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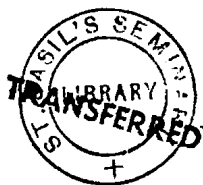
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The Centenary Edition.

THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF
SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI,
DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH,
*Bishop of Saint Agatha, and Founder of the Congregation of the Most
Holy Redeemer.*

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM,
Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

THE ASCETICAL WORKS.

Volume XV.

PREACHING.

*Letter to a Religious. Letter to a Bishop. The Exercises
of the Missions. Instructions on the Command-
ments and the Sacraments.*

THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION.

RŊDE PATER:

Memoriam gloriosi Congregationis SS. Redemptoris Fundatoris, centesimo, ab ejus obitu, adventante anno, pio et admodum opportuno consilio recolere aggressus es, dum omnia ipsius opera anglice vertenda, et typis edenda curasti. Summus itaque Pontifex, cui tum S. Doctoris exaltatio, tum fidelium utilitas summopere cordi est libentissime excepit 9 volumina huc usque edita, quæ Ei offerre voluisti. Ac dum meritas Tibi laudes de hac perutili tua cura præbet, et gratias de filiali oblatione agit, Benedictionem, quam tuis obsequentissimis litteris petiisti, Emi quoque archiepiscopi Baltimorensis commendationi obsecundans, ex intimo corde impertiit.

Hæc ad Te deferens fausta cuncta ac felicia a Domino Tibi adprecor.

Paternitatis Tuæ,

Addictissimus,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

ROMÆ, die 4 Junii, 1888.

TRANSLATION.

REVEREND FATHER:

As the centenary of the death of the illustrious Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer drew near, you conceived the pious and appropriate plan of shedding a new lustre on his memory by translating all his works into English and publishing them. The Holy Father, therefore, who has at heart the spiritual advancement of the faithful, as well as the exaltation of the holy Doctor, has most graciously accepted the nine volumes thus far published, which you wished to present to him. While bestowing upon you well-deserved praise for your useful labor, and thanking you for the gift inspired by your filial love, he gives you from his heart the blessing which you humbly asked for in your letter, complying also with the request of the Most Rev. Archbishop of Baltimore.

As the bearer of this, I wish you all happiness in the Lord.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

ROME, June 4, 1888.

The Centenary Edition.

PREACHING.

Letter to a Religious. Letter to a Bishop. The Exercises of the Missions. Instructions on the Commandments and the Sacraments.

BY

ST. ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI,

Doctor of the Church.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM,

Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.



*A. H. Simard
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APPROBATION.

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Nicholas Mauron, Superior-General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled "PREACHING," which is Volume XV. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of St. Alphonsus de Liguori, called "The Centenary Edition."

ELIAS FRED. SCHAUER,

Sup. Prov. Baltimorensis.

BALTIMORE, MD., May 12, 1889.

JAN 23 1953

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NOTICE.

WE have gathered in this volume all that has reference to the holy ministry of preaching, its importance, the good that it accomplishes, and the manner of exercising it, so that the greatest amount of fruit may be derived from it. In regard to the ministry of preaching, we must distinguish its three parts, namely: the first has for its object **PREACHING IN GENERAL**, its necessity from a point of view of divine Providence, and the manner in which one should preach in order to make preaching successful under all circumstances; the second regards the **MISSIONS**, their various exercises, and the means that one should employ to make them a success; the third is **INSTRUCTION**, or the Large Catechism, which one should use while giving it, and the best method that should be followed in order to interest, to enlighten, and to move others, either during the mission or at any other time.

We shall not fail to remark the persistency with which our holy Doctor recommends on every occasion natural simplicity of language, and reprobates every expression that savors of grandiloquence, studied eloquence, or any pretension to elegance. This is a rule that he rigorously imposed upon all those that lived under his authority; he himself always followed this rule, not only in his discourses, but also in all his writings.

St. Alphonsus, in preaching and in having others to preach in this manner, which is joined to the practice of all the virtues that make men truly apostolic, has effected and does not cease to effect through his chil-

dren an immense deal of good. With feelings of gratitude to God, he thus congratulates himself in a circular addressed to the worthy companions of his labors, who had been formed after his school:

“My dearest Brothers in Jesus Christ: The principal thing that I recommend to you is the love of Jesus Christ. Very much are we bound to love him. For this end he has chosen us from all eternity, and called us into his Congregation, there to love him, and to make others also love him. What greater honor, what greater mark of love, could Jesus Christ have shown us? He has snatched us from the midst of the world, in order to draw us to his love, and that, during the pilgrimage of this life, by which we must pass into eternity, we might think of nothing but of pleasing him, and of bringing those crowds of people to love him who every year, by means of our ministry, abandon sin, and return to the grace of God. It is generally the case that when we begin a mission the greater number of the people of the place are at enmity with God, and deprived of his love; but five or six days have scarcely elapsed when, behold, numbers, as if roused from a deep sleep, begin to listen to the exhortations, the instructions, and the sermons; and when they see that God offers them his mercy, they begin to weep over their sins, and conceive the desire of being reconciled with him; the way of pardon is opened before them, and seeing it, they begin to abhor that manner of life which they had previously loved; a new light begins to shine upon them, and a peace hitherto unknown touches their hearts. Then they think of going to confession, to remove from their souls those vices which kept them separated from God; and whereas before a Mass of a quarter of an hour appeared to them too long, five decades of the Rosary too tedious, and a sermon of half an hour unendurable, they now gladly hear a second and a third Mass, and

they are sorry when the sermon, which has lasted an hour and a half, or perhaps two hours, is over. And of whom does the Lord make use, if not of us, to work so wondrous changes, and to bring the people to delight in those very things that before they despised? When the mission is over, we leave in the place two or three thousand persons who love Almighty God, who before were living at enmity with him, and who were not even thinking of recovering his grace."

And while, on the one hand, the holy Founder of an Order which is altogether apostolic has accomplished and is still accomplishing so much good by his word; on the other hand, by his admirable writings, which have raised him to the rank of Doctor of the universal Church, he does not cease to preach, every day, with the greatest fruit, to a countless number of souls in all parts of the world.

ED.

ST. ALPHONSUS published his LETTER TO A RELIGIOUS in 1761; as he was promoted to the episcopate only in the following year, the signature of bishop, which we see at the end of the letter, was added after that period. It is a complete dissertation on the matter and the form required in pulpit oratory, for mission sermons, for sermons preached in Lent and on Sundays, for panegyrics, or simple instructions and catechetical instructions.

"He took care to send it," says Tannoia (B. 2, ch. 50), "to the General Superiors of the religious Orders, and all admired the high degree of sacred eloquence that he possessed, as well as the zeal with which he tried to induce preachers, to preach Jesus Christ, and not to preach themselves."

He also sent copies of this letter to a large number of bishops, and added to it a note, dated May 10, 1761, in which he thus expresses himself: "I feel great pain when I see so many poor ignorant people who listen to sermons, but derive very little fruit therefrom; and this because of preachers who use an elevated and a florid style, and disdain to lower themselves to break to them the bread of the divine word. It is this that has determined me to publish the present letter, which I have the honor to send to your Lordship. I beg you to read it, and to have it afterwards read by the priests of the diocese who are engaged in preaching. I would also ask you to send it to the convents of religious priests, and to recommend it to the Superiors to have it read by those that preach. You would also do me a favor if you asked those to read the letter who come to preach the sermons during Advent and during Lent. It is true that the latter bring with them their sermons prepared; but who knows whether by reading it they would not correct themselves in the future, and think of the great account that those preachers will have to render to God who do not make themselves understood by poor ignorant people?" (Villocourt, l. 6, p. 4, ch. 3, a. 8.)

All that we read above shows the importance that our illustrious Doctor attaches to this letter. ED.

A Letter to a Religions,

IN WHICH HE TREATS OF THE ADVANTAGES OF PREACHING IN A SIMPLE AND APOSTOLIC MANNER, AND OF THE NECESSITY OF AVOIDING AN ELEVATED AND FLORID STYLE.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph !

I HAVE received your esteemed letter, in which you say that what I have written in the *Selva*, or Collection of Materials,¹ for the spiritual exercises of priests, on the style to be employed in sermons preached for congregations consisting both of the illiterate and the learned, has been criticised by a distinguished literary character. In the *Selva* I have asserted that the style of all sermons preached before the ignorant and the learned should be simple and popular. My critic, you say, maintains that, though sacred orators should preach in a clear and orderly manner, they should never condescend to speak in a popular style; because, according to him, such a style is unworthy of the dignity of the pulpit and degrading to the word of God. This proposition has astonished me; but, to speak with the sincerity of a friend, what you have added has scandalized me. The objections of my critic, you say, appear somewhat reasonable to you, because a sermon should have all the properties of a discourse, and it is admitted that one of the most essential is to delight the audience; and therefore, when the audience consists both of the ignorant and the learned, the sacred orator should not, by a low,

¹ *Dignity and duties of the priest, or Selva*, vol. xii. p. 265.

popular style, disgust the latter, who are the respectable part of his hearers, but should speak in a manner calculated to please and delight them.

Now, to explain fully my sentiments on this point, which I shall show are the sentiments of all wise and pious men, and to answer every objection that can be proposed against my opinion, it will be necessary to repeat much of what has been already written in the *Selva*.

It cannot be doubted that by preaching the world has been converted from paganism to the faith of Jesus Christ. *How*, says the Apostle, *shall they hear without a preacher? Faith then cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*¹ As the faith has been propagated, so it has been preserved by preaching, and so are Christians induced by preaching to live according to the maxims of the Gospel: for it is not enough for the faithful to know what they must do in order to be saved; it is, moreover, necessary for them, by hearing the word of God, to be reminded of the eternal truths and of their obligations, and also to adopt the means of obtaining eternal life. Hence St. Paul commanded Timothy continually to instruct and admonish the flock committed to his care: *Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine.*² Hence also the Lord addressed the same command to the prophet Isaias: *Cry, cease not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew My people their wicked doings.*³ And again he said to Jeremias, *Behold I have given My words in thy mouth: Lo, I have set thee this day over the nations,*

¹ "Quomodo autem audient sine prædicante? . . . Ergo fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Christi."—*Rom. x. 14-17.*

² "Prædica verbum, insta opportune, importune, argue, obsecra, increpa in omni patientia et doctrina."—*2 Tim. iv. 2.*

³ "Clama, ne cesses, quasi tuba exalta vocem tuam, et annuntia populo meo peccata eorum."—*Isa. lviii. 1.*

and over kingdoms, to root up, and to destroy, etc.¹ Jesus Christ has imposed the same obligation on his apostles, and through them on all priests who are called to the office of preaching. *Going therefore, teach ye all nations: . . . to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*² And if, through the fault of those who are bound to announce the divine word, a sinner perish, God will demand an account of his soul at their hands. *If, when I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, thou declare it not to him, nor speak to him, that he may be converted from his wicked way, and live, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand.*³

But let us come to the point. My proposition is that, when the audience is composed of the learned and of the ignorant, the style of the sermon (I do not here speak of funeral orations or of panegyrics—of these I shall say something hereafter) should be simple and popular. This proposition is not mine only: it is that of the celebrated Louis Muratori, who is regarded as one of the first literary characters of the day. It cannot be said that such a man censured a lofty and polished style because he was but little acquainted with it; for the whole world knows that he was a man of great genius, and of extraordinary literary acquirements. In his golden book on *popular eloquence* which is in the hands of every one, he asserts, and proves most learnedly, the proposition that I have laid down.

But, to confirm my assertion, I shall take many reflections from other authors, and particularly from the

¹ "Ecce dedi verba mea in ore tuo; ecce constitui te hodie super gentes et super regna, ut evellas, et destruas, etc."—*Jer.* i. 9.

² "Euntes ergo docete omnes gentes; servare omnia quæcumque mandavi vobis."—*Matt.* xxviii. 19, 20.

³ "Si, dicente me ad impium: Morte morieris; non annuntiaverit ei . . . ipse impius in iniquitate sua morietur, sanguinem autem ejus de manu tua requiram"—*Ezech.* iii. 18.

holy Fathers; and I entreat you, and every one into whose hands this book shall fall, to read the whole of it; for it contains a great deal of matter most useful for those that are engaged in preaching, and that are desirous of gaining souls to Jesus Christ. St. Basil says: "The sacred school does not follow the precepts of the rhetoricians."¹ The saint does not mean to say that the sacred orator should not employ the art of rhetoric in his sermons, but that he should not imitate the empty eloquence of the ancient rhetoricians, who in their orations sought only their own glory. It is not denied that we should avail ourselves of the rules of rhetoric in all our sermons. But what, I ask, is the principal end that every preacher should propose to himself in using the art of oratory? Certainly he should have no other object in view than to persuade and to induce the people to practise what he preaches. Such is the doctrine of the learned Marquis Orsi, who, in a letter to Father Platina, says: "Let eloquence be employed to move rather than to delight; for to move is the same thing as to persuade, which is the only object of the art." In his work on popular eloquence Muratori says that "rhetoric is necessary, not to fill sermons with flowers, but to teach the method of persuading and of moving." I shall occasionally take passages from this book; because the opinions of so great a man cannot, like mine, be treated with contempt. In his life of the younger Father Segneri he says: "Good rhetoric is nothing else than a perfect imitation of the natural and popular method of reasoning with others, and of persuading, everything superfluous being removed. The more the reasoning of the sacred orator is natural and intelligible,—not to the few men of learning who may be present, but to the people to whom

¹ "Sacra schola præcepta rhetorum non sequitur."—*In Gordium Mart.*

he speaks,—the more effective will be his eloquence." Speaking of the style to be adopted by the preacher of the divine word, St. Augustine says: "Let him try as much as possible to be understood, and to be listened to with docility."¹ St. Thomas says, "that the preacher whose principal object is to show his eloquence, does not so much intend to induce the people to practise what he teaches, as to imitate himself in the elegance of his language."²

The language of sermons preached before mixed congregations should be so plain and simple that the audience may clearly understand all that is said, and may be moved to practise all that is taught. Hence the preacher should avoid two things: *loftiness of thought and superfluous elegance of language.*

With regard to the first, would to God that Superiors would imitate the example of St. Philip Neri. It is related in his life that he commanded those who gave instructions to the people to speak on subjects that are useful and popular, and never to enter into scholastic questions, or to seek after sublime conceptions. Hence when he heard the members of his Congregation introduce subjects that were too subtle or curious, he made them descend from the pulpit, even though they were in the middle of the sermon. Finally, he exhorted all to employ their eloquence in showing, in a plain and easy style, the beauty of virtue and the deformity of vice. Of some preachers we may say, with the prophet Isaias, *Who are these that fly as clouds?*³ And as lofty clouds seldom forebode rain, so, from the sermons of those that

¹ "Aget quantum potest ut intelligatur, et obedienter audiatur."—*De Doct. Christ.* l. 4, c. 15, n. 32.

² "Qui eloquentiæ principaliter studet, homines non intendit inducere ad imitationem eorum quæ dicit, sed dicentis."—*Opusc.* cap. xix. 19.

³ "Qui sunt isti, qui ut nubes volant?"—*Is.* lx. 8.

preach in a lofty style it cannot be hoped that the waters of salvation will ever flow. Hence the holy Council of Trent has commanded all parish priests to preach in a style accommodated to the capacity of their flock. "Archpriests, . . . either personally, or by others who are competent, shall feed the people committed to them with wholesome words, according to their own capacity."¹ Hence also the celebrated Muratori wisely observes, "The preacher must speak to the people in the language in which a man of learning would endeavor to persuade a peasant, and thus he will make an impression on the learned as well as on the ignorant."

*Except, says St. Paul, you utter by the tongue plain speech, how shall it be known what is said? For you shall be speaking unto the air.*² Hence, according to the Apostle, they that preach in language not easily understood by the people, only speak to the air. But, alas! how many preachers are there that labor hard, through a miserable desire of acquiring the praises of their hearers, to fill their sermons with sublime conceptions and subtle thoughts, unintelligible to the people, and recite their discourses in the tone and manner of a comedian? What fruit can such preachers expect from their instructions? Louis of Grenada says that the ruin of the world is to be ascribed to this crying evil, that the greater number of preachers seek applause rather than the glory of God and the salvation of souls.³ Would to God it were not too true! And Father John d'Avila, in one of his letters, in which he describes the miseries and ini-

¹ "Archypresbyteri, etc., per se, vel alios idoneos, plebes sibi commissas pro earum capacitate pascent salutaribus verbis."—*Sess. 5, de Ref. c. ii.*

² "Nisi manifestum sermonem dederitis, quomodo sciatur id quod dicitur? eritis enim in aera loquentes."—*1 Cor. xiv. 9.*

³ "Maxima prædicatorum turba majorem nominis sui celebrandi, quam divinæ gloriæ et salutis humanæ procurandæ curam habent."—*Eccl. Rhet. l. 1, c. 6.*

quities of the world, says: "There is no remedy for so great an evil, principally on account of the preachers, who are the medicine of these wounds; but such dangerous diseases are not cured by the soft lenitives of polished and delicate discourses—they require strokes of fire." One would imagine that some of those lofty preachers study to make themselves unintelligible, or rather, as Muratori says, that they are ashamed to speak in language that all can understand. *The little ones*, says the prophet Jeremias, *have asked for bread, and there was no one to break it unto them.*¹ In his comment on this passage, St. Bonaventure says,² that the bread of the divine word is not to be divided in a manner calculated to indulge curiosity, but must be broken in small pieces on which the little ones may feast. What profit can the poor and illiterate derive from sublime conceptions, from irrelevant erudition, or from long descriptions of a tempest or of a pleasant garden, the study of which has cost the preacher a week's labor, though the entire discourse does not last longer than a quarter of an hour?

And here let it be observed that lofty thoughts and ingenious reflections, or facts of a curious and distracting nature, though they may please the learned, still injure the effect of the sermon; for, as Muratori well observes, he that understands them dwells with delight on the sublimity of the thoughts or on the novelty of the facts, and does not attend to his own spiritual profit: thus the will is not affected, and no fruit is produced.

It was not in a lofty style that St. Paul preached to the Corinthians: *And I, brethren, when I came to you, I came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of Christ; for I judged not myself to know*

¹ "Parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis."—*Lam.* iv. 4.

² "Panis frangendus, non curiose scindendus."

*any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*¹

I, brethren, in preaching to you, have not had recourse to sublime discourses, or to human wisdom: I have desired only to know Jesus Christ crucified; that is, that all our hope and our salvation consists in imitating his sorrows and his ignominies. The sentiments of Natalis Alexander on this passage of St. Paul are worthy of attention: "It is not to be wondered at that most preachers derive no fruit, since they make their preaching consist in the artifice of secular eloquence, in measured periods, in excessive ornament of words and flights of human reason. They do not teach the Gospel, but their own inventions; they know not Jesus crucified, but rather propose to themselves the imitation of academic orators than that of the apostles and of apostolic men. Let the humility of the preacher accompany the simplicity of the sermon, of which Christian eloquence is not altogether deprived, which is adorned with a natural, not a counterfeit, beauty. Let him fear lest by his pride, and by the captivation of human glory and applause, and by the ostentation of eloquence he may hinder the work of God. The fewer, continues the learned author, the ornaments of secular eloquence the preacher employs, and the less his confidence in human means, the more fruitful will his sermons be in converting sinners."²

¹ "Et ego, cum venissem ad vos, fratres, veni non in sublimitate sermonis aut sapientiæ, annuntians vobis testimonium Christi. Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum."—1 Cor. ii. 1.

² "Quid mirum, si nullum fructum faciunt plerique qui prædicationem in eloquentiæ sæcularis artificio, in periodorum commensuratione, in verborum lenociniis humanæque rationis excursibus collocant. Evangelium non docent, sed inventa sua, Jesum crucifixum nesciunt, academicos oratores lubentius sibi proponunt imitandos quam apostolos, et apostolicos viros. Simpliciter sermonis, non penitus christiana destitutam eloquentia, naturali decore ornatam, non fucatam, comitetur

The learned and celebrated missionary, Father Jerome Sparano, of the venerable Congregation of the Pious Workmen, used to compare those that preach in a lofty and florid style to artificial fireworks, which, while they last, make a great noise, but leave after them only a little smoke. St. Teresa¹ then had just reason to say that the sacred orator who preaches himself does great injury to the Church. "The apostles," she would say, "though few, have converted the world; because they preached with simplicity and with the true spirit of God, and now so many preachers produce but little fruit." And why? "Because," says the saint, "the preachers of the present time have too much of human wisdom and human respect, and therefore few only of their hearers give up the habits of vice." St. Thomas of Villanova says: "Many preachers there are, but few that preach as they should."² Philip Neri used to say: "Give me ten priests with the true spirit of the apostles, and I will convert the whole world."

By the mouth of the prophet Jeremias the Lord asks: *Why then is not the wound of the daughter of My people healed?*³ In his exposition of this passage St. Jerome answers: "Because there are not priests to apply the necessary remedy."⁴ Speaking of preachers who adulterate his word, the Lord says, in another place: *If*

humilitas concionatoris. Timeat ne superbia sua gloriæ humanæ plaususque captatione, ac ostentatione eloquentiæ Dei opus impediatur. Quo major ejus humilitas, quo minor in mediis humanis fiducia, minor eloquentiæ secularis affectatio, eo major spiritui et virtuti Dei ad conversionem animarum locus datur."

¹ *Life*, ch. xvi.

² "Multi prædicatores, sed pauci qui prædicant ut oportet."—*In die Pentec. conc.* 2.

³ "Quare igitur non est obducta cicatrix filiæ populi mei?"—*Jer.* viii. 2.

⁴ "Eo quod non sunt sacerdotes, quorum debeant curari medicamine."

*they had stood in My counsel and had made My words known to My people, I should have turned them from their evil way and their wicked doings.*¹ "They would," says Cardinal Hugo, commenting on this passage, "have made known My words, not their own." Preachers who speak not in simple language, preach not the word of God, but their own; and therefore, says the Lord, sinners remain in their wicked ways. O God! what an abuse is it to see sometimes religious, even of the reformed Orders, who, from their penitential garments, and from the appearance of their mortified lives, seem to breathe zeal and sanctity, and from whom the people expect to hear sentiments and words burning with divine love; what an abuse, I say, is it to see such religious ascend the pulpit, and deliver a discourse which is only a collection of ingenious thoughts, of descriptions, of antitheses and of other such trifles, of inflated language and rounded periods, which the hearers scarcely understand, and from which they derive no benefit! What a pity to see so many of the poor come to learn the means of saving their souls, and obliged, after listening to the preacher for more than an hour, to go away without having understood any part of the sermon! They return home as ignorant as before, and full of discontent at having spent so much time in attending to a discourse which they could not understand.

Those orators who preach themselves, and are not understood by their audience, sometimes say: "The people were all attentive to the discourse." I also say that the people were attentive; they wished to understand the discourse, but have they understood it? Muratori says that he had seen the poor listen with open mouths to panegyrics, of which they scarcely understood a single word. Hence it happens, that, hav-

¹ "Si stetissent in consilio meo, et nota fecissent verba mea populo meo, avertissem utique eos a via sua mala."—*Jer.* xxiii. 22.

ing found by experience that they do not understand the discourses preached in the Church, they become disgusted with religious discourses, they cease to attend to them, and thus become more and more obstinate in vice. Justly, then, has Father Gaspar Sanchez called those who do not preach in a simple style the greatest persecutors of the Church; for, in reality, there cannot be a greater persecution or evil that can befall the people than the adulteration of the word of God; for, when mixed up with flowers and trifles, it is either not understood, or is at least deprived of its efficacy; so that it cannot give to the people the light and help which they might receive from it.

Secondly, the preacher should employ *words that are in common use*, and should avoid those that are not understood by the illiterate. Preachers of long standing and of high character must be particularly careful to use language easily understood by the people; for, should they speak in a polished style, young preachers, being naturally desirous of applause, will study to imitate them. Thus the abuse will be more widely extended, and the poor will be deprived of the fruit of the word of God. St. Jerome compares vain preachers, who employ only sounding and polished words, to women who by their vain ornaments please men, but do not please God.¹

But Father Bandiera, in the preface of his *Gerotri-camerone*, controverts the opinion of those who maintain that in sermons a selection of words, and careful attention to the collocation necessary for elegant diction, do not edify the people, but, on the contrary, destroy the simplicity suited to spiritual subjects, and take up the preacher's time in the study of empty words. He as-

¹ "Effeminate quippe sunt eorum magistrorum animæ qui semper sonantia componunt, et nihil virile, nihil Deo dignum est in iis."—*In Ezech. hom. 3.*

serts that ornaments of style throw a splendor round spiritual subjects, such as the maxims of faith, the beauty of virtue, and the deformity of vice. He says that the holy Fathers employed these ornaments, and that without their aid the word of God cannot be preached with dignity from the pulpit. He also adds, that some persons censure select language as unsuited and injurious to devotion, because they themselves have not a command of polished expression. To remove every erroneous impression that might be made on the minds of his readers I shall answer his arguments and refute his assertions.

First; I cannot conceive what could have induced Father Bandiera to give expression to so unreasonable sentiments in his preface; for in the body of his work he says that, when the greater part of the audience consists of the poor, the style of the sermon should be easy and simple, and that sometimes it should be low, when otherwise the hearers would not derive profit from the discourse. He also says that the style of academic discourses is very different from that of sermons. He adds that preachers who, in their instructions, should adopt the style of his own work, would act improperly. He then agrees in opinion with us, that, when the greater part of the audience is composed of the illiterate, the style of the sermon must, if the preacher wishes to produce fruit, be simple, and be accommodated to the capacity of the hearers. What, then, has induced him to assert that the dignity of the divine word, delivered from the pulpit, requires the ornaments of style, and that those ornaments give splendor to spiritual things; or that some writers, because they themselves have not a command of language, censure, as injurious to devotion, a nice selection of words?

Let us now come to the refutation of the assertions of Father Bandiera: his opinion should be received with

caution, for, being an eminent professor of the Tuscan language, he may have been induced to adopt it by too great an attachment to eloquence of expression. He says that "it is necessary to give splendor to spiritual subjects." Such is not the language of St. Ambrose. This Father says that Christian preaching stands not in need of the pomp or elegance of words, and that therefore ignorant fishermen were chosen by the Lord to preach the Gospel, and to sow the word of God pure and unadulterated.¹

Natalis Alexander answers Father Bandiera, and says that the word of God requires not affected and flowery ornaments, since it is adorned by the natural beauty which it contains in itself; and therefore the more simply it is expounded, the more luminous and splendid it appears. The words of the same author, which have been already quoted, are so appropriate, that I shall repeat them in this place: "Let the humility of the preacher accompany the simplicity of the sermon, of which Christian eloquence is not altogether deprived, which is adorned with a natural, not a counterfeit, beauty. . . . The fewer the ornaments of secular eloquence the preacher employs, and the less his confidence in human means, the more fruitful will his sermons be in converting sinners."² Thus the more purely and nakedly the word of God is preached, the more forcibly it strikes the hearts of the hearers; for, according to the Apostle, it is in itself living and effective; so that it is

¹ "Prædicatio christiana non indiget pompa et cultu sermonis; ideoque piscatores, homines imperiti, electi sunt qui evangelizarent."—*In I Cor. I.*

² "Simplicitatem sermonis non penitus christiana destitutam eloquentia naturali decore ornatam, non fucatam, comitetur humilitas concionatoris. . . . Quo minor in mediis humanis fiducia, minor eloquentiæ sæcularis affectatio, eo major spiritui et virtuti Dei ad conversionem animarum locus datur."

more piercing than a two-edged sword.¹ And God himself, by the mouth of the prophet Jeremias, has declared that his word is a fire which inflames, and a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces—that is, the most hardened hearts: *Are not My words as a fire, saith the Lord: and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*²

Let us examine the sentiments of the author of the *Imperfect Work* on this subject. “The word of God,” he says, “though simple and popular, is in itself living, and gives life to those who hear it, because it contains in itself the truth of God, which persuades and moves the hearts of men; but human language, though polished and select, is, for want of God’s co-operation, dead, and therefore produces no fruit.”³ The learned Mansi says that when it is naked and divested of ornament the word of God strikes the heart, but adorned with flowers, it is like a sword within its scabbard—it cannot cut.⁴

Father Bandiera asserts that the holy Fathers have in their writings employed the ornaments of style. In answer I say, that we have not heard the sermons of these Fathers, nor are we acquainted with their style of preaching. We only read their written discourses, and we know that sermons which were preached in a simple

¹ “Vivus est sermo Dei, et efficax, et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti.”—*Heb.* iv. 12.

² “Numquid non verba mea quasi ignis, dicit Dominus, et quasi malleus conterens petram?”—*Jer.* xxiii. 29.

³ “Omnia verba divina quamvis rustica sint et incomposita, viva sunt, quoniam intus habeant veritatem Dei et ideo vivificant audientem. Omnia autem verba secularia quoniam non habent in se virtutem Dei, quamvis sint composita et ingeniosa, mortua sunt; propterea nec audientem salvant.”—*Hom.* 46.

