down his benefits on us, by the motions of the heavens, and by the services we perpetually receive from all creatures, what can we do less than be always praising him, who is always preserving, maintaining and defending us, and bestowing on us a thousand other graces and favors? Let us, then, make this our first and chief exercise; and in order to it, let us, as St. Basil advises us, begin all prayers with this; let us, morning, noon and night, nay, every hour of the day, never cease to thank God for all his mercies and benefits, as well general as particular; for those of grace as well as for those of nature; but, above all, for that benefit of benefits, for that grace of graces, his becoming man for us, his shedding his blood for our salvation, and for his being pleased to let us always enjoy his company by means of the most adorable sacrament of the altar. Let us, amongst so many benefits, reflect particularly on this last circumstance, that he who has humbled himself so low for us is the Lord of all creatures, and that all he has done for us has been the pure effect of his love and mercy, without the least tincture of advantage or self-interest. Much more might be said on this subject; but having spoken of it in another place, where we treat of the divine benefits, this shall suffice at present.

§ V. *Of the four Degrees of Obedience.*—18. The eighth virtue that recommends us to this heavenly Father, is an entire obedience to every thing in general, that he shall command us; and in this consists the perfection of all justice. There are in this virtue three degrees; the first is to obey God’s commandments; the second, to follow his counsel; and the third, to hearken to his inspirations and calls. The observance of the commandments is necessary to salvation, the following of his counsel helps us much in the keeping of the commandments, without which we frequently fall into danger; for it is a great remedy to prevent being forsworn, not to swear even to the truth; to prevent losing peace and charity, not to contend; to be safe against coveting our neighbors’ goods, not to possess any thing of our own; and to be sure not to endeavor to do harm to those that hate us, to do them all the good we can. So that the following of the counsels is instead of an out-work to the precepts; and, therefore, he that would arrive at the end, is not to think it enough to keep the one, unless he labors to the utmost of his ability, and as much as his state and condition will permit, to observe the others. For as a man, that is to get over a rapid river, will not venture to cross directly over, but will go up higher to take the tide along with him, that so he may do it with more security,

so he that serves God should not content himself with observing of no more than what is just enough to save him; he must take the thing a little higher, that in case he should not reach to what he proposes to himself, which would be the better, he may at least arrive at that indispensably requisite to salvation; I mean, that which is sufficient.

19. The third degree, we said, was a submission to the divine inspirations; for faithful servants not only obey what their masters command them by word of mouth, but observe the least sign they give of their pleasure. But because a man may be deceived in this point, by taking that for an inspiration from God which comes only from man, or perhaps from the devil, we must take St. John's advice along with us here, for our better security: "Do not give credit to every spirit, but examine whether it comes from God or not;" John iv. 1. And, therefore, besides what you meet with in the Holy Scriptures, and the writings of the saints, which are the standards we must bring these things to, you must follow this general rule:—That since there are two ways of serving God, the one of our own choice, the other of obligation, whensoever they both happen to meet together, be sure let that which is of obligation take place of the other, though it be ever so great and meritorious. And thus it is we are to understand that most excellent saying of Samuel, "Obedience is better than sacrifice" (1 Kings xv. 22); because God would have men observe his word first, and afterwards do him all the other services they can, still with respect to the obedience they owe to him.

20. By necessary services we mean, first, the keeping of God's commandments, without which there is no salvation. Next, the observing of such persons' orders as are placed over you: "Because he that resists them, resists God's disposal of things;" Rom. xii. 2. In the third place, the observance of all those things that are annexed to each man's state and condition, as the obligations of a superior in his situation, of a religious or of a married man in theirs. Then the observance of such things, as, though they are not necessary in themselves, yet contribute very much to the observance of those that are so, because the necessity of the one makes the others in some manner necessary. As, for example, you have found for a long while, that when you take some time every day to retire a little, and enter into yourself to examine your conscience, and to treat with God about proper means for the remedying of what you find amiss there, you lead a more regular and orderly life, that you have a more absolute command over yourself and your passions, and are much more easily inclined to the embracing of all kinds of virtue; you see, on the other side, that as soon as ever you neglect this holy exercise, you run immedi-

ately into a great many failings, and find yourself in danger of contracting your former vicious habits again; this comes from the want of a sufficient stock of grace, and of being not grounded thoroughly in virtue: and for this reason, as a poor man, that has earned nothing all day, has nothing to eat at night, so you, as often as you want the assistance of this devotion, grows hungry and weak, and much more apt to commit lesser faults, which lead you by degrees into greater. In this case you must suppose, that God calls you to this exercise, since you find, by experience, that it is the means by which he generally assists you, and that without it you always fall back again into your former courses. What I say here is not to make you believe that this precept is of indispensable necessity, but only to show you how necessary and convenient a means this is, for your better complying with the obligations of your state. Besides, if you are nice and tender, if you are too much a friend to yourself, and cannot endure any thing that is hard and laborious, and yet perceive, that this love of your own ease is a hindrance to your spiritual progress, inasmuch as it is the cause of your omitting many good works, because of the labor that is in them, and of your committing many bad ones, because they seem pleasant and easy; it is plain, in such a case, that God would have you use all your force and strength, and accustom yourself to such exercises as are most difficult and painful to the macerating of your body, and the mortifying of all your senses and appetites; because your own experience teaches you of what concern and consequence this affair is. You may inquire after the same manner into all those other works, in the practice whereof you find most benefit, and receive the greatest prejudice by omitting them, and you will understand, by this means, which of them God requires you should do; but with submission yet in this, and all other matters, to the advice and direction of those that are set over you.

21. You may see by what has been said, that a man is not always to take hold of that which is best in itself, but of that which is best and most necessary for him. For there are many things most noble and perfect, which may not be the best for me, though they are the best in themselves, because I am neither able to perform them, nor does God call me to them. It, therefore, concerns every one to do just what he finds himself called to, to measure himself by his own strength and abilities, and make that which is most proper for him the object of his choice, without aiming at those things which are out of his reach; it is the advice of the wise man, when he says, "Do not set your eyes upon riches, which you cannot enjoy, because they will take wing like an eagle, and fly into the air;" Prov. xxxiii. 5. And as for those who follow not this counsel, the prophet reproves them very

severely, saying, "You have aspired to that which is greatest, and it has proved the least; you have sown a great deal, and it has brought you but little;" Agg. i. 9.

22. This is the rule you are to follow between services of choice and those of obligation, but as to those that are only of choice, you may observe the following method:—Among these services, some are public and others private; honor, interest and pleasure are the effects of the one, but not of the other. Your best way, therefore, not to err in this point, is to stand more upon your guard in those which are public, than in those which are not, and to be more suspicious the more interest and profit there is in the case. Because self-love is naturally very subtle and always seeking itself, even in exercises of the utmost piety and devotion. This it was gave a holy man frequent occasion to say, "Do you know where God is? He is where you are not." Giving us hereby to understand, that the less advantage and self-interest there was to be expected, the action was so much the more pure and divine, because a man then proposes nothing to himself but the search of God. What I say here is not to oblige any man to stick so close to this rule as never to act contrary to it; for, after all, it may and often does happen, that the other extreme may be much more meritorious than this, and a man's obligations may weigh down all that I have said; my only design is to advise persons against the deceit and malice of self-love, and not to give any credit to it, let it look ever so much like virtue.

23. Perfect obedience includes it in these three degrees, which are, in all appearance, the same the apostle meant, when he said, "Be not imprudent, my brethren, but wise, that you may know what is the will of God, good, well pleasing and perfect;" Ephes. v. 17; Rom. xii. 2. The apostle seems, in this sentence, to have comprehended these three degrees of obedience; because the observing of the precept is *good*, the following of the counsels is *well pleasing*, and the hearkening to the divine calls and inspirations is *perfect*. So that a man may be truly said to be come to the very perfection of obedience, when he has performed whatsoever God has commanded him, whatsoever he has advised, or whatsoever he has inspired him to.

24. Besides these three degrees, there is a fourth, which is a most perfect conformity to the will of God, in all he shall command us; by being equally disposed to receive honor or dishonor, a good reputation or a bad, health or sickness, life or death; by submitting ourselves, with humility, to all his decrees and orders; by preparing ourselves with an equal affection for chastisements and stripes, or for smiles and caresses, for favor or disgrace; not looking on that which is given us, but on him that

gives it, and on the love with which he gives it. For a father has no less tenderness and affection for his child when he corrects and punishes him, than when he makes much of and caresses him.

25. He that has obtained these four degrees of obedience, has acquired that resignation so much recommended by spiritual guides, and by which a man puts himself so entirely into the hands of God, that he becomes as pliant as a piece of wax in the hands of an artist. This virtue is called resignation; because, as a clergyman that resigns up a benefice lays down and delivers it entirely into the hands of his bishop, for him to dispose of as he pleases, without any control or contradiction, so a perfect man delivers himself up into the hands of God, that he may be his own master no longer, nor live for himself; that he may neither eat, sleep nor work for himself, but for the honor and glory of his Creator, by conforming in all things to his most holy pleasure and disposal, and by receiving from his hands, with the same heart of love, all the difficulties and contradictions he shall meet with; by denying and renouncing himself and his own will for the doing of God's with all exactness, whose slave he acknowledges himself on a thousand accounts. David has given us an example in himself of this resignation, when he said, "I am become like a beast before thee, and am always with thee;" Ps. lxii. 23. Because, as a beast neither goes where it pleases, nor rests where it pleases, nor does what it pleases, but obeys its keeper in all things, so he that serves God is to submit himself in all things to him. The prophet Isaias has taught the same lesson, in these words: "The Lord has opened my ear, and I do not contradict him, nor have I turned away from him, by refusing what he has commanded me to do, though it was ever so hard and painful:" Isa. i. 5. Ezekiel has instructed us in the same, by the figure of those mysterious animals of which he writes, "that, which way soever they perceived the impulse of the spirit, that way they went, nor did they turn back as they walked;" Ezek. i. 12. The prophet by this shows us with what readiness and joy a man should do whatsoever he shall understand to be the will of God. But for the doing of this there is required, besides a ready will, a discreet understanding and spirit, to prevent our being deceived, and mistaking our own will for God's, and, therefore, for the most part, we ought to suspect every thing that is according to our own inclination, and look on that as most secure that is most opposite to it.

26. This is the greatest sacrifice man can offer up to God, because, in all other sacrifices, he can offer up nothing but his goods; whereas, in this, he offers up himself, so that this sacrifice is as much above all others as man is above the goods he possesses. Here that saying of St. Augustine is verified, "that, though God

is the Lord of all things, yet it is not for every one to use these words of David, 'O Lord, I am thy servant' (Ps. cxv. 16); but for those only, who, having quitted the possession of themselves, have given themselves wholly up to the service of this Lord, and are by this means become his;" St. Aug. in Ps. 118. This is the best disposition a man can be in for the obtaining the perfection of a Christian life; because God, out of his infinite goodness, being always ready to enrich and improve man, when he does not on his side resist or put a stop to God's designs, but, on the contrary, readily and entirely obeys him, he may easily work him up to what he thinks fit, and make him, like another David, a man after his own heart; 1 Kings xiii. 14.

§ IV. *Of Patience in Afflictions.*—27. The last virtue we proposed, at the beginning of this chapter, as very necessary for acquiring of this last degree of perfection, is patience in those afflictions which our tender Father often sends us, both as a trial and for matter of merit. This it is that Solomon invites us to, in his Proverbs, by these words: "My son, refuse not the correction of the Lord, nor be discouraged when thou art chastised by him. For whom the Lord loves he corrects, and takes a pleasure in them, as a father does in his children." Prov. iii. 11, 12. The apostle explains this text, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, where, advising them to patience, he says thus: "Endure correction with perseverance. God deals with you herein as with sons; for what son is there that is not corrected by his father? For if you want the chastisement which all God's children have received, you are bastards, and not sons. Our fathers according to the flesh have chastised us, and we have honored them; shall we not, therefore, with much more reason obey the Father of spirits, to the end that we may live?" Heb. xii. 7, 8, 9.

28. These words show us that it is the duty of a father to correct and punish his children; and dutiful children will submit themselves with humility to the same, and look on it as a very great favor, and as a token of fatherly love and care: this, the only Son of the eternal Father has taught us by the same example, when, on St. Peter's endeavoring to rescue him from death, he said, "Shall I not drink the chalice which my Father has given me?" John xviii. 11. As if he had said, If this chalice had been presented me by any one else, you might have had some reason for being against my drinking it; but since it comes from my Father's own hands, who knows how to assist those that are his children, and at the same time can and will do it, why shall I not take it as coming from him?

29. Yet there are some who, in time of prosperity, think they are subject to this Father, and have a perfect conformity to his will, but in time of adversity they presently faint, and make it

appear that their resignation and conformity were false; and that they were deceived in their submission, since they lost it when they had occasion to make use of it; like cowards, who boast in time of peace, but in fight fling down their arms and quit the field. And since this life is so subject to continual troubles and combats, it will be well to arm such persons with spiritual weapons which they may make use of at such times.

30. For this end you may, in the first place, consider that the troubles of this life are nothing, if compared with the greatness of that glory we may purchase by them. For the joy this eternal glory gives us is so charming that, putting the case we were to enjoy it but for one single hour, we should willingly undergo all the pains and torments we can possibly endure here, and despise all the pleasures this world is able to afford us for the obtaining of it. Because, as the apostle says, "Our tribulation here, which is so light, and endures but for a moment, procures for us an inestimable weight of eternal glory in heaven;" 1 Cor. iv. 7.

31. Consider, again, how frequently we are puffed with prosperity, whilst, on the contrary, the grief caused by adversity purifies our hearts: the first state makes a man proud and haughty, whereas the other humbles him, though he was ever so high before: that teaches a man to forget himself; the ordinary effect of this is to put him in mind of God: that frequently makes us lose the merits of our best actions; by this we often atone for the sins of several years, and secure ourselves against falling into them again for the future.

32. If you languish under sickness, you are to persuade yourself that, very often, God, foreseeing what ill use we should make of health, clips, as it were, our wings, by the distemper he sends, and so puts us out of the power of committing any sin; so that it is much more to our advantage to languish under sickness, than to enjoy health and go on in our crimes. It is much better, as our Saviour tells us, "to enter into life maimed or lame, than to have both our feet, and be cast into everlasting fire;" Matt. xviii. 8. It is a plain case that our God, who is so merciful, takes no pleasure in tormenting us; his delight is to heal our infirmities, by applying contrary remedies, that so we, who have got our sickness by the enjoyment of pleasures, may recover our health by suffering some pain; and that having been thrown down by committing of such things as are unlawful, we may rise again by depriving ourselves of those that are lawful. Thus you see how God, by an effect of his infinite goodness, exercises his indignation on us in this world, that we may happily avoid the effects of it in the next; how he uses his severity here with mercy, that he may not "pour out his wrath upon us hereafter without it." For, as St. Jerome says, "God is most angry when he conceals his

anger against sinners." So that, according to this, he that is not willing to receive the correction of children now, must be condemned to the pains of devils hereafter. This gave St. Augustine a great deal of reason to cry out, "Burn me, O Lord, cut, and do not spare me in this life, that thou mayst spare me for all eternity in the next." By this you may perceive how careful the Creator of all things watches over you, by holding in the reins, and not letting you follow the track of your own evil inclinations. When once a physician has given his patient over, he allows him to take whatever he has a mind for; but for those whose condition is not so desperate, he prescribes to them their diet, and will allow them nothing that will do them any prejudice. So a father keeps his son short when he is given to debauchery or gaming, and yet leaves him his estate when he dies. God, who is the sovereign Physician of our souls, and the best of all fathers, takes the same course with us.

33. Besides all this, consider what injuries and affronts our Saviour suffered from his own creatures. Consider how he was despised, scoffed at and buffeted by them; with what patience he exposed his divine face to be spit upon by those villains, the instruments of the devils; with what mildness he suffered them to pierce his head with thorns; how willingly he received the bitter potion they gave him to quench his thirst; how silent he was whilst they hailed him in sport and mockery; with what vigor, in fine, and with what patience he ran to embrace death, that he might deliver us from it. Can you, then, who are nothing but a vile creature, at best but dust and ashes, think any thing hard that he shall be pleased to inflict upon you in punishment of your sins, when he himself has suffered so much for these same sins of yours, and would not go out of this life but with pains and torments, though he came into it, without the least spot of imperfection? "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so enter into his glory?" Luke xxiv. 26. And all this to teach us, by his own practice, what the apostle has declared to us, "that no one is crowned without fighting lawfully;" 2 Tim. ii. 5. So that it is much better to suffer our present afflictions with patience, whilst we may make our advantage of them by using them as the means of obtaining pardon for our sins and of increasing our glory, than, by bearing them with impatience, make our trouble greater, and put ourselves out of all hopes of benefitting by them. For whether you will or will not undergo them, you must, if God thinks fit, for there is no resisting his will.

34. To all these considerations I shall add one more, of great force and efficacy, which is that, for the preserving of this patience, a man must be always fortified and prepared against all kinds of adversities and afflictions, which way soever they come

For how can any one expect to be better treated by a world so full of corruption and vice, by a flesh so weak and frail, by the devils that are so envious, and by his fellow creatures that are so malicious? All he is to look for from them are continual persecutions, and unexpected assaults and onsets. It is the part of a prudent man to be always in readiness against such encounters and accidents as these, as he would do if he were passing through an enemy's country, and in so doing he will find two extraordinary conveniences. The first is, he will undergo all his troubles the better, being thus forearmed; because, as Seneca says, "A blow never falls half so heavy as it would do, when we see it coming at a distance." And Ecclesiasticus gives us the same advice, when he says, "Apply a remedy before you are sick;" Eccl. xviii. 20. The other advantage is, that, as often as a man does so, he is sensible he offers a sacrifice to God much like that of the patriarch Abraham, which he was going to make of his son Isaac; Gen. xxii. For whensoever a man considers with himself that he may meet with such or such troubles and contradictions, either from God or men, whensoever he prepares himself for receiving of them with humility and patience, resigning himself entirely into the hands of God, accepting of all things from what part soever they come, as if he himself had sent them, as David did when Simei affronted him, he cannot but be persuaded, that whilst he does this, he offers up a most acceptable service to God, and merits as much by his good will and readiness, though he does nothing at all, as if he had done all he was prepared to do; 2 Kings xvi.

35. For this reason it concerns us to remember that this is one of the most essential obligations of a Christian. St. Peter assures us of it, when he says, "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, knowing that you are thereunto called;" Pet. iii. 9, 14. Every Christian, then, should consider, that as long as he lives in the world he is like a rock in the sea, which is perpetually exposed to the violence of the waves, and yet still keeps its place, though they are always beating against it. I have been copious upon this matter, because a Christian's whole duty, according to what St. Bernard says, consists in these two things, "To do good, and to suffer injuries;" S. Bern. Sermon. 1. Apost. Pet. et Pauli. There is no doubt but it is easier to comply with the first than with the second, and, therefore, it is requisite we should give most caution where there is the greatest danger.

36. But it is observable, by the bye, that in this virtue of patience holy writers tell us there are three degrees, each of which is more perfect than the other. The first of them is, the bearing of afflictions patiently; the second is, the desiring of them for the love of Christ; and the third, the taking a delight in them upon the same account. So that it is not enough for a man that

serves God to take up with the first degree only; when he has attained that, he must aim at the second; and not stop there neither till he comes to the last. We have a very good example of the first degree in the patience of holy Job. The desire several of the martyrs had of suffering furnishes us with an example of the second; and the joy which the apostles had in being found worthy to suffer affronts for the name of Christ, is an evident proof of the last. This is the degree the apostle had arrived to, when he said in one place, "That he glories in his tribulations;" and in another, "That he will rejoice in his tribulations, afflictions, stripes, &c. which he had suffered for Christ;" Acts v.; Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. xi. 12. Speaking elsewhere of his imprisonment, he desires the Philippians to share with him in the joy he has to see himself in chains for the name of Christ; Phil. ii. And he tells us the same favor was granted to the faithful of Macedonia; so that they had a great deal of comfort amidst the heavy afflictions they were oppressed with. This is the highest degree of patience, charity and perfection, a creature can possibly attain to, and which very few arrive at, and, therefore, God does not lay this obligation upon any one, by way of precept, any more than he does the former.

37. From what has been said, we are not to imagine that we must rejoice at the deaths, misfortunes or afflictions of our neighbors; much less at those of our friends or relations; and least of all at those of the church; because the same charity, which commands us to rejoice in one case, obliges us to be sorry and compassionate in the other. For it is charity that knows how to rejoice with those that rejoice, and to weep with those that weep; as we see the holy prophets did, who spent their whole lives in lamenting and bewailing the miseries of men, and the punishments they groaned under.

38. Whosoever, therefore, to conclude, shall have obtained these nine qualities or virtues, shall have the heart of a child towards God, and cannot but have thoroughly complied with this last and principal obligation of justice, which is, to give God whatsoever is due to him.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Obligation of particular States and Callings.

1. AFTER having spoken of the duties of all sorts of persons in general, it would be well to show now what is most proper for every one in particular, according to his condition and employment. But because this would be too tedious, I shall content myself at present with a word or two, in short, to show how highly it concerns each particular person, over and above what I have said already, to have a regard to the laws and obligations of the state he is in. Now these laws are many and different, according to their different callings. For some are appointed to command, and it is the business of others to obey; some are married, others are religious, others are masters of families, &c. Now, every one of these conditions has its particular obligations.