⁴ “Sicut gladius ferire nequit, nisi si nudus; nam intra vaginam constitutus quantumvis sit acutus non vulnerabit: ita verbum Dei, ut impiorum corda vulneret, nudum esse debet, sine figurarum ornamento, aut vanæ eloquentiæ floribus.”—*Biblioth. mor.* tr. 83, d. 11.

and popular style are usually polished before they are committed to writing or given to the public. This remark has been made by the celebrated Muratori. "It is," he says, "true that St. Ambrose very frequently spoke in an abstruse manner; but we have not the sermons which he preached to the people." He reduced to treatises the discourses delivered from the pulpit, and added to them various ornaments, so that the original form of his popular instructions has disappeared. But Muratori says that, in their sermons to the people, the most celebrated Fathers of the Church, namely, St. Basil, St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Gregory the Great, St. Maximus, and St. Gaudentius, preferred popular to sublime eloquence; and this is evident, as well from the sermons as from the other works of these saints. Let us hear how St. John Chrysostom speaks of sermons embellished with pompous words and well-turned periods: "We seek by those words and beautiful compositions to delight our neighbors. We try to be admired, but we are not anxious to heal the diseases of our neighbors."¹ And he adds, that the preacher who studies to delight others and to attract admiration by elegant compositions should be denominated "Miserable and unhappy traitor."² St. Augustine says: "We do not make use of high-sounding and poetical words of secular eloquence, but we preach Christ crucified."³

Father John d'Avila used to say, that every preacher should ascend the pulpit with a thirst for the salvation of souls, which would make him endeavor and hope,

¹ "Hæc nos patimur, verborum fucos conquærentes, et compositionem elegantem, ut delectemus proximum. Consideramus quomodo videamur admirabiles, non quomodo morbos componamus."—*Hom.* 33, *ad pop.*

² "Miser et infelix proditor."—*Ad pop. ant. hom.* 33.

³ "Non nos tonantia et poetica verba proferimus nec eloquentia utimur seculari sermone fucata, sed prædicamus Christum crucifixum."

with the divine aid, to gain to God the souls of all his hearers. Hence St. Gregory says that the sacred orator should descend to the level and should accommodate his language to the weak understanding of the people.¹ This is the doctrine of Muratori, who says that every one who preaches to the illiterate "ought to imagine that he is one of them, and that he wishes to teach and convince them of some truth." And therefore he says he is bound to adopt the most popular and lowest kind of eloquence, and to proportion his language to their gross understandings, by speaking to them in a familiar manner, using short sentences, and sometimes even proposing questions and giving the answers. The merit of such sermons consists in employing the language and figures which usually make an impression in common conversation.

St. Gregory deemed it unworthy of a preacher of the Gospel to confine himself to the rules of grammar, and therefore he says that in his sermons he frequently exposed himself to the imputation of ignorance, by uttering even barbarisms.² In his exposition of the words of David, *My bone is not hid from Thee, which Thou hast made in secret*,³ St. Augustine, knowing that the word *os* signified either the mouth or a bone, used the barbarous word *ossum* to express the meaning of the prophet; for he preferred to be censured by grammarians rather than to be unintelligible to the people.⁴

¹ "Debet ad infirmitatem audientium semetipsum contrahendo descendere, ne dum parvis sublimia, et idcirco noq̄ profutura loquitur, magis curet se ostendere quam auditoribus prodesse."—*Mor.* l. 20, c. 1.

² "Non barbarismi confusionem devito, etiam præpositionum casus servare contemno, quia indignum existimo ut verba cœlestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati."—*Ep. ad Leandr. in Expos. l. Job.*

³ "Non est occultatum os meum a te, quod fecisti in me."—*Ps.* cxxxviii. 15.

⁴ "Habeo in abscondito quoddam *ossum*. Sic potius loquamur, melius est ut reprehendant nos grammatici quam non intelligant populi."—*In Ps.* 138, n. 20.

Such was the contempt of the saints for elegance of style when they spoke to the people. In the fourth book on the *Christian Doctrine*, the same Father says that the preacher should not be the servant of his words, and thus expose himself to the danger of not being understood; but he should employ the language best calculated to convey his meaning and to persuade his hearers.¹ It is in this manner, as the prophet says, "bread is broken to the little ones." *The little ones have asked for bread, and there was none to break it unto them.*² Hence the sermons of the missions and of the spiritual exercises produce so much fruit, because in them the bread of the divine word is minutely broken to the people.

I may be asked: Do you mean that all sermons should be composed in the same style as the sermons for the missions? In answer, I in the first place ask: What is understood by sermons for the missions? Is it a discourse composed of vulgar expressions, without order and without method? No: vulgar phrases are not necessary; they are not becoming even in familiar instructions, much less in sermons. Order is indispensable in all sermons. The art of oratory, and the occasional use of tropes and figures, are also necessary; and therefore you must have observed that, in the third part of the *Selva*,³ speaking of the style of preaching to be adopted in the missions, I have given a comprehensive abstract of rhetoric, for the instruction of the young men of our congregation. But the rules of rhetoric are, as Muratori says, suited even to popular eloquence, provided the preacher employ them, not to win applause,

¹ "In ipso sermone malit (concionator) placere rebus magis quam verbis; nec doctor verbis serviat, sed verba doctori."

² "Parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis."—*Lam.* iv. 4.

³ Farther on, in Chapter VII. of the present volume.

but to move his hearers to lead a Christian life. The art of oratory should, adds Muratori, be used, but only in such a way that it may not be perceived by the people.

There is no doubt that the sermons prepared for the missions should be more easy and simple, and less encumbered with Latin quotations, than other discourses. Some young missionaries fill their sermons with a confused medley of texts of Scripture, and long passages of the holy Fathers; but what profit can a poor illiterate peasant derive from so many Latin quotations, which he does not understand? Texts of Scripture serve to give authority to our instructions, but only when they are few, and explained in a manner proportioned to the capacity of our audience. One text well expounded, and accompanied with appropriate moral reflections, will be more profitable than many passages heaped together. An occasional passage from the holy Fathers is also very useful; but it should be short and forcible, and peculiarly applicable to the subject. Look at the sermons of that celebrated preacher, the Venerable Father Paul Segneri, and you will find that they contain few Latin passages, but a great many practical reflections and moral deductions.

The style of preaching in the missions must certainly be more simple and popular, that the poor may be persuaded and moved to virtue. The language should be plain and the periods concise, so that a person may understand any sentence without having heard or understood the preceding one, and that they who come to the church in the middle of the sermon may immediately understand what the preacher says. If the style of the sermon be close and connected, the illiterate, who have not heard the first period, will not understand the second, nor the third. Moreover, as Muratori well observes, in order to keep up the attention of the people

it is necessary to make frequent use of the figure called *Antiphora*, by proposing questions and replying to them. With regard to the modulation of the voice, it is necessary to avoid the sonorous and inflated tones used in panegyric. We should also abstain from the violent efforts of the voice made by some missionaries, who expose themselves to the danger of bursting a blood-vessel, or at least of losing their voice, and at the same time disgust their audience. The best way to excite and fix the attention of the people is, to speak at one time in a loud, at another in a low, tone of voice, but without violent and sudden transitions; at one time to make a long exclamation, at another to pause and afterwards to begin with a sigh, etc. This variety of tone and manner keeps the audience always attentive.

The act of contrition is the most important part of sermons for the mission, and therefore in such sermons it should never be omitted; for little indeed would be the fruit of the sermon if the people are not excited to compunction, or not induced to resolve on a change of life. It is to effect this object that the act of contrition is proposed to them. It is even necessary to repeat several acts of sorrow, in order to move the people to contrition, not by loud exclamations, but by solid motives and reasons. In the purpose of amendment which accompanies the act of sorrow the preacher should recommend, in a particular manner, the people to avoid the occasions of sin, and to have recourse in their temptations to the assistance of Jesus and of Mary; and should therefore, at the end of the sermon, make them ask the divine Mother to obtain some favor for them, such as the pardon of sin, the gift of perseverance, and the like. These observations are particularly applicable to sermons for the missions; but I wished to insert them in this place, because they may be useful to some of those who are devoted to the missions.

Sermons for *Lent*, or for *Sundays*, should certainly differ somewhat from those that are prepared for the missions; but, where the audience consists of the ignorant and the learned, all sermons should, as Muratori says, be simple and popular, if the preacher wish to produce substantial fruit, and to induce the people to approach the tribunal of penance. I remember that when a celebrated missionary preached in Naples, in a simple and popular style, the churches were thronged, and the confessionals were surrounded by crowds, who, after the sermon, ran to confess their sins. Muratori says that in the small towns, and even in the churches of cities which are frequented by the common people, the preacher is obliged to adopt the most popular and even the lowest style, in order to accommodate himself to their gross understandings. I have seen a whole town sanctified by the Lenten sermons of those who addressed the people in simple and popular language.

Oh, what a pity to see so many Lenten sermons preached in the villages, and so little fruit! In the beginning of Lent the poor come to the sermons, but finding that they do not understand the preacher, and consequently derive no fruit from his instructions, they cease to frequent the church. I would entreat those who preach in the villages, that, if they will not consent to change the discourses which they have already composed in an elevated style, they will at least, towards the last weeks of Lent, after the people return from work, give the spiritual exercises in the manner in which they are given during the missions. The laboring poor cannot, particularly on working days, attend in the mornings at the hour at which the sermon is usually preached. I assure these preachers that they will reap more fruit from the spiritual exercises proposed in simple language, than from a hundred Lenten sermons. Some will excuse themselves from giving

these exercises, saying that they are preachers, and not missionaries. Some are perhaps even ashamed to give these exercises in which a simple and popular style is indispensably necessary, lest their reputation might be injured, or lest they should be regarded as preachers of little note. But I am consoled by the conviction that not only priests, but also many religious, are accustomed during the Lent to give these exercises with so much advantage to the people.

Oh, what universal benefit would flow from the Sunday sermons if preachers always addressed the people in plain and simple language! At Naples the Holy Sacrament is exposed every day in several churches, in particularly in those in which the devotion of the Forty Hours is performed. These churches are frequented by great numbers of the faithful, but particularly of the poor. How great would be the fruit of the sermons preached in these churches if the sacred orators adopted a popular style, instructing the people in the practice of the different virtues, in the practical method of preparing for Communion, in the manner of visiting the Blessed Sacrament, of making mental prayer, of attending Mass, of meditating on the Passion of Jesus Christ, and of performing the other exercises of devotion? But are the discourses delivered in their churches of this description? No; the style is generally high and flowery, and therefore they are but little understood by the people. Father John d'Avila being once asked for a rule for preaching, answered, that the best rule for preaching well was to love Jesus Christ fervently. The answer was most just; for the preacher who loves Jesus Christ ascends the pulpit, not to gain applause, but to gain souls to Jesus Christ. St. Thomas of Villanova used to say that to pierce the heart of sinners, to effect their conversion, darts burning with divine love are necessary. But can darts of fire proceed from the

frozen heart of the preacher who seeks by his preaching to acquire a great name?

Should we then conclude from this that whoever then preaches in a polished style does not love Jesus Christ? I do not mean to assert that; but I know well that the saints did not preach in that manner. In all the lives that I have read of holy missionaries I have not found any one of them commended because he preached in an elevated and ornate style; I find, on the contrary, those commended in a special manner who preached in a style simple and popular. Thus in truth did the holy apostle Paul teach us by his own example how to preach, saying: *My reasoning consists not in the embellishments of human eloquence, but in making the people comprehend sincerely the truths of religion.*¹ "It was the task of the apostles," says Cornelius à Lapide, commenting on the text just cited, "to show how their spirit manifested the spirit of the divine mysteries so that others might receive the Holy Spirit through them."²

It is said of St. Thomas of Aquin, by the author of his life, that "he accommodated himself to the capacity of his audience, lowering the wings of his genius, proposing simply such reflections as served to inflame the heart rather than feed the mind. For this purpose he used only such words as were most common and familiar, being accustomed to say: 'The language of the preacher should be so clear that the meanest capacity may understand it.'"³

In the life of St. Vincent Ferrer we read that the saint

¹ "Et sermo meus et prædicatio mea non in persuasibilibus humana sapientiæ verbis sed in ostensione spiritus et virtutis."—I Cor. ii. 4.

² "Hæc fuit demonstratio Apostolorum ostendere spiritum eructantem arcana divina, ita ut alii cernerent Spiritum Sanctum per os eorum loqui."

³ "Tam apertus debet esse sermo docentis, ut ab intelligentia sua nullos, quamvis imperitos, excludat."

composed his sermons, not on the model of discourses written in select and studied language, but at the foot of the crucifix; and from this source he derived his eloquence. P. Bartoli writes as follows, in his life of St. Ignatius of Loyola: "Where others seek to recommend the word of God by clothing it with ornaments, he, by divesting it of all such elegance, made it appear beautiful and grand; for his method was to reduce the arguments to a certain nudity which exhibited them in their true form and genuine character." And therefore the same P. Bartoli relates that the learned who heard him were wont to say: "That in his mouth the word of God had its true weight." The same practice was observed by St. Philip Neri, of whom I already mentioned, as it is written in his life, that he prescribed to the members of his Congregation, in preaching, to treat each subject in an easy and popular manner; and when they indulged in lofty and curious speculations he made them come down from the pulpit.

It is also mentioned of St. Francis de Sales, that when preaching he accommodated himself to the capacity of the rudest among his audience. The incident is well known which occurred to the Bishop of Belley. This prelate being invited by the saint to preach, delivered a very elegant and florid discourse, so that he received the highest applause from his auditors; but St. Francis was silent, and the prelate, surprised at this, asked him at last how he liked the sermon, the saint replied: "You pleased all but one." The Bishop of Belley was invited a second time to preach, but as he understood that his former discourse was not pleasing to the saint, because it was too highly embellished, he made the second quite simple and moral; and then St. Francis assured him that he was very much pleased with the second discourse. On another occasion he addressed to him the following words: "A sermon is excellent when the audi-

tors retire from the church in silence, reflecting but not speaking; and instead of praising the preacher, think on the necessity they are under of amending their lives." And as the saint thought, so did he practise. The author of his life states, that although he preached in Paris before an auditory composed of princes, bishops, and Cardinals, he always preached in a solid, simple manner, not seeking to acquire the character of an eloquent preacher, but to gain souls to God. In conformity with this, the same saint wrote from Paris to a religious of his Order in the following terms: "On the vigil of the Nativity I preached in presence of the Queen in the Church of the Capuchins; but I assure you I did not preach better before so many princes and princesses than I do in your poor little convent at Annecy." But because the saint preached from the heart and to draw souls to God, although he preached without ornament, the fruit he produced was immense; wherefore Madame de Montpensier said, as we find it related in the life of the saint: "Others in their sermons fly, as it were, in the air; but the Bishop of Geneva descends to his prey, and this orator of holy love suddenly besieges the heart, and makes himself master of it."

I shall relate in the sequel what the saint wrote in one of his letters, concerning the manner of preaching, and what he thought of those preachers who employ frivolous ornament in their discourses. It is mentioned in the life of St. Vincent de Paul that in his sermons he used not only a simple, but even an humble style. Above all, he required of his brethren that they should preach to the candidates for orders in a simple and familiar manner; because it is not, he said, pomp of expression that is conducive to the salvation of souls, but simplicity and humility, which dispose the heart to receive the grace of God. And for this purpose he was accustomed to adduce the example of Jesus Christ, who,



although he could have explained the mysteries of faith in a style proportioned to their sublimity, he being the wisdom of the eternal Father, nevertheless made use of familiar terms and similitudes, to accommodate himself to the capacity of the people, and to leave to us the true model of explaining the word of God. Of St. Francis Regis it is likewise written in his life, "that he explained the truths of faith with such clearness and simplicity, that he made himself intelligible to the meanest capacity."

The case of Father Tauler, the Dominican, is also well known. He preached at first in a very lofty style, but being afterwards led to embrace a more perfect life, by means of a poor man who was sent him by God as his spiritual guide, he ceased to preach for many years; but the poor man having enjoined him to resume this function, he changed his style of preaching from the sublime to the popular; and we are told that in the first sermon he preached the compunction of the people was such that several swooned away in the church. We are told of Father John d'Avila, that in his sermons he used such familiar language that by some he was considered to be an ignorant person; so that once a certain individual, who was a man of letters, but of depraved morals, said to his companion, on an occasion when Father d'Avila was to preach, "Come, let us go hear this ignoramus;" but during the sermon he was struck by the grace of God, and he totally reformed his life. Now let us hear the sentiments of this great servant of God. According to the author of his life, he said: "If the preacher does not faithfully fulfil his office, if he is attentive rather to gratify the taste of his auditors than touch their hearts, and seeks for fine words rather than the conversion of souls: in fine, if by loftiness of thought he preaches himself rather than Jesus Christ, he stands in imminent danger of eternal ruin; he frightfully abuses and betrays the

commission confided to him." The same we find written in the life of Father Louis Lanusa, and of Father Paul Segneri, junior, and of other servants of God, particular mention of whom for brevity's sake I omit.

Hence we see the account that these preachers will have to render to God, who preach themselves and not Jesus Christ, as well as the Superiors who allow them to preach in this manner. For myself, once hearing a young man of our Congregation preaching in a grand and elevated style, I made him leave the pulpit in the middle of his discourse. But let them not entertain a doubt that, if they are not corrected by their Superiors, they will be assuredly chastised by God; for the preacher is bound to promote the good of each person who hears him, as in the pulpit he fulfils the office of ambassador of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle affirms of all priests: *He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, . . . He hath placed in us the word of reconciliation. . . . For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us.*¹ The preacher then occupies in the pulpit the place of Jesus Christ, and speaks on the part of Jesus Christ to sinners who hear him, in order that they may return into favor with God. Now if a king, as Father John d'Avila observes in one of his letters, commissioned one of his subjects to negotiate a marriage with a lady on his behalf, and the ambassador concluded it for himself, would not such a man be a traitor? And such exactly, said Father d'Avila, is the preacher who, commissioned by God to effect the conversion of sinners, studies to procure glory for himself, and thus renders the divine word useless, by adulterating it so that it produces no fruit. And thus does St. John Chrysostom also denom-

¹ "Dedit nobis ministerium reconciliationis. . . . et posuit in nobis verbum reconciliationis . . . Pro Christo legatione fungimur, tanquam Deo exhortante per nos."—2 Cor. v. 18.

inate every preacher who preaches from vanity—"A miserable and unhappy traitor."¹

The embellishment of a sermon with lofty sentiments and elaborate expression, to gain a character for one's self, is precisely that adulteration of the word of God which the Apostle avoided; as he writes to the Corinthians: *For we are not as many, adulterating the word of God, but with sincerity, but as from God, before God, in Christ we speak.*² On which words St. Gregory observes, that adulterers are not desirous to have children: on the contrary, they abhor them; they propose to themselves nothing else but the gratification of their unlawful passions: such are those who do not preach to gain souls, but to acquire a name and reputation.³

But let preachers tremble lest God should cut them off, as he threatens by the prophet Jeremias: *Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, who steal my words every one from his neighbor.*⁴ Who are they who unjustly employ the divine word? They are precisely those who make use of it only to acquire the name of great orators, robbing God of his glory to transfer it to themselves. St. Francis de Sales said that the preacher whose discourses abound in foliage, that is, curious thoughts and elegant expressions, is in danger of being cut down and consigned to the fire, like to the unfruitful tree in the Gospel; whilst our Lord said to his disciples, and through them to all priests, that he had chosen them to bring forth fruit—lasting fruit. Hence Cornelius à Lapide, speaking of such orators, hesitates not to assert

¹ "Miser et infelix Proditor."

² "Non enim sumus, sicut plurimi, adulterantes verbum Dei; sed ex sinceritate, sed sicut ex Deo, coram Deo, in Christo loquimur."—2 Cor. ii. 17.

³ "Adulterari verbum Dei est ex eo, non spiritales fructus, sed adulterinos foetus quærere laudis humanæ."—Mor. l. 22, c. 17.

⁴ "Propterea ecce ego ad prophetas, ait Dominus, qui furantur verba mea: Projiciam quippe vos."—Jer. xxiii. 30, 33.

that they sin mortally, both because they pervert the office of preaching to their own exaltation, and also because by preaching in a lofty and elegant style they oppose an obstacle to the salvation of so many souls that would be converted if they preached in an apostolic manner.¹ The same was said by Father John d'Avila, as we have remarked above: "If the preacher do not faithfully fulfil his office," etc.

Nor does it avail such a person to say: What I principally propose is the glory of God. He who makes use of lofty and uncommon language, so as not to be understood by all, opposes an obstacle to the glory of God, by preventing the conversion of many who hear him, since, as Muratori well remarks, whoever preaches is bound to procure the salvation of each individual, be he learned or ignorant, as if there were no other who heard him. And if any one of them be not converted, because he could not comprehend what was said, the preacher will have to render an account, as God himself declared by the mouth of Ezechiel (this all preachers are sufficiently aware of, but in practice they attend but little to it; hence I repeat it here): *If when I say to the wicked: Thou shalt surely die; thou declare it not to him, . . . the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand.*² And undoubtedly it is the same not to preach the word of God, as to adulterate it by a florid style; so that it does not produce the fruit that it certainly would if it were expounded in a clear and simple manner. St. Bernard says that on the day of judgment those poor ignorant persons will appear to

¹ "Prædicator qui plausum quærit, non conversionem populi, hic damnabitur quia prædicationis officio, ad laudem non Dei sed suam abusus est, tum quia salutem tot animarum sibi creditam impedivit et avertit."—*In Luc.* vi. 26.

² "Si dicente me ad impium: Morte morieris; non annuntiaveris ei, . . . ipse impius in iniquitate sua morietur, sanguinem autem ejus de manu tua requiram."—*Ezech.* iii. 18.

arraign those preachers who have lived on their bounty, but have neglected to heal, as they ought, the diseases of their souls.¹

We should be persuaded that when the word of God is adulterated by studied elegance of expression it becomes feeble and enervated, so as not to be of any service either to the learned or unlearned. I do not assert this of myself: it is stated by St. Prosper, or, if you will, another ancient author who goes under his name.² And this sentiment he borrowed from St. Paul, who writes as follows: *Christ sent me . . . to preach the Gospel, not in wisdom of speech, lest the cross of Christ should be made void.*³ On which text St. John Chrysostom observes: "Some devote themselves to external wisdom: the Apostle shows that this wisdom does not only aid the cross, but it even annihilates it."⁴ Lofty conceptions, then, and elaborate expression in sermons hinder and, as it were, annihilate the spiritual profit of souls, which is the fruit of the redemption of Jesus Christ. Hence St. Augustine said: "I should not presume to employ wisdom of speech, lest the cross of Christ become enervated; satisfied with the authority of the divine word, I would rather serve the simplicity of the Gospel than vanity."⁵

St. Thomas of Villanova inveighs against those hearers

¹ "Venient, venient ante tribunal Christi; ubi erit pauperum accusatio, quorum vixere stipendiis, nec diluere peccata."—*De Vita et Mor. Cler. c. 7.*

² "Sententiarum vivacitatem sermo cultus ex industria enervat."—*De Vita contempl. l. 3, c. 34.*

³ "Misit me Christus . . . evangelizare, non in sapientia verbi, ut non evacuetur crux Christi."—*I Cor. i. 17.*

⁴ "Alii externæ sapientiæ operam dabant, ostendit (Apostolus) eam non solum cruci non opem ferre, sed etiam eam exinanire."

⁵ "Non præsumam unquam in sapientia verbi, ne evacuetur crux Christi; sed Scripturarum auctoritate contentus, simplicitati obedire potius studeo, quam tumori."—*Contra Felician. c. 2.*

who, whilst their souls are lost in sin, go in quest of flowery discourses. "O fool," he says, "thy house is burning, and thou expectest artificial discourse!"¹ But this reproof is better directed to those preachers who address a congregation of which probably there are many in a state of sin: these miserable souls require rather the thunder and lightning which would arouse them from their lethargy, and strike them with terror, and for this purpose are required words not borrowed from the academy, but springing from the heart and from a true zeal and desire to rescue them from the hands of the enemy, and yet we would amuse them with polished phrases and sounding periods. If a house were on fire, what folly would it be, says Father Mansi,² to attempt to extinguish it with a little rose-water. Thus, when I hear any one praised who preaches with studied elegance, and hear it said that his sermons have produced great fruit, I smile, and say: It is impossible; and why? because I know that God does not lend his co-operation to such preaching. *My preaching*, says the Apostle, *was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in shewing of the spirit and power.*³ "To what purpose," says Origen, commenting on the text cited above, "does all our eloquence serve if it be not animated by the spirit and virtue of divine grace?"⁴ The Lord lends his aid to him who preaches his word in a plain and simple manner, without vanity, imparting a force and power to his language that moves the hearts of all who hear him. But this efficacy he does not communi-

¹ "O stulte, ardet domus tua; et tu expectas compositam orationem?"

² *Biblioth. mor.* tr. 83, d. 42.

³ "Prædicatio mea, non in persuasibilibus humanæ sapientiæ verbis, sed in ostensione spiritus et virtutis."—I *Cor.* ii. 4.

⁴ "Hæc verba Apostoli quid aliud sibi volunt, quam non satis esse quod dicimus, ut animas moveant hominum, nisi doctori divinitus adsit cœlestis gratiæ energia, juxta illud (*Ps.* lxxvii. 13): Dominus dabit verbum evangelizantibus virtute multa?"

cate to studied and polished expression. The diction that is refined and adorned according to the dictates of human wisdom, says the Apostle, as we have before observed, enervates the divine word, and destroys the profit which might be expected from it.

Oh, what a fearful account will those priests have to render to God who preach through vanity! St. Bridget¹ saw the soul of a preacher, who was a religious, condemned to hell for having preached in this spirit; and the Lord said to the saint that he does not speak by vain preachers, but rather the devil. In discoursing one day with that great missionary, Father Sparano, mentioned above, he related to me an awful occurrence. He told me that a certain priest who preached in a polished style, being at the point of death, and feeling a great aridity and indisposition to conceive a hearty sorrow for his sins, almost despaired of his salvation; and then the Lord spoke to him from a crucifix near him, in a voice which was also heard by all present: "I give you that compunction which you excited in the hearts of others when you preached." But more terrible is the circumstance related by Father Cajetan Mary de Bergamo, a Capuchin, in his book entitled *The Apostolic Man in the Pulpit*. This author relates that a preacher, then a Capuchin, related to him the following occurrence, which happened to himself a few years before. He being a young man and accomplished in polite literature, had already begun to preach in the cathedral at Brescia; but when preaching there a second time, after an interval of some years, he was observed to preach quite in an apostolic manner. Being afterwards asked why he had thus changed his style of preaching, he replied: "I knew a celebrated preacher, a religious, a friend of mine, and who, like me, preached in

¹ *Rev.* 1. 6, c. 35.

a spirit of vanity; when he was at the point of death it was found impossible to induce him to make his confession. I went to see him, and spoke to him strongly; but he looked at me steadfastly without making a reply. In the mean time the Superior conceived the idea of bringing to him in his cell the Blessed Eucharist, in order to move him by this means to receive the sacraments. The most Holy Eucharist was brought, and those who were present said to him: 'Behold, Jesus Christ is come to grant you pardon.' But the sick man began to exclaim in a voice of despair: 'This is the God whose holy word I have betrayed.' We all then commenced to pray to the Lord that he would have compassion on him, or to exhort him to confide in the divine mercy; but he in a louder voice exclaimed: 'This is the God whose holy word I have betrayed;' and then added: 'There is no more mercy for me.' We continued to suggest to him sentiments of confidence, when a third time he cried out: 'This is the God whose holy word I have betrayed;' and then he said, 'By the just judgment of God I am condemned,' and suddenly expired... And this is the reason, observed this Father, why I have so much reformed my manner of preaching."

Who knows but some one will smile at those facts, and the whole of my letter; but such a one I shall expect to meet before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. Besides, I do not intend that at all times and before all sorts of persons the same style of expression should be used. When the audience is composed entirely of priests or educated persons, the preacher should make use of more select language; but his discourse should be always simple and familiar, as if he were discoursing in familiar conversation with the learned, and not decorated with lofty ideas and elaborate expressions; otherwise, the more florid the discourse, the less will be the fruit derived from

it," says St. Ambrose.¹ The pomp and luxury which appear in the flowers of eloquence make it useless for the production of fruit. St. Augustine said that the preacher who seeks to please his auditors by an ornamental style is not an apostle that converts, but an orator that deludes; whence it may be said of his hearers what is said of the Jews, who, hearing Jesus Christ, admired his doctrine, but were not converted.² They will exclaim, "He spoke extremely well;" but they will have derived no profit whatever from the discourse. St. Jerome wrote to his friend Nepotianus that in preaching he should endeavor to elicit tears rather than applause from his auditory.³ St. Francis de Sales expresses the same idea in a more emphatic manner in a letter to an ecclesiastic: "In leaving the church I would not wish it should be said, O how great an orator! he has a prodigious memory; he is very learned; he spoke admirably: but I would wish to hear the hearers say, How beautiful, how necessary is penance! My God, how good, how just Thou art! and the like: or that the words of the preacher having made a breach in the hearts of the hearers, they were unable to render any testimony in favor of their merit but the amendment of their lives."⁴

Perhaps the preacher who studies to speak elegantly may entertain a hope that he will obtain universal applause: let him divest himself of this persuasion. Many will praise, many will criticise him; some will offer one opinion, some another. And such is the folly of those orators who preach themselves and not Jesus Christ that, with all their efforts to obtain a vain ap-

¹ "Quod luxuriat, in flore sermonis hebetatur in fructu."—*In Ps.* 118, s. 12.