2. As to those that have the charge of government, the apostle advises them to be "watchful in all things, to take pains, and to discharge their duties;" 2 Tim. iv. 5. And Solomon gives the same advice, when he says, "My son, if you are bound for your friend, and have engaged yourself for another man, you are bound by your own words, and are taken by your speech. Do, therefore, my son, what I say, and disengage yourself. Run, make haste, waken your friend, let not your eyes sleep, and give no rest to your eyelids; save thyself as a doe from the hands of the hunter, and as a bird from the hands of the fowler." Prov. vi. 1—5. Do not wonder at the wise man's requiring so much solicitude in a matter of such concern as this. For it is usual for men to take a great deal of care in those things they are intrusted with, upon two accounts, either because of the value of them, or else because of the danger they are exposed to. Now both those reasons are so strong in the concern of our souls, that there is nothing can be of greater value, nor in more danger; and, therefore, much care must be taken in looking after them.

3. The business of a subject or inferior is to look upon his superior, not as a man but as God himself, so that he must have the same respect for him as he has for God, and should do whatsoever he bids him with the same readiness he would do it, had God himself commanded it. For if the master, whose service I am in, should bid me obey his house-keeper, or his steward, who is it I obey, in obeying the steward, but the master himself? If God, therefore, commands me to obey my superior, it is not so much my superior that I obey, as God himself, when I do whatsoever is ordered me. As if St. Paul would have a servant submit to and respect his master, not as a man but as Jesus Christ, how

much more reasonable is it for an inferior to obey his superior, when obedience is the tie of his obligation? Ephes. viii. 5.

4. There are three degrees in this obedience: the first is to obey in action only, the second is to obey both in action and will, and the third in action, will and understanding. For some do what is commanded them, yet neither do they like what they do, nor do it with a good will. Others do it with a good will, but still disapprove of what they do; others there are, in fine, who, "captivating their understanding to the service of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 5), obey their superiors as they would do God himself, in action, word and understanding, doing whatsoever he orders them, with cheerfulness and readiness, with humility approving of it, without sitting as judges over those to whom they themselves are answerable. You must, therefore, make it your business to obey your superiors all these three different ways, remembering that our Saviour says, "He that hears you hears me, and he that despises you despises me;" Luke x. 16. Never murmur or say any thing against them, that they may never have occasion to tell you, "It is not against us that you murmur, but against the Lord;" Exod. xvi. 8. Despise them not, for fear God himself should say to them, "They have not despised you, but me, that I should not reign over them;" 1 Kings viii. 7. Treat them with all kind of truth and sincerity, that no one may upbraid you, saying, "You have not lied to men, but to God" (Acts v. 4), and lest, like Ananias and Sapphira, you be punished with sudden death for your rashness.

5. Let the married woman look to the government of her house, and take care of her family, please her husband, and do all that a wife should do; when she has satisfied those obligations, let her spend the rest of her time in devotion as much as she pleases, but still let her remember, that the duties of her state call upon her first.

6. Let those that are fathers of children frequently reflect upon the severe punishment that was inflicted upon Heli, for his neglect in chastising and instructing his sons; 1 Kings iv. This omission of his, God punished not only with his own and his children's sudden death, but with the loss of the priesthood, which was removed for ever after from his family. Consider that the sins of the children are, in some manner, imputed to the fathers, and that the ruin of a son is very often the cause of his father's destruction: nor does he deserve the bare name of father, who, after having begotten his son for this world, does not also beget him for the next. Let him correct him, reprove him, advise him, keep him out of bad company, and seek good masters for him: let him train him up in virtue, and instruct him, like Tobias, from his very infancy to fear God (Tob. iv.); let him break him of his own will and inclinations; and since, before his birth, he was his father

according to the flesh, he must, now he is born, be his father according to the spirit. For it is against reason, that a man should do no more of the duty of a father than birds and beasts do, whose only business is to feed and maintain their young ones. Man must behave himself in this matter like a man, nay, like a Christian, like a faithful servant of God. He is to bring his child up so as that he may be the child of God and an heir of heaven, not a slave to the devil and an inhabitant of hell.

7. Masters of families, that have servants, should remember what St. Paul says: "If a man does not take care of those that are under him, and especially of those that are of his own family, he has denied his faith, and is worse than an infidel;" 1 Tim. v. 8. They are to consider, that those of their family are like sheep of their flock, and that they are the shepherds and keepers, especially of those that are their servants. Let them not forget, that the time will come when they must give an account of them, when they shall be asked, "Where is the flock that was committed to your charge, and the noble herd that you had the care of?" It was properly called *noble*, because of the price of its redemption, and the most sacred humanity of Christ, by which it has been ennobled; since there is no slave so mean, that has not received both his liberty and nobility from the humanity and blood of Christ. It is, therefore, the duty of a good Christian to be particularly watchful over those of his family, and to keep them from all kinds of open sins, as quarrelling, gaming, swearing, cursing, &c.; but above all, from sins of impurity. He must, besides all this, endeavor to instruct them in the principles of religion; he must make them observe the commandments of the church, particularly that of hearing mass upon Sundays and holidays; of fasting upon all the vigils and other appointed fasting days in the year, unless, as we have said already, there be some lawful excuse for their not complying with these precepts.

CHAPTER VI.

First Advice upon the Esteem we are to have of the different Virtues, for the better understanding the Rule of a good Life.

1. As, at the beginning of this treatise, I set down some necessary precognita, by way of advance; so it is convenient here, now we are drawing to a conclusion, to give some advice for the clearer understanding of all that is contained in it. First, therefore, it is necessary, after having treated of several kinds of virtues, to show how much one virtue is more excellent than another,

that so we may know what value to put upon every one, and to esteem it according to its true worth. For as it is requisite, that a man who trades in jewels should know what rate they bear, that he may not be deceived in the value of them, and as it is convenient for the steward of a great man's house to know the merits of all in the family, that each person may be treated according to his deserts, (for otherwise there will be nothing but perpetual confusion and disorder), so he that trades in the jewels of virtue, and he that, like a faithful steward, is for giving every one what is his due, should be well acquainted with the value of them, that whensoever they are set together, he may know which to give the preference to, lest he should gather chaff and scatter the grain.

2. You are, therefore, to understand, that all those virtues we have hitherto treated of may be ranked into two classes; for some of them are more spiritual and inward, and others more visible and outward. In the first class are contained the theological virtues, with all the others, which have God for their object; but charity, as queen of the rest, has the first place. To these we may add several other very excellent virtues, and which are much like the former, as humility, chastity, mercy, patience, discretion, devotion, poverty of spirit, contempt of the world, a denying of our own will, a love of the cross, and of Christ's mortifications, with many other such virtues, which we call virtue in this place, taking the word in the largest signification. We call them spiritual and inward virtues, because it is the spirit they chiefly reside in, though they extend themselves even to outward works, as appears particularly in charity and in the worship of God, which, notwithstanding their being inward virtues, work outwardly for the honor and glory of the same God.

3. There are other more visible and outward virtues, as fasting, discipline, silence, retirement, pious reading, prayer, singing of psalms, pilgrimages, hearing of mass, assisting at sermons and at the divine office, with all the outward observances and ceremonies of Christian and religious life. For though these virtues are all of them in the soul, yet their effects appear more outward than those of other virtues do, which are often occult and invisible; as to believe, to love, to hope, to contemplate, to be inwardly humbled, to have sorrow for a man's sins, to judge discreetly, and the like.

4. There is no doubt, but that the first of these two kinds of virtues are much more excellent and necessary than the second. For as our Saviour said to the Samaritan woman, "Woman, believe me, the hour is come that those who are the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father looks for such to adore him. God is a spirit; and, therefore, they that

adore him must adore him in spirit and truth." John iv. 23. This is, in plain terms, no more than what little children repeat so often at school, in these two noted verses:—

*Si Deus est animus, nobis ut carmina dicunt,
Hic tibi præcipue sit pura mente colendus.*—CATO.

If God, as poets say, a spirit be,
He must in spirit be adored by thee.

For this reason David, describing the beauty of the church, says, "that all her glory is within, her garments are of cloth of gold, and of several colors;" Ps. xlv. 13. The apostle expresses the same thing to us, when he says, "Accustom yourself to piety, for bodily exercise is good but for a little, but piety is profitable for all things, and has a promise of the goods both of this life and of the next;" 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8. By piety here we are to understand the worship of God, and charity towards our neighbor; and by the exercise of the body, abstinence and other corporal austerities, according to St. Thomas upon this place.

5. This is a truth which the heathen philosophers were not ignorant of; and Aristotle, though he has not written much concerning the gods, says, that if the gods take any notice of our concerns, as it is to be believed they do, it is very probable they are most pleased with that which is the best and comes the nearest to them; which is man's spirit or understanding. For this reason they who take care to beautify and adorn their souls with the knowledge of this truth, and with the reformation of their desires and passions, must, without doubt, be most acceptable to God. Galen, the great physician, was of the same opinion; for, in his book of the Composition and Structure of Man's Body, and the Use of its Parts, coming to a passage, which particularly demonstrated the singular wisdom and providence of God, the sovereign Artist, he was struck with admiration at so many wonders, and forgetting, as it were, his physic, turned to divinity, and broke out into these expressions: "Let others offer up their hecatombs" (they were sacrifices used by the ancients of a hundred oxen) "to the gods: I will honor them by a profound acknowledgment of the greatness of their wisdom, by which they have so wonderfully disposed of all things; I will reverence them by confessing the greatness of their power, by which they have been able to execute their own pleasure; I will worship them, by admiring the greatness of their love, which has refused the creatures nothing, since they have bestowed upon every one of them in particular, whatsoever was necessary, and left them nothing to desire further;" L. 3. de Usu Partium. These are the words of a heathen philosopher; and what, I pray, could a Christian have said beyond this? especially after having read this

expression of the prophet : "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings;" Osee vi. Change but the word *hetacombs* into *holocausts*, and you will find the philosopher and the prophet agree upon this matter.