² "Mirabantur sed non convertebantur."—*In Jo.* tr. 29, n. 2.

³ "Docente te in ecclesia, non clamor populi, sed gemitus susci-
tetur. Auditorum lacrymæ laudes tuæ sint."—*Ep. ad Nepotian.*

⁴ *Lettre* 218, *man. de prêcher*, ch. 2, a. 3.

plause, they do not, notwithstanding, obtain it from all; whilst, on the other hand, he who preaches Christ crucified always secures the fruit of his discourse, as by it he pleases God, which should be the only end of all our actions. Hence generally a simple and familiar style of preaching, as Muratori remarks, "will please and delight even persons of cultivated understandings; for, when the preacher speaks in a lofty and florid style, the hearer then is satisfied with relishing and admiring his genius, and pays little or no attention to his own spiritual profit; on the other hand, even the learned commend a preacher who, with a view to benefit all, breaks for them that spiritual bread—the word of God. They will not praise his genius, but his fervor; by which, without making a display of talent, he proposes solely to serve the souls of his hearers—this is the true glory to which the sacred orator ought to aspire. Moreover, the learned who desire to derive fruit from the sermon seek not him who enlightens their minds, but him who heals their souls; and on this account both learned and unlearned crowd to hear him who preaches in a popular manner, because every one finds there the spiritual nourishment that is necessary for him."

Seneca says that the sick man does not seek for the physician who speaks well, but who will cure him. To what purpose does it serve, he says, for you to entertain me with fine words when I stand in need of the cautery and the knife to cure me.¹ Wherefore St. Bernard says: "I like to hear the voice of that teacher who seeks to gain of me, not applause, but tears."² I recollect that the renowned D. Nicholas Capasso, a man so distinguished for learning, went every day to hear the Canon Gizzio

¹ "Non quærit æger medicum eloquentem sed sanantem. Quid oblectas? aliud agitur; urendus, secandus sum: ad hæc adhibitus es."

² "Illius doctoris libenter vocem audio, qui non sibi plausum, sed mihi planctum moveat."—*In Cant.* s. 59, n. 3.

whilst he was giving the spiritual exercises to the members of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost; he said that he went to hear that servant of God because he preached the word of God in an apostolic manner, and without studied elegance. Oh how does the pure and simple word of God please even the learned! Muratori relates in the life of Paul Segneri the younger, which he wrote, that, although he preached in a familiar and popular style, he delighted all so much that he touched the hearts even of the most enlightened among his audience.

In like manner, in the life¹ of St. John Francis Regis I find the following passage: "His discourses were simple: he preached only to instruct the people; and, notwithstanding, the gentry as well as seculars and clergy of the town of Puy crowded to his catechetical discourses so eagerly that for two or three hours before he began every place was occupied; and it was the common saying of the inhabitants of Puy that they admired more his holy simplicity than the studied elegance of the most distinguished preachers. He, they observed, preaches Jesus Christ and the divine word as it really is; while the others come here to preach themselves, and, instead of the divine word, display their own eloquence, which is altogether human." And the following fact, which is afterwards mentioned, is remarkable: There was a certain preacher who gave a series of instructions in the cathedral during the same Lent in which the saint was giving a mission. Being astonished how it was that the people left him to go hear an ignorant priest, as he considered St. Francis compared with himself, he went to find the Provincial, who at that time was making his visitation, and said to him that Father Regis was indeed a saint, but that his manner of preaching was not suitable to the dignity of the

¹ *By Father Daubenton*, l. 3.

pulpit, and that the meanness of his style and the trivial things he said dishonored his ministry. The Provincial replied: "Let us both, before we condemn him, go and hear him." The Provincial was so much affected with the force and unction with which he explained the evangelical truths, that during the entire discourse he was shedding copious tears; then, on leaving the church, turning to his companion, he said, "Ah, my Father, would to God that all sacred orators preached in that manner! Let us allow him to preach with his own apostolic simplicity—the finger of God is there." The same preacher, says the writer of his life, was touched with such compunction in hearing the discourse, that instead of censuring him, as he had proposed, he even praised him as he deserved.

Let us now say something of panegyrics, as we promised. Why, I ask, do panegyrics, as they are composed nowadays, produce no fruit? How fruitful would they be were they delivered with simplicity, detailing with devout reflections the virtues of the saints; thus would the people be moved to imitate their example. This undoubtedly is the object of panegyrics, and hence the masters of the spiritual life recommend strongly the reading of the lives of the saints. Therefore St. Philip Neri, as the writer of his life relates, recommended the members of his Congregation to adduce, in preaching, some example from the life of a saint, in order that the doctrine might be more firmly impressed on the minds of the hearers; but he wished that such facts should be mentioned as would move the auditors to compunction rather than excite their wonder. Father John Dielegis, who wrote on the manner of composing panegyrics, says that panegyrics do not produce fruit through the fault of the auditors who come to hear the discourse, not to derive any benefit from it, but to listen to exquisite thoughts and an elegant discourse; but he would have

said with more truth, that the fault is generally imputable to orators who fill their discourses with conceits and affected language, for the purpose of obtaining empty praise, when their only object should be, as the same author observes, to move their hearers to the imitation of the virtues of the saints of whom they speak. But let us hear what Muratori says on modern panegyrics. In his work already cited, *On Modern Eloquence*, in the 13th chapter, he writes thus: "Why do sacred orators for the most part heap together gems and flowers, and make a parade of their eloquence? The end of panegyrics is to lead the auditory, by such examples, to the practice of virtue; but few indeed think of this. Good God! how many extravagant hyperboles! how many fantastic ideas! in a word, how many silly conceits!"

And in truth, what fruit can be derived from the panegyrics of certain learned preachers, who fill them with flowers, subtleties, ingenious thoughts, curious descriptions, high-sounding words, unintelligible to persons of ordinary capacity, rounded periods, so long that, to comprehend their meaning, even the learned require to exert all the powers of their minds, so that they nearly resemble academical discourses, in which his own glory is the only object of the speaker. O God! what a disorder to see a minister of Jesus Christ expend uselessly many months and much labor (one of this class of preachers, who is now in eternity, said, that to compose a panegyric he required at least six months), and for what purpose?—to round periods, and heap together figures and flowers. And what profit does the orator derive from this either for himself or for others? For himself, nothing but a little smoke; and as for the hearers, they derive from it nothing, or almost nothing, because either they do not understand it, or, if they do, their attention is distracted by those sounding words and ingenious thoughts; and thus they lose their time.

It has been related to me by several persons deserving of credit, that the preacher mentioned above, who said that to compose one panegyric he required six months, being at the point of death, gave directions that all his manuscripts should be burned. I was moreover assured that this same person, being once complimented by others for his panegyrics, was much troubled, and replied: "Alas! these discourses will be one day my condemnation."

Muratori, in a work entitled *Christian Charity*, writes as follows: "Oh, why have we so many panegyrics, which invariably terminate in a vain display of talent and ingenious subtleties, devised by volatile imaginations, unintelligible to the people?" And then he adds: "Let a panegyric, if intended to be useful, be composed in that popular and intelligible style of eloquence which instructs and moves the ignorant no less than the learned; but this is oftentimes not understood by him who fancies himself more learned than others." Oh! that these frothy panegyrics were abolished in the Church, and that these discourses were composed in a simple and familiar manner, as this writer says, who was eminent at once for piety and learning.

But, before I conclude, it is necessary that I should reply to the observation which your letter contains—that to entertain is one of the principal objects of the orator, and therefore, when persons of education assist at a sermon, the preacher should speak in a polished and ornamental style in order to please them.

Reverend Father, I will not reply to you: St. Francis de Sales answers for me, who, in the letter already cited, which he addresses to an ecclesiastic on the manner of preaching, in confirmation of all we have advanced above in the fifth chapter, writes as follows: "Lengthened periods, polished language, studied gesture, and the like, are the bane of preaching. The most

useful and elegant artifice is, to employ none. Our words should be inflamed by an interior charity, and should come from the heart rather than the mouth: the heart speaks to the heart; the tongue speaks but to the ear. The texture of the discourse should be natural, without vain ornament, without affected expression. Our forefathers, and all those whose preaching has brought forth fruit, have abstained from speaking with too much elegance, and from using the ornaments of worldly eloquence, because they spoke from the heart, as good parents do to their children. The object of the preacher is to convert sinners and to make the just perfect; whence, ascending the pulpit, he should say in his heart: *Ego veni ut isti vitam habeant et abundantius habeant.*"¹ Then the saint, speaking of the pleasure the preacher should afford, uses the following words: "I know that many say the preacher should delight; but as for me, I distinguish, and say, that there is a pleasure consequent on the doctrine which is preached and the impression made upon the hearers; for what soul is so insensible as not to feel extreme pleasure in learning the way to heaven; how to gain Paradise; in comprehending the love which God bears us? And, in order to impart this pleasure, all diligence should be used to instruct and to move. But there is another sort of pleasure which oftentimes is an obstacle to instruction and to persuasion—a tickling of the ear by a profane elegance of language, and a certain balancing of words, which is altogether artificial. And as to this, I say without hesitation, that a preacher should not make use of it, because it belongs to profane orators; and whosoever preaches in this manner preaches not Christ crucified, but himself. St. Paul detests preachers who are *prurientes auribus*, and consequently such as are solicitous to please their hearers."²

¹ *Lettre 218, man. de prêcher*, ch. 5, a. 1, 3, 4; ch. 2, a. 2.

² *Ib.*, ch. 2, a. 3.

So far the saint: and let it be observed, that the writings of this saint are, in a special manner, approved and adopted by the Church, which prays that by their guidance we may arrive at eternal happiness.¹ Such is the prayer we recite in the Office of the saint.

In conformity with this, the learned theologian Habert, speaking of the style which the ministers of the Gospel should adopt in preaching, says that the preacher then should endeavor to please, by a style clear, easy, and accommodated to the capacity of each of his auditors.² Then the audience will be gratified, as St. Francis de Sales observes, by understanding the eternal truths, the maxims of the Gospel, and by knowing what they have to do, or to avoid, in order to be saved; they will be pleased whilst they feel themselves touched with compunction, animated with confidence, and inflamed with the love of God.

St. Augustine says that if the pleasures of sense delight, much more delightful is the knowledge of the truth; and hence, he adds, there is nothing which the soul so ardently desires as to know the truth.³ Agreeably to this, St. Francis observes, in his treatise on the love of God: "Truth is the object of the understanding, and hence it finds all its pleasure in knowing the truth; and the more sublime it is, the greater its gratification: whence the ancient philosophers abandoned riches, honors, and pleasures, that they might understand the truths of nature. And Aristotle said that human feli-

¹ "Concede propitius ut ejus *dirigentibus monitis*, æterna gaudia consequamur."—We may also apply this remark to the teachings of our saint; for we also read in the prayer of his Office: *Ut ejus salutari- bus monitis edocti . . . ad te pervenire feliciter valeamus*. He was, moreover, raised to the dignity of Doctor of the Church.—ED.

² "Evangelii minister delectabit, si sit sermonis apti, facilis, ac perspicui."

³ "Quid enim fortius desiderat anima quam veritatem?"—*In Jo. tr.* 26, n. 5.

city consists in wisdom; that is, in knowing the truth of the most excellent things."¹ Hence the saint concludes, that a soul cannot enjoy greater delight than in acquiring a knowledge of the truths of faith; the more as the knowledge of them is not only a source of pleasure to us, but also eminently useful, as upon them depends all our happiness for time and eternity.

Wherefore St. Antoninus says that the preacher ought indeed to delight his audience; but for what end? In order that, being moved by the discourse they may be induced to practise what they have learned.² On the other hand, St. John Chrysostom affirms that the ruin of the Church is the great eagerness of sacred orators, not to move their hearers to compunction, but to please them with fine words; as if they came to hear a singer chant a piece of sacred music in the pulpit. "Such preachers," continues the saint, "act like a father who gives to his sick child what it wants. Such a one, however, does not deserve the name of father. This happens every time that one seeks flowery language, not to inspire compunction, but to win vain praise."³ Yes, reverend Sir, there are many sacred orators who delight their auditory by their elegant and pompous diction, and attract crowds to their sermons. But I would wish to know how many of those who are so highly pleased with their discourses, full of elegance and ornament, leave the church with a contrite heart, and afterwards amend their lives. Such precisely was the language of

¹ *Love of God*, B. 3, ch. 9.

² "Ut sic moveat affectum ut flectat scilicet curando, ut quæ dicta sunt, velit implere."—P. 3, tit. 18, ch. 3, § 4.

³ "Subvertit ecclesiam, quod et vos non quæritis sermonem qui pungere possit, sed qui oblectet, quasi cantores audientes. Et idem sit ac si Pater videns puerum ægrotum illi, quæcumque oblectent, porrigat, talem non dixerim Patrem. Hoc etiam nobis accidit, flosculos verborum sectamur, ut oblectemur, non ut compungamus, et laudibus obtentis, abeamus."—*In Act. hom.* 30

St. Francis when mention was made before him of preachers who had obtained great applause. "Be so good as to tell me," he would say, "how many were converted by their preaching." The accursed passion for display spoils the sermons of many preachers, and destroys the fruit of them for those who hear him. This made St. Vincent de Paul exclaim, as we read in his life: "O cursed ambition of display! how many virtues do you infect! of how many evils are you the cause! You make him who should preach Jesus Christ, preach himself, and destroy when he should save."¹

Some, in order to entertain the audience, ornament, or rather disfigure, their sermons with witticisms and ridiculous anecdotes, and even go so far as to say that this is necessary in instructions or catechetical discourses addressed to the people, in order to excite and keep alive their attention and interest. But I know that the saints in their sermons did not make the people laugh, but weep. When St. John Francis Regis preached (and his sermons were always familiar) the audience wept from the beginning to the end of the discourse. A facetious remark, naturally suggested by the occasion, may perhaps be allowed; but to reduce the exhortation to a comic scene, as some do, by introducing ridiculous trifles or curious stories, with attitudes and gestures designed to make the audience laugh—I do not know how they can reconcile such an exhibition with the respect due to the temple of God, and to the pulpit from which is announced the word of God, and in which the preacher fulfils the office of ambassador of Jesus Christ. The auditors indeed will laugh and be merry, but afterwards they will be distracted and indevout, and instead of attending to the moral instruction, will continue to reflect upon the witticism or ridiculous story which they have heard.

¹ *Abelly*, l. 3. ch. 34.

From all I have written, your Reverence will be able to infer what surprise the assertion contained in your letter caused me, that the preacher should delight his auditory by a polished and ornamented style. I hope in the Lord that you will remove from your mind this prejudice, this grievous error, hurtful to your own soul, and to all those that will assist at your instructions.

And as your Reverence is so very humble as to condescend, towards the close of your letter, to ask of an unworthy sinner some instructions for preaching with advantage to the people, I recommend you for the most part, in your sermons to speak of the last things—death, judgment, hell, eternity, and the like; because the eternal truths make the deepest impression, and incline the heart to the love of virtue. I beg of you, repeatedly in your discourses to explain to the people the peace enjoyed by the soul that is in favor with God. St. Francis de Sales by this means drew away many souls from a vicious life, and on that account Henry IV., King of France, commended him much, blaming other preachers who make the way of virtue appear so difficult that they deter souls from entering upon it. I entreat you also to speak often of the love that Jesus Christ has shown us in his Passion, in the institution of the most Holy Sacrament, and of the love we should bear in turn towards our most blessed Redeemer, by often calling to mind those two great mysteries of love. I say this because few preachers, or at least too few, speak of the love of Jesus Christ; and it is certain that what is done solely through fear of punishment and not through love will be of short duration. A great servant of God, and a great laborer in the vineyard of the Lord, Father Genaro Sarnelli, used to say: "I would wish to do nothing else but proclaim without ceasing: love Jesus Christ, love Jesus Christ, because he is deserving of your love." In like manner often recommend, in preaching, devotion

to the most Holy Virgin, through whose intercession all graces come to us, by making the people have recourse to her at the end of the discourse to obtain some special grace, as the forgiveness of their sins, holy perseverance, and the love of Jesus Christ. Above all, I beg of you to give practical advice to your audience, by suggesting the means of persevering in the grace of God, such as to guard the eyes from looking at dangerous objects, to fly evil occasion—from conversing with persons of a different sex or vicious companions; to frequent the sacraments; to hear Mass every day; to enter into some pious sodality, to practise mental prayer, instructing them at the same time practically in the manner of making it; to read spiritual books; to visit the most Holy Sacrament; to make the examination of conscience; to recite the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary. You should often inculcate conformity to the divine will amidst contradictions, as upon this conformity our perfection and salvation depend. Exhort them particularly to have recourse each day to Jesus and Mary, to obtain holy perseverance, and in particular, in the time of temptation; and I strenuously recommend you constantly to suggest to the people that great means of salvation, prayer—a subject which I remark preachers treat very seldom, and very slightly, although upon prayer depend our eternal salvation and all our good.

I am aware that speaking upon such practical subjects has little attraction for those preachers who aim at loftiness of speech, because they appear to them to be trivial matters, and they do not admit of ingenious thoughts and sounding periods. But it was thus St. Francis de Sales preached, who converted by his sermons innumerable souls: he always enforced the practices of a Christian life, so that in one country district the people desired to have in writing the practical rules which he

recommended from the pulpit, that they might be the better able to put them in practice.

Oh, if all sacred orators preached solely with the view of pleasing God, in an easy and popular style, and discoursed on the truths and the maxims of the Gospel, in a manner plain, simple, and unadorned, and enforced practically the remedies against sins, and the means of persevering and of advancing in the divine love, the world would change its face, and God would not be offended as we now see him. We may remark, that the country parish in which there is a fervent priest, who truly preaches Christ crucified, is soon reclaimed and sanctified. I say, moreover, if a pious and simple discourse is delivered in a church the whole auditory is touched with compunction, and if they are not all converted, they are at least moved and affected; if such a style of preaching, then, were universal, what advantage would we see universally accrue to souls!

I will trespass on you no longer; but as you had the patience to read this long letter, I beg of you to join me in the following prayer to Jesus Christ:

O Saviour of the world, who art little known and loved less by the world, especially through the fault of Thy ministers; Thou who didst give up Thy life for the salvation of souls,—I beseech Thee through the merits of Thy Passion to enlighten and inflame so many priests who might convert sinners, and sanctify the entire earth if they preached Thy word with humility and simplicity, as Thou and Thy disciples preached it. But, alas! they do not do so; they preach themselves, and not Thee: and thus the world is full of preachers, and in the mean time hell is constantly crowded with souls. O Lord, repair this mighty ruin which preachers cause in Thy Church; and if it be necessary, humble, I pray Thee, as an example to others, by some visible sign, those priests who for their own glory adulterate Thy holy word, that

they may amend, and that they may not thus obstruct the spiritual profit of the people. Thus I hope, thus I pray.

I recommend myself to your prayers, and remain your
Reverence's most devoted and obliged servant,

ALPHONSUS M.,

Bishop of S. Agatha, etc.

Refutation of a French Book

ENTITLED

“ON PREACHING,

*By the Author of the Philosophical Dictionary.”*¹

I. Exposition of the Author's Ideas.

WHILE the last pages of the present work (*The Truth of Faith*) were being printed, this book fell into my hands. By appearing as a new production by the author, who wrote the *Philosophical Dictionary*, which has already been condemned everywhere, it announces for this very reason a suspicious doctrine. In fact, I have found therein several unsound propositions, and even an impious proposition, which is clearly opposed to holy Scripture.

Moreover, on seeing the title of the work, *On Preaching*, one would have thought that it treated of the utility and even of the necessity there is in this world of preaching to the people in order to enlighten them, because in consequence of sin and the corruption of their nature they are enveloped in darkness, and naturally inclined, not to what is good and virtuous, as the author wishes, but to evil and to vices. Now this is not the case: the end of the work is to discredit preaching, by representing it as entirely useless for the reformation of morals.

I do not wish to quote here all that the author says:

¹ Cardinal Villecourt (l. 3, ch. 38) informs us that this anonymous author was an abbé named Coyer, whose person and whose books have hardly been noticed in France. However this may be, his sacrilegious utopia touched the zeal of the holy bishop, and has produced for us a few more good pages, which appeared in 1767 with *The Truth of Faith*.

I shall give only a short sketch of it, to make the reader understand what the book contains.

The author distinguishes the conversion of the *mind* from that of the *heart*, and says that preaching can bring about the conversion of the mind, but not that of the heart; that is, it may effect a change of *religion*, but not a change of *morals*. And here is the way in which he pretends to prove this:

He says that preaching began when men united to live together in society. Cain, he says, having built the first city, which he called Henoah, and this city having become peopled with a race as wicked as himself, Enos preached against vice, but without success. Then came Henoah, who added threats, but his preaching was just as fruitless, or rather, it became injurious; for the faithful, by mingling with the Gentiles to convert them to the worship of the true God, married their daughters, and thus the corruption extended throughout the world.

He continues by saying that the Lord, seeing the whole world corrupted by sin, ordered Noe to inform men of the near approach of the deluge; and Noe in the presence of the Ark, which he had begun to build, preached against vice; but all this was useless, so that God was obliged to submerge the world; and so it happened.

After the deluge generations multiplied again, and there were two empires—that of Babylon and that of Ninive. Noe continued to preach, and did so with more force, recalling to people's minds the chastisement that had been administered. The prophets afterwards preached; but the people, instead of amending, added new crimes to their old ones, in such a manner that the Lord sent fire from heaven, which consumed five cities.

After the coming of the Messias St. John the Baptist preached penance; but how many persons practised it? Jesus Christ himself preached, and gathered together

only a small number of disciples, who after his death were dispersed and began to preach throughout the world; but they ended by being put to death in different countries by those very men to whom they had preached.

Thus speaks the author, and then adds:

Under the reign of Constantine the Gospel began to be preached everywhere; many people embraced the faith, but did not renounce vice: they thus changed their religion without changing their manners. Preaching was much more multiplied in the 12th century, thanks to the zeal of the children of St. Francis and of St. Dominic. Then came the children of St. Ignatius, and many other new religious, who filled the Church with preachers; and notwithstanding all this, the world found itself more than before filled with vice and wickedness. What means can we therefore employ in order to effect a reform of morals, since so far preaching has always been ineffectual?

The author, arriving at his conclusion, says that the preacher who is really capable of reforming the world is a good government, which rewards the virtuous and punishes the wicked. Preachers, he says, preach about eternal goods and eternal evils, as faith teaches them; but these future goods and evils are far off, and make little or no impression, because men are more touched by what they see than by what they hear. The author then suggests different ways of extirpating vices.

This is what he first proposes: 1. To the fathers of families should be left, as was given by Romulus and Remus, the absolute power of chastising at their will their own children, except that they should not be allowed to sell or kill them, as was allowed to the Romans; 2. The husbands should be the judges of their wives; 3. The masters should have over their servants the authority that generals have over their soldiers.

But his principal project is to establish in every city or village a censor, who should be charged with presiding over the families; then to establish a college of twelve censors from the nearest places, forming a distinct tribunal of the tribunals of justice. This tribunal would have to chastise the vices that magistrates are not charged with punishing, and to reward the virtues that have not received the reward that they deserve. After this he makes an attack upon the author of the *Spirit of the Laws*, who had said that a monarchical government remedies all things, and replies to him that the universe is an altogether too convenient a censor, since it leaves vices without punishment and virtues without reward.

2. Refutation.

What displeases me above all in these projects is, that the author, in order to induce people to live well, speaks only of human means, and does not even mention the necessity of divine grace, without which all human forces can certainly do nothing for the conversion of hearts. Human governments in punishing bad subjects and in rewarding the good only serve, without divine grace, to make Pharisees, who outwardly appear to be saints, but inwardly are filled with vice. It is grace only that is successful in reforming hearts; hence the Church teaches us to pray thus: *Tua nos quæsumus, Domine, gratia semper et præveniat et sequatur, ac bonis operibus jugiter præstet esse intentos*—(Let Thy grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord, ever precede and follow us, and make us continually intent upon good works). Now holy preaching, of which I will afterward speak, serves to make us know the necessity of grace, and at the same time the necessity of prayer in order to obtain grace.

As regards the second part of this book, which refers to civil government, it is not my business to discuss it; for

it is not a subject about which I am concerned. I only say that if this college of censors, which the author proposes should depend on a higher authority, I would leave it to this latter authority, as belonging to it, the right of determining whether or not it is expedient to establish a tribunal of this kind; for, on the one hand, it seems that it can be made useful, but on the other hand the greatest inconveniences would result therefrom. If, on the contrary, one should wish to make it independent by establishing a democratic régime instead of a monarchical government, it would be in opposition to the common opinion of wise men, all of whom hold that the monarchical government is better and more suited to preserve harmony in society.

But let us return to the first part concerning *preaching*, which is of particular interest to me: the author declares it to be useless for the reformation of morals.

If he wishes to speak of vain and ornate preaching, as he really speaks of it in some parts of his book, he is right, and I agree with him; for I myself have published a little work in which I have proved that preachers who in their discourses seek their own glory, and not the glory of God, are, as far as the public are concerned, not only useless, but are often even pernicious; since most of the hearers being illiterate people, these discourses, which they do not understand, only cause them tediousness, and they go with disgust to hear the word of God. For myself, I say that if the divine word were not altered, if it were preached in its purity and in a simple manner, every one would become a saint. Very severe will therefore be the account that will have to be rendered to God by those priests who profane holy preaching by a lofty and pompous style, beyond the capacity of the people, causing thereby the loss of so many souls. We should read what is said about this matter by Muratori in his golden book entitled *Popular Eloquence*.

In short, if the author means this kind of vain preaching, he is right when he says that it cannot be conducive to the amendment of bad morals; but if he speaks in general, as he really does, of holy preaching, I say that his thesis is not only most false, but it is, moreover, pernicious and impious, since it is contrary to holy Scripture.

Holy Scripture teaches us that good morals, like faith, are propagated and cultivated by preaching. Jesus Christ has declared that to save men his Passion alone was not sufficient, but that preaching was also necessary in order that men might do penance for their sins and amend their lives: *And thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead on the third day: and that penance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all nations.*¹ For this reason, therefore, he commanded his disciples to go out into the whole world, to teach not only the mysteries that men should believe, but also the commandments that they should keep: *Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.*² *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*³ In obedience to this command the apostles preached, and their preaching produced fruit in the entire world, as is testified by St. Paul: *In the word of the truth of the Gospel, which is come unto you, as also it is in the whole world, and bringeth forth fruit and groweth, even as it doth in you, since the day you heard it.*⁴

¹ "Et sic oportebat Christum pati, et resurgere a mortuis tertia die, et prædicare in nomine ejus poenitentiam et remissionem peccatorum in omnes gentes."—*Luke*, xxiv. 46.

² "Euntes in mundum universum, prædicate Evangelium omni creature."—*Mark*, xvi. 15.

³ "Docentes eos servare omnia quæcumque mandavi vobis."—*Matt.* xxviii. 15.

⁴ "In verbo veritatis Evangelii, quod pervenit ad vos, sicut in universo mundo est, et fructificat, et crescit, sicut in vobis, ex eo die qua audistis."—*Col.* i. 5.

And this came to pass because the Lord co-operated in making successful their zeal: *And they going forth preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed.*¹

The author says that preaching is inefficacious for the reformation of morals. But God does not speak thus: the Lord declares that as the rain makes the earth fruitful and makes it produce wheat, in the same way the word of God does not remain sterile; it produces in souls fruits of good works: *And as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return no more thither, but soak the earth, and water it, and make it to spring, and give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall My word be, which shall go forth from My mouth: it shall not return to Me void; but it shall do whatsoever I please, and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it.*² St. Paul adds that the word of God is so efficacious that it penetrates the hearts more than a two-edged sword: *For the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword; and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit.*³ By the word *animæ*—soul—we understand the inferior part of man, which is called *animal*; and by the word *spiritus*—spirit—we understand the superior part, which is called *spiritual*. Hence the word of God prevents the superior part from uniting with the inferior part, as happens among the wicked in whom the inferior drags down the superior part; so that holy

¹ "Illi autem perfecti prædicaverunt ubique, Domino cooperante, et sermonem confirmante sequentibus signis."—*Mark*, xvi. 20.

² "Et quomodo descendit imber et nix de cælo, et illuc ultra non revertitur, sed inebriat terram, et infundit eam, et germinare eam facit, et dat semen serenti, et panem comedenti; sic erit verbum meum, quod egredietur de ore meo: non revertetur ad me vacuum, sed faciet quæcumque volui, et prosperabitur in his ad quæ misi illud."—*Is.* lv. 10.

³ "Vivus est enim sermo Dei, et efficax, et penetrabilior omni gladio accipiti, et pertingens usque ad divisionem animæ et spiritus."—*Heb.* iv. 12.

preaching, or rather, the grace by means of preaching, separates the inferior part from the superior, and prevents the superior part from being dragged down, and dominates over all the actions and all the desires of men.

St Paul, moreover, writes: *It pleased God by the foolishness of our preaching to save them that believe.*¹ He says, *By the foolishness of preaching*: this is because the mystery of the Redemption, which the apostles preached, was regarded as foolishness by the Gentiles, just as we afterwards read in the same place: *But we preach Christ crucified: unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles, foolishness.*² The Apostle then declares that it is by means of the preaching of such folly that the Lord has wished to save believers. Now in order to save men, they must be led not only to believe the truths of faith, but also to do what faith teaches; for faith alone without works cannot save any one. Hence the Apostle assures us, in another text already cited, that the faith of Jesus Christ produced fruits of good works in the whole world: *It is in the whole world, and bringeth forth fruit.*³

Origen also attests⁴ that in his time in all parts of the world those that had abandoned their divinities as well as the laws of their country, and consequently their wicked morals, in order to follow the law of Jesus Christ, were innumerable. Hence the apostles, as the fruit of their preaching, had the consolation of seeing the Gentiles not only despise and trample under foot

¹ "Placuit Deo per stultitiam prædicationis salvos facere credentes."
—I Cor. i. 21.

² "Nos autem prædicamus Christum crucifixum, Judæis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam."—*Ib.* i. 23.

³ "In universo mundo est et fructificat."—*Col.* i. 6.

⁴ "In omni orbe terrarum, in omni Græcia atque universis exteris nationibus, innumeri sunt et immensi, qui, relictis patriis legibus, et his quos putabant deos, se disciplinæ Christi tradiderunt."—*Periarch.* l. 4, n. 1.

their gods, but also extirpate their vices, which were inveterate for so many centuries, abhor earthly pleasures, renounce the riches and the honors of the world, in order to embrace sufferings, opprobrium, poverty, persecution, exile, tortures, and death.

The author says that preaching has not served to extirpate vice. It is not denied that, notwithstanding all the preaching, there were, there are, and there will be obstinate people who, in order not to give up their vices, renounce God; but on the other hand, how many are there who, after having heard the divine word, have changed their lives and given themselves to God! And these conversions were not dramatic conversions, which were only apparent as would be those that were only accomplished because of temporal rewards and punishments, of which the author speaks: they were true conversions of the heart. This was especially shown by so many martyrs, who, in order to confess their faith according to the precept of the Gospel, sacrificed their lives amid torments, and had so great a desire to die, that Tiberian, governor of Palestine, was forced to write to the Emperor Trajan that it was impossible to put to death all the Christians, so great was the number of those that offered themselves to die for Jesus Christ. This subsequently induced Trajan to leave the Christians in peace. Those that were thus converted by holy preaching were not only the common, ignorant people; but there were among them nobles, learned men, decurions, judges, senators, so that Tertullian in his Apology could say to the Gentiles: "We are filling all your places,—cities, islands, meetings, camps, decurions, the senate, the forum."¹ After the first three centuries, which were centuries of blood, the fourth and fifth were centuries of self-inflicted penances, and of renouncing

¹ "Vestra omnia implevimus, urbes, insulas, conciliabula, castra, decurias, senatum, forum."—*Apologet.* c. 37.

of the world; for many men and women retired to the desert, leaving behind their country, their relatives, their property, and everything, in order to give themselves up entirely to God by the practice of the holy virtues. St. Jerome, when he was living in Palestine, wrote¹ that thither came every day from India, from Persia, from Ethiopia, companies of monks living in solitude, for the purpose of visiting the holy places of Jerusalem. And Rufinus² assures us, that particularly in the territory of a single city of Egypt there lived at the beginning of the fourth century twenty thousand religious virgins who led a holy life. All this was the fruit of holy preaching.

I do not wish to continue any longer, nor fatigue my readers, to prove the utility and the necessity of holy preaching; for this it suffices to recall to mind what the Apostle says: *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?*³ It seems to me, moreover, that the little that I have said above sufficiently proves how impious is the thesis of the book in question, in which the author pretends to prove that preaching has never been a useful and proper means for the reformation of morals, when, on the contrary, without preaching we should be deprived of one of the principal means destined by God to bring about the true conversion of hearts.

¹ *Ad Lætam, de Instit. filia.*

² *Vit. Patr. l. 1, c. 5.*

³ "Quomodo ergo invocabunt, in quem non crediderunt? Aut quomodo credent ei quem non audierunt? Quomodo autem audient sine prædicante?"—*Rom. x. 14.*

A Letter

ON THE ADVANTAGES OF THE HOLY MISSIONS, TO A BISHOP
RECENTLY APPOINTED, BY WHOM THE SAINT HAD BEEN
CONSULTED ON THE SUBJECT.*

I HAVE received your lordship's most esteemed letter, in which I see your zeal for procuring missions for all the villages of your diocese, and in which your lordship states several objections which have been made against the advantages of the missions. In obedience to your lordship's commands I shall detail at full length my views on the matter, and shall answer all the groundless objections which have been put forward against the holy missions.

It is certain, my lord, that the conversion of sinners is the greatest benefit that God can bestow upon man. St. Thomas¹ says that the gift of grace by which God justifies the sinner is a greater favor than the beatitude of glory. But the conversion of sinners is precisely the end of the missions; for, by the instructions and sermons of the missions, they are convinced of the malice of sin, of the importance of salvation, and of the goodness of God, and thus their hearts are changed, the bonds of vicious habits are broken, and they begin to live like Christians.

In the old as well as in the new law the Lord ordained that the world should be saved by means of the missions. The faith, according to St. Paul, has been

¹ I. 2, q. 113, a. 9.

* This letter was printed in connection with *Sermons for Sundays*, which appeared in 1771 (*Villecourt*, tome vi, pages 304 et 472).—ED.

propagated by preaching; but preaching would have been ineffectual if God had not sent the preachers. *How*, says the Apostle, *shall they believe him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach unless they be sent?*¹ Hence, according to St. Gregory, the missions began at the commencement of the world: for God has never at any time neglected to send workmen to cultivate his vineyard.² In the Old Testament he sent the prophets to preach the law, and in the New he has sent his own Son to teach us the new law of grace, which is the perfection and accomplishment of the old law. *God who in times past spoke to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by his Son.*³

But because Jesus Christ was sent to preach only in Judea, he appointed the apostles that, after his death, they might preach the Gospel to all nations.⁴ By the preaching of the apostles the Gospel began, as we learn from St. Paul, to fructify throughout the world.⁵ The apostles sent their disciples to propagate the faith in the other nations, which they themselves had not been able to reach. And in after years, as we know from ecclesiastical history, holy workmen were sent by the Sovereign Pontiff and by other bishops to preach the Gospel in other kingdoms. In the fourth century St. Ireneus was sent to France. In the fifth, St. Palladius was sent to Scotland, and St. Patrick to Ireland. In the sixth, St. Gregory sent St. Augustine to England.

¹ "Quomodo credent ei quem non audierunt? Quomodo autem audient, sine prædicante? Quomodo vero prædicabunt, nisi mittantur?"—*Rom. x. 14.*

² "Ad erudiendam ergo dominus plebem suam, quasi ad excolendam vineam, nullo tempore destitit operarios mittere."—*In Evang. hom. 19.*

³ "Novissime, diebus istis, locutus est nobis in Filio."—*Heb. i. 2.*

⁴ "Euntes in mundum universum prædicate evangelium omni creaturæ."—*Mark, xvi. 15.*

⁵ "In universo mundo est, et fructificat, et crescit."—*Col. i. 6.*

In the seventh, St. Eligius was sent to Flanders, St. Kilian to Franconia, Sts. Swibert and Willibrord to Holland. In the eighth century Gregory the Second sent St. Boniface to Germany, St. Wulfran to Friesland, and St. Hubert to Brabant. In the ninth, St. Ascanius was sent to Denmark and Sweden, and St. Methodius to Bohemia, Moravia, and Bulgaria. In the tenth, St. Maynard was sent to Livonia, and St. Ottone to Pomerania. In the thirteenth century the Pope sent Dominicans and Franciscans to Greece, Armenia, Ethiopia, Tartary, and Norway. These facts have been taken from a work entitled *Historical Notices of the Church*.

Finally, we know that in later times immense numbers have been converted from paganism in the East Indies and Japan by St. Francis Xavier, and in the West Indies by St. Louis Bertrand. I abstain from mentioning the many provinces of infidels and heretics which were converted by missionaries. St. Francis de Sales was sent to the province of Chablais, and converted seventy-two thousand heretics. We also know that St. Vincent de Paul instituted a Congregation of priests, which was approved by the Holy See. The priests of this Congregation are called "The Fathers of the Mission," because their lives are spent in giving missions in all places to which they are invited.

In a word, wherever the faith has been planted or a reformation of morals introduced, all has been effected by means of the missions; and when the scourges of heaven—earthquakes, wars, famine, and pestilence—have failed to convert the people, when the civil laws with all their penalties have not succeeded in preventing murders, thefts, adulteries, and blasphemies, the missions have been found effectual; hence, the learned Contenson of the Order of St. Dominic says that by the missions alone souls obtain eternal life.¹ Hence, when

¹ "Per solas missiones impletur prædestinatio, quæ est transmissio creaturæ rationalis in vitam æternam."—*Theol.* l. 3, d. 6, c. 2, sp. 2.

a mission is to be given in any place, we can clearly perceive the efforts of hell to prevent it. For there is always some dissolute person who does all in his power to prevent the mission, because he knows that it will be an effectual obstacle to the execution of his wicked designs. But if in cities the missions are most useful, they are necessary in the villages and small towns as well for the instruction of the people as to give them an opportunity of making a good confession. First, in the small towns the missions are necessary for the instruction of the people. It is true, in all or in almost Catholic countries, sermons are preached to the people during the Lent. But the people derive far greater fruit from the sermons of the missionaries than from the Lenten discourses. For the preachers for Lent ordinarily preach in a high and flowery style, or at least in a manner not adapted to the capacity of the poor. They have their sermons committed to memory, and cannot change them, whether their audience consists of the learned or ignorant. When the preachers of the villages came to ask the blessing of Cardinal Pignatelli, Archbishop of Naples, his Eminence recommended them to address the people in a simple and popular style. For, said his Eminence, the greater part of the people being illiterate, they derive no fruit from the sermons unless the language be accommodated to their capacity. He then added, Perhaps you will tell me that the prescription is already written. I then answer, Oh, what a pity for the patients!

The remarks of this holy prelate were most just; for, what benefit can a sick man derive from remedies which have been prescribed without a knowledge of his disease?

Hence, when the poor people of the country places are asked what fruit they have received from the sermon, they answer that they could not understand it

because the preacher spoke Latin. It is not true that these preachers always speak Latin, but their language is so little adapted to the weak understanding of the ignorant that to them it is as unintelligible as if it were Latin. I assert, and in this assertion I believe I am not rash, that it would be sometimes better for the ignorant to be absent from these sermons. For after listening for an hour to a sermon, in the hope of deriving from it spiritual profit, they find that their time has been lost, and thus they conceive a dislike for the word of God, and become worse than they were before. Hence it is that after the sermons of Lent we see the same bad practices, the same animosities, and hear the same blasphemies and the same obscenities. The greatest misery of the poor in the country is, as Contenson says, that there is no one to break to them the word of God; and therefore, he says, woe to the bishops, woe to the negligent priest!

But, it will be asked, are there not over the poor in the villages pastors who preach every Sunday? Yes, there are pastors who preach; but we must consider that all pastors do not, or cannot break the bread of the divine word to the illiterate in the manner prescribed by the Council of Trent. "They shall feed the people committed to them with wholesome words, according to their own capacity, and that of their people, by teaching them the things which it is necessary for all to know unto salvation, and by announcing to them, with briefness and plainness of discourse, the vices which they must avoid, and the virtues which they must follow after."² Hence it often happens that the people draw

¹ "Tot parvuli in oppidulis petunt panem et non est qui frangat eis. Væ, væ prælati dormientibus, væ presbyteris otiosis!"—*Loco cit.*

² "Plebes sibi commissas, pro earum capacitate, pascant salutaribus verbis, docendo necessaria ad salutem annunciandoque cum brevitate et facilitate sermonis vitia quæ eas declinare, et virtutes, quas sectari oporteat."—*Sess. 5, c. 2, de Ref.*

but little fruit from the sermon of the pastor, either because he has but little talent for preaching, or because his style is too high or his discourse too long. Besides, many of those who stand in the greatest need of instruction do not go to the sermon of the parish priest. Moreover, Jesus Christ tells us that *No prophet is accepted in his own country.*¹ And when the people always hear the same voice, the sermon makes but little impression upon them.

But the sermons of the missionaries who devote their lives to the missions are well arranged, and are all adapted to the capacity of the ignorant as well as of the learned. In their sermons, as well as in their instructions, the word of God is broken. Hence, in the mission the poor are made to understand the mysteries of faith and the precepts of the Decalogue, the manner of receiving the sacraments with fruit, and the means of persevering in the grace of God: they are inflamed with fervor, and are excited to correspond with the divine love, and to attend to the affair of salvation. Hence we see such a concourse of the people at the missions, where they hear strange voices and simple and popular discourses. Besides, in the missions, the eternal truths which are best calculated to move the heart, such as the importance of salvation, the malice of sin, death, judgment, hell, eternity, etc., are proposed in a connected manner, so that it would be a greater wonder that a dissolute sinner should persevere in his wickedness, than that he should be converted. Hence, in the missions, many sinners give up their evil habits, remove proximate occasions of sin, restore ill-gotten goods, and repair injuries. Many radically extirpate all sentiments of hatred, and forgive their enemies from their hearts; and many who had not approached the sacraments for

¹ "Nemo propheta acceptus est in patria sua."—*Luke, iv. 24.*

many years, or who received them unworthily, make good confessions during the missions.

It has been said that, during the ten or fifteen days which the mission lasts, the missionaries have given absolution to many relapsing sinners, who would require a trial of many months before they could be safely absolved. Would to God that all confessions were made with the same dispositions with which they are made in the missions. Oh, how small should be the number of damned souls! Surely length of time is not the only means of ascertaining the dispositions of a penitent; it may be a very fallacious means. How many are there who, in order to receive absolution during the time of the paschal precept, abstain for a month and more from the habits of sin, who interrupt their evil practices, and relapse immediately after? I therefore am of opinion that the disposition of a penitent may be better known from the deep impression made by the sermons, from the compunction of heart which he manifests, from the resolution which he makes, and from the means which he adopts in order to avoid sin, than from length of time. St. Cyprian says that charity is perfected, not so much by length of time, as by the efficacy of grace. And St. Thomas says that God sometimes infuses so much compunction into the hearts of sinners that they instantly acquire perfect sanctity.¹ At a synod of the Bishops at Flanders, held at Brussels, the following decree was made: "The confessor, in the case of greater sinners, even when they are backsliders, should not ask that they should perform works of penance for a notable time, but he should with the holy Fathers be mindful that God in the conversion of the sinner considers not the measure of time but of sorrow."² Moreover,

¹ "Quandoque tanta commotione convertit (Deus) cor hominis, ut subito perfecte consequatur sanitatem spiritualem."—P. 3, q. 86, c. 5.

² "Confessarius a quibusvis peccatoribus gravioribus etiam recidivis,

since the matter of the sacrament of penance is moral and not physical, it is sufficient for the confessor to have a moral certainty which (as the author of the Instructor of Young Confessors says) is nothing else than a prudent probable judgment, not opposed by a prudent doubt of the dispositions of the penitent. Those who have assisted in giving missions, and who are accustomed to hear confessions, know well the difference between the confessions made on other occasions and the confessions made during the missions. They are fully convinced that in the missions penitents confess their sins with true sorrow, and with a firm purpose of amendment.

The reparation of so many sacrilegious confessions in which sins are concealed through shame, particularly by women, should of itself be sufficient to render the missions very desirable. This great evil of bad confessions is more common in small villages in which there are but few confessors, who are acquainted with all the inhabitants. Penitents are ashamed to confess their sins to confessors whom they meet every day, and thus through shame they continue to make sacrilegious confessions during their whole lives. Many, through this accursed shame, conceal their sins even at the hour of death, and thus sacrilegiously receive the last sacraments. Hence, the reparation of so many bad confessions is one of the greatest advantages of the missions. The people, knowing that the missionaries are strangers who will remain only for a few days, and whom they shall never see again, are easily induced, by the terrors of the divine judgments proposed in the sermons of the mission, to confess the sins which they had before concealed.

Hence I say that in every village the mission should

stata lege, non exigat ut per notabile tempus prævix exercuerint opera pœnitentiæ; sed cum sanctis Patribus expendat Deum, in conversione peccatoris, non tam considerari mensuram temporis quam doloris."

continue as long as will be necessary for the missionaries to hear the confessions of all the inhabitants; otherwise, many persons will not be able to make their confession to the Fathers, and thus their consciences will be perplexed and troubled. For, by the sermons, scruples are excited; but by the sermons alone, a person addicted to bad habits, to unjust contracts, or inveterate hatred is not sufficiently taught what he must do in order to tranquillize his conscience. But in confession everything is adjusted, and the penitent is instructed how to make restitution for injuries done to others in their property or character, how to remove the occasions of his sins, and how to pardon injuries. But if the doubts and scruples excited by the sermons be not removed in the confessional, many persons will be more perplexed and troubled in mind than they were before the mission began. And if a person whose past confessions were sacrilegious cannot confess to the missionaries, he will, being obliged to make his confession to the priests of the village, continue, as before, to conceal his sins. Where the mission is so short that all the inhabitants of the place have not time to make their confession to the missionaries, it will do more injury than service to many souls. For, some persons whose ignorance rendered the omission of certain sins in confession excusable, being instructed in their obligation, will be found to confess these sins, but will not have courage to disclose these to the confessor of the place: thus, they will commit sacrileges and be lost.

Finally, all the world knows the immense good which has been and is daily done by the missions. A description of the innumerable conversions of sinners, produced by means of the missions, would be too long for this letter; but I shall mention a few.

Speaking of the missions of Father Segneri the younger, the celebrated Muratori says that the entire

people gave up their employments to attend his sermons. He says that hatred for their sins and compunction of heart were plainly depicted in the countenances of all. Human respect and human feelings were trodden under foot, the most obdurate sinners were converted, and the confessors were obliged to hear confessions not only by day but by night. He adds that after the mission the whole town appeared to be changed: scandals were removed, abuses corrected, inveterate and obstinate animosities ceased, and blasphemies, imprecations, and obscenities were no longer heard. A similar description has been published of the fruits of the missions of Father Joseph Carabantes, a Capuchin; but in one city the people were so deeply penetrated with compunction that almost all of them went through the streets in the garments of penance, scourging themselves, and with tears asking of God the pardon of their sins.

Speaking of the missions given by the venerable priests of the congregation of St. Vincent de Paul, the author of his life says that, during a mission in the diocese of Palestrina in 1657, a young man whose arm had been cut off by an enemy, having met his enemy in a public street after the sermon, cast himself at his feet, asked pardon for the hatred he had borne him, and, rising up, embraced him with so much affection that all who were present wept through joy, and many, moved by his example, pardoned all the injuries that they had received from their enemies. In the same diocese there were two widows who had been earnestly entreated but constantly refused to pardon certain persons who had killed their husbands. During the mission they were perfectly reconciled with the murderers, in spite of the remonstrance of a certain person who endeavored to persuade them to the contrary, saying that the murders were but recent, and that the blood of their husbands was still warm. The following fact is still more won-

derful: In a certain town, which shall be nameless,* vindictiveness prevailed to such an extent that parents taught their children how to take revenge for every offence, however small; this vice was so deeply rooted that it appeared impossible to persuade the people to pardon injuries. The people came to the exercises of the mission with sword and musket, and many with other weapons. For some time the sermons did not produce a single reconciliation; but on a certain day, the preacher, through a divine inspiration, presented the crucifix to the audience, saying: Now let every one who bears malice to his enemies come and show that for the love of his Saviour he wishes to pardon them: let him embrace them in Jesus Christ. After these words a parish priest whose nephew had been lately killed came up to the preacher and kissed the crucifix, and, calling the murderer, who was present, embraced him cordially. By this example and by the words of the preacher the people were so much moved that for an hour and a half they were employed in the church in making peace with their enemies and embracing those whom they had before hated. The hour being late, they continued to do the same on the following day, so that parents pardoned the murder of their children, wives of their husbands, and children of their fathers and brothers. These reconciliations were made with so many tears and so much consolation that the inhabitants long continued to bless God for the signal favor bestowed on the town. It is also related that many notorious robbers and assassins, being moved by the sermon, or by what they heard from others of it, gave up their arms

* In the Life of the saint by Abelly, l. 4, ch. 5, this place is called Niolo, situated in the island of Corsica, where a mission was given in 1652. This Life presents many other very interesting details about the good done in the missions given by the children of St. Vincent de Paul.
—ED.

and began to lead a Christian life. Nearly forty of these public malefactors were converted in a single mission.

We read in his life of the stupendous effects produced by the missions of Father Leonard of Port Maurice, of the reformed Franciscans. In a village of Corsica called Mariana murders were so frequently committed through revenge that entire families were extinguished; such was the fruit of a mission given by Father Leonard that at the end of it there was not a single individual in the town who had not made peace with his enemies. In another place, called Casaccone, there was a family who obstinately refused to be reconciled with certain persons who had offended them. But when, at the close of the mission, the preacher declared that he did not intend to bless those who retained sentiments of hatred in their hearts, all the members of that family came forward, and with many tears made peace with their opponents. During the mission in this place, a young man came from a distance, for the purpose of killing an enemy, whom he expected to find at the exercises of the missions; but by hearing the sermon he was converted, laid aside his hatred and made a general confession. In a town called Castel d'Acqua, there was a great number of opposite factions: during the mission they came one day, armed, to the church. Great slaughter was apprehended; but by the sermon their hearts were filled with compunction: they went of their own accord to the preacher, and a common peace was established. In another place there were two parties who had been at variance for twenty years; in these contentions many persons were killed. Through the obstinacy of their chief, whose name was Lupo, one of the parties at the beginning of the mission refused to make peace; but at the end of the mission, seeing that his opponents were reconciled with God, and that he was still the enemy of

God, Lupo was struck with remorse, and offered to make peace: thus the two parties were reconciled. In Livorno great preparations were made for the amusement of the carnival; but as soon as the mission began, the masks and dances and, because no person would go to the theatres, even the public comedies were given up. These are ordinary, not extraordinary, fruits of all missions: I therefore abstain from saying more on this subject.

Let us now come to the objections that are made against the utility of the missions. It is said in the first place that the fruit of the missions is only temporary, that, though it appears great, it lasts but a short time, and that the wicked become worse than they were before. I answer, would to God that all who are converted would persevere! It is one of the miseries of human nature that many who recover the grace of God lose it again by sin. But though it should be admitted that the fruits of the missions are not permanent, it is at least certain that, during the mission, bad practices are given up, scandals are removed, blasphemies cease, a great deal of ill-gotten property is restored, and many bad confessions are repaired. But it is not true that, after the missions, all sinners become worse than they were before; many persevere in the grace of God, and others, if they relapse, abstain for many months from mortal sin. Moreover, by listening to the sermons of the missions, the people acquire a more perfect knowledge of God and of the importance of salvation, and a greater horror of sin; and if they relapse into sin, they endeavor to rise again at the time of the Paschal Communion. I hold for certain that, if among all those who have attended the sermons any one die within a year after the missions, he will scarcely be lost. The fruits of the mission are always visible at least for a year or two; and if they do not last longer, it is because the

priests of the place do not labor to preserve and maintain them by assembling the people to meditation and to the visitation of the Blessed Sacrament, and, above all, by attending to the confessional. "Væ," says the learned Contenson, "*prælati dormientibus, væ presbyteris otiosis.*" But when, after three or four years, the land becomes dry, it is necessary to refresh it by another mission.

The second objection against the missions is that the consciences of many are disturbed by scruples excited by the sermons. Oh what an objection! Then, rather than disturb their conscience, it is better to allow sinners to slumber in the lethargy of sin, and in an accursed peace which is the seal of damnation! The devil wishes that the false peace of sinners, which keeps them in a state of perdition, should not be disturbed! But it is the duty of a pastor to awaken those who sleep in sin, and to warn them of the danger of damnation to which they are exposed; and surely than the missions, there is no better means of arousing sinners to a sense of the perils by which they are beset.

Hence, bishops should take care that missions be given in every village, however small. Where there are many villages near one another, some missionaries select for the mission a place in the midst of these villages. The greatest sinners, who are consequently the most blind and the most careless of their salvation, do not go to the exercises of the mission unless they are performed in their own church. They remain at home under the pretext that the church in which the mission is given is too distant, or that the weather is bad, and thus they continue in their miserable state of perdition. I speak from experience; for we found that many places derive little or no profit from the missions, either because these missions were given in the midst of several villages or because they were too short. Hence, when the mission-

aries of our little Congregation go into any diocese, it is usual to give the mission in every village, however small, at least for eight days, and in populous towns for fifteen, twenty, or thirty days, until the confessions of all are heard.¹

The third objection is that the exercises of the missions generally end at night, and are therefore a cause of much scandal. I answer that they who attend the exercises are struck with the terror of God's judgments; and should any one during that time be disposed to tempt others to sin, he could not expect to succeed: but even though some attempt should be made to draw others into sins, must the mission be given up? If, to avoid all danger of evil, it were necessary to abstain from what is good and profitable, we should prohibit festivals of the saints, processions, and pilgrimages to holy places, because in these things there is always some disorder; we should prohibit confession, Communion, and hearing Mass, because even in these there are sometimes scandals and sacrileges. But we know that the Church not only permits but even approves and commands these things.

But it is said that from preaching at night many sins arise: and will there be no sins if the missions be given up? Ah, if the missions be given up, bad habits, quarrels, blasphemies, and all scandals will continue. But at least, during the mission, thousands of sins are avoided. But you will ask why are the sermons preached at night? I answer that, where the people attend by day, the sermons should be preached during the day and not at night; but, where they cannot attend by day, what can be done? It is certain that if, in the country places, the poor laboring classes, who form almost the entire audience, do not attend the sermons, the mission will be lost; but however strongly they may be exhorted to attend

¹ See treatise on the EXERCISES OF THE MISSIONS, ch. x.

at an early hour, these poor people cannot come till after the work of the day. Masters and employers are recommended to allow their servants and workmen to give up their work at an early hour during the days of the mission; but these employers look to their own interest and pay but little attention to such recommendations. The workmen, unless they complete the day's work, are not paid. Without their wages they are not able to provide food for themselves or their families: hence in the villages the poor cannot attend till about sunset; and if they do not attend, I say the mission is lost.¹

The fourth objection is that some imprudent missionaries preach from the pulpit against the sins which they hear in the confessional, and excite in the people a hatred for confession. This objection has been made by some wicked persons who hate the missions, and is utterly destitute of foundation. The first thing the missionaries do after their arrival at the place of the mission, is to inform themselves of the prevailing sins and abuses of the place, and these they attack in their sermons. But they are careful never to mention in the pulpit any circumstance which could in the most remote manner reveal any sin heard in confession. But of what are they to speak in the pulpit? Is it of ecstasies, raptures, visions, or of revelations? No, they must preach against the vices which are most common, and which are ordinarily committed in all places, such as impurity, blasphemies, hatred, theft, and the like.

Finally, it is said that the missions, being repeated every three years, are too frequent, and therefore produce little or no impression on the minds of the people. I admit that, between two successive missions in the same place, there should be a considerable interval of time; but an interval of three years is quite sufficient. For,

¹ See EXERCISES OF THE MISSIONS, ch. vii. art. 8, n. 4.

ordinaarily speaking, in that space of time many forget the sermons of the missons, many relapse into sin, and very many fall into tepidity. A new mission will renew the fervor of the tepid, and will restore God's grace to those who have relapsed. But it is not true that repeated missions do not produce much fruit. For although in the second mission the people do not manifest so much compunction as in the first, the fruit is notwithstanding very great. For, as I have already said, many who have returned to their former bad habits rise again from sin, many who became tepid begin again to serve God with fervor, and many are more firmly established in the practice of virtue. Hence, to renew the fervor and resolution of the people, the missionaries of our little Congregation usually return after some months to the place in which they have given missions. And we have learned by experience the great advantages which flow from these renewals.

I have said enough; I only entreat you Lordship to continue with your wonted zeal to procure every three years a mission for every village in your diocese. Do not attend to the objections of those who speak against the missions through interested motives or through ignorance of the great advantages of the missions. I also pray you to oblige the pastors and priests of the villages to continue the exercises recommended to them by the missionaries, such as common mental prayer in the church, visit to the most holy sacrament, familiar sermons every week, the Rosary, and other similar devotions. For it frequently happens that, through the neglect of the priests of the place, the greater part of the fruit produced by the mission is lost. I recommend myself to your prayers and remain,

Your very devoted and obedient servant,

ALPHONSUS, MARIA,

Bishop of St. Agatha, etc.

The Exercises of the Missions.