6. But notwithstanding the excellence of these virtues, those of the second class are very useful (though not so noble as the former) for acquiring and preserving of those that are greater; some of them are necessary, either because of the precept, or of the vow that goes along with them. This is made out by reflecting on those virtues we have mentioned. For retirement and solitude put a man out of the way of seeing, hearing and talking of a thousand things that will endanger not only his peace and quiet of conscience, but his chastity and innocence. We are all sensible what a help silence is for preserving of devotion, and avoiding of those sins, which men fall into by talking; and the wise man has told us, that, "where there is much talk, sin will not be wanting." As for fasting, besides its being an effect of the virtue of temperance, and a satisfactory and meritorious work, if it be done with charity, it enervates the body, it lifts up the spirit, it weakens our enemy, and disposes us for prayer, pious reading and contemplations; it keeps us out of those excesses and debaucheries occasioned by eating and drinking, and preserves us from all those scurrilous jests and buffooneries, quarrels and riots, which generally follow merriments and revels. As to those other virtues of reading good books, hearing of sermons, praying, singing and assisting at the offices of the church, it is plain they are all acts of religion, incitements of devotion, and serve to enlighten our understandings, and to make our wills more inflamed with the desire of spiritual things.

Experience makes this point so clear that, had our adversaries considered it, they would never have run into the contrary extremes; for we daily see, that in those monasteries where regular discipline is more exact, and where the exterior observances are better complied with, there is always more virtue, more devotion, more charity, more strength and vigor in the members of them, and the fear of God and Christianity is better encouraged and promoted. Whereas in those houses where these things are less regarded, and where the exterior discipline their rules oblige to is grown loose, conscience, good manners and a holy life follow the same course, and fall to ruin; because where the occasions of sinning are more, there sins and disorders are more frequent. So that the observance of a religious state may be properly compared to a vine, which, if it be well fenced and enclosed, is out of all danger of being spoiled, but otherwise its fruit will be exposed to every one that passes by. It is even so with a religious order that has once fallen from the rigor and

austerity of its rule. Then what clearer proof than this, which is grounded on daily experience, of the advantage and importance of these virtues?

8. How is it possible for a man that proposes to himself the acquiring and preserving of this sovereign virtue of devotion, which capacitates and enables him for all other virtues, and is, as it were, an incentive and spur to all kind of good, ever to obtain his end, whilst he watches so carelessly over himself, especially when the virtue he aims at is so far above his strength as it is, and so pure and perfect? For it is so nice, and, if I may be allowed the expression, so volatile, that a man can scarce look back but it is gone. An excess of laughter, a superfluous word, a greater meal than ordinary, a little passion, a small dispute, or any other distraction whatsoever; the desire of seeing, hearing or thinking of things not to our purpose, though not bad, are enough to spoil the better part of our devotion. So that not only our sins, but unnecessary employs, and any thing that can divert us from thinking on God, draws us away from it. For as iron, to be changed into the substance of fire, must be always in it, or at least but seldom out of it, for fear of returning to its natural coldness again; so this noble virtue depends so much upon man's being always united to God by an actual love and reflection, that if he but thinks of any thing else, he casts himself back again into his natural corruption, that is, into the old disposition he had at first.

9. It concerns him, therefore, that has a mind to procure this virtue, and to keep it when he has it, to watch so carefully over himself, that is, over his eyes, his ears, his tongue, and his heart; it concerns him to be so temperate in his meals, to be so regular in all his words and notions, to be so much a friend to silence and solitude, to make it so much his business to be present at the service of the church, and to do all those things which shall excite him to devotion, that he may, by means of this care and diligence, be able to secure to himself the possession of so great a treasure as this is. If he does not do this, let him look on it as most certain he shall never succeed in this point.

10. All this may sufficiently convince us of the importance of these virtues, without lessening the value of the nobler. Whence we may gather the difference there is between them; for these are, as it were, the end, those the means of attaining it; these are like health, those like medicines proper for procuring of it; these are in a manner the spirit of religion, and those the body, which, though it is inferior to the spirit, is a chief part of the compound, and necessary because of its operations; these are like the treasure, and those like the key that secures it; these are, as it were, the fruit of the tree, and those the leaves that adorn the

tree and preserve the fruit. Though this comparison does not answer exactly, because the leaves of a tree are no part of the fruit, though they preserve it; but these virtues secure justice so as, at the same time, to make up a part of it, since they are all of them virtuous actions, and worthy of grace and glory, if done with perfect charity.

11. This is the esteem you are to set upon the virtues we have here been discoursing of, which is what we proposed at the beginning of this chapter. This doctrine will secure us against two vicious extremes, that is, two notorious errors there have been in the world, as to this affair: the first, an ancient one, of the Pharisees; the other is a late one, of the heretics of our times. For the Pharisees, like carnal and ambitious men, and brought up in the observance of the law, which as yet was carnal, made no account of true justice, which consists in spiritual virtues, as we may see throughout the whole course of the gospel; so that, as the apostle says, "they had the appearance indeed of piety, but wanted the substance" (2 Tim. iii. 5); you might have taken them for good men by the outside, though they were full of abomination and filth within. But our present heretics, on the contrary, being sensible of this error, to avoid one extreme ran into another, which was splitting upon Scylla to avoid Charybdis. But the true Catholic doctrine shuns both these extremes, and seeks virtue in the mean, taking care to give the inward virtues the first and best place, without suffering the outward to lose the rank that is due to them. It places some, as it were, in the rank of the nobility, and others among the gentry and commonalty, which compose this commonwealth, that the value of every thing may be known, and each have as much as is its due.

CHAPTER VII.

Of four necessary Instructions that follow upon this Doctrine.

1. FROM what has been said may be drawn four important instructions for the spiritual life. The first is, that he who serves God as he ought to do, is not to content himself with seeking after spiritual virtues only, though they are the most excellent, but must add the others to them; and this as well for the preserving of the first, as for the arriving at the height and perfection of all justice. To this purpose he is to consider, that as a man consists not of either soul alone or of body alone, but of both together, because the soul alone, without the body, is not a complete man, and the body, without the soul, is nothing but a lump of earth; true and

perfect Christianity is neither only interior nor only exterior, but both at once; because there is no preserving the interior without something at least, if not a great deal, of the exterior, according to every one's state and condition, nor is it enough for the performing of perfect justice. And as to the exterior without the interior, it goes no farther towards making a virtuous man, than the body without the soul does to the making of a natural man. So that, as the body receives its whole life and being from the soul, so the exterior depends, after the same manner, upon the interior, and most of all upon charity, for all the esteem and value it has.

2. He, therefore, that would be undeceived, must no more separate the corporal from the spiritual, in order to make a perfect Christian, than he is to divide the body from the soul, for the making a complete man. Let him take the body and soul together, the treasure and the chest, the fence and the vine; let him take all his supports and props along with it, for they are all to go together, or he will lose both; for he will not be able to obtain the one part, and the other without it will not avail him. Let him consider, that since neither nature, nor art which copies after nature, produce any work without giving it an outside and clothing, and without giving it a defence and stay, both for its preservation and beauty; it is repugnant to reason to think that grace, which is a much more perfect form than the others are, and which operates much better, should not do as much as they do. Let him reflect on the sentence, "He that fears God, despises nothing; and he that contemns little things, will fall by degrees into great ones;" Eccl. vii. 19. Let him consider the danger he runs in not taking notice of small things, because it is the ready way for him not to mind the greater. Let him but think on the flies that succeeded the gnats in the plagues of Egypt; that this may teach him how the neglect of lesser things makes way for that of greater; Exod. viii. For he who does not regard the stinging of gnats shall be soon troubled with flies, that will overrun him with filth and nastiness.

§ I. *The second Instruction.*—3. By this it will appear about what virtues we are to be most solicitous, and which require less care. For as men will do more for a piece of gold than for a piece of silver, and more for an eye than for a finger, so it is convenient we should take most care to purchase and keep those virtues that are the most excellent. For if we are diligent in that which is of least moment, and careless in that which is of most, all our spiritual affairs will be disorderly. It is, therefore, a great piece of prudence in superiors, in their chapters and public assemblies, to recommend to their religious the observance of silence, fasting, solitude, ceremonies, modesty and the choir;

and to be much more zealous in advising them to charity, humility, prayer, devotion, meditation, the fear of God, the love of their neighbors, and the like. And this latter part is so much the more necessary than the other, by how much the inward failings are more private than the outward, and, therefore, the more dangerous. For as men are more apt to remedy the defects they see than those they do not see, it is a hazard they may thus come to make no account of the inward failings, because they are not seen, though they may take much notice of the outward, because they appear; besides, the exterior virtues, as abstinence, watching, disciplines, corporal austerities and mortifications, are more visible to others, and, therefore, more familiar to, and more esteemed by them; whilst hope, charity, humility, discretion, the fear of God, the contempt of the world, and the rest of the interior virtues, are less in credit with the world, because they appear less outwardly, though, at the same time, they are much more acceptable to God, than the others. Our Saviour himself gave us the reason of this difference of opinions, when he said, "You justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts" (Luke xvi. 15); and the apostle tells us to the same purpose, "He is not a Jew that is a Jew outwardly, nor is that circumcision which appears outwardly in the flesh; but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and the circumcision of the heart, which consists in the spirit, and not in the letter, is true circumcision, whose praise comes not from men, but from God" (Rom. ii. 28, 29); for men have not eyes to see this spiritual circumcision. Since, then, these outward things are so manifest, and so much in view, and the desire of honor and praise is one of the cunningest and most powerful passions a man has, there is more danger of being carried away by this passion, to the consideration and pursuit of those virtues which are most in esteem amongst men, than of being wrought on to the desire of those that appear less honorable, because it is the spirit that calls us to the love of these; but the spirit and flesh together invite us to search after those, and the flesh is eager and subtle in pursuing all its appetites. This being so, we have all the reason in the world to fear, that two such powerful passions as these will easily prevail against one, and force it to quit the field. This disorder may be remedied by the light of this doctrine, which always pleads for the juster side, and stands up for maintaining of its right, notwithstanding all these obstructions, and is most zealous in recommending that to us, which we cannot but see to be of the greater importance.

§ II. *The third Instruction.*—4. Another thing to be learned hence is the obligation we have of following the rule of God's commandments in the concurrence of two virtues, which cannot possibly be both embraced; for this will happen sometimes, and

in such a case we must give the preference to the most worthy of the two, to avoid confusion and trouble. This is what St. Bernard teaches us, in his Book of Dispensation. "There are," says he, "a great many laws enacted, not because men could not have lived without them, but because they served much more for the obtaining and preserving of charity. Therefore, they are to remain in their force and vigor, without change, as long as they answer this end; nor can they themselves, who have the power to do it, make any innovation in this kind, without giving offence. But if, at any time, they should prove destructive to charity, who can think it would not be consonant to justice, and most for the increase of charity too, to omit, defer, change for the better or abolish, with the consent of those persons who have the authority in their hands, such laws as were instituted for the maintaining of charity, when once they are perceived to be prejudicial to it? For it would certainly be a point of injustice to observe those laws, which were made in the behalf of charity, if ever they happen to prove otherwise. It is requisite, therefore, that those who are in command should look on these things as unchangeable and irrevocable, as long as they are useful for the keeping up of this virtue, and no longer." *Orat. de Præcepto et Dispens. c. 4.* These are St. Bernard's own words, who produces two decrees, one of pope Gelasius, and the other of pope Leo, in proof of what he here asserts.