OUR saint describes in this treatise the exercises of the missions such as they are given or were given at his time at Naples; but we may clearly gather from what he says, that he does not pretend that the same method should be followed and the same means employed in every place and at all times. This is what he himself, in his old age, gives us to understand when he heard that there was an intention of introducing his Institute into Austria. "The missions," he said, "are not there given in the way in which we give ours: instruction or catechism is more useful there than preaching, because the people are living in the midst of Lutherans and Calvinists." Moreover, the statutes of his Congregation lay down this regulation for the missionaries: "Those ceremonies that are obsolete, ludicrous, and unusual in the country or places where they preach, shall be omitted; and as a general rule, the means of exciting the feelings of the people shall be used but sparingly, or shall even be omitted, especially in large places, and in places where the people are well educated." He that presides over the mission should, therefore, consider the circumstances of time and place where the mission is given, and, above all, the character of the people, so as to select and direct the exercises in a manner that will produce most fruit.—ED.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE are some who assert that the missions do more harm than good, because they trouble, they say, the people and their consciences, and because, if the people abstain from committing sin during the mission, they fall back into vice as soon as it is over, and become worse than they were before. Those that speak in this way, having had no experience in regard to missions, are ignorant of the great number of souls that are thereby gained for God. But he that practically knows what missions are, is fully aware how many inveterate enmities they remove, how many bad habits they root out, how many restitutions of ill-gotten goods they bring about, how many law-suits—a fruitful source of hatred—they adjust, and above all, how many bad confessions they repair, especially in the country in small places, where in this respect one may say that the missions are not only useful, as in large cities, but are even necessary. Indeed, as in these places the inhabitants know one another, it is not a rare thing that shame prevents them from manifesting their sins to the confessors of the place.

It is true, many at the opening of the mission complain that the missionaries have come to create disturbance among them; but these complaints are not uttered by good people: they are uttered by those that live thoughtlessly in their sins, and do not wish to be disturbed. Such is the aim of the devil: he does not wish that his unhappy slaves should be roused from their false peace in which they live—a peace that is to be the cause of their eternal torment and their eternal despair!

It is also true that after the mission many will relapse into sin. Ah! would to God that all those that are once converted would have the happiness of persevering

in the state of grace till death; but so great is human frailty, that many sinners after having recovered the grace of God, again lose it. Nevertheless, even if no other advantage could be gained, it is certain that, at least during the time of the mission, many sins are avoided. The missions, however, bring back to God many souls, who afterwards persevere in God's grace till death; and if many should happen to relapse, they keep from sin at least for several months, and will acquire during the mission a greater horror of sin, a better knowledge of God and of the importance of their eternal salvation.¹

As for the exercises of the missions, there are many books that treat of them at length, especially the beautiful work of the venerable priest Philip de Mura, which bears the title, *The Missionary instructed*, from which I confess that I have taken the greater part of the present little work. However, it was for the greater convenience of the young members of our Congregation that I made this abridgment, in which I have briefly set forth rules and examples of all the exercises in accordance with the usage of the missions given by our Institute. To these I have added many things and many reflections which an experience of thirty-four years has made me regard as very useful to souls. I hope that this little work will also be profitable to many other priests; for therein they will find expressed in a clear and succinct manner what is said diffusely in other books, the more so since a plain and concise style is more pleasing at the present time, in which one wishes to read little and know much. Besides, in this book will be found examples written in a familiar style, proper for missions, which should certainly be very different from the style in which Sunday or Lenten sermons are preached.

¹ These objections are refuted more at length in the *Letter to a Bishop*, page 73.

The Exercises of the Missions.

CHAPTER I.

EXHORTATIONS (*Sentimenti*).

THERE are four kinds of exhortations; namely, the exhortations of the evening, the exhortations of the day, the exhortations during the taking of the discipline, and the exhortations of peace.

To give to each of these exhortations the suitable form, it is necessary to consider the aim and purpose of each. Thus:

1. The exhortation of the *evening* is given in order to rouse the sinner and to call him to the mission.

2. The exhortation of the *day* is given to gather together the faithful and to lead them to the church.

3. The exhortation of the *discipline* is given to move sinners to contrition, and to do penance for their sins.

4. Finally, the exhortation of *peace* is given to reconcile enemies.

I.

The Exhortation of the Evening.*

I. PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

1. The exhortations of the evening contribute greatly to inspire the people with fervor from the very begin-

* This exercise is scarcely in vogue outside of Italy. It was the practice of St. Alphonsus in his missions to send some of the missionaries, accompanied by clerics with a cross and lighted torches, to make short exhortations at the corner of the streets and public places for the first few evenings of the mission. The object of these exhortations

ning of the mission. To arouse sinners and to induce them to come to church in order to hear the sermons, it is not sufficient that the opening of the mission be announced to them, or that they be called by the sound of the bell; they must be moved by the power of the word, and by the fear of the chastisements that God has reserved for them. Without these exhortations, at least during the first four or five days, we shall see the church but little frequented by those that need the mission most. On the contrary, we know by experience that the evening exhortations awaken in a wonderful way these destitute souls, and determine them to go to the church with the rest.

2. These exhortations should be short, and even very short, so that they do not last longer than half or quarter of an hour, either because being given in the evening, in the open air, and mostly in winter, they may become inconvenient both for the speaker and for the listeners, or even because several exhortations are given in the same evening, and must be given with fervor and vehemence, by using startling expressions which, like arrows, strike the ears and hearts of the hearers. Young missionaries often have this defect, that they prolong these exhortations as well as the other smaller exercises of the mission, and almost make sermons out of them. They thereby grow tedious to the listeners and disturb the order of the mission, so that there is no time left for other more necessary exercises.

3. The evening exhortations are concluded, not by an act of contrition, but by a terrible Sentence (*sentenza terribile*). Only at the end, after returning to the church, another very short exhortation is made, and is

was to excite the people to penance, and invite them to attend the exercises of the mission. A stanza of some suitable hymn was first sung, and then the missionary gave a short but animated exhortation.

—ED.

concluded by an act of contrition expressed in a few words.

2. DIVISION OF THE DISCOURSE.

The evening exhortation contains five parts; namely: 1. The Introduction with the Proposition; 2. The Amplification; 3. Moral reflection with the invitation to penance; 4. The Announcement of the powers with which the missionaries are invested, as also of the exercises of the mission, and of the indulgences that are attached to the mission; 5. The terrible Sentence.

I. The INTRODUCTION, preceded by the singing of a hymn, may be begun in different ways, of which the following are examples: 1. By an EXCLAMATION: "O eternal God! how good Thou art! Men despise Thee, flee from Thee; and Thou goest in search of them; Thou callest to them in order to offer them pardon." 2. By a REPROACH: "Sinner! tell me: When will you cease to offend God?" (It must here be remarked that the exhortation should not be begun by the use of abusive words, such as *wretched, villanous, crime-laden souls*, and the like, for the hearers grow angry when they hear themselves thus called at the beginning of the discourse.) 3. By an INTERROGATION: "My dear brother, tell me: At the end of this kind of life that you are leading, what will become of you?" 4. By expressing a sentiment of COMPASSION: "Poor sinner! who would not pity your unhappy state, knowing that you are in disgrace with God, etc.?" 5. By an EXPOSITION: "My dear Christian, I have come to tell you in the name of God, that he is ready to pardon you, if, etc."

After this introduction or the like, the PROPOSITION, or the argument of the exhortation, is announced. The proposition is drawn from the hymn that is sung before. Let us suppose that the hymn is as follows:

“Lo! a God of all compassion
 Calls thee; shall he call in vain?
 If thou yet reject his mercy,
 Will he ever call again?”

After the people have heard this hymn, we may thus address them: “My dear Christians, I have come this evening to bring you two messages; the one a message of joy, the other a message of terror: if you return to God, who calls you back to him during this holy mission, he will embrace you as his dear children; but if you do not return, and do not return soon, God will no longer call you, and you will be damned.” Sometimes it will be well to begin the introduction by the proposition itself; thus: “You understand me, ye sinners: if now you return to God, you will find him full of mercy; but if you do not return to him immediately, he will turn his back upon you and will no more call you.” Sometimes, also, it will be well to repeat the very words of the hymn; for example: “My Brethren, you have heard what the hymn says:

‘Soon thy life will end, poor sinner,—
 Know’st thou *when* the end will be?’”

II. As regards the *Amplification*, the following rules must be observed:

If the proposition is not a truth of faith, as for example, that God after a certain number of sins abandons the sinner, it should be confirmed by some succinct arguments, presented in short, clear, and quite simple periods. Some short reflection should also be made, but without employing comparisons, frightful examples, or texts of Scripture, unless these texts are short and generally known, such as: *God is not mocked. It is appointed unto men once to die. Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire*; etc. The following is an example of amplification: If we take the proposition given above,

namely, that God abandons obstinate sinners, we may briefly give the following reason: "He does not deserve mercy who uses God's mercy only to offend him more. The Lord bears with the sinner and gives him time, so that he may be converted and may weep over the evil that he has done; but when God sees this ungrateful sinner, instead of profiting by the time that he has given him to be converted, using it only to heap sin upon sin, he deprives him of life by a just judgment." Afterwards this short reflection may be added: "Put an end to all this sin—put an end to it, my dear Brethren: know that the greater the patience that God has had with you, the greater will be the chastisement that he reserves for you, if you do not hasten to amend your life."

But if the proposition has for its object some truth of faith, as the certainty of death, of judgment, etc., it will suffice to amplify it by reflections; for example, in speaking of death: "What torture and what despair will you not experience when you see by the light of the candle that the time for doing good has passed for you, and that at this last moment, with your head quite stupefied by fear and confusion, you are no longer capable of doing anything?" etc.

III. The amplification is followed by the MORAL APPLICATION and by the INVITATION TO PENANCE. Example: "What then would be your folly, my dear Brethren, if instead of returning to God, now that he calls you, you expose yourselves to the danger of being abandoned by God, and consequently of going to endure an eternity of torments in hell! Return to him; do not delay; profit by this favorable moment, in which Jesus Christ himself comes to seek you by a holy mission in your own home."

It must here be remarked, that in the moral application no particular vice should be named; for some one of the hearers might take offence, thinking that on his

account the exhortation was given. And when the exhortation is given purposely for the benefit of some scandalous person, it should not be given too near his house, but at a certain distance, so that he may hear it without suspecting that the exhortation is given expressly on his account.

IV. Here follows the ANNOUNCEMENT of the mission, which begins or has already begun, by making known the powers with which the missionaries are invested, the exercises that are to take place in the church, and the indulgences that may be gained according to a plan that will afterwards be given.

V. We conclude by the TERRIBLE SENTENCE which should correspond to the proposition of the exhortation. This sentence should be short, but should consist of words grave and striking, which will remain engraven on the minds of the hearers; for example: "Tremble, yes, tremble, ye sinners; perhaps this very night, if you do not resolve to amend your life, God may permit death to surprise you, and you may die and be condemned to hell!" Or: "If you do not now weep over your sins, think that you may have to weep over them for all eternity in hell." Or: "Continue, O obstinate sinner! continue to offend God. But remember: In the valley of Josaphat I await you; there you will hear the sentence which Jesus Christ will pass upon you: Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire!" Sometimes we may finish by the very words of the hymn, if they well express the terrible sentence. Example:

"Who can tell?—perhaps, my brother,
Death *this night* will come to thee."

3. EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT EVENING EXHORTATIONS WITH THEIR DISTINCT PARTS.

First Example.

“ Lo ! a God of all compassion
Calls thee ; shall he call in vain ?
If thou yet reject his mercy,
Will he ever call again ?”

1. INTRODUCTION.—Dear Christians, I have come this evening to bring you two messages; the one a message of joy, the other a message of terror: if you return to God, who calls you back to him during this holy mission, he will embrace you as his own dear children; but if you do not return, and do not return soon, God will no longer call you, and you will be damned.

2. AMPLIFICATION.—Hear, my Brethren: the Lord pardons the sins of him who repents of them; but he does not pardon him who has the will to commit sin. See for how many years God has borne with you, and is saying to your heart: Cease, my child; amend your life; offend me no more!—And what have you done? Always the same thing: you have confessed, you have promised; yet you have always begun again to sin, you always continue to offend God! For what are you waiting? That God may take you from this world and cast you into hell? Do you not see that God cannot bear with you any longer?

3. MORAL APPLICATION.—Let us, then, my Brethren, give up evil, now that a mission is offered to you; give yourselves to God, who deigns still to wait for you, and who is ready to pardon you all the offences that you have committed, if you wish to amend your life. Come to the church where the mission is going on; come to hear the sermons, and make a good confession. Do not doubt that if you truly desire to abandon sin, I promise

you on the part of Jesus Christ that you will receive the grace of pardon.

4. ANNOUNCEMENT.—See, Jesus Christ has come among you with his holy mission, which begins to-morrow. The missionaries have the power of absolving all reserved cases, even censures reserved to the Pope; they can also dispense from vows. In the church there will be every day, morning and evening, various touching and salutary exercises, such as the recitation of the Rosary, with instructions and sermons. Moreover, those that attend these exercises, if they confess and communicate, will gain a plenary indulgence when they receive at the end of the mission the Papal blessing. You see that God opens at this moment the treasury of his mercy; you can sanctify yourselves if you wish.

5. SENTENCE.—What do you say? What do you resolve to do? Yes or no; do you desire no more to offend God? Who knows whether it is not the last appeal that the Lord addresses to you? Hasten to take a resolution. Do you wish to wait until God puts an end to your disorders by casting you into hell without the least hope of ever remedying your misfortune? Go, my dear Brethren, enter your homes, and reflect on what you have heard this evening; recommend yourselves to the Blessed Virgin, and ask her to enlighten you.

Second Example.

“ Sinner, thou art foe of heaven,
 And thou tremblest not with fear?
 Cease those sins, my child, ah! leave them
 Death advances, hell is near.”

1. INTRODUCTION.—O sinner, you remain an enemy of your God without trembling! . . . My dear Brethren, if you are in the state of sin, it is certain that God is your enemy: God, I say, who if he wishes can this very mo-

ment cast you into hell! And you sleep, and you laugh, and you do not tremble, and you do not weep . . . !

2. **AMPLIFICATION.**—Ah! for myself, I pity you, because sin has blinded you, and does not allow you to see the danger in which you are of dying at any moment, and of going to burn in an abyss of fire for all eternity! Have you perhaps as your enemy only a great man of the world from whom you can hide yourselves, from whom you can escape by flight, or against whom you can defend yourselves? Oh no! it is God whom you have as your enemy—God who sees you everywhere whithersoever you may go, who can reach you wherever you are; if he wishes to chastise you, how could you defend yourselves against his hand?

3. **MORAL APPLICATION.**—My dear Brethren, tell me: In living as you do, how can you save yourselves? Do you not see, unhappy sinners, that you are damned? Do you not see that God cannot have patience with you any longer? Listen to me this evening: you are now the enemies of God, it is true, since you have offended him much; but he is ready to pardon you if you wish to amend your life. Courage, then, my dear Christians! come to the mission, go to confession, and renounce sin; hasten to give yourselves to God, who is still waiting for you, who is still calling for you; do not anger him any more.

4. **ANNOUNCEMENT.**—See, Jesus Christ has come to your very dwellings to invite you to return to him; it is on your account that he has sent hither missionaries, who have the power, etc.

5. **SENTENCE.**—O sinners! what more do you wish God to do? Do not, therefore, lose confidence, hope; but hope and tremble: if you wish to amend your life, hope; if you wish to continue to have God as your enemy, tremble—yes, tremble that the present appeal may not be the last one for you; if you do not resolve

to give yourselves to God, perhaps this very evening God will abandon you, and you will be damned! Go, my dear Brethren, enter your houses, and reflect, etc.

Third Example.

“ Soon thy life will end, poor sinner ;
 Know'st thou *when* the end will be ?
 Who can tell ?—perhaps, my brother,
 Death *this night* will come to thee.”

1. INTRODUCTION.—My Brethren, have you understood what this hymn says to you : “ Thy life will end, and thou knowest not when the end will be ” ? See, poor sinners, the beautiful life that you are leading, alas ! far from God, far from the sacraments, far from the church. You scarcely hear a Mass on feast days, and when you hear it, you do so in a careless manner ; and then how do you spend the rest of the time ? To offend, to anger God ! In fact, you live as if you were never going to die.

2. AMPLIFICATION.—Unfortunate sinner ! do you not think of death ? But whether you think of it or not, whether you wish it or not, a day will come when your life will end ; you will have to leave this world ; your body will be buried in the earth, and your soul will enter eternity. Do you, my Brethren, believe or do you not believe that ? It is certain, it is of faith, that you must die, and that after this life a life is to begin that will never end ; and if you are damned, your life will be unhappy, you will be in despair forever, as long as God will be God.

3. MORAL APPLICATION.—Tell me : if this night, or even this moment, while I am speaking to you, death, were to surprise you, what would become of your poor soul ? whither would you go, O miserable man ? Let us, my Brethren, quickly profit by the means of salvation, now that God is waiting for you, and gives you

time to confess and to regulate your accounts before death comes upon you. What do you say? what do you intend to do? You must decide.

4. ANNOUNCEMENT.—See, Jesus Christ has come to call you to himself by a mission, and to pardon you if you wish to do so. The missionaries have the power, etc.

5. SENTENCE.—I ask again: What do you say? what do you wish to do? do you wish to return to God? Consider: How many have died since the last mission given in this place? How many of those that have died are now burning in hell? Why?—because they did not wish to give up their wicked lives, and God himself has put an end to them. Now do you wish that the same thing should happen to you, and that you should be condemned to weep in the flames of hell during all eternity? Go, my Brethren, into your houses, and reflect, etc.

Fourth Example.

“ Love God who, loveth thee,
For love itself is he ;
He bids the sinner weep ;
He saith: Poor child, from sin depart ;
Rest thee within thy Father’s heart ;
Turn to thy Shepherd, wandering sheep.”

1. INTRODUCTION.—O my God, how good and merciful art Thou towards men! They leave Thee, and Thou goest in search of them. They outrage Thee, and Thou offerest them pardon and peace.

2. AMPLIFICATION.—My dear Brethren, I come this evening on behalf of Jesus Christ to offer you pardon and salvation, if you wish to accept them. Tell me: Do you merit this grace? The Lord could make you die and send you to hell the moment that you offend him; yet, see the great mercy which he now shows you: instead of punishing you, you see him coming to you with this holy mission, in order to pardon you; he

comes himself to seek you, to make peace with you; it will suffice if you repent of having offended him, and if you promise not to offend him any more.

3. MORAL APPLICATION.—Here is what the hymn says:

“ He saith: Poor child, from sin depart;
Rest thee within thy Father’s heart;
Turn to thy Shepherd, wandering sheep.”

Now what do you say? how do you respond to the appeal that the Lord addresses to you? Ah! do not delay any longer, cast yourselves at his feet; come to the church, and make a good confession.

4. ANNOUNCEMENT.—The mission has already begun. The missionaries have the power, etc.

5. SENTENCE.—My dear Brethren, listen: if you wish to profit by this beautiful occasion of returning to God, he has his arms open to receive you; but if you continue to shut your ears to his voice, tremble lest he may abandon you and may call you no longer. Now if God abandons you, woe be to you! You will die in your sins, and you will be cast into hell to weep there without any hope of ever remedying your eternal ruin. Go, my Brethren, etc.

Fifth Example.

“ Souls to hell are blindly running,
Ah! what myriads, who can tell?
On they go, because *they think not*
What a fearful thing is *hell!*”

1. INTRODUCTION.—Sinner, what do you say? You say: If I go to hell, I shall not be there alone? If I am damned, I must have patience!—Yes, O heavens! this is what so many blind sinners say, and see how they go to hell! And why? You have heard the words of the hymn: “On they go, because they think not what a fearful thing is hell!”

2. AMPLIFICATION.—Listen: What you now say was

also said by so many damned souls that now burn in the eternal fire: "If I go there, I shall not be there alone! If I am damned, I must have patience!" But at present they do not speak thus. Ah! would that this evening one of the damned came from hell and spoke in my place; you would hear him cry out: Unhappy me! I said that in hell I should not be alone; now that I am damned, would that I could be alone in my punishment! Alas! in the midst of this fire, which devours me, in the midst of the darkness, of the smoke that envelops me, in the midst of so many other torments, I must still bear the torment of being in the midst of all these damned persons, whose number suffocates me, whose cries stupefy me, whose stench becomes insupportable to me. I said: "If I go to hell, I must have patience!" Alas! what patience! I am dying with rage at every moment; I do nothing but utter cries and shrieks of despair. I should like to die, and I cannot even hope to die.

3. MORAL APPLICATION.—You hear, my Brethren, how the damned speak who cared little about hell, and it is they whom you are imitating. Hear now what God says to you by my mouth: My children, for these miserable beings there is no remedy; but there is a remedy for you if you wish to use it: ask my pardon; I will pardon you, and I will deliver you from hell.

4. ANNOUNCEMENT.—It is for this reason that the Lord sends you this mission. The missionaries have the power, etc.

5. SENTENCE.—O sinners! who knows whether this is not the last notice, the last mercy, which you receive from God? Put an end to all this; the Lord cannot bear with you any longer; his vengeance is near. Will you believe in hell only when you have arrived there? Ah! take care, you are going there; and if you once arrive there, remember that there will be no remedy for

your misfortune; think that if you ever fall into that abyss of fire, you will never come forth from it; never, never. Go, my Brethren, etc.

Sixth Example.

“ Think, then, ere yet this life is o'er,
On that whereon thy *all* depends—
That *evermore* or *nevermore*,
Eternity which never ends !”

1. INTRODUCTION.—O eternity, eternity! The saints tremble at the mere thought of eternity; and ye sinners, who are in disgrace with God, you do not fear? You do not tremble? It is of faith that he who dies in the state of sin goes to burn in the fire of hell for all eternity!

2. AMPLIFICATION.—What is hell? It is a dark place, where one sees only horrible monsters; where one hears only cries, shrieks, howling; where one feels only the torture of fire and other torments. And how long will all these horrors last? During all eternity: always, always! Will they ever end? No; never, never!—Come here, unhappy Judas, thou who hast been in hell for so many ages! tell me: How long will thy punishment last?—Judas answers: Always, always!—And thou, unfortunate Cain! tell me: How long hast thou been suffering in this abyss of fire? Alas! answers Cain: for many thousand years! And when will thy punishment be over?—Ah! never, never!

3. MORAL APPLICATION.—My dear Brethren, what think you? Tell me: How can you sleep with sins upon your souls, and as enemies of God? Does not an eternal hell await you? Why do you not resolve to give up the wicked life which you are leading? Now that you can do so, why do you not remedy this great ruin that threatens you if you do not become reconciled with God? Hasten to prevent this misfortune; make a good

confession, return to God's grace; for he certainly does not desire you to be damned.

4. ANNOUNCEMENT.—You already know that the mission has been begun. What is a mission? It is Jesus Christ, who comes to save his lost children and to deliver them from hell. Know that the missionaries have the power, etc.

5. SENTENCE.—My Brethren, do not fail to profit by this great mercy that God has bestowed upon you to-day. Now, while shedding tears at the feet of a confessor, you can deliver yourselves from hell; but if you do not amend your lives, pay attention to what I am going to say to you this evening: you will have the misfortune of ending by going to weep in hell during all eternity, as long as God will be God! Go, my Brethren, etc.

4. STANZAS FOR THE EVENING EXHORTATIONS AT A MISSION.

(Per li sentimenti di notte.)

I.

Love God, who loveth thee,
 For love itself is he;
 He bids the sinner weep;
 He saith: Poor child, from sin depart;
 Rest thee within thy Father's heart;
 Turn to thy Shepherd, wandering sheep.

2.

'Tis the Lord hath sent me hither,
 Messenger of pardon free;
 Day of grace and hour of mercy—
 Grace perhaps the last for thee!

3.

Lo! a God of all compassion
 Calls thee; shall he call in vain?
 If thou yet reject his mercy,
 Will he ever call again?

4.

Sinner, thou art foe of heaven,
 And thou tremblest not with fear?
 Cease those sins, my child, ah! leave them;
 Death advances, hell is near.

5.

Now thy Lord is waiting, waiting;
 But he will not always wait:
 When the day of vengeance breaketh,
 Cries for mercy come too late.

6.

Turn to God in humble penance,
 Sinner, do not still delay;
 Do not scorn the love of Jesus,
 Cast his mercy not away.

7.

Lost in sin, and yet rejoicing!
 Far from God, and canst thou sleep?
 On the brink of fell damnation,
 And thou carest not to weep?

8.

Soon thy life will end, poor sinner,—
 Know'st thou *when* the end will be?
 Who can tell?—perhaps, my brother,
 Death *this night* will come to *thee*.

9.

Think of death!—that awful moment
 When thy dream of life must end;
 Boundless bliss or ceaseless torments
 On that moment, death, depend.

10.

Live thy life of sinful pleasures,
 Sinners, yet *the end must come!*
 Then, bold man, thy outraged Saviour
 Shall be Judge to seal thy doom.

11.

Whither shalt thou fly for refuge
From that justly angered One,
Sinner, when he shall reproach thee
All the evil thou hast done?

12.

Souls to hell are blindly running,
Ah! what myriads, who can tell?
On they go, because they *think not*
What a fearful thing is *hell!*

13.

And when shall hell's sharp pains be o'er?
The insult to God's majesty
Has been so deep that evermore
Those pains shall last, eternally.

14.

Think on that dread eternity
To which thou art hast'ning ever;
Think of that long futurity
Of pains that will leave thee never.

5. SIMULTANEOUS EXHORTATIONS.

Simultaneous exhortations are given but rarely. This means is employed only in certain places when the inhabitants do not come in sufficient numbers to the church, or when there are many scandalous persons who do not come to the sermons.

The object that is proposed in these exhortations is, to strike fear into the minds of the hearers; hence the exhortations should be filled with threats of the divine chastisements, such as an unhappy death, abandonment on the part of God, eternal punishments.

The following is the manner of performing this exercise:

1. The missionaries should be so numerous* as to be able to surround the place by keeping themselves at a certain distance from one another, so that their voices do not mingle.

2. They should leave the church in the evening at a later hour than usual, without lights, without the crucifix, and unaccompanied. Each one goes alone and secretly to the place that is designated; then at the signal given by a stroke of the large bell all begin the exhortation at the same time, and they also finish it at a second stroke.

3. This exhortation, as to its parts, is similar to the evening exhortation that has been described above, but with this difference: the INTRODUCTION is shorter, and it is made *ex abrupto* (abruptly) by beginning with the proposition itself, the object of which will be, for example, the proximate abandonment on the part of God, or the ingratitude of those that close their ears to his voice, or justice which he exercises toward those that despise his mercy. To the introduction is joined the AMPLIFICATION with the reflection; then comes the MORAL APPLICATION; but each of these parts should be very short, so also the invitation to penance, which shall be without the exposition of motives, without effective words, and without any announcement of powers or faculties, etc.; hence the simultaneous exhortation is in substance composed only of three parts; namely: The introduction, with a short amplification and reflection, the Moral Application with the invitation to penance, and the terrible Sentence.

* We should know that St. Alphonsus, wishing to produce by his labors solid and durable fruits, used the means suitable for this end: he employed in each mission a number of evangelical laborers proportionate to the population and to the difficulties of the place; there were often twenty of them, and sometimes more, and the exercises lasted at least two or three weeks. (Tannoia and Villecourt, l. 2, ch. 52.)—ED.

6. EXAMPLE OF A SIMULTANEOUS EXHORTATION.

1. INTRODUCTION.—Do you then, O sinner! really wish to damn yourself? Do you wish God to punish and abandon you? A few days ago the mission began, and you do not even wish to come to the church. Instead of punishing you, God has sent you the holy mission, during which he does not cease to call you night and day, at every hour, in every place, in the church, in the public places, at your very dwellings! What greater mercy could God have shown you? And you have become more and more deaf to his voice, you have become more and more obstinate! Continue, O ungrateful man! continue to despise the invitations and the graces which the Lord offers to you; but you must know that the justice of God is at hand: soon you will be the victim of an unhappy death. The demons of hell demand of God vengeance against you, and God can no longer bear with you. Unfortunate man! I pity you; it would have been better had you not been born! Now, you laugh at the mission; but listen: a time will come when this grace, which God gives you to-day and by which you do not wish to profit, will be a cruel sword which will pierce your soul in hell forever. Then you will open your eyes to weep over and to curse your obstinacy; but then there will be no longer any remedy.

2. MORAL APPLICATION.—Cease then to be deaf, O ungrateful sinner! cease to excite the anger of God. Come to church to-morrow; come to hear the rest of the sermons; the end of the mission approaches. Come; Jesus Christ is waiting for you; make a good confession, but do so soon, soon, soon, before the mission is over. Lose no time; resist no longer God, who is calling you.

3. SENTENCE.—If you do not accept my invitation, I announce to you this evening a great chastisement which God will send you, and I inform you that this

mission which God has sent you to save you, will serve, if you neglect it, to make God abandon you, and make you weep in hell with greater grief; without any hope, then, of ever being able to remedy your eternal loss.

II.

The Exhortation given during the Day.

We have already said in the beginning that the exhortation given during the day has for its object to collect the inhabitants and to lead them from the public places and their places of work to the church; the aim of the moral application should therefore be to induce the hearers to come to the church, in order to hear the sermon that is about to be preached.

This exhortation is composed of the same parts as the evening exhortation, but with the following differences:

1. It should be longer; may last a quarter of an hour; the arguments may be more extended, and a few—two or three—short Latin sentences may be added; there may also be related an example, which however should have reference to the proposition of the exhortation.

2. The form of this exhortation should also be simple and popular, but less terrible and less vehement.

3. It is not necessary always to begin with a hymn, especially when the people are already disposed to listen.

4. At the end of this exhortation, especially during the first days of the mission we may add the act of contrition, but in a few words.

5. Instead of the terrible Sentence, we finish by a special motive, to induce the people to come to the church.

EXAMPLE OF AN EXHORTATION GIVEN DURING THE DAY.

1. INTRODUCTION.—My Brethren, have you ever heard of the following incident: A king having been offended

by one of his subjects, justly condemned him to death, but before the execution of the sentence this good prince charged one of his ministers to tell the condemned man that if he repented and asked the king's pardon he should obtain forgiveness?—Similar traits are not seen between the princes of the earth and their subjects; but this is what has taken place between God and you. You are condemned to hell on account of the offences that you have committed against God; but the Lord, instead of treating you according to justice, has sent us to you through this mission. *For Christ we are ambassadors.*¹ We are ambassadors of God, but ambassadors of peace and of pardon.

2. AMPLIFICATION.—We therefore announce to you on behalf of Jesus Christ, that he is disposed to pardon you, if you repent of having offended him, and if you promise him that you will amend your lives. Well, what say you? What answer do you give? Dear Brethren, hear well that about which there is question: the mission is a great mercy of God for those that wish to profit by it; but for the obstinate, it will only serve to attract sooner the abandonment and the chastisements of the Lord. Our Lord wept at the sight of Jerusalem: *Seeing the city he wept over it.*² And why? Because he saw that this ungrateful city did not wish to profit by the merciful visit that he made to it: *Because Thou hast not known the time of Thy visitation.*³ It is for this reason that he announces to you with tears in his eyes the chastisement that he has reserved for you.

3. MORAL APPLICATION.—Ye inhabitants of N., Jesus Christ has come to-day to visit you also by this holy mission in order to show you mercy. Let him who despises this visit of our Lord tremble, and let him expect

¹ "Pro Christo legatione fungimur."—2 Cor. v. 20.

² "Videns civitatem, flevit super illam."—Luke, xix. 41.

³ "Eo quod non cognoveris tempus visitationis tue."—Ibid. 44.

to receive soon an exemplary punishment. You must, therefore, my dear Brethren, return without delay to God, now that God calls you: the Lord calls you; but he will not call you always; and when he calls any one he wishes to be obeyed without delay. If you, therefore, hear to-day his voice, do not harden your hearts: *To-day if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.*¹ Let us suppose that the condemned man mentioned above, to whom the King made an offer of pardon on condition that he would immediately repent of his crime, would have answered that he would think over the matter, and that afterwards he would speak about it: tell me, would not the King have ordered the sentence to be executed immediately? Indeed, this is precisely what he should expect who is not converted at once when God calls him.

4. ANNOUNCEMENT.—You see, my Brethren, that the mission has come; to-day it begins. Jesus Christ calls you at this moment, and says to you: *Turn ye to Me, . . . and I will turn to you.*² Sinners, you have left me by offending me; but return to me, and I will receive you into my arms. What more can you ask of so good a God? Ah! no; let no one among you be so ungrateful as to add to the injuries already done to God the injury of despising the pardon that God offers him to-day.

5. ACT OF CONTRITION.—Come, let us cast ourselves at the feet of Jesus Christ; let each one of you say to him: O Lord! I thank Thee for having waited for me till the present day, and for not having sent me to hell. I repent. . . . In future I will amend my life, etc.

MOTIVE FOR INDUCING THE PEOPLE TO COME TO THE CHURCH.—Now let all come to the church. Jesus

¹ "Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra."—*Ps.* xciv. 8.

² "Convertimini ad me, . . . et convertar ad vos."—*Zach.* i. 3.

Christ says that his sheep hear his voice: *My sheep hear My voice.*¹ At this moment one may see who are the sheep of Jesus Christ, who are those that follow Jesus Christ, etc.

III.

Exhortation of the Discipline.*

The exhortation of the discipline should be still shorter than the evening exhortation: it should be conceived in terms that produce compunction rather than terror, and pronounced in a voice that expresses grief, since its only aim is to induce the hearers to repent of their faults, and to give themselves up to penance at that very moment.

This exhortation has three parts: the Reflection, the Moral Application, and the Conclusion. In the REFLECTION some important proposition of the sermon, which has preceded, is expounded; in the MORAL APPLICATION the necessity of penance is shown; in the CONCLUSION the hearers are induced to practise penance.

¹ "Oves meæ vocem meam audiunt."—*John*, x. 27.

* Two or three days after the beginning of the mission St. Alphonsus replaced the evening exhortations by another exercise: at the end of the great sermon in the evening the women left the church and only the men remained, who, the lights having been extinguished, took the discipline in common. All the missionaries had to be present; one of them began by summing up the motives of the sermon that had just been preached, and tried to inspire his hearers with sentiments of compunction so as to dispose them for this act of penance. Then the men could be seen weeping on account of their sins, and trying to satisfy the justice of God. (*Tannoia and Villecourt*, l. 2, ch. 52. See the *Method of giving Missions* in this treatise.)—ED.

I. EXAMPLES OF VARIOUS EXHORTATIONS TO TAKE THE DISCIPLINE.

First Example.

AFTER THE SERMON ON ABANDONMENT BY GOD.

1. REFLECTION.—Have you heard, my dear Brethren, what chastisement you have deserved by your sins? You have deserved that God should abandon you and should no more pardon you. But no: the Lord is still waiting for you; he calls you; his arms are open to receive you, if you wish to return to him. O my Brethren! do no longer offend this God, who has shown so much kindness to you; change your conduct; or do you wish that he should really abandon you?

2. MORAL APPLICATION.—Hasten, O sinners, hasten to give yourselves to God. Tell him that in future you will no more offend him; and as to the past, beg him to pardon you the great offence that you have given him.

3. CONCLUSION.—Weep, then, do penance, chastise your bodies, by which you have displeased God. Now raise your hand, raise your voice, and ask pardon: Pardon me, O Lord! mercy; I repent of having offended Thee; mercy!

Here the missionary intones at once the *Miserere*, which is continued by the ecclesiastics who are present. About the middle of the psalm, at the verse that best suits his subject, he interrupts it by a stroke of the bell, and makes a second exhortation, but still shorter, by following the same rule as above; for example:

1. *Cast me not away from Thy face.* David, while thinking of the sins which he committed against God, trembled and said: *Cast me not away from Thy face:* O Lord! do Thou not reject me, as I have deserved.

2. And you, my dear Brethren, what say you? How many times have you not driven God from your hearts? You would deserve that at this moment God should drive you from this church.

3. But no; see what he says this evening to each one of you: My son, ask my pardon, and I will pardon you. Raise again your voice and say: Pardon, O Lord! mercy.

We must take care that this exercise should always be concluded with fervor. If the fervor of the participants grows weak, the discipline should be abridged by intoning the *Gloria Patri*. We afterwards say to the people: Now respond to the hymn while saying with tears:

“I have offended Thee, my God,
 Alas! my dearest Lord;
 Thou Sea of Goodness Infinite,
 And Fount of Love adored.
 Ungratefully, without a cause,
 I have offended Thee,
 Who on the cross to give me life
 Didst die through love for me.
 But I am sorry, O my God!
 In mercy, Lord, forgive;
 I never will offend Thee more,—
 No, never, while I live.
 May every moment of my life
 Be spent in bitter tears,
 To mourn my past ingratitude,
 The sins of former years!”

After the hymn the *Hail Mary* is recited three times by the people, with the face on the floor; and then we conclude by saying: “May the most Blessed Sacrament be praised and thanked! Blessed be the holy, immaculate, and most pure Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary!”

At the end of the exercise all those that wish to go to confession are invited to proceed to the place destined for this purpose. It must be here remarked that the missionaries, especially those that are charged with the duty of giving instructions and of preaching, should al-

ways urge the people, and particularly the men, to come to confession very soon, by telling them that if they wait till the great crowds come to confession, it may not be possible to satisfy them. This advice should be often repeated with much force from the very beginning; for otherwise the missionaries will remain unoccupied for several days, and will afterwards be overwhelmed by crowds, and this will cause confusion and embarrassment.

Second Example.

AFTER THE SERMON ON DEATH.

1. REFLECTION.—Have you understood, my Brethren: A day will come when you must die; and then the world coming to an end for you, you will find yourself extended on your bed and abandoned by all men.

2. MORAL APPLICATION.—Then there will be no more time to make peace with God: your conscience being confused, God angered, your head weakened, your heart hardened—such will be your state; help yourself then if you can. Now, sinners, it is time to regulate your accounts and become reconciled with God; for this end he has waited for you up to the present time; he has opened his arms to receive you. Know that if to-day you weep over your past offences, God will forgive all your sins.

3. CONCLUSION.—Weep, then, do penance, chastise your bodies.

Third Example.

AFTER THE SERMON ON JUDGMENT.

1. REFLECTION.—A day will come, my Brethren, when you will appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ to render an account of your whole life. Tell me: if Jesus Christ wished to judge you this very evening, what sentence would he pronounce against you?

2. MORAL APPLICATION.—Pay attention to what I say: On that day there will be no more mercy; then Jesus Christ will be the just Judge, while now he is a Father, and he opens his arms to receive and to pardon you.

3. CONCLUSION.—Hasten then to weep, etc.

Fourth Example.

AFTER THE SERMON ON HELL.

1. REFLECTION.—My dear Brethren, have you heard this evening the sermon on hell? Have you reflected where you should be now on account of your sins? You should now find yourselves in this abyss of fire, in profound darkness, in the midst of terrible torments. Do you not thank God that you still find yourselves in this church, with the certain hope of obtaining pardon if you only wish it? Ah! if one that is damned were present here this evening, and could repent of his sins, and obtain grace, what penance would he not perform in order to be released from hell!

2. MORAL APPLICATION.—And you who have so many times deserved hell, more than many others who are now condemned for fewer and less grave sins than yours, what do you do? Do you not weep? do you not ask pardon of God?

3. CONCLUSION.—Ah! do not delay to weep, etc.

2. EXHORTATION TO TRAIL THE TONGUE ON THE GROUND.

The exercise of the discipline ordinarily continues every evening till the evening before the day on which the Papal blessing is given; but on the last evening, instead of the discipline, it is customary to trail the tongue on the ground, an exercise very useful for those that have the habit of blaspheming and of uttering immodest language. This is done in the following manner:

After the women have left the church, and the door

has been locked, the chairs and benches are removed, and the men are assembled at the main entrance of the church. Then the Father who is to give the exhortation places himself opposite to the people on an elevated place, with the crucifix held by a cleric who is between two others carrying lighted candles; at the same time all the other missionaries keep the multitude together in front of the crucifix, and hold back the children, if any have moved forward. Immediately after this the exhortation is given; and at the end, when the Father exhorts all to trail the tongue on the ground, the other missionaries begin by setting the example; but afterwards, as soon as they see the men prostrating themselves with the face on the ground, they rise, place themselves in the church at a distance from one another, and all together, in a loud voice, continue to animate the people to perform this penance with compunction.

The end of this exhortation is no other than to inspire people with horror of the sins of the tongue. As to the form, it may be the following; but the discourse may be more extended, as I give here only an idea of what is to be done.

3. EXAMPLE OF THE EXHORTATION TO TRAIL THE TONGUE ON THE GROUND.

O goodness of God, how great art thou! O justice of God, how terrible art thou! O cursed sin, how cruel art thou! Raise your eyes, my Brethren; see the image of the man hanging on the cross, after having been scourged, crowned with thorns, and all covered with wounds from head to foot. Could you tell me who is this man, and what he has done? It is the august Son of God, innocent and holy. Why did his eternal Father condemn him to so painful a death? Hear what his Father answers: *For the wickedness of My people have*

I struck him. It was for the crimes of my people that I have struck him. Consider then the humiliation and the pain inflicted by your sins upon this innocent Lamb: it was because of your impurities that his flesh was torn; it was because of your bad thoughts that he was crowned with thorns; his feet and his hands were nailed to the cross because of your sinful steps and impure touches; his heart was pierced on account of your obstinacy. But, O my Jesus! be consoled; for these poor sinners are no longer obstinate; Thou already knowest that during these days of the mission they have tried to repair the evil that they have done: Thy painful wounds they have tried to heal by the scourges that they inflicted upon themselves; the spittle that covered Thy eyes they have tried to wipe off by tears; the pain of Thy feet pierced with nails they have tried to alleviate by coming to the church; the wounds made by the thorns they have tried to lessen by holy resolutions. Yes my Brethren, all this is true; but this divine mouth of Jesus Christ I see still tormented by the gall of your blasphemies, of your lies, of your immodest language. Well, this evening you should sweeten all the bitterness that you have caused our Lord in the past. And what must you do to accomplish this? At first, you should weep over the displeasure that you have given to so good a God, who died for you; and then you should chastise yourselves by trailing a little on the ground that tongue that has put so much gall into the mouth of Jesus Christ. Come, then, let us this evening offer him this consolation. My Fathers, be ye the first to give the example; and you, my Brethren, follow the priests. Weep, then, etc.

4. MOTIVES TO BE ANNOUNCED BY THE MISSIONARIES DURING THE TRAILING OF THE TONGUE ON THE GROUND.

1. Suffer, cursed tongue, for having dared to offend Jesus Christ.

2. Think, my Brother, that your tongue should now be burning in hell, etc.

3. Say from the bottom of your heart: O my Jesus! accept this penance, however small, and pardon me all the sins that I have committed by my words.

4. Most Holy Virgin Mary, my Mother, offer to God this mortification, and pray to him to pardon me.

5. O my Brother! what joy this evening for the angels to see, etc. And what torment for the devils to see that God receives you this evening into his arms, etc.

6. At the same time make an act of contrition and ask pardon, etc.,—O Lord, I am sorry, etc.; and then a firm resolution, etc.,—O Lord, I will rather die. Oh, I have given Thee enough gall, my sweet Jesus! If I should offend Thee again by my cursed tongue, let me rather die.

7. Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, and by the merit of the gall which he tasted on the cross, pardon me, etc.

8. My dear Brother, if you were in hell, which you have deserved, what penance would you not do to be redeemed out of it? Well, this evening, on account of this mortification God will deliver you from the pains that you should suffer in hell, etc.

IV.

The Exhortation of Peace.

The exhortation of peace, which is delivered after the discipline, as distinguished from that which precedes the general Communion, according to Bari, is composed of six parts: 1. Recapitulation; 2. Application; 3. Proof; 4. Example; 5. Moral application; 6. Conclusion.

1. A point of the sermon that has preceded is briefly recapitulated.

2. It is applied to those that cherish hatred against

their neighbor by announcing to them the chastisement reserved for the revengeful.

3. It is proved by some passage from holy Scripture or from the holy Fathers, and by reasons, showing how much he should fear divine vengeance who wishes to be revenged, and how, on the contrary, he should hope for pardon from God who forgives others.

4. The proof is confirmed by an example given somewhat in detail.

5. The moral application is then made.

6. At the end the hearers are invited to become reconciled with one another by forgiving one another the injuries that have been received.

After the conclusion of the discourse, the Father still continues to urge those present to the forgiveness of injuries, and this by various motives that are found at the end of the following example.

It should be explained that it is the business, not of him who has given offence, but of him who has received it, and who wishes to forgive, to come to tell the missionary in secret what is that offence. If only the one that gave offence presents himself, he should be dismissed with a few kind words, and should not be allowed to mention the fact nor the person who has been offended. When the person offended presents himself, if the offence has been secret, care should be taken to have the reconciliation brought about in secret; but if it has been public, he who is the author of it is called, provided it is not an ecclesiastic, so that both may embrace each other at the foot of the crucifix; and if the author of the offence is not present, he is to be replaced by one of his near relatives. It must, however, be observed, that if the hatred proceeds from a cause concerning honor, it suffices to say to the person offended that he should pardon the offence in his heart,

and this need not be followed by an embrace, which might create scandal and some sinful affection.

EXAMPLE OF AN EXHORTATION TO PEACE.

1. RECAPITULATION.—You have heard, my dear Brethren, the account which you have inevitably to render to Jesus Christ, and the terrible sentence which the divine Judge will pronounce against sinners.

2. APPLICATION.—Job, who was so holy a man, thinking of God's judgments, cried out: *For what shall I do when God shall rise to judge? and when he shall examine, what shall I answer him?*¹ And you, my Brethren, what will you answer God when he asks you an account of your life? Tell me, what will you answer him, you especially who bear hatred towards your neighbor, and who, after having heard the sermon of this evening, still think of revenging yourselves?

3. PROOF.—Vengeance belongs to God only; he is the just avenger of sins, and for this reason he is called *the God of revenge.*² And you, miserable worm of the earth, you wish to act as if you were God? But think of the chastisement with which St. James menaces those that refuse to forgive others: he will be judged without mercy: *For judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy.*³ Now you do not wish to forgive your neighbor the offence that he has given you: well, when on the day of judgment you wish to obtain pardon from Jesus Christ, it will with justice be refused to you. You yourselves, then, according to St. Augustine,⁴ will not

¹ "Quid enim faciam, cum surrexerit ad judicandum Deus? et cum quæsierit, quid respondebo illi?"—*Job*, xxxi. 14.

² "Deus ultionum."—*Ps.* xciii. 1.

³ "Judicium enim sine misericordia illi qui non fecit misericordiam."
—*James*, ii. 13.

⁴ "Nescio qua fronte indulgentiam peccatorum obtinere poterit, qui Deo, præcipienti inimicis suis veniam dare, non acquiescit."—*Serm.* 273, *E. B. app.*

dare to ask mercy of God, who himself has given you the command to forgive your neighbor. Now you wish to take revenge upon your neighbor: then Jesus Christ will also take revenge upon you. Our Lord has said: *Revenge is mine, and I will repay them in due time.*¹ Should you not have committed other offences against God, you should think it no little injury that you heap upon him this evening by wishing to persist in hating your neighbor, when Jesus Christ exhorts you to pardon him for the love of him, when he commands you to do so, and when he seems even to beg you to do so!

4. EXAMPLE.—It is related that St. John Gualbertus, whose relative had been assassinated, met one day the murderer, who asked his pardon for the love of Jesus Christ. On hearing this name the saint pardoned him. Having afterwards entered the church, he saw the image of Jesus crucified bend its head and salute him as if to thank him for having pardoned the murderer for the love of his Saviour.

Instead of this incident, the following may be related: A powerful man had seven enemies, and wished to take revenge on all seven. St. Catharine of Siena begged him to pardon at least one of them for the love of Jesus Christ. He did so, and while doing so he felt such interior consolation that he at once called upon St. Catharine to tell her that for the love of Jesus Christ he pardoned all his enemies.

5. MORAL APPLICATION.—You see then how our Lord presses to his heart all those who for the love of him pardon the injuries that have been heaped upon them. Hence, my dear Brethren, if you wish also to be embraced by Jesus Christ, you must pardon your neighbor and embrace him who has offended you. Our Lord

¹ “*Mea est ultio, et ego retribuam in tempore.*”—*Deut.* xxxii. 35.

says: *Forgive and you shall be forgiven.*¹ * Know, then, if this evening, to please God, you forget to pardon the offences that you have received, God will forgive the offences that you have committed against him, and he will embrace you as his children.

6. Well then, my dear Brethren, if your neighbor has offended you, come first to mention this in secret to the missionary, and then become reconciled with one another at the foot of the crucifix. Oh, happy he that is the first this evening to perform this noble deed and to set the good example! Come then, Jesus Christ is waiting for you, etc.

This exhortation is here given in an abridged form, merely to give a succinct idea of it; he that has to give it, should take care to develop it in any way that he thinks fit. We think it useful to indicate here, in conclusion, various motives, which may be given for the purpose of inducing those who have been offended to grant full pardon; for example:

1. Come, give to-day this satisfaction to Jesus Christ, come to pardon, etc.; I do not ask this on my account, but for the love of Jesus crucified, who, if you pardon others, will pardon you; and if, on the contrary, you refuse to pardon others, do not ask his pardon; for he will withdraw from you, and on the day of judgment, etc.

2. You see that at this moment the devil is occupied in tempting you, so as to prevent you from pardoning your neighbor; he says to you that it would be a shame for you to pardon others. Answer him by asking whether it was a shame for Jesus crucified to pardon his executioners. Ah! do not listen to the devil; listen to

¹ "Dimittite, et dimittimini."—*Luke*, vi. 37.

* In the *Pater noster*, the divine Master commands us to ask God to pardon us only as we pardon others.—ED.

Jesus Christ, who says to you this evening: If you wish me to make peace with you this evening, make, first, peace with your neighbor.

3. Come, why are you waiting? Do violence to yourselves: do not allow yourselves to be conquered by the devil. Give this pleasure to Jesus Christ and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who now have their eyes upon you to see what you are going to do.

4. Oh, what consolation will you feel after this beautiful act! Hasten, come, etc.

5. See, and tremble: if you do not forgive your neighbor this evening, God will abandon you, and you will be damned.

6. Pay attention: see who is coming; do not allow him to pass by. Come to Jesus Christ, the King of peace. Live Jesus, and may the power of hell burst with anger! Courage! etc.

(As for the example of another exhortation to peace, given to the people before General Communion, see farther on, in Chapter IV.)

CHAPTER II.

THE ROSARY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

I.

Narration.

THE recitation of the Rosary may be preceded by an introduction in which is related some example of the protection which the Blessed Virgin grants to those that practise this devotion. But it must be observed that this introduction should be given only when there is time for it, and when it becomes necessary in order to keep the people occupied; this is, however, rarely the case. Ordinarily, in winter, and in those places where the instruction is given during the day, according as it is commonly practised, there is little time for it. It is, therefore, better to omit the introduction, and to recite the Rosary immediately, as it greatly contributes to the success of the mission. It will then be well to begin by giving out the mysteries on which the meditation is to be made, by joining to them some short reflection and a short moral, as will be said farther on. If afterwards time permits, the narration may be given at the end of the Rosary; we give here the rules for it.

The narration contains three parts: The Introduction, the Fact, and the Moral Application,

I. AS to the INTRODUCTION, the proposition which is its subject is drawn from the very fact that one wishes to relate by passing from a general proposition to the particular proposition of this fact. If there is question, for instance, of the help given by the Blessed Virgin to one of her pious clients at the hour of death, one may

say: "At all times, under all circumstances, Mary, our good Mother, comes to the assistance of her clients; but it is, above all, at the hour of death that they stand in the greatest need of her protection, etc."

2. As to the FACT, only that is given which has connection with the proposition without speaking of the circumstances that are foreign to it, and without speaking parenthetically. It will always be well to mention the name of the author who relates the fact, as well as the circumstances of time and place.

3. As to the MORAL APPLICATION, we begin by drawing the conclusion from the fact related, according to the particular proposition which precedes it; for example: "You see, my dear Brethren, how the recitation of the Rosary is useful to obtain the protection of Mary at the moment of death." Then comes the moral application: "Hence, in future, do not omit to recite it every day with devotion and with confidence. Let us then say it together this evening: *Deus, in adjutorium, etc.*"*

EXAMPLE OF NARRATION.

I. INTRODUCTION.—He that has a true devotion to Mary may be called happy even in this life, and may be sure of paradise, according to the words of the Gospel: *He that shall find Me, shall find life, and shall have salva-*

* According to Tannoia and Villecourt, l. 2, ch. 52, this was the practice followed by St. Alphonsus in his missions: Before the evening sermon, when the people were assembled in the church, a part of the Rosary was recited, not in Latin according to the Italian custom, but in the vernacular, in order that the people might understand what they said, and that, accustoming themselves to recite the Rosary in this way, they might subsequently continue this practice. The missionary took care to explain how pleasing it is to the Blessed Virgin, and to point out to the people the indulgences that were attached to it; especially did he recommend the recitation of the Rosary (or five decades) every evening, in common, with their families. --ED.

tion from the Lord.¹ But who is he that finds Mary? It is he who loves her, and who honors her by special devotions. Now among all the devotions I know none that is more pleasing to the Mother of God than the Rosary. Oh, what a beautiful hope of salvation have those who recite every day the Rosary with piety and perseverance! The books are full of examples of souls saved by this means. Hear what the devils themselves, forced by a command from St. Dominic, have said in praise of the Rosary.

2. FACT.—Father Pacciucchelli² relates that one day while St. Dominic was preaching about the devotion of the Rosary, a heretic was brought in who, for having publicly spoken ill of the Rosary, had been by a just judgment of God become possessed of devils; he had been bound, and he uttered horrible cries. Then the saint commanded the devils, in the name of Mary, to answer all the questions that he would address to them. At first he asked them why they had taken possession of this sinner, and how many they were. They answered that it was on account of the irreverence committed against Mary, and that they numbered fifteen thousand, on account of the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary. Then the saint asked them whether what he had preached on the Rosary was true. The evil spirits then began to howl and to curse the moment in which they had entered this body, since they now found themselves forced to confess what would do them so much injury. "Hear, O Christians!" they said; "all that our enemy has said of Mary and of the Rosary is true." They added that they had no power against the servants of Mary, and that many sinners at death by invoking Mary, notwithstanding their unworthiness, succeeded in saving

¹ "Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, et hauriet salutem a Domino."
—Prov. viii. 35.

² *Super Angel. Salut.* exc. 3, n. 10.

their souls. They concluded with these words: "We are compelled to make known that he who perseveres in devotion to Mary and to the Rosary will not be damned; for Mary will secure for him eternal salvation." Then St. Dominic told the people to recite the Rosary. At each *Ave Maria* there departed from the unhappy man a multitude of devils like burning coals, so that at the end of the recitation of the Rosary he was entirely delivered from these infernal spirits. Such a prodigy brought back many heretics to the true faith, and filled every one with an ardent devotion to the Rosary.

3. MORAL APPLICATION.—You see, my dear Brethren, what a beautiful hope we have of being saved by the protection of Mary when we honor her by devotion to the Rosary. Do not, therefore, in future, fail to recite it every day with much affection and confidence; if any one has neglected this practice in the past, let him begin it this evening, and never discontinue it. Let us, then, begin and recite the Rosary during these days of the mission, so that the Blessed Virgin may obtain for all the inhabitants of this place the grace of true conversion. *Deus, in adjutorium, etc.*

II.

The Mysteries.

After the exposition of the mystery come the Consideration, the Moral Application, and the Prayer; for example:

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES.

In the 1st, the ANNUNCIATION, we contemplate how the Blessed Virgin was informed by the archangel Gabriel that she should conceive and bring forth our Lord Jesus Christ.—(CONSIDERATION): Consider here, my dear Brethren, the love of our God: he could have

saved us by sending an angel to redeem us; but he wished to come himself to die for our salvation, so that our hearts might not be divided, says St. Bernard: "In order that our hearts might not be divided, he wished to be our Creator and Redeemer,"¹ etc.—(MORAL APPLICATION): However, where is the love, where is the gratitude, of men towards a God who has loved them so much?—(PRAYER): Let us ask Mary, in this first decade of the Rosary, to obtain for us this holy love of God: O holy Mother of God! so full always of love for this good Lord Jesus Christ, who became thy Son, that he might deliver us from hell, obtain for us the grace to love him with our whole heart, etc.

In the 2d, the VISITATION, we contemplate how the Blessed Virgin Mary, having learned that Elizabeth, her cousin, was with child, set out immediately to visit her, and remained with her three months.—(Cons.) The visit of Mary was the source of grace to this whole family.—(Mor. applic.) Happy the soul that is visited by Mary, etc.—(Pr.) Let us pray, then, to our dear Lady, that she may deign, during this mission, often to visit our souls, so that they may be sanctified, etc.

In the 3d, the BIRTH OF OUR LORD, we contemplate how, the time having arrived, the Blessed Virgin brought forth our Redeemer at midnight, in a stable, between two animals, and she laid him in a manger.—(Cons.) When the time of her delivery arrived, Mary was at Bethlehem; but not being able to procure any lodging in the city, she was obliged to take shelter in a cave, which was used as a stable for cattle; and there she gave birth to the Son of God, etc.—(Mor. applic.) Jesus wished to make his first appearance in this world in the form of a babe lying in a manger, in order to inspire sinners with greater confidence, etc. . . . Let no one,

¹ "Ne corda divideremus, voluit esse nobis Creator et Redemptor."

then, entertain sentiments of distrust, etc.—(Pr.) Let us beseech the Blessed Virgin to obtain for us true confidence, etc.

In the 4th, the PRESENTATION, we contemplate how, forty days after the birth of our Lord, that she might fulfil the precepts of legal purification, the Blessed Virgin offered her divine Son in the Temple, and placed him in the arms of the aged Simeon.—(Cons.) Mary had no need to be purified, because she was always free from every stain; but in order to obey the law, and through humility, she went to be purified, and to appear sullied like other women.—(Mor. applic.) Since, then, the Mother of God, who was so pure, was not ashamed to appear as if she needed to be purified, how shall you ever be ashamed to confess your sins during this holy mission? —(Pr.) Pray to the Blessed Virgin to help you to overcome every repugnance to confess your sins, etc.

In the 5th, the FINDING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE, we contemplate how Mary, having lost her Son, and having sought for him during three days, found him again disputing in the midst of the Doctors, when he was twelve years of age.—(Cons.) The Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, having gone to Jerusalem to visit the Temple, took with them the little child Jesus; but at the return they lost him. For three days, then, they sought after him with many sighs and tears, and found him at last in the Temple.—(Mor. applic.) The Blessed Virgin never lost the grace of her divine Son; she was only deprived of his sensible presence; and, nevertheless, she sought after him with tears. Oh, how much greater reason has the sinner to search with tears for Jesus Christ, when he has lost his grace! Whoever seeks for him in this way will surely find him.—(Pr.) Let us pray to the Blessed Virgin to obtain for us a true sorrow for our sins, etc.

THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES.

In the 1st, the AGONY IN THE GARDEN, we contemplate how Jesus Christ, while praying in the Garden of Olives, sweat drops of blood.—(Cons.) When our Saviour reached the Garden of Olives, he was seized with so great a sadness that he said it was sufficient to take away his life: *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*—(Mor. applic.) What was it, then, that afflicted the heart of Jesus so much, that made him sweat drops of blood? It was the sight of our sins that caused him this cruel agony. Let us also unite our sorrow to that of Jesus Christ.—(Pr.) Let us pray to the Blessed Virgin to obtain for us this sorrow.

In the 2d, the SCOURGING, we contemplate how cruelly Jesus Christ was scourged in the house of Pilate, where, according to a revelation made to St. Bridget, he received six thousand six hundred and sixty-six blows.—(Cons.) This scourging of Jesus Christ was so cruel that his body became like a leper's, that is, one continual wound from head to foot, according to the prophecy of Isaias: *And we have thought him as it were a leper.*—(Mor. applic.) Holy writers teach that our Saviour was pleased to suffer this great punishment especially to satisfy for the sins committed against chastity. Sinners, have you heard this? Your impurities are the scourges that made our Saviour suffer; ah! do no longer scourge him, etc.—(Pr.) Pray to the Blessed Virgin to deliver you from this vice, which makes hell so full, and in temptations invoke Mary, etc.

In the 3d, the CROWNING WITH THORNS, we contemplate how Jesus Christ was crowned with thorns and treated like a mock king.—(Cons.) After having been scourged, he was made to sit upon a stone; a reed was put into his hand to represent a sceptre, a rag upon his shoulders for a royal mantle, and on his head, in place

of a crown, a wreath of thorns, which they struck with a cane to make them penetrate. Then the soldiers insulted him, saying: "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they buffeted him.—(Mor. applic.) Sinners do the same: for they confess; but scarcely risen from the feet of their confessor, they leave the church to give Jesus Christ new blows on the face.—(Pr.) Let us beseech the Blessed Virgin to obtain for us the grace to die rather than ever offend God any more, etc.

In the 4th, the CARRYING OF THE CROSS, we contemplate how Jesus Christ, having been condemned to death by Pilate, was made to bear the cross upon his shoulders in order to increase his humiliation and his pain.—(Cons.) With great affection Jesus embraced this cross, wishing by this means to satisfy for our sins.—(Mor. applic.) It is therefore just that we, in our turn, to satisfy for the many offences which we have given him, should embrace the crosses that God sends us, etc.—(Pr.) Let us pray to Mary to obtain for us resignation and patience in all our tribulations, etc.

In the 5th, the CRUCIFIXION, we contemplate how Jesus Christ, having arrived at Calvary, was stripped, then nailed to the cross, where he died for love of us, in the presence of his afflicted Mother.—(Cons.) Consider what a bitter death our Saviour suffered to purchase our love.—(Mor. applic.) Let us always keep by us some beautiful image of Jesus crucified, and often, while looking at it, let us say: "I love Thee, my Jesus, because Thou hast died for me.—(Pr.) Let us ask the Mother of sorrows to obtain for us the grace to think often of the dying love of Jesus Christ, which he bore to us by dying for us.

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES.

In the 1st, the RESURRECTION, we contemplate how, the third day after his death, Jesus Christ rose again triumphant and glorious, to die no more.—(Cons.) Let

us consider the glory of our Redeemer when he arose from the sepulchre, after having vanquished Satan, and delivered the human race from bondage.—(Mor. applic.) How great is the folly of the sinner who, having been once delivered from the tyranny of the devil, consents to become again his slave for some wretched gain or some miserable pleasure of this world!—(Pr.) Let us pray to the Blessed Virgin to unite us by love so closely to Jesus Christ that we may never again by mortal sin become the slaves of Lucifer.

In the 2d, the ASCENSION, we contemplate how Jesus Christ, forty days after his resurrection, ascended into heaven in triumph, surrounded by wonderful glory, in the sight of his most holy Mother and of his disciples.—(Cons.) Before Jesus Christ died for us, Paradise was closed against us; but by his death, Jesus has opened it for all those that love him.—(Mor. applic.) Ah, what a pity that, after our Saviour has suffered so much to obtain Paradise, this happy kingdom, in which, etc.; and then so many foolish sinners should renounce it and give themselves up to hell for a worthless pleasure, for a mere nothing!—(Pr.) Let us beseech Mary to obtain for us the light to see clearly how miserable are the goods of this world, and how great the delights that God offers in the world to come to those that love him.

In the 3d, the MISSION OF THE HOLY GHOST, we contemplate how Jesus Christ, seated at the right hand of his Father, sent down the Holy Ghost to the chamber where the apostles with the Virgin Mary were assembled.—(Cons.) Before receiving the Holy Ghost, the apostles were so feeble, so cold, in the love of God, that, at the time of the Passion of our Lord, one betrayed him, another denied him, and all abandoned him; but as soon as they had all received the Holy Ghost, they were so much inflamed with love that they gave up their lives generously for Jesus Christ.—(Mor. applic.) St. Augus-

tine says: *He who loves, does not labor.* He who loves God feels no affliction under crosses, but rather rejoices, etc.—(Pr.) Let us ask of Mary to obtain for us from the Holy Ghost the gift of divine love; for then all the crosses of this life will seem sweet to us.

In the 4th, the ASSUMPTION OF OUR BLESSED LADY, we contemplate how Mary, twelve years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, departed this life, and was carried up by angels to heaven.—(Cons.) The death of Mary was full of peace and consolation, because her life had been all holy, etc.—(Mor. applic.) Our death will not be like hers, for our sins will then be a subject of alarm. But hear: for as to him who renounces a bad life and consecrates himself to the service of Mary, this good Mother will not fail to comfort him in that last moment, and obtain for him the grace of dying consoled, as she has done to so many of her faithful servants.—(Pr.) Let us place ourselves, then, under her protection, with the firm purpose to amend our lives; and let us always ask her to assist us in the hour of death, etc.

In the 5th, the CORONATION OF OUR BLESSED LADY, we consider how Mary was crowned by her divine Son, and we contemplate at the same time the glory of all the saints.—(Cons.) When Mary was crowned in heaven by the hand of God, she was also appointed to be our advocate; for this reason, Blessed Amadeus says that she prays for us incessantly.—(Mor. applic.) It is true that Mary prays for all men, but she especially prays for those that often and confidently have recourse to her intercession.—(Pr.) Let us beseech her always to pray for us, by saying with the Church: *Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us*; and with St. Philip Neri: *O Mary, Mother of God! pray to Jesus for us.*

CHAPTER III.**PREPARATORY ACTS FOR THE CONFESSION OF CHILDREN.**

BEFORE the acts that are made to dispose the children for confession, we address to them an instruction which is composed of three parts: the **Introduction**, the **Proof**, and the **Fact**.

1. To the **INTRODUCTION** is joined the **Proposition**, which has for its subject the injury that is done to God by sin, or the ingratitude of the sinner, or the mercy of God towards him who repents. It will be well to begin the introduction by a truth opposed to the proposition. For example: if one takes for the subject the injury done to God by sin, the introduction should at first show how God deserves to be honored; if it is the ingratitude of the sinner, one should speak of the great obligation of loving God for so many benefits, etc.; and if it is of the mercy of God, one should speak of the chastisements that he merits who offends God.

2. Here follows the **PROOF**, giving reasons or authorities, which should be few in number, expressed briefly and simply, according to the capacity of the children. A short moral is added to the proof.

3. After this a **FACT** is selected, which should correspond to the proposition, and be conducive towards exciting compunction so as to dispose the children to make a good act of contrition.

We pass, then, to the **Acts**.

We begin by the acts of theological virtues; that is, Faith, Hope, and Charity. Care should be taken that

these acts be preceded by their corresponding motives, namely: for the act of faith, that we should believe what the Church teaches, because God has revealed it to her; for the act of hope, that we should hope for paradise and the graces necessary to reach it, because we have the promise of God, who is all-powerful, merciful, and faithful; for the act of charity, that we should love God, because he deserves to be loved by men by reason of his infinite goodness.—I have said that these motives should precede the acts, and not follow them, as they are made to do by some; for the motive is called *motive* because it should move us to act. This is what should be observed in regard to the acts that are made at the end of each instruction. Besides, we should be careful that the acts preparatory for the confession of the children has special relation to confession that they are going to make, namely: to believe specially that in the sacrament of penance sins are pardoned, to hope especially for pardon through the merits of Jesus Christ, etc.

We finish with the act of contrition, preceded by the motive, the reflection or reason that moves one to repentance, and by the invitation through which one is urged to repent; for example:—(MOTIVE): Jesus Christ has said: *Him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out* (*John*, v. 37).—(INVITATION): Ah, my children, you would deserve to be rejected to-day by Jesus Christ; but since he says to you that he will not reject you, hasten to cast yourselves at his feet, weep, repent, etc., and say to him: (ACT) My Jesus, it is true that I have offended Thee, but I love Thee with my whole heart; and because I love Thee, I repent, etc.—It will also be good for the children, and for persons but little instructed, to make them conceive the act of contrition by asking them, for example: My children, do you not love with your whole heart this God who is so good? And because you love

him, do you repent of having offended him?—It will be well to repeat these acts of contrition three times, by giving them different motives: the first motive should be drawn from the proposition; at the second, the crucifix should be kissed; the third, finally, should be stronger and more touching.

Example of this Exercise.

1. INTRODUCTION.—My dear children, if you have offended God, you have committed a great crime, and very great is the punishment that you have deserved. How have you had the boldness to offend a God so great and so good? He has created you, he has loved you so much that he gave his life for you, etc.—But thank the infinite mercy of your God.—(PROPOSITION): Know that this God, whom you have so much despised, wishes to pardon and embrace you to-day if you sincerely repent of having offended him.

2. PROOF.—Do not fear; have confidence. God says that he does not wish the death of the sinner, but that he be converted, and that he live: *I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live* (*Ezech. xxxiii. 11*). (All these texts, if one wishes to quote them, should be briefly but clearly explained.) Hence our Lord invites all sinners, etc. *Turn ye to Me . . . and I will turn to you* (*Zach. i. 3*).

3. FACT.—(Here is narrated in a few words an example of the mercy of God. The most touching is that of the prodigal son [*Luke, xv.*]. We briefly describe his departure from the paternal house, the miserable state to which he was reduced; for to keep himself from starving he was obliged to take care of the swine. Then we mention the reception given him on his return by his father, who embraced him, and clothed him with a precious garment, which signifies grace, etc. Hence we pass on to the MORAL APPLICATION.) You see in this

example, my dear children, how good God is towards those that return to him with a repentant heart, etc.—Let us, then, have confidence, etc.—If you make to-day a good confession, Jesus Christ will embrace you, etc.—(Here there must be added, in a few words, an example of the chastisements that God sends to those who in confession omit through shame to tell some mortal sin. We should forcibly dwell upon this point, in order that the children at present and in the future conceive great horror for concealing their sins through shame. Afterwards, we let them make the Acts, saying:) Now, before you go to confession, it is necessary that you perform the acts in order to obtain the pardon of God in confession.

ACT OF FAITH.—My God, because Thou hast revealed it to the holy Church, I believe all that the holy Church teaches me as of faith. I believe that Thou art my God, the Creator of all things, who, during an eternity, rewardest the just in paradise and punishest the sinners in hell. I believe the mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons, but one God. I believe that God the Son, the second Person, was made man by taking the name of Jesus Christ, who died for us, who arose again on the third day, who is now sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven,—that is, equal in glory to God his Father,—and who will come one day from heaven to judge all men. I believe that only the Roman Catholic Church is the Church of Jesus Christ, in which alone we can obtain eternal salvation. I believe the Communion of the Saints; that is, the participation in the good works among all those that are in the grace of God. I believe the seven sacraments, and especially the sacrament of baptism, by which the soul is washed, cleansed from sin, and receives the grace of God; the sacrament of penance, by which we recover the grace that has been lost; and the sacrament of the Eucharist, in which we

really receive Jesus Christ, the body, the soul, and the divinity. My God, I thank Thee for having made me a Christian; and I protest that I wish to live and to die in this holy Faith.

ACT OF HOPE.—My dear children, when you have sinned, the devil wishes to make you despair; but God does not wish us to despair: he even commands us always to hope for the pardon of our sins, provided we repent of them: My God, because Thou art faithful, all-powerful, all-merciful, trusting in Thy promises, I hope, by the merits of Jesus Christ, the pardon of my sins, final perseverance, and the glory of paradise.

ACT OF CHARITY.—Now, my children, God wishes to pardon you, but he wants you to love him. What do you say? Does not this God, who is the sovereign good, deserve to be loved? Let us, then, make an act of love for God, who is so good: My God, because Thou art infinite goodness, the sovereign good, worthy of infinite love, I love Thee above all things, with my whole heart.

ACT OF CONTRITION.—But, in the past, have you always loved our good God? have you not offended him? Ah, make an act of contrition, with the intention of applying it to the confession that you are going to make; and pay attention: for if you do not truly repent of your sins, Jesus Christ will not pardon you. (We make first an act of ATTRITION): Think, my children, that you should at this moment burn in hell forever, separated from God and excluded from paradise. Now, on account of hell, which you have deserved, and paradise, which you have lost, are you sorry for all the sins that you have committed against God?—(We then make an act of CONTRITION): But, above all, think how great is this God, and how much he deserves to be loved by you, at least out of gratitude for the love that he has borne you by having even died for you. Still, you have done

him an injury: you have preferred nothingness to him you have turned your back upon him. Are you sorry for all this? Say, then: My God, during the past I have despised Thee; but now I love Thee with my whole soul: and because I love Thee, I am sorry for the sins that I have committed against Thee, for all the displeasure that I have caused Thee; I regret all this with my whole heart; I should like to die of sorrow, and should have rather suffered every evil than have but once offended Thee.

At the end we let the children make a firm purpose of never more offending God, by raising the hand as a sign of the promise that they are making. They should also be told to make now a special resolution never to conceal any sin through shame.

However, before making this formal act of contrition, we should take care to have the children to feel sorrow several times and for various motives, as has been said above, by taking the crucifix when the second motive is mentioned.

After these acts it is customary to take a child that is distinguished for its innocence, and to have him embrace the crucifix on the top step of the altar.

CHAPTER IV.

SOLILOQUIES FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

DURING the mission two soliloquies are given: one being for the children, the other for the people. The only difference between the two is that the first should be given in a more plain and familiar manner, according to the capacity of the children; but to the second the exhortation to penance is added, and is given after the act of contrition, as we may see in the example given. Both have, however, the same parts and the same acts as well for the preparation for Communion as for thanksgiving.

The acts for the preparation are usually the acts of faith, adoration, humility, contrition, love, and desire; but substantially they may be reduced to three—the acts of faith, humility, and love: the act of faith is joined to that of contrition; and to the act of love, that of desire. It will be well to relate between these acts some little touching incidents. We begin the whole by a short introduction, as may be seen further on in the example of the soliloquy for the people, which, excepting the exhortation to peace, resembles the soliloquy for the children, as has already been said.

After the act of contrition, before the Communion of the people, the exhortation to peace is given, and before the Communion of the children the procession takes place, which they make outside of the church, all wearing a crown of thorns on their heads, and the girls having, besides, their faces covered with a white veil.

(As to the girls, we understand here those that are not more than fifteen years old; for those that are older go to Communion by themselves, without procession). When the children return to the church, before they enter, the Communion tickets, received from the missionary who teaches the catechism, are collected. Then the children are placed in a line before the altar, the boys being separated from the girls, and the soliloquy is concluded by acts of love and of desire, etc.

Example of the Soliloquy for the People, with the Preparatory Acts for Communion.

INTRODUCTION.—*Let us be glad and rejoice: and give glory to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath prepared herself.*¹ O my dear Brethren! there are no longer tears of grief, but tears of joy and of love which I ask of you this morning. Let us be glad and let us rejoice: Yes, let us be glad; why? the marriage of the Lamb is come: Jesus Christ, the divine Lamb, pacified by your repentance, wishes to come this morning to espouse your souls in holy Communion. You have longed so much for this day; it has come. Prepare yourselves, then: for the heavenly Spouse is near; he is ready to enter your hearts.

ACT OF FAITH AND OF ADORATION.—St. Teresa is astonished that so many envied the happiness of those that lived in the time when Jesus Christ was visible on earth, when every one could enjoy his presence, speak to him face to face, and ask him for favors: “But,” she said, “have we not in the Blessed Sacrament this same Jesus, our Saviour, who not only causes us to enjoy there his presence, but gives us as food his sacred flesh and his entire self?” Such is the assurance which Jesus Christ himself gives you to-day from this altar, from

¹ “Gaudeamus, et exsulemus, et demus gloriam ei, quia venerunt nuptiæ Agni, et uxor ejus præparavit se.”—*Apoc.* xix. 7.

which he says to you: My children, you must know that this bread with which you are soon to nourish yourselves is not bread, but it is my own body: *Take ye, and eat: This is My body.*¹ Reanimate, then, your faith. You must have a lively faith to communicate with devotion. Tell me: who is it that lives in the Blessed Sacrament? It is Jesus Christ. Let each one say to himself: Ah, my Jesus, I believe firmly, because Thou hast said so, that Thou art all entirely with body, soul, divinity, in the consecrated Host. I believe that in receiving Thee I receive this same Son of God, who was made man and who died for me on the cross. Yes, my Saviour and my God, in this sacrament I adore Thee with my whole heart, and I unite my adoration to that which is paid to Thee by the angels and the Most Blessed Virgin.

ACT OF HUMILITY AND OF CONTRITION.—In olden times the deacon before holy Communion addressed to the people these words: If any one is not holy let him not approach the Blessed Sacrament. My dear Brethren, you wish this morning to receive Jesus Christ; but are you holy? If you are not, at least humble yourselves and say: *I am not worthy.* O Lord! I am not worthy to receive Thee; I am not worthy even to appear in Thy presence. On account of my sins, I should merit to be driven from the church and to be cast into hell. But no, my Brethren, Jesus Christ does not wish that you should omit approaching him and even receiving him; he has said: *Him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out.*² He who comes to me with a repentant heart, etc, I will not repel. Have you understood me? Approach, then, this sweet Master; but approach with tears, on account of the sins that you have committed. (Here the crucifix is held in the hand.) Say to him: See, O Lord! the traitor whom Thou hast loved so much and who has been so

¹ "Accipite, et comedite; hoc est corpus meum."—*Matt.* xxvi. 26.

² "Eum, qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras."—*John*, vi. 37.

ungrateful to Thee. My God, I trust that Thou hast already pardoned me; but if Thou hast not yet pardoned me, ah! do pardon me now before I received Thee: I am sorry, etc.

Exhortation of Peace before Communion.*

But you must know, my Brethren, that Jesus Christ declares in the Gospel that pardon is granted to him who pardons: *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.*¹ He who does not forgive, how can he hope for forgiveness? How could this Lamb, who is so full of love and mercy, contentedly enter a soul filled with hatred? He has specially ordained that priests should refuse Communion to those that bear hatred toward others when he says: *Give not that which is holy to dogs.*² By the word *dogs* we here understand, according to the interpreters, those that bear hatred like infuriated dogs. The angels also give notice that the dogs should be kept out of the church: *Without are dogs.*³ St. Augustine says that hatred toward our neighbor renders us children of the devil; and according to St. Thomas, the sacrament of the altar, this heavenly bread, should be given only to the children of God, and not to vindictive dogs who are the children of the devil.

Let him, therefore, tremble who wishes to receive holy Communion with hatred in his heart; he might experience to-day what is related of a woman who, preserving in her heart enmity towards another woman, dared to present herself before the Holy Table to fulfil the Paschal duty. As this enmity was public, the priest refused her Communion; then, in order not to undergo

¹ "Dimittite, et dimittimini."—*Luke*, vi. 37.

² "Nolite dare sanctum canibus."—*Matt.* vii. 6.

³ "Foris canes."—*Apoc.* xxii. 15.

* See what has been said about the Exhortation of Peace, page 124.

this affront she declared, yet not with sincerity, that she forgave her enemy. After Mass, the other woman having advanced towards her at the door of the church to thank her for her pardon, she answered: "What pardon? What are you talking about? I would rather die on the gallows than pardon you." Scarcely had she uttered these words when she became black in the face and fell dead to the floor; before the eyes of all, her mouth immediately opened, and the consecrated Host, which she had just received, came out of it and remained suspended in the air until a priest came and respectfully placed it upon the paten. The corpse of the unfortunate woman, like that of a dog, was afterwards thrown upon a dunghill. Would any of you wish to be exposed this morning to the same fate? He who desires to communicate should banish from his heart all rancor, etc.

Now, my dear Brethren, you have a sweet consolation to give to the heart of Jesus Christ. Arise, then, all of you, and hear what you should do: you should all become reconciled with one another; let every one who has received an injury, go to embrace the person who has offended him, and forgive him, for the love of Jesus Christ. Ye boys and girls, go each of you in search of your father and your mother, and on your knees before them ask their pardon for all the displeasure that you have caused them, etc. Afterwards, let all approach those who have given offence; let the men embrace the men, and let the women embrace the women. Well, then, let all of you obey. Peace! peace! let hatred be far from you, now that the King of peace is about to enter your hearts, etc. (At this moment all the missionaries, surrounding the hearers; exhort the faithful to become reconciled with one another.)

Acts of Desire Immediately before Communion.

One day St. Catharine of Sienna, arriving late at the church for receiving holy Communion, Jesus appeared to her, his face very pale, as if he were about to faint away. The saint asked him the reason of this, and Jesus answered: "My daughter, it is to make known to thee how greatly I desire that thou shouldst come to receive me; come and receive me immediately." Devout souls, you desire to receive Jesus Christ; but know that he still more desires to receive you. This whole past night our Lord has been, so to speak, occupied in counting the moments, waiting for the morning, in order to give himself to your hearts. Prepare yourselves, then; in a few moments he will come. Let us say the *Confiteor*. (The missionary himself recites the *Confiteor* in a loud voice; and when the priest who is at the altar has said the *Misereatur*, etc., he continues): Come, ye ministers of God, hasten to give Jesus Christ to these faithful souls, who desire to unite themselves to their well-beloved Lord, and to satisfy Jesus Christ himself who wishes to console them. (Here *Ecce Agnus Dei* is said.) Already, my Brethren, Jesus is coming to you; here he is; but before he enters your hearts, ardently invite him, saying: Come, my Jesus, the desire of my soul! Pray to the Blessed Virgin to present you to her divine Son herself. Oh, what a joy, what a feast, for the angels this morning! Let the bells ring, let the organ resound. Here the king of heaven, the divine Spouse, is coming to unite himself to you; receive him with a heart burning with love; call him by sighs full of tenderness: Come, my Jesus! come, my God! I love Thee, and I wish to love Thee always. (At this moment, during the ringing of the bells and the playing of the organ, the preacher is silent; only from time to time, during holy Communion and the playing of the organ, he proposes

in a few words some motive of fervor and pronounces some act or resolution; for example): O Lord! in future I will amend my life. Deign to receive me to-day; I give myself entirely to Thee. Thou shalt be in future my only love. If I should be ever in danger of offending Thee, rather let me die at this moment. Tell me what Thou wishest of me; I will do in all things Thy holy will. Most Holy Virgin Mary, attach me entirely to my Jesus, etc.

Thanksgiving after Communion.

Thanksgiving is usually composed of five acts; namely: acts of welcome, thanksgiving, oblation, good resolution, and petition. We give here some examples:

1. ACT OF WELCOME.—Faithful soul, now that you have communicated, see you are now with your God; he dwells in you, as he himself has said: *He that eateth My flesh . . . abideth in Me, and I in him.*¹ Reanimate, then, your faith; adore Jesus Christ, who has come to you; welcome him, embrace him, entertain him. Think that Jesus Christ has given himself entirely to you, and say to him: O Lord! whither hast Thou come? what good didst Thou see in me that could have induced Thee to dwell in my heart? Ah! be Thou welcome; I adore Thee; I embrace Thee; I press Thee to my bosom so that Thou mayest never leave me.

2. ACT OF THANKSGIVING.—What do you say? He well deserves to be thanked, he who is the King of heaven, who has deigned this morning to enter your heart. If a king of this earth would enter your house, what thanks, etc.! Thank him, therefore. But what words can suffice to thank a God who descends from heaven to visit a wretched being who has offended him? Thank him at least as well as you can; tell him: O

¹ "Qui manducat meam carnem, . . . in me manet, et ego in illo."
—*John*, vi. 57.

Lord! what can I say to Thee, what can I do, to thank Thee as Thou dost deserve? O saints of paradise! O holy angels! O most blessed Virgin Mary! help me to thank Jesus Christ, who has given himself to me.

3. ACT OF LOVE.—But do you wish to know, devout soul, what is the best thanks that you can give to Jesus Christ? It is to say to him: My Jesus, I love Thee.—He wishes that you should love him; it is in order to be loved by you that he has given himself to you. Love him, then; and offer yourself entirely to him by saying to him: Yes, my Jesus, I love Thee with my whole heart; and as Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me, I give myself entirely to Thee. Deign to receive me; I give Thee my body, my understanding, my will, and all that I am. I belong no longer to myself, I belong to Thee; dispose of me as Thou pleasest. It is sufficient for me to love Thee, my Jesus; I desire nothing more.

4. ACT OF A GOOD RESOLUTION.—Oh, what consolation do I feel this morning, my dear Brethren, in seeing you all united with Jesus Christ! But a sad thought troubles me; it is this: Who knows whether some one among you may not again banish Jesus Christ from his soul? Our Lord, on the night before his Passion, and on which he instituted the Blessed Sacrament, turned to his disciples and sorrowfully said to them that one of them would betray him: *One of you is about to betray Me.*¹ Ah! it seems to me that I hear Jesus Christ saying at this moment: Many of you who have just received me will again betray me. Alas! my Brethren, could there be among you any one who, after so many graces, would yet be disposed, etc.? I beg you to renew your good resolution; promise the Lord to suffer all evils rather than lose him again. Say to him: Yes, my God, I have offended Thee; I have lived long enough away

¹ "Unus vestrum me traditurus est."—*Matt.* xxvi. 21.

from Thee; the time that remains to me I no longer wish to employ to offend Thee any more: no, it is not what Thou hast deserved; I wish to use my time only to love Thee. To-day I give Thee my word: I am resolved to die rather than displease Thee again; I am resolved to lose all rather than Thy holy grace.

5. ACT OF PETITION.—But of what use are these promises if God does not give you the grace to keep them? Now, our Lord, in order to give us his graces, wishes that we should ask him for them, especially after Communion. St. Teresa says that, when Jesus Christ comes into the soul, he there places himself, as it were, on a throne of mercy and says: *What wilt thou that I should do to thee?*¹ Cherished soul, ask me what thou desirest; I have come to grant thee graces, etc.—Open, then, your hearts, represent to the Lord your miseries, your wants, and ask him for graces; ask him, above all, for holy perseverance and for his love.—Say with me: O Lord, my God! since instead of sending me to hell Thou didst wish with so much love to visit my soul to-day, deign to console me by granting me holy perseverance; do not allow it ever to happen that I should separate myself from Thee. If Thou seest that I shall lose Thee, let me rather die before I leave this church. Ask him also for the grace of loving him: My God change in me this ungrateful heart: let me forget all, in order to love only Thee, who hast loved me so much; give me Thy love; I wish nothing more.—Jesus Christ has promised us that all the graces that we ask of his eternal Father in his name will be granted to us: *Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*² Let us then pray to the eternal Father in the name of Jesus Christ, that he may grant us these graces

¹ "Quid tibi vis faciam?"—*Mark*, x. 51.

² "Amen, amen dico vobis: Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis."—*John*, xvi. 23.

of holy perseverance and of his love: My God, for the love of Thy Son, give me and to us all holy perseverance and Thy love.—Ask him at the same time for the grace of always praying to him for perseverance; for he who does not continue to ask for it, will not have it. Let us also pray to the Blessed Virgin to obtain it for us, etc.

Then a *Pater* and an *Ave* are recited for the bishop, the authorities of the place, the parish-priest, and the priests, the governor, the landlord of the house where the Fathers are staying, and finally for the Fathers themselves. We finish by giving the benediction with the holy ciborium, and then make the people ask again for perseverance, and say at the moment when the Blessed Sacrament is inclosed in the tabernacle: Now, my Brethren, send your hearts into this tabernacle to be inclosed there with Jesus Christ, in order that they may always remain united with him. The tabernacle, having been shut, its key is put into the hands of the statue of Mary with the petition that she should herself guard the hearts of all those that are present, so that they may never more be separated from Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER V.

THE LITTLE CATECHISM, OR THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE
TAUGHT THE CHILDREN, AND THE LITTLE SERMON THAT
IS PREACHED TO THEM AFTERWARDS.

I.

The Method to be followed in Teaching Catechism.

THE various points to be observed are the following:

1. The manner of explaining the doctrine should be simple and familiar, and adapted to the intelligence of the children, and of uninstructed adults who often come to listen.