§ III. *The fourth Instruction.*—5. We may gather from what has been said, that there are two sorts of justice, a true and a false one. The true one is that which embraces the interior virtues, and with them the exterior, that are necessary for the keeping of them. The false one is that which lays hold of some of the exterior virtues, without meddling with the interior, that is, without the love of God, without fear, humility, devotion, and the like. The Pharisees were just as this comes to, and no more; and, therefore, our Saviour says to them, "Wo unto you, hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, who pay the tithes of your mint, your aniseed and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith;" *Matt. xxiii. 23.* He upbraids them again soon after, with these words: "Wo unto you, hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, who make the outside of your cups and dishes clean, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness;" *Ibid. ver. 25.* And immediately again "Wo unto you, hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, for you are like unto painted sepulchres, which appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead men's bones, and all sorts of filthiness;" *Ibid. ver. 27.*

6. Such justice as this is we find frequently condemned by God himself, in the writings of the prophets. In one of them he

says, "This people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; and they fear me, because of the laws and institutions of men;" Isa. xxix. 14. And in another place he says, "Why do you offer me so many sacrifices? I am quite tired with them. I have no pleasure in the burnt-offerings of rams, and in the fattening of beasts, in the blood of calves, of lambs and of goats. Offer me no more oblations, for it is but lost labor; your incense is an abomination to me; I will not bear with your new moons; and sabbaths, and solemn meetings; your public assemblies are wicked; they are troublesome to me; I cannot abide them." Isa. i. 11, 13, 14.

7. What! does God find fault with what he himself so strictly commanded; nay, even when they are acts of religion, which of all virtues is the noblest, since its business is to worship God with works of adoration and piety? Certainly, it cannot be the virtue he condemns, but the men that content themselves with outward obligations, and neglect true justice and the fear of God. For he himself declares, immediately after, that it is nothing else that displeases him. "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean, put away your evil thoughts out of my sight, and cease from doing of evil, and learn to do well; and then, though your sins were as red as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; and though they were like purple, they shall be as white as wool;" Ibid. ver. 16, 17, 18.

8. He expresses the same thing again with much more vehemence elsewhere: "He that sacrifices an ox to me is like him that kills a man; he that sacrifices a sheep is like him that tears a dog in pieces; he that makes an offering to me is like him that offers up swine's blood; and he that offers me incense is like him that sacrifices to an idol;" Isa. lxvi. 3. What can be the meaning of this, O Lord? what kind of prodigy is here? Why are those things, which you yourself have commanded, so abominable to you? He gives us the reason of it, when he says, "They have made choice of all these things in their ways, and their soul is delighted in their abominations;" Ibid. You see here, then, what small account God makes of exterior things, when they are not grounded on interior. To give us a proof of this, he says, by another prophet, "Take away from me the noise of your songs; for I will not hear the melody of your harps" (Amos v. 23.); and in another place he says, expressing his displeasure in more lively terms, "I will fling the dung of your solemn feasts into your faces;" Mal. iii. What need is there, after all this, of saying any more, to show how little all exterior things amount to, let them be ever so noble and great in themselves, if the love and fear of God, and a horror of sin, which are the foundations of justice, be wanting.

9. Should you ask me, what can be the reason of God's disliking these kinds of service, of his comparing sacrifice with manslaughter, and incense with idolatry; of his calling the singing of psalms *a noise*, and solemn feast and meeting *dung*; I answer, because these things, for want of the foundations we have spoken of, besides their being of no worth or esteem, give occasion to many to be proud and haughty, to presume on themselves, and to condemn every body else, that does not do as they do; and, what is worst of all, this false justice settles them in a false security in the way they are in, which is one of the greatest dangers they can fall into; because they are so satisfied with what they have, that they aim at nothing further. Do but consider the Pharisee's prayer in the gospel: "I thank you, O God, that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or as this publican is; I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess;" Luke xviii. 11; 12. You may easily discover in this prayer, the three dangerous rocks we have spoken of; you may plainly see his presumption, when he says, *I am not like other men*; his contempt of others, in these words, *I am not as this publican*; and his false security, *in his thanking God for the life he led*, whilst he imagined all was safe, and that he had nothing to be afraid of.

10. Hence springs a dangerous kind of hypocrisy, which these false just men run into. For the understanding of this, you are to know that there are two sorts of hypocrisy: the one is base and palpable, and is of those who know they are wicked, and outwardly appear good, to deceive the world. The other sort is more nice and subtle, which makes a man even deceive himself as well as others, like the Pharisee, who really cheated himself, and not others only, under the cover of justice, by imagining himself to be a holy man, though at the same time he was a very great sinner. This kind of hypocrisy the wise man points at, in these words: "There is a way that seems just to man, but the end of it leads to death;" Prov. xiv. 12. And in another place, speaking of four kinds of evils there are in the world, he reckons this for one of them: "There is a generation that curses their father, and that does not bless their mother. There is a generation that think themselves clean, and yet is not cleansed from their filthiness. There is a generation that has a proud look, and that turn up their eyelids. There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and who devour the poor from the earth with their jaws." Prov. xxx. 11, 12, 13, 14. The wise man looks on these four sorts of persons as the most infamous and dangerous in the world; and amongst them he puts those that are hypocrites in regard of themselves, who fancy they are clean, when they are as far from being so as the Pharisee was.

11. This condition is so dangerous, that, to speak the truth, it is not half so bad for a man to be a sinner, and to know he is such, as it is to be just after this manner, and to live in a false security. Because, let a man be ever so sick, the knowing of his distemper is a fair way to his recovery; but when a man fancies himself to be well, though he is much out of order, there will be no persuading him to take any medicine to cure him. For this reason our Saviour told the Pharisees, "that publicans and harlots should go before them into the kingdom of heaven;" Matt. xxi. 31. The Greek translation, instead of "shall go before," reads "do go before," which is a stronger proof of what we affirm. This is what we are told much more plainly by our Saviour himself, in those obscure but terrible words, in the Apocalypse: "I wish you were either cold or hot; but because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit you out of my mouth;" Apoc. iii. 15, 16. How is it possible God should wish a man were cold? And how is it possible that a man that is cold should be in a better condition than one that is lukewarm, since the latter is nearer being warm than the other? The reason is this:—He that is hot is the man that has got the fire of charity, and with it all those virtues, both interior and exterior, that we have spoken of; the cold man is he who has neither the one sort nor the other, because he has no charity. And the lukewarm is he that has some of the exterior virtues, but wants the interior, or at least charity. Now our Saviour would have us know that this man's condition is more dangerous than his is that is quite cold, not because he has more sins than the other, but because his evil is much more incurable; for the greater security he imagines himself to be in, the further he is from applying any remedies. So that this superficial and outside justice of his makes him believe he is something, whereas in reality he is nothing at all. We need but read what follows to know it is the genuine and literal sense of the text. For our Saviour, speaking more clearly to him whom he had called lukewarm before, says, "You shall say, that you are rich and wealthy, and want nothing; and you know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" Ibid. xvii. Is not this the Pharisee drawn to life, who said, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men?" Luke xvii. 11. This, without doubt, was he that thought himself rich in spiritual treasures, because he thanked God as if he was so; and yet he was poor, naked and blind, because he was empty of all interior justice, full of pride, and so blind that he could not see his own failings.

12. We have made it appear thus far that there are two sorts of justice, a true and a false one; we have discovered the dangers of this, and showed the excellence and dignity of that. And

let no one think we have lost our time in treating of these things so largely; for since the gospel itself, which of all sacred writ is of most authority, and which has been left us as the rule to square our lives by, condemns this kind of justice so often; since the prophets, as we have proved, do the same, it would have been very ill done if we should have passed over this matter slightly, which the Holy Scriptures so often repeat and inculcate. If the dangers a man is exposed to lay as open to every one as rocks that appear above the water in the midst of the seas, there would be no great need of advising persons against them; but when they are quite hid from us, it is convenient we should have some instructions to know how to avoid them, as mariners have their charts to show them whereabouts those shelves lie that are quite under water, that they may steer their course so as not to run upon them.

13. Let no man deceive himself saying, such precepts were very necessary in former times when this vice was so frequent, but that there is not so much need of them now-a-days. I am of opinion the world is as bad now as it was then, and that it has almost always been of the same condition, because, when men are the same, when human nature is the same, when there are the same inclinations, and the same original sin, which we have all of us been conceived in, and from whence all other sins draw their rise, there must needs be the same offences. For where there is so great a proportion between the causes of sin, it is impossible there should not be as great a one between the sins themselves. So that there are the same crimes now in such and such kind of persons as there were then; the only difference is, the names are not the same; just as Plautus or Terence's comedies are the same now they were a thousand years ago, though the players are changed.

14. So that, as those ignorant and carnal people thought God was very much obliged to them for their sacrifices, for their fasts and solemnities, observed according to the letter only, not according to the spirit; there are a great many Christians at present who hear mass every Sunday, say the Office of our blessed Lady or the Rosary every day, fast every Saturday in honor of her, are always present at sermons, and assist at the office of the church; and yet, after all, notwithstanding so many actions which are really good, they are as eager in their pursuit of honors, as fully bent upon satisfying their lusts, and as subject to anger, as other men are that never do any of these things. They forget the obligations of their states; they are not at all concerned about the salvation of their servants and family; they are full of hatred and malice, and will abate nothing of their haughtiness; they never exercise the least degree of hu-

mility or patience. Nay, some of them go so far, and that upon very trivial matters, that they will not so much as speak to their neighbor upon any account whatsoever. Others are very backward in paying servants their wages, and in discharging their debts. And if a man should happen to do or say any thing that touches their honor or interest, adieu then to all the virtues they had. You will meet with some that are very generous and profuse of their prayers; but they will never put their hands into their pockets to give an alms to the poor. You may find others, that will not for all the world eat flesh upon Wednesdays; but they will make no scruple of detracting from their neighbor, and will never stop at any kind of slander or scandal when a man's reputation is at a stake; so that, whilst they are so scrupulously afraid of eating the flesh of beasts, they have no horror of preying upon that of man, which God has so strictly forbidden them. For there is scarce any thing that a Christian should be so much concerned for as the credit or honor of his neighbor; and yet it is but what few take any notice of, though there are many things that are not half so important, which they are much more solicitous about.

15. That these and many other such failings are the common practice, not only of the worldly men, but even of those that are retired out of it, is a truth unquestionable. And, therefore, we thought it necessary, this mistake being so general, to undeceive such as are fallen into it, especially when those persons, whose particular business it is to take notice of it, neglect their duty entirely in this point. What I have said will, I hope, supply this defect, and serve as a direction to those that desire to keep in the right way.

16. And that what we have said may be more profitable to the reader, and he may not grow worse upon the medicine, it is good to advise him, in the first place, to inquire into his own spiritual state and condition, that he may see what it is he is most inclined to. For as there are some general instructions that serve for all sorts of persons, as those upon charity, humility, patience, obedience, and the like, there are others, again, more particular, which are good for some, but not so for others. As, for example, a scrupulous person should have his conscience enlarged a little; whereas his, on the contrary, that is too large already, is to be confined and straitened. A man that is subject to diffidence, and apt to be discouraged, must be put in mind of mercy; whereas the presumptuous should be frightened with the remembrance of justice. The same rule is to be observed proportionably in other cases. This is no more than the author of Ecclesiasticus advises us to, when he says, "Talk to the unjust man of justice, of war to the coward, of gratitude to the

ungrateful, of piety to the wicked, and of labor to the idle;" Eccl. xxxviii. 12.

17. Since, according to this, there are two sorts of persons, the one that apply themselves wholly to interior virtues, and the other that concern themselves about none but the exterior, it would do well to recommend the exterior virtues to the first sort, and the interior to the second, that so every one may be brought to a due measure and proportion. We have endeavored all along here to treat every thing with such moderation, that nothing might want the place that is due to it; we have spoken in commendation of greater things without any prejudice to the lesser, nor have we, in extolling these, lessened them; and by this means we have avoided those two dangerous rocks, which we have advised others not to split upon, the one which they run upon who practise interior acts, and never mind the exterior, the other they dash against who are so bent upon exterior, as to have no concern at all for the interior, and, above all, the fear of God, and a hatred of sin.

18. The main point of all this business is to ground ourselves so in the fear of God as to tremble at the very name of sin. Happy is he that has this virtue deeply rooted in his soul; he may build what he pleases upon this foundation; but as for him, on the contrary, who is easily wrought upon by sin, let him have all the appearances that can be, he is to look upon himself as miserable, blind and unhappy.

CHAPTER VIII.

A second Advice upon the different Ways of Living there are in the Church.

1. OUR second advice is to prevent men passing their judgment upon one another, on account of the *different ways of living*. To this purpose, you must understand, that there being many virtues requisite to a Christian life, some persons are more addicted to some of them, and others to others. For we see some practise those most which have God for their immediate object, and these persons apply themselves for the most part to a contemplative life; others esteem those virtues best, which make them most serviceable to their neighbor, and those embrace an active life; others, again, love those best which put a man most in mind of himself, and these virtues belong particularly to a monastical life.

2. Again, all virtuous actions being so many means for the

obtaining of grace, some men follow one way, and some another, for the acquiring of it; so that some endeavor to obtain it by fasting, disciplines, and other corporal austerities; some by alms and works of mercy; some by continual prayer and meditation; in this last means, the ways are as many as the methods of praying and meditating are different. So that some make use of this method, and some of that, and as there are many things to be meditated upon, there are also many sorts of meditations. Now that sort is best for each particular person, which he finds most profitable, and which serves best to excite him to devotion.

3. Virtuous persons are subject to a great mistake as to this point, which is, that they who have profited by any one of these means think there is no other way of arriving at God, but that which they have gone. They would fain teach all the world the same, and look upon those as out of the road, who do not go their way, because they imagine it is the only one to get to heaven. He who is much given to prayer thinks that, without it, it is impossible to be saved; he that fasts much persuades himself that nothing is to the purpose but fasting; he that leads a contemplative life fancies every body else to run the hazard of his salvation; nay, they carry it so far sometimes, as to have no kind of esteem for an active life. They, on the other side, that have made choice of an active life, and for want of having experienced what passes betwixt God and the soul in the most delightful repose of contemplation, when they see how far they have advanced by their active way of living, lessen as much as they can the contemplative life, and think there is no perfection without a composition of both, as if all the world was to do what they do. A man that makes choice of mental prayer, thinks all other kind of prayer unprofitable; and he that loves vocal prayer best, says, that since it is more laborious than the other, it must needs be more meritorious.

4. So that every man cries up his own ware, as shopkeepers do, and this without being sensible of it; with a hidden pride and ignorance, each of them commends himself, by extolling that which he has the greatest stock of. Thus virtues are under the same circumstances as sciences, of which every one praises that he professes, and decries all the rest. The orator says, there is no art in the world to be compared with rhetoric. The astronomer will tell you, there is no science like that which treats of the heavens and stars. The philosopher says the same of his science. He that gives himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures says much more, and with more reason. The linguist says almost as much as he, because his languages serve for the better understanding of the Scripture. The school-divine must have the first place, or else he will not be satisfied. In fine, there is none of

them all without his weighty reasons, to make you believe his sciences better and more necessary than the rest.

5. This, which appears so plainly in sciences, is to be found in virtues, though it does not lie so open; for all the lovers of them desire to choose that which is best, and seek that which suits with their inclinations; and therefore think, that what fits them best, is best for every body, and what does not agree with them is proper for nobody.

6 Hence spring the judgments made on other men's lives, and the spiritual divisions and schisms among brethren; one man fancying another is in the wrong, for not taking the same way he does. It was almost such an error the Corinthians lived in; 2 Cor. xii. They had received several different gifts from God, and every one looked upon his own as the best, and, therefore, they valued themselves above one another. Some preferring the gift of tongues, others that of prophecy, some, again, that of interpreting the Scriptures, others the working of miracles, and so of the rest. The best remedy that can be given against this mistake is that which the apostle prescribes them in his epistle against that distemper. First, he makes all graces and gifts equal as to their origin, assuring them they are all streams that flow from the same spring, which is the Holy Ghost; and that, as to this point, they are all of them alike, though they differ among themselves; the members of a king's body are all a king's members, and of the blood royal, though they are not the same in respect to one another. The apostle says to this purpose, "We have all been baptized in one spirit into one body;" 1 Cor. xii. 13. So that we all thus far partake of the same honor and glory, as being the members of the same head. For this reason the apostle adds, immediately after, "If the foot should say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it not, therefore, of the body? And if the ear should say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it not, therefore, of the body?" Ibid, 15, 16. It is plain, then, that as to this we are all equal, because of the unity and fraternity that is in all, notwithstanding the diversity which is in us at the same time.

7. The cause of which is partly nature and partly grace; we say it arises from nature, because, though every spiritual being owes its beginning to grace, yet grace, like water received into several vessels, takes several shapes, agreeable to the nature and condition of every one. For some persons are naturally easy and quiet, and, therefore, more fit for a contemplative life; others are more choleric and active, and, therefore, an active life is best for them; others are more strong and healthful, and less in love with themselves, so that a laborious, penitential life agrees best with them. God's goodness displays itself in all these particulars

much to our admiration; for he, designing to communicate himself to all, has been pleased to propose several ways to us, for our partaking of this favor, according to the several conditions of men, so that he that cannot go one way may try another.

8. The second cause of this variety is grace; because the Holy Ghost, who is the Author of it, has thought fit to have this variety in those that belong to him, for the greater perfection and beauty of the church. For as several members and senses are required to the making of a man's body perfect and beautiful, so there must be a great many virtues and graces to make the church so too. For if the faithful were all alike in this respect, how could they be called a body? "If the whole body," says St. Paul, "should be eyes, where would the hearing be? If it should be hearing, where would the smelling be?" Ibid. 17. God has, for this reason, thought fit there should be several members in one body, that so multiplicity and unity meeting together, there might be proportion between several things in one; and hence comes the perfection and beauty we see in the church. Thus we see there must be this same diversity of voices, yet with concord, that so it may be sweet and harmonious; for if the voices were all of the same pitch, if they were all trebles, all bases or all tenors, how could they make music and harmony?

9. The same thing appears to our wonder, even in the works of nature, in which the sovereign Artist has intermixed so much variety, by giving every creature its particular qualities and perfections, and has shown so much justice in the distributing of them, that though each particular creature has some kind of advantage or other upon all the rest, yet they do not envy one another, because if any of them is outdone in some things, it excels in others. The peacock is beautiful to the eye, but not delightful to the ear; the nightingale, on the other side, charms the ear, but does not please the eye; the horse is good for the race and the camp, but not for the table; the ox is good for the table and plough, and fit for nothing else; fruit-trees produce what is good for eating, but are not so fit for building as those trees are which bear no fruit. Thus in all things together we find all things dispersed, but never all together in any one thing; that by this means the beauty and variety of the universe may be preserved, and the species of things may continue, and they may all be linked to one another, by a mutual and necessary dependence.

10. The same order and beauty that is in the works of nature, God has thought fit should be in those of grace; and for this reason he has, by his Spirit, ordered such a variety of virtues and graces in his church, that all of them might make a most harmonious concord, a most perfect world, and a most beautiful body composed of different members. We may see the effects of

this variety in the different states of men in the church, where some give themselves up to a contemplative life, and others to an active; some apply themselves to works of obedience, others to penance; some to prayer, and others to singing; some to study, that they may be profitable to others; some to looking after the sick and visiting hospitals: some to relieve the poor and miserable; some to one kind of good exercise, and some to another.

11. The same variety is to be found in religious houses. Though they all take the road that leads to heaven, yet they do not go all the same way. Some take the way of poverty, others of penance; some go by the exercises of a contemplative life, and others by those of an active; some labor for the good of the public, whilst others retire as far from it as they can. Some have revenues by the rules of their institution, others love poverty better; some run into the deserts, and others into cities and towns; and all this out of the motives of religion and charity.

12. We may observe this variety again, not only in the orders and monasteries, but in the particular members of the same, so that some are employed in singing in the choir, others in manual labor; some are studying in their cells, others are hearing confessions in the church, and others are abroad about the affairs of the house. What is all this but several members in one body, and several voices in one concert, that so there may be an exact proportion and beauty in the church? There is no other reason for putting a great many strings to the same lute, and a great many pipes into the same organ, but to make the music more pleasant, by the variety of the sounds. This is the coat of several colors, which the patriarch Jacob made for his son Joseph. And such were the curtains of the tabernacles, which God commanded Moses to paint and set out with wonderful variety and beauty. Gen. xxxvii. Exod. xxvi. xxxvi.

13. If so, and it is convenient it should be so, for the beauty and order of the church, why do we not lay aside the vicious custom we have got of detracting from our neighbors, of passing sentence on their actions, and making ourselves judges over other men, because they do not do what we do? This is destroying the body of the church, rending Joseph's coat, disturbing and despoiling the harmony of the heavenly music: it is like desiring that the members of the church should be all feet, or all hands, or all eyes. But if all the body were eyes, where would the ears be? and if all were ears, what would become of the eyes?

14. Thus you see how great a mistake it is to blame another, because he has not what I have, or cannot do what I do; as it would be in the eyes to despise the feet for not seeing, or the feet to find fault with the eyes for not walking, and bearing the

whole burthen on them. For it is requisite the feet should take pains, and the eyes should always be at rest; that the former should be always on the ground, and the latter above them, free from dust or any thing that may sully them. Nor are the eyes, notwithstanding their continual repose, less serviceable to the body than the feet that take so much pains. As the steersman in a vessel, that stands at the helm, with his compass before him, does as much good as they that are always on deck or hauling the ropes, that look after the sails or that stand at the pump. On the contrary, he that we think does least in reality does most, because it is not the labor that is taken about a thing, but the value of the thing itself, together with the importance of it, that makes it more or less excellent; unless we will say, that a laborious plain man, for example, does the commonwealth more service than a discreet and prudent statesman, because of the two he works the hardest.

15. He that considers this seriously will leave every one to his calling; that is, he will let a foot be a foot, and the hand be still a hand, and will never desire that the body should be all foot or all hand. This is what the apostle endeavors to persuade us all to in the epistle above cited; and it is the advice he gives us in these words: "Let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth;" because he that eats may perhaps stand in need of what he eats, and be endowed with some nobler virtue than yours is, and which you want. So that he is not to be blamed by you for eating, since, in all appearance, his other virtues may make him better than you are. For as in music, those notes that are on the lines are as good as those that are between them, so he that eats disturbs the harmony and concord of the church no more than he that abstains; nor he that seems to do nothing, any more than he that is always employed, if he spends his leisure time so as to endeavor to make himself serviceable to his neighbor hereafter.

16. St. Bernard advises us against this same fault, when he says, "That none ought to examine into another man's way of life, to pass judgment on it, but those that are judges and rulers in the church; much less is a man to put another person's life in the same scale with his own, for fear it should happen to him as it did to a certain monk, who, being troubled to have his poverty compared with Gregory's riches, heard a voice, which told him he was much richer in a cat he had, than the other with all his wealth;" Serm. 4. in Cantica.

CHAPTER IX.

The third Advice of the Vigilance and Care every virtuous Man ought to live with.

1. HAVING proposed in this rule so many different virtues, and given so many instructions on the regulating of our lives, our next advice is, to endeavor to procure one general virtue, which may comprehend, and, as far as is possible, to supply the want of the rest; this is the rather advisable, because our understanding is such that it cannot conceive many things at once. This virtue is a perpetual solicitude and vigilance, and a continual attention to whatsoever we do or say, that so every thing may be brought to the rule and moderation of reason.

2. We are to behave ourselves in this point like an ambassador that is to speak to a sovereign prince. He has his attention fixed on the matter he is to discourse of, he weighs every word he speaks, he manages the tone of his voice, and considers every posture and motion of his body, and this all at the same time. Thus he that serves God should use his utmost endeavors to be always watchful and attentive upon himself; whether he speaks or holds his tongue, whether he asks a question, gives an answer, whether at table, in the street or in the church, at home or abroad, he is to have his rule and compass always with him, to measure every action, every word, nay, every thought, that so all may square to the law of God, to the judgment of reason and to decency. For the distance between good and evil being so great, and God having given our souls a natural knowledge of both, there is scarce any man so ignorant, but, if he weighs what he does, will more or less discover what he ought to do, and, therefore, his attention and solicitude is as serviceable as all the instructions of this rule and many more.

3. This is the care the Holy Ghost recommended to us, when he said, "Watch carefully over yourself, O man, and over your own soul!" and the last of the three advices the prophet Micah gave us, as we have observed already, was, "to walk carefully with God," which is to be solicitous to do nothing in contradiction to his will; Mic. vi. 8. The many eyes Ezechiel's mysterious animals had, teach us what vigilance and care we should use in this battle, where our enemies are so numerous, and we have so much to attend to; Ezek. i. The same is represented to us by the posture of the seventy stout men that guarded Solomon's bed. They had their swords on their thighs ready to draw, to express how watchful and ready he must be who walks in the very midst of so many enemies; Cant. iii.

4. Besides the many dangers we are exposed to, another reason for this extraordinary vigilance is the niceness and consequence of this business, especially to those who aspire to the perfection of a spiritual life. For to behave ourselves, and to live as God would have us, to preserve ourselves from all the stains and spots of this world, to live in this flesh without the corruptions of it, "to keep ourselves free from reproof till the day of Christ," as the apostle says, are things so high and so far above the reach of nature, that we stand in need of all these, and many more helps, and even of the assistance of God's grace; Phil. i. 10.

5. Consider how attentive a man is when he is on any nice, curious work; for it is certain this is the nicest work, and requires attention. Observe how cautiously a man walks that carries a glass brimful of some precious liquor, for fear of spilling; think of a man that is forced to cross a river on stones that are not conveniently placed, how carefully he treads, for fear he should fall in and be drowned. But, above all, consider how cautiously a rope-dancer sets every step; how steadily he keeps his eyes, for fear of tottering and falling one way or other. Do you always endeavor to carry yourself with the same circumspection, especially at first, till it become habitual, so as not to speak a word, entertain the least thought, or make any motion that may, if possible, deviate from the line of virtue. Seneca advises us to this by an example as profitable as it is familiar. "A man (says he) that has a mind to acquire virtue, must imagine himself to be always in the presence of some great person he has a veneration for, and endeavor to do and say every thing just as he would if that person were really present;" Epis. 25.

6. Another way, no less proper than the former, is, to think we have no longer to live than the present day, and so to behave ourselves as if we were really persuaded we should appear that same night before the tribunal of Christ, to give him an account of our whole life.

7. But the best way of all is, to walk always, as much as possibly we can, in the presence of Almighty God, to set him always before our eyes (for he is truly present every where), and to perform all our actions, as having so great a Majesty for the witness and judge of whatsoever we do, begging him grace to carry ourselves so as may best become his divine presence. This attention, which we advise to hear, should have two ends; the one of considering God interiorly, of walking before him, of adoring him, of praising and reverencing, loving and thanking him, and of offering a sacrifice of devotion to him on the altar of our hearts; the other is, to reflect on every word or action, and to see that nothing be done or said to the prejudice of virtue. We should

have one eye always fixed on God, to beg his grace, and the other always cast down on ourselves, to see what it is becomes us most, and to direct us in employing our lives to the best advantage. We are to make use of the light God has given us; first, to observe those things that refer to God, and next, to correct and perfect our own actions, meditating seriously on God, and on the extent of our duties. And though this is not always practicable, we must endeavor yet to do it, as often and as long as we can: for this kind of attention is no hinderance to our corporal exercises. The heart, on the contrary, will by this means have the frequent opportunity of stealing off in the very heat of temporal engagements and business, and of hiding itself in the wounds of Jesus Christ. The importance of this instruction is such, that it has obliged me to repeat it, though I have given it before in the Memorial of a Christian Life.

CHAPTER X.

The fourth Advice of the Fortitude requisite to the obtaining Virtue.

1. THE foregoing advice has furnished us with eyes to see our duty. This will furnish us arms, that is, *fortitude*, to perform it. For since there are in virtue two difficulties, the first whereof consists in distinguishing betwixt good and bad, and separating the one from the other; the second is overcoming of the bad, and in pursuing of the good; attention and watchfulness are necessary for that, and diligence and fortitude for this; and if either of these two be wanting, our virtue will be imperfect; for either it will be blind, if there is no attention, or else impotent, if fortitude be wanting.

2. This fortitude is not the same whose part it is to moderate boldness and fear, which is one of the four cardinal virtues, but a general fortitude necessary for the overcoming of all those difficulties that may lie in our way to virtue. To this end it always goes along with it, with sword in hand, and makes way for it wherever it goes. Because virtue, according to the philosophers, is a hard and difficult thing; and, therefore, it is convenient it should always have this by it, to assist it in breaking through these difficulties. For as a smith is always to have his hammer in his hand, because of the hardness of the metal he is to work on, so this fortitude is like a spiritual hammer, which a good man is never to be without, if he designs to overcome the difficulty he

shall meet with in virtue. So that a smith without his hammer can do nothing, neither can he who is in pursuit of virtue, if he has not this fortitude to assist him. To prove this, what virtue is there that has not some particular labor and hardship in it? Take which of them you please, you will find it so. Prayer, fasting, obedience, temperance, poverty of spirit, patience, chastity, humility, all of them, in short, have ever some difficulty or other joining with them, arising either from self-love, from the world, or the devil. If, then, this fortitude be taken away, what will the love of virtue be able to do when it is disarmed and can do nothing for them?

3. Whosoever, therefore, you are, that desire to improve yourself in virtue, look on these words, which the Lord of all virtues and strength spoke formerly to Moses, though in another sense, and directed to you: "Take this rod in your hand, for with it you shall do wonders and miracles, by which you shall bring my people out of Egypt;" Exod. iv. 17. Assure yourself, that as his rod was the instrument of all those wonders, and that which put an end to so glorious an enterprise, so this rod of fortitude is that which must overcome all the difficulties that either the love of the flesh or the devil shall lay in their way, and it is by this you are to bring off your undertaking with success. And, therefore, let it not be out of your hand, for if you once lay it down, you will not be able to do any of these wonders.

4. Therefore, I think fit in this place, to give notice of a great error those that begin to serve God are apt to fall into; they, having read in some pious books how great the consolations and delights of the Holy Ghost are, and how sweet and delightful charity is, persuade themselves immediately that there is nothing but pleasure in the way to virtue, without any mixture of labor and pains. And, therefore, they prepare themselves for it, as if it were an easy and pleasant undertaking, so that they do not think of arming themselves for a fight, but of dressing for some public entertainment. They never consider, that though the love of God is sweet in itself, there is a great deal of bitterness before a man can get to it; for, first of all, self-love must be overcome; a man must fight against himself, and what war so hard as this is? Isaias told us of the necessity of both: "Shake the dust off from you," says he, "O Jerusalem; rise up, and sit down;" Isa. lii. 2. There is no trouble, it is true, in sitting down, but there is a great deal in shaking off the dust of earthly affections, and in rising from the sleep of sin. This is what we must do before we are to think of enjoying the rest which the prophet means by *sitting down*.

5. It is likewise true that God has great comforts in store for those that work hard, and for all such as have parted with the

pleasures of this world for those of heaven. But unless this exchange be made, and if a man will not let go what he holds, he may assure himself this refreshment will not be granted him. For we know the children of Israel had not manna given them in the wilderness till they had spent all the flour they had carried out of Egypt.

6. But to come home to our subject: those persons who will not arm themselves with this fortitude must account on what they look for as lost, and never think of finding it, unless they change their affections, and alter their ways of proceeding. They may be assured, that rest is purchased by labor, the victory by fighting, joy by tears, and the most delightful love of God by self-hatred. This is the reason why laziness and sloth are so often condemned in the Proverbs, whereas fortitude and diligence are so highly commended, as we have shown elsewhere; for the Holy Ghost, who is the Author of this doctrine, knew very well, that the one was no small hinderance to virtue, and the other forwarded it as much. *Treatise of Prayer*, c. ii. § 2.

§ I. *Of the Means of acquiring this Fortitude.*—7. You will ask me, perhaps, what the means are for obtaining of this fortitude, which is no less difficult than other virtues. For the wise man had reason to begin his alphabet that is so full of divine instructions with this sentence: “Who has found a strong woman? She is to be valued more than all treasures and precious stones that are brought from the farthest parts of the earth;” *Prov.* xxxi. 10. What means, then, must we use to find out so inestimable a thing as this is? We must first consider what this value is, because that which contributes to the purchasing so immense a treasure as that of virtue is, must certainly itself be of no small esteem. For what can be the reason why worldly men fly so fast from virtue, but the difficulty cowardly and lazy persons find in it? The slothful man says, “There is a lion in the way; I shall be killed in the middle of the street;” *Prov.* xxii. 13. And the same wise man says, in another place, “The fool stands with his arms across, and says, A little with ease is much better than a handful with affliction and labor;” *Eccl.* iv. 5, 6. Since, therefore, there is nothing that frightens us from virtue but the difficulty of it, if we can gather strength to overcome this difficulty, the conquest of the whole kingdom of virtue follows. Is there any man that will not take courage, and endeavor to acquire this fortitude on the acquisition of which depends the making ourselves masters of the kingdom of virtue, and consequently of that of heaven, which is to be gained by those only that use violence? This same fortitude overcomes self-love, with all its assistants; and when once we have routed this enemy, the love of God, or, to speak more properly, God himself, comes in

its place ; since, according to St. John, “ He that remains in charity remains in God ;” Matt. xi. 12.

8. Another thing that is a great help to us, is the good example of so many holy men as are in the world, poor, naked, bare-foot, pale, and worn out with watching and fasting, and deprived of all the conveniences of this life ; some of whom are so desirous of labors and mortifications, and so much in love with them, that, as merchants run to great fairs, and scholars to the most flourishing universities, so they run up and down from monastery to monastery, from province to province, in search of great austerities and rigors, where they find no food, but hunger ; no riches, but poverty ; no ease, but the cross and perpetual macerations. What can be more opposite to the practice of the world and to the inclinations of the greater part of mankind, than for a man to go into strange countries to find out a way to suffer more hunger, to be poorer, worse clothed, and more naked than he was before ? This certainly is repugnant to flesh and blood, but extremely consonant to the Spirit of God.

9. But what condemns our ease most is the example of so many martyrs, who have undergone such different and cruel kinds of deaths, for the purchasing of the kingdom of heaven. There is not a day passes in the whole year but we have the examples of some of them set before us by the church, not only to celebrate their memories by the feasts it institutes in honor of them, but to profit by imitation of those virtues they were so famous for. One day we have the example of a martyr that was broiled, another day of one that was impaled alive, another day of one that was thrown into the sea, another of one that was cast down headlong from a rock, another of one that had his flesh torn off with red hot pincers, another of one that was pulled limb from limb, another of one that was shot to death with arrows, another of one that was boiled in a cauldron of oil, with an infinity of other torments they were put to. Nay, several of them have undergone, not one sort of torment only, but all that human nature could possibly suffer. How many have been carried from prison to the whipping-post, from the whipping-post to the stake, from thence to be torn with iron hooks, and, after all, have died by the sword, which was very often the only instrument that could take their lives away, but yet could not hurt their faith nor daunt their courage.

10. What shall I say of the cruel devices and inventions, not of men but of devils, to attack the faith and fortitude of the spirits, by the torture of the bodies ? Some, after having been barbarously slashed and wounded, were laid on beds of nettles and sharp pieces of tiles and stones, that, whilst they lay there, all the parts of their bodies might be wounded at once, and that no mem-

ber might be free from pain, and their faith thus assaulted by an army of unheard-of torments. Others they made walk barefoot over hot coals, and tied others to wild horses' tails, and so dragged them through briers and over flint-stones. They had a dreadful invention for others of a wheel that was covered all over with sharp razors, that so the body that was fastened to it, might, on the motion of the wheel, be cut to pieces by the rows of razors set in it. Others were stretched out on wooden horses, and, as they lay in this posture, with their bodies tied fast down, the executioner made great furrows in their flesh from head to foot with iron hooks. Nor could the cruelty of those tyrants be satisfied with such barbarous torments; their fury made them invent another strange one, which was to bend down the branches of two great trees with all the force they could, and to tie the martyrs to them by the feet, that so flying up again with more violence, they might pull the body of the saint into two pieces, and each branch carry one half along with it. There was a certain martyr in Nicodemia, and afterwards a great many were put to the same kind of torments, that had been whipped so barbarously, that not only his skin but the greatest part of his flesh was torn off, so that his very bones might be seen through holes they had made with their whips; when they had done this, they washed his wounds with vinegar, and sprinkled them over with salt, and not thinking this enough, because they saw the saint was not dead yet, they laid him on a gridiron over a fire, and there turned him from one side to the other with iron forks, till the holy body being scorched and broiled, the soul left it, and went immediately to God. Thus death itself, which is said to be of all things the most terrible, has been in some manner outdone by these barbarous tormentors, because their design was not so much to kill as to torture, by inflicting the most cruel pains they could think of, so as to force the soul to leave the body by the extremity of the sufferings it endured, though they had received no wounds that were mortal.

11. These martyrs had the same kind of bodies that we have, the substance was the same, the composition the same; they had the very same God to assist them that we have; nor was the glory they expected different from that which we look for. Now if these persons underwent such severe torments, and such cruel deaths, for obtaining of eternal life, shall we refuse to mortify the irregular desires of our flesh for the same end? Shall we grudge to fast one day, when these holy men have died of hunger? Why shall we think it much to say a few prayers on our knees with devotion, when we see these saints have continued to pray for their enemies, though they were nailed to the cross? Why shall we be unwilling to mortify and retrench our desires

and passions a little, when these persons have so cheerfully given their limbs to be cut and torn in pieces? Why should we be against the taking of a little time every day, to retire ourselves into our closets, to meditate there, when these men have been shut up so long, in dark prisons and dungeons? And if these, in fine, have held down their backs to be ploughed up and furrowed, why shall we grudge to take a discipline now and then on ours, for the love of Christ?

12. But if these examples cannot move us, let us lift up our eyes towards the sacred wood of the cross, let us consider who it is that hangs on it, in the greatest pain and torment imaginable for the love of us. "Consider him," says St. Paul, "that endured such contradictions from sinners, for fear you should be tired and lose courage;" Heb. xii. 3. This is a surprising example, take it which way you will. For if you consider his sufferings, they could not have possibly been greater; you will find also, it was for no crime of his own that he suffered, he being innocence itself; nor for any necessity he was in, because he is Lord of all created beings. It was only an effect of pure goodness and love. And notwithstanding his being so great, he underwent such bitter torments, both in his body and in his soul, that all the sufferings of the martyrs, and of the whole together, are not fit to be put into the balance with them. His torments were such that the very heavens were astonished at them, the earth shook, the rocks were rent asunder, and the most senseless beings were sensible of them. And can man then alone be so hard, as not to be wrought upon by that which moved the very elements? and can he be so ungrateful, as not to copy something from him who came into the world to give him an example? For this reason, as our Saviour himself said, "It was requisite that Christ should die, and so enter into his glory;" Luke xxiv. 16. For, after his coming into the world, to conduct us to heaven, which was to be done by the way of the cross, it was convenient that he himself should be crucified the first; that so the servant, seeing the master so ill dealt with, might have the better courage to suffer.

13. Who, then, can be so ungrateful, so delicate, so proud, or so impudent, as to desire to go to heaven by living at his ease and pleasure, when he sees the Lord of majesty, with all his friends and followers, take so much pains to get thither? King David commanded Urias, after his coming from the camp, to take his leave and refresh himself at his own house, and to sup with his wife; but the loyal subject replied, "The ark of God, and Israel, and Judah, are in their tents; and my master Jacob, and my Lord's servants, are in the open field, and shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and lie with my wife? By your life,

and by the life of your soul, I will not do this thing." 2 Kings xi. 11. O true and faithful servant, who were as worthy of praise, as you were unworthy of death! How can you, O Christian, choose but have the same respect for your Lord when you see him stretched out on the cross? The ark of God, that is made of incorruptible cedar, undergoes torments and death itself, and do you seek your own ease and pleasure? This ark in which the hidden manna was kept, which is the bread of angels, drank gall and vinegar for you, and do you hunt after your sweet morsels and delicacies? This ark, in which the tables of the law were kept, which are all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God, is despised and esteemed no better than folly, and do you aim at nothing less than honor and praise? But if the example of this mystical ark is not sufficient to confound you, take with it the patterns and the sufferings of so many saints, of so many prophets, martyrs, confessors and virgins, who have undergone such pains and torments, and have lived in such rigors and austerities. The apostle gives us a short view of their sufferings in these words: "They have been mocked, they have been scourged, and put into chains and prisons. They have been stoned, they have been sawn asunder, they have been tempted, they have been slain with the sword, they have wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted and tormented, of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in wildernesses, over mountains, in dens, and in caverns of the earth" (Heb. xi. 36, 37, 38); and yet, amidst all these miseries, they remained unshaken and constant in their faith.

14. If the saints led such lives, and if, what is much more yet, the Saint of saints himself lived no otherwise, I cannot see what privilege they claim, nor what they propose to themselves, who think of going where these are now, in a road of delights and pleasures. If, therefore, you desire to share with them in their glory, you must, whilst you are here, partake of their labors; if you intend to reign with them hereafter, you must resolve upon nothing less than suffering with them now.

15. What I have here said is to exhort you to this noble virtue of fortitude, that so you may imitate that holy soul, of whom Solomon has given us this commandment: "She hath girded her loins with strength, and has fortified her arms;" Prov. xxxi. 17.

I will conclude this chapter and the doctrine of this second book, with that excellent sentence of our Saviour: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me;" Luke ix. 23. Our divine Master has here given us an abridgement, in a few words, of the whole doctrine of the gospel, the design of which is the forming of a perfect and evan-

gical man, who, though he enjoys a kind of paradise within, is, nevertheless, continually stretched upon a cross without; so that the sweetness of the one tempers the bitterness of the other, and the pleasure he finds in the one makes him willingly embrace the toils and hardships he is to expect from the other.

FINIS.

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