2. To the explanation of the mystery or of a precept some short moral should always be added; for example: After having explained what one understands by a God who is a rewarder, we may say: See what good is derived from the service of God, and what evil is caused by sin, etc.—In the same way, when treating of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ: See what love the Son of God has had for us.—When speaking of the second commandment of God: It is a great sin to blaspheme, and great will be the punishment of the blasphemer in hell, etc.—Besides, it will be well to quote some appropriate example, and also to counsel some practice, such as: When you are tempted to anger, say: O Lord! give me patience. Mary, my Mother, help me.—But these moral applications should be short; otherwise they become instructions, sermons, as is the case with some missionaries who make sermons out of all the exercises.

3. After the explanation of the mystery, the precept, or the sacrament, we put questions to two or three chil-

dren, in order that the truths taught may remain impressed on their minds; we then present to them a little picture, telling, however, the children that such a present is never given to those that ask for it.

4. We should frequently recall to the mind of the hearers the three great means of keeping one's self in the grace of God, namely: the first, to avoid sinful occasions and bad companions; the second, always to recommend one's self to God by prayer, and especially in temptations by invoking Jesus and Mary; the third, to frequent the sacraments.

5. The catechist should show authority from the beginning, so that the children may not become too familiar. Moreover, he should guard against using abusive language against those that do not answer well, or charging the priests of the place with negligence; he should rather blame the children for having been careless in coming to instructions in catechism. He shall positively keep from striking the children, either with the hand or with a stick, even though they should behave improperly, because thereby great trouble may arise. He should rather call to his assistance the priests of the place, that they may keep the children quiet.

II.

What should be Explained to the Children during the Mission.

We should explain to the children during the mission the following three points:

1. The mysteries of our holy faith; 2. The sacraments, especially penance and Eucharist; 3. The commandments of God and those of the Church, except the sixth commandment of the Decalogue, which should not be explained to the children,—it will suffice to tell them, without comment, that this commandment forbids all shameful sins.

I. THE MYSTERIES OF OUR HOLY FAITH.

We therefore explain, in the first place, the mysteries that we should believe, and before all, the four principal ones: 1. The existence of God, and his perfections; 2. This God is a just rewarder; 3. The mystery of the Holy Trinity; 4. The incarnation and the death of Jesus Christ.

Previously we explain the motive for believing the truths of faith, that God himself, the infallible truth, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, has revealed them to the holy Church, and that the Church teaches us these truths.

1. We explain that there exists only one God, the sovereign good, who possesses all perfections: he is infinite in goodness and beauty; he is the Creator of the universe; all-powerful, he can do all that he wishes; immense, he is in every place; eternal, he has always been, and will always be.

2. We explain that God is a just rewarder; on the one hand, he rewards the just eternally in paradise after having made them pass through purgatory if there still remains any temporal punishment due to the faults that they have committed; on the other hand, he condemns sinners to hell, where they must suffer for all eternity.

3. We explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity, namely: in God there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; but these three Persons are only one God, because they are only one and the same substance, one and the same essence, and they have the same divinity and the same perfection: hence, as the Father is eternal, the Son is also, etc.; the Father does not proceed from any other, the Son, who is also called the Word, proceeds from the Father from all eternity, being begotten of the Father by intelligence; the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son

by the will, or by the love that the Father and the Son bear to each other.

4. We explain the incarnation and the death of Jesus Christ by saying that the Son of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, has taken a body and has become man in the womb of Mary, always Virgin, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, and that he is called Jesus Christ. Hence Jesus Christ is true God and true man: as man he suffered and he died on the cross to save sinners; but he arose the third day after his death; he afterwards ascended to heaven, where he sits at the right hand of the Father: this means that he possesses a glory equal to that of his Father. At our death he comes to judge us in the particular judgment; and at the end of the world, he will come to judge all men in the universal judgment after they have risen, their souls being united again with their own bodies.

Afterwards we also explain that there is only one true Church, the Roman Catholic Church, outside of which there is no salvation. We explain the Communion of the Saints, which consists in this: that all the faithful in the state of grace participate in the merits of the good works of one another.

2. THE SACRAMENTS.

In the second place, we explain the seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. We say that these sacraments have been instituted by Jesus Christ, and that they are the means by which we receive the graces which our Saviour has merited for us by his Passion.

1. By Baptism our souls receive the grace of God, and are purified from every sin, original and actual.

2. By Confirmation they acquire the power of resisting temptations and combating fearlessly for the faith.

3-4. (As to Eucharist and Penance, we shall speak of them afterwards.)

5. By Extreme Unction we receive the help necessary to overcome the temptations of the devil at the hour of death, the rest of the sins are effaced, and we even obtain the health of the body if it be useful for the soul.

6. By the Sacrament of Holy Orders we receive the spiritual power and the graces necessary to exercise it well.

7. By the Sacrament of Matrimony man and woman receive the grace necessary to fulfil the duties of the conjugal state, and to bring up their children according to the law of God.

We afterwards explain more at length the Sacrament of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance.

I. As for the EUCHARIST, there are several things that must be explained, namely:

1. This sacrament really contains Jesus Christ living, as he is in heaven, his body, his soul, and his divinity; for after the priest at Mass has consecrated the Host, this Host, although it preserves the color and the taste of bread, yet it is no longer bread, but the body of Jesus Christ; so the consecrated wine is no longer wine, but the blood of Jesus Christ; so that we must adore the sacrament of the altar as we adore God.

2. When the Host is broken, Jesus Christ is not divided; he remains entire in each particle. Besides, Jesus Christ really remains in him who receives him, until the sacramental species are consumed.

3. He that communicates receives help and strength to live in the grace of God; for as earthly bread preserves the temporal life of the body, so the heavenly bread preserves the spiritual life of the soul.

4. To communicate well there are dispositions required on the part of the body and on the part of the soul. On the part of the body, we must be fasting,

having neither eaten nor drunk anything since midnight. If we have taken anything in the mouth without swallowing it, this would not prevent us from receiving Communion. On the part of the soul, we must be in the state of grace. If we commit a mortal sin, we must confess it before communicating; and if we do not confess it; we would render ourselves guilty of sacrilege, excepting only in certain rare cases of necessity, for example: if we remember the sin only when we are at the altar railing, and when we could not withdraw without scandalizing those that are present, it will then be sufficient to make an act of contrition. We should be still more guilty if we dared to communicate after having omitted, through shame, to declare to the confessor a mortal sin that we have committed. Those who have only venial sins, will do well to confess them; but if we communicate with these sins on our consciences, we would not commit a sacrilege.

5. We conclude by instructing the children on the great good that is derived from holy Communion; we tell them how advantageous it is to receive it frequently, and above all to occupy one's self after having received it with thanking Jesus Christ for such a favor, and with asking for the graces of which one stands in need.

II. As for the sacrament of PENANCE, we should explain more at length the five things that are necessary to make a good confession, that is: Examination of conscience, sorrow, purpose of amendment, confession, and penance.

1. On the subject of the EXAMINATION of conscience, we explain that it should precede confession, and should be made carefully, according to the time since we have not confessed, and according to the number of sins that we have committed.

2. SORROW, or contrition, should be true, supernatural, universal, sovereign, and full of confidence: TRUE, that

is, produced by a sincere regret of having offended God; SUPERNATURAL, or conceived not on account of natural motives, as the loss of goods or of reputation, but on account of having offended God, the infinite goodness, or of having deserved hell, etc., according as one has contrition or attrition with a beginning of love, as we shall afterwards explain; UNIVERSAL, comprising all the mortal sins committed since the last confession, which was well made; SOVEREIGN, so that one regrets the loss of the grace of God more than any other loss; FULL OF CONFIDENCE, by hoping to obtain from God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, the pardon of all our sins.— Moreover, this sorrow is either perfect or imperfect. It is perfect, and it is called CONTRITION, when one repents of sin because it has offended the goodness of God. It is imperfect, and it is called ATTRITION, when, after having offended God (the offence given to God should always be the object of sorrow), one repents on account of paradise, which one has lost, or on account of hell, which one has deserved, or on account of the supernatural and particular heinousness of the sin committed. We therefore detest sin with contrition, because it is an evil in regard to God, and with attrition, because it is an evil in regard to ourselves. It must be added that with attrition alone one receives only pardon when one receives the absolution of the confessor; while with contrition one obtains it at once before receiving absolution, provided one has the intention of confessing one's sins. All theologians agree that to attrition should be united INITIAL LOVE, that is, a beginning of the love that we owe to God; which beginning of love already exists implicitly, as theologians commonly say, in the hope or even in the desire which the penitent has of obtaining by confession the pardon of his sins and the friendship of God.

3. The PURPOSE of amendment must be firm, univer-

sal, and efficacious: **FIRM**, that is, one should be able resolutely to say: I wish (and not I should wish) with God's help to keep from sin; **UNIVERSAL**, so that one wishes to keep from every sin without exception; **EFFICACIOUS**, we are thereby induced to use all the necessary means not to fall back again into them, and to avoid the voluntary proximate occasions; for if one promises only to avoid sin, without avoiding the proximate occasions, the purpose is not good.

4. In **CONFESSION**, it is useful to declare venial sins; however, it is not necessary, since we can obtain pardon of them by other means, such as an act of contrition or an act of love. But we must necessarily confess the mortal sins that we remember to have committed; and if we do not confess them, the confession would be sacrilegious and null: we would then have to confess them again by declaring not only the sin or the sins that we have omitted to tell, but also those sins that we told in the bad confession, together with the sacrilege that we have committed. If the penitent forgets some grievous sin without his fault, the confession is good; but when he remembers the sin, he must confess it in his next confession.

Finally, we must accept the **PENANCE** imposed by the confessor, and perform it as soon as possible; if it should happen that it is impossible for us to perform it, we should have it commuted either by the same confessor or by another.

3. THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH.

In the third place, we briefly explain the precepts of the Decalogue.

The first commandment, which ordains the adoration of God, commands the exercise of the three theological virtues, namely: of faith, by believing all the truths of

faith enumerated above ; of hope, by hoping in the mercy and power of God, and in the promises that he has made to us, through the merits of Jesus Christ, of obtaining paradise, and all the graces necessary to obtain it; of charity, by loving God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves. This first commandment also imposes upon us the obligation of asking God for help, that we may keep ourselves in the state of grace and obtain salvation.

The second, which forbids the taking of the name of God in vain, forbids us to blaspheme God, or the saints, or the holy days, or things holy. It also forbids false oaths. (We here explain that to swear BY MY CONSCIENCE is not a real oath.) Moreover, it imposes the duty of fulfilling the vows that one makes with the intention of binding one's self.

The third, which ordains the sanctification of holy days, commands us to hear Mass, and to abstain from servile work, unless there is a necessity, such as may arise during the vintage, the harvest, etc.

The fourth commands us to honor our parents; that is, to respect them, to obey them, and to love them by helping them in their spiritual and temporal wants.

The fifth forbids us to kill or unjustly to strike our neighbor, and even to wish him any evil, as also to rejoice at the evil and to grow sad at the good that befalls him.

The sixth forbids all immodest thoughts, words, and actions.

The seventh forbids us to take, to retain, or to damage the property of another, against his will.

The eighth forbids us not only to give false testimony, but also (1) to form rash judgments by misjudging our neighbor without a reason; (2) to speak ill of our neighbor either by falsely ascribing to him some fault, or by making known his hidden though real faults, unless it be necessary to manifest them in order

to remedy a great evil,—and on this point it must be observed that it is a sin not only to detract or to calumniate any one, but even to listen voluntarily to detraction or calumny; (3) to dishonor our neighbor by action or by word; (4) to tell lies, especially when the lies are injurious to others.

The ninth forbids us to give consent to impure thoughts.

The tenth forbids us to covet what belongs to our neighbor, as also to wish him evil, or to rejoice at the evil done, with regard to his worldly goods.

There are five commandments of the Church, namely: 1. To hear Mass every Sunday and holy day; 2. To fast during Lent, on the Ember days, and on the vigils, and to abstain from meat on Friday and Saturdays; 3. To confess at least once a year, and to receive Communion at least at Easter in one's own parish; 4. To pay tithes wherever they are due;¹ 5. Not to solemnize marriage at the forbidden times.

III.

The Little Sermon, Addressed to the Children, after Catechism.

There is no doubt that the missions are useful not only to adults, but also to children; nevertheless it has been remarked that during the great sermon, which is the most important of the mission, the children create the greatest disorder; for understanding only a little of what is preached they pay but little attention, and spend the time in talking, playing, and pushing one another; this is a source of constant trouble to the preacher and the hearers. It has therefore been thought expedient, as is practised in the missions of our Congregation, to make the children leave the church at the beginning of the great sermon, and to assemble them in another

¹ By dispensation it is allowed to eat meat on Saturdays.

² In other words, to contribute to the support of the Church.

church or in a chapel, where, after they have received an instruction in catechism, we address to them a short discourse, which is followed by an act of contrition. This special exercise is certainly much more profitable to the children than if they listened to the great sermon; for the discourse is in accordance with their weak comprehension; we employ in it forms and expressions that are suitable to them, without Latin texts and without division of points. We conclude by having them make an act of contrition before the crucifix. Before beginning, some pious hymn is chanted.

This discourse is composed of five parts: 1. The introduction with the proposition, which may take its place; 2. The amplification; 3. The example; 4. The moral application; 5. The conclusion, with the act of contrition.

EXAMPLE OF A LITTLE SERMON ADDRESSED TO THE CHILDREN AFTER
CATECHISM.

Death.

1. INTRODUCTION.—Death is certain. Whoever is born into this world is born condemned to death. Sooner or later, young or old, each one must die.

2. AMPLIFICATION.—My dear children, it is certain that you all must die. We know not whether you will be rich or poor, whether you will have good or bad health, whether you will die in bed or elsewhere, whether you will die old or young; it may be that you will die before having reached the age of fifteen or twenty: how many are there who have died in this place even before this age! But, however this may be, my friends, had you many years to live, a day will come when you will find yourselves about to die, and abandoned by every one; for then from the room of the dying person are dismissed his parents, his brothers, his sisters, and all the rest; you will then remain alone with the crucifix on one side, and on the other your spiritual Father, who

will make the recommendation of the soul, and will say to you, mentioning your name: N., go forth from this place, go forth from this world.—And whither should you go? Into eternity, into paradise or into hell, to rejoice forever with God, etc., or to burn forever, etc.—Then the devils will surround you, to make you despair by placing before your eyes all your sins. How you are to be pitied at this moment! etc. And if you were to die suddenly?

3. EXAMPLE.—Listen to this example. A boy used often to go to confession; and every one took him to be a saint. One night he had a hemorrhage, and he was found dead. His parents went at once to his confessor, and crying begged him to recommend him to God; and he said to them: “Rejoice; your son, I know, was a little angel; God wished to take him from this world, and he must now be in heaven; should he, however, be still in purgatory, I will go to say Mass for him.” He put on his vestments to go to the altar; but before leaving the sacristy, he saw himself in the presence of a frightful spectre, whom he asked in the name of God who he was. The phantom answered that he was the soul of him that had just died. Oh! is it you? exclaimed the priest; if you are in need of prayers, I am just going to say Mass for you.—Alas! Mass! I am damned, I am in hell!—And why?—“Hear,” said the soul: “I had never yet committed a mortal sin; but last night a bad thought came to my mind; I gave consent to it, and God made me die at once, and condemned me to hell as I have deserved to be. Do not say Mass for me; it would only increase my sufferings.” Having spoken thus, the phantom disappeared.

4. MORAL APPLICATION.—Now, my dear children, tell me: if you were to die now, what would be your death? where would you go? Take courage, then! profit by this mission and make the resolution to sanctify your-

selves, never to commit those shameful sins, nevermore to utter curses, blasphemies, bad words, never to take what does not belong to you, never to bear hatred against your neighbor, etc.—Reflect well on this: would you like to die as this unfortunate boy died, whose end you have heard was so terrible?

5. CONCLUSION.—As for the past, for the sins that you have committed, what are you to do now? Should you despair? No; God does not wish you to despair; he wishes that you should ask his pardon, because he wishes to pardon you. Now kneel down, and amid tears and sighs ask pardon of God, etc. (Here the act of contrition is made, two or three motives of repentance being given, for example): Ah! if you were to die this day, this night, on which you had fallen into sin, what would become of you? where would you be? Thank Jesus Christ, your Saviour, with a sincere repentance, etc. What do you say? do you wish to die in the arms of Jesus Christ? But if you wish that Jesus should embrace you, you should weep, etc. (While speaking of death, in the act of contrition, it will be well to exhibit a skull, and also to call to mind a boy now dead who was known to the children, by mentioning his name; for example): O N. ! where are you now? What a misfortune if you are damned!

This example of a little sermon is given here in an abridged form; it should be made longer; for with the act of contrition it may last about half an hour or three quarters of an hour, after the instruction in catechism, which lasts half an hour. It must be remarked that not many things should be said to the children, and that it is better to repeat to them the same truths or practices, in order that they may fix them upon their minds, and thus begin to put them in practice.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LARGE CATECHISM, OR INSTRUCTION FOR THE PEOPLE.

THE large catechism, or instruction for the people, is one of the most important of the mission; the priest who is charged with this duty should be well instructed, and should have had great experience in the office of hearing confessions, in order to know how to discover the illusions and the innermost recesses of consciences, so as to apply suitable remedies.

This instruction¹ is composed of several parts. It begins with the introduction, the exposition of the subject, and the division; these form the **EXORDIUM**.—Then comes the **EXPLANATION** of the mystery, or of the sacrament, or of the commandment, to be followed by the **MORAL APPLICATION**, with the practice. At the end we answer objections, or excuses brought forward by persons that have no tender consciences; then we briefly sum up, in the form of an **EPILOGUE**, what has been said in the instruction, and finish with the Christian acts.

1. The **INTRODUCTION** is drawn from the preceding instruction, so as to unite the material and to refresh the memory by summing up what has been said the evening before. This is done, however, only when the things have some connection with one another; otherwise the introduction is formed by announcing the importance of the subject which one wishes to treat. As for the **EXPOSITION**, if there is question of a commandment, we take care to distinguish all that it contains.

¹ See Hints to the Catechist, which precede Instructions on the Commandments and Sacraments.

The DIVISION of the points serves to elucidate better the material, and to impress better on the minds of the hearers the truths that one exposes to them. These three members, as has already been said, form a sort of EXORDIUM; hence they should be very short.

2. We enter, then, into the EXPLANATION of the mystery, or of the sacrament, or of the commandment. What one teaches should be confirmed by authorities—a few of them to be cited briefly—as well from reasons as from facts that refer to the subject. It is especially useful to employ comparisons, which should be clearly exposed.

3. Thence we pass to the MORAL APPLICATION by observing that one should not only enlighten the mind, but should also move the will of the hearers to flee from vice, and to use the remedies and the means necessary to avoid them; many more sins are committed by a bad disposition of the will than by ignorance. The moral application should also be short; it should be announced with animation, but without adopting the preaching tone and without outbursts of the voice. Sometimes, in the instruction, it is useful to raise the voice against a vice, or a maxim of the world, or an excuse made by people who lead a bad life; but these oratorical bursts should be short and rare, in order to avoid the defect of some who make sermons out of their instructions, confounding this last exercise with the first.

We should, above all things, take care, in giving the instruction, to insinuate practical things by teaching the people the very words that it will be proper for them to say when an occasion presents itself of putting in practice what has been indicated; for example: if one receives from another an injury or some annoyance, let him say to him: May God make you a saint! I shall pray to God to enlighten you.—So also when any one has met with some loss or other adversity, let him say: May all be for

the love of God! May the will of God be done!—This kind of practice should be repeated many times, in order that it may remain impressed upon the memory of simple and uninstructed people, who do not understand, or who soon forget the Latin texts and other things; they can remember only these short and easy practices which are taught them, and which are often repeated to them.

The catechist should also speak of certain excuses or frivolous difficulties which some are accustomed to bring forward in order to palliate their faults; these are, for example, some of the false reasons: that they have not the means of living without taking the property of another; that others do the same; that they are not saints; that they are flesh and blood; that such a neighbor or such a relative is the cause of their sins. Moreover, it should be declared that if any one would be inclined to revenge himself in case he had received an injury, he would be continually in a state of sin and that he could not justify himself by the worldly maxim that a man must take care of his honor. These false and wicked reasons should be forcibly and warmly refuted, so that the hearers may free their minds from certain prejudices which they hold to be maxims. This is the cause why many always remain in sin, and end in losing their souls.

The instruction is concluded in the *EPILOGUE*, which is a summary, as short and as substantial as it can be, of the doctrine that has been taught; and at the end we leave to the hearers, as a remembrance, a maxim of religion adapted to the subject and capable of making an impression.

These rules are common to all catechetical instructions; but as for those that are given during the missions a few more remarks should be made.

I.—In the first place, as to the subjects which are to be explained in the missions, the instruction is restricted

chiefly to three points, the same that have already been spoken of in the little catechism, namely: 1. The mysteries; 2. The sacraments, especially the sacrament of penance; 3. The commandments of God and of the Church. But in the large catechism these subjects should be explained more at length, with more details, and in another manner, by making the things that we teach rest on authorities and reasons.

There are catechists who think that it is better to speak first of confession, and then of the commandments. For my part I find it preferable to begin by the commandments; for if we explain them towards the end of the mission, it will easily happen that this explanation will raise scruples in the consciences of the hearers; this will oblige them to go to confession again, and thus we should lose much time. If, however, we should wish to join the explanation of the commandments to that of the first part of the confession, which is the examination of conscience, this would also be well.

And as the greatest utility of the missions consists perhaps, and even without doubt, in the reparation of sacrilegious confessions, we must insist on this point in every instruction: in showing how great is the malice of sacrilege, and how many souls are lost through the weakness that they show when they conceal their sins in confession. Many unfortunate persons, overcome by shame, even when they confess to the missionaries, as we know from experience, continue to conceal their sins; now, if there be one who in the mission has not the courage to repair the confessions he has made badly, how can he escape losing his soul? If he has not overcome his shame when he confesses to a missionary, how will he overcome it when he returns to his ordinary confessor? It is for this reason, as has been already said, that we must always insist on this point.

For this purpose it is customary in our missions that the catechist, at the end of his instruction and before the recitation of the Christian acts, always recites a terrible example—and these examples are numerous—of a soul damned for having concealed sins in confession. This is not conformable to the rules of art, since the example does not always correspond to the instruction; but it corresponds to the end of the missions, which are chiefly given to remedy sacrilegious confessions. It is sufficient to introduce the example in these words: Take care, then, to confess all the sins that you have committed, according as I have told you to-day, and do not through shame omit anything.

II.—It is a strange error on the part of catechists when they fill their instructions with fine words, scholastic questions, and witticisms, while the poor people are asking for substantial bread, with which they could be nourished so easily.

1. As for expressions, the common rule is that the style of the instruction should be altogether simple and popular without descending to what is silly and low; this is never necessary, and is unsuitable to the pulpit. The period should be short and concise. It is often useful to ask questions, which the catechist answers himself; this is a means of keeping the hearers more attentive, and of impressing better on their memory the things that are said.

2. As for scholastic questions, they are suitable for the literary exercises of theologians, and not for the instruction of the people from the pulpit; since the hearers consist mostly of those that are but little instructed, and that do not understand these questions, or at least cannot derive any profit from them. If there happens to be among the hearers a learned man, if he is prudent and discreet, he will praise this simple manner

of instructing the people, and he will blame the catechist who acts otherwise.

3. Finally, as to witticisms, I beg my dear reader to consider well what I am now writing. I do not deny that certain catechists adopt this style, saying that it is useful in order to attract the people to the instruction as well as to keep their attention, and to prevent them from growing tired. But for myself I know thus much: it is this: that the saints, in their instructions, did not make people laugh, but they made them cry. We read in the life of St. John Francis Regis that in his missions the people who heard his sermons, as well as his many instructions, did not cease to weep from beginning to end.

Here at least is what I say: If any one wishes to indulge in some pleasantry which naturally arises from the subject that is treated, such a thing might be allowed; while speaking, for example, of men that have a bad conscience, it would be proper to relate the ridiculous excuses that they make; the same thing may be said of other similar cases. But to wish to make a comical scene of the instruction by relating witty anecdotes, odd stories, with expressions and gestures, the object of which is to excite the laughter of the hearers, I do not know how that can agree with the respect due to the church in which one is, and with the pulpit from which one teaches the word of God, and in which the catechist appears as the minister of Jesus Christ. It is true that people take pleasure in hearing witty things, and things that will make them laugh; but I ask, What benefit can be derived from such a practice? Certainly, after they have laughed, the hearers will find themselves so distracted and so much deprived of piety that it will be difficult for them to re-collect themselves again; and often, instead of listening to the moral application which our facetious catechist must draw from his witty remarks in order not to be regarded as a charlatan, they

will think only of that which has made them laugh. Were there even no other inconvenience connected therewith, the catechist who delights in saying facetious things, and in indulging in pleasantries, will surely not acquire among the hearers the reputation of a saint, or of a soul filled with the love of God; the most that he can obtain would be to be regarded as an amusing and agreeable man. Moreover, it is a mistake to believe that without these pleasantries many people will not come to the instruction nor pay attention to it. I even say that many more will come, and that they will listen with greater attention, when they see that they do not lose any time, that the hearing of an instruction is not merely a simple amusement, but that it is a useful exercise disposing them to virtue and to piety.

III.—We should guard against exposing certain doctrines that might produce some laxity of conscience. Such doctrine may well be applied to some one in particular when he comes to confession; but when announced in the pulpit, it may injure the hearers who are inclined to be lax: for from this doctrine, which is otherwise just and useful when it is applied under the required circumstances, they may perhaps draw lax and unwarrantable conclusions.

Nevertheless, it is good and even necessary to enlighten the erroneous consciences of those that look upon that to be a sin which is not a sin. There are, for example, persons that think that they have rash suspicions or rash judgments, and that they commit sin even when there exists a reason sufficient for suspecting or judging. Some take it to be a grave sin to curse the years, the days, the wind, or the rain: others think that it is wicked slander if they make known to parents the thefts, the bad habits, or other faults of their children, even when this is necessary so as to remedy the evil. Others believe that they are committing sin when they do not keep a certain com

mandment of the Church, for example, to hear Mass, to fast, even in cases when they have received a dispensation, etc.—It must be explained that these are not sins, or that in regard to the circumstances they are not mortal sins.

We should, on the other hand, indicate the sins that are certain, especially those that are the cause of other grievous sins; for example: we must teach the people that he who does not avoid the voluntary proximate occasion of mortal sin sins grievously even when he would not have the intention of committing sin, and when he would not know that it is a grave sin to expose one's self to this occasion; for, when one exposes one's self to a similar occasion, it is morally certain that he will fall into sin.

We should instruct women in regard to superstitious things or vain observances, although they practice them in good faith. We must also inform them that they are in a bad state when they take pleasure in having and seek to have men to long for them without intending to be married.

Besides, there are persons that do not look upon it as a grievous sin to curse holy-days or holy things; we should enlighten them on this point: otherwise they will contract a habit of it; and if this habit is once contracted, they cannot get rid of it, even after they acknowledge that such curses are grievous faults.

When speaking of the sixth commandment, we should avoid scandalizing the innocent by awakening their curiosity in regard to the evil of which they are ignorant; it is sufficient, on this point, to condemn in general what offends chastity, without explaining the species or the circumstances; so that those that are guilty may understand how they should confess them, and those that are innocent may remain in their ignorance. We must, however, teach the people when in this matter bad thoughts

and words are or are not sins. But we should especially speak of the remedies against the impure vice, by often recommending among other things the three great means, which are: the flight of the occasion, the frequentation of the sacraments, and, above all, prayer, without which no one can be chaste.

The reader is asked to see what has been said in the preceding chapter, for the little catechism; in it may be found many things which may also serve for the large catechism, or catechetical instruction for adults, and which are here omitted.

We afterwards narrate some terrible examples of persons who, for having omitted, through shame, to confess their sins, have had an unhappy end. We may relate one of these examples every day before reciting the Christian acts, as we have indicated above.¹ We quote these examples succinctly; he that wishes to use them may lengthen them and express them more forcibly, according as he sees fit.²

Then we make the Christian acts in the following manner:

The acts of faith and hope are made like those that are found in the acts preparatory to the confession of the children.³ As to the act of faith particularly, we should make it in all its extent, by maintaining in it not only the four principal mysteries, which must be believed as a necessary means to salvation, but also the others that are contained in the Symbol, or Creed, and which must be believed by necessity of precept; in it we should also mention the sacraments by at least specifying the four sacraments necessary to every Christian, namely:

¹ Page 173.

² The examples to be related here are the same as those given in this volume at the end of the INSTRUCTIONS ON THE COMMANDMENTS AND THE SACRAMENTS.

³ Page 143.

baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, and penance. We include confirmation among the sacraments necessary to all Christians, because Benedict XIV.¹ has declared that those that neglect to receive it commit a mortal sin.

We must add the acts of charity, contrition, and firm purpose, but in form other than is indicated above; for example :

ACTS OF CHARITY, CONTRITION, AND FIRM PURPOSE.—
My God, because Thou art infinite goodness, worthy of infinite love, I love Thee above all things with my whole heart. And because I have offended Thee, Thou who art infinite goodness, I repent of all my sins; I am sorry for them with my whole heart. By Thy grace, which I ask of Thee now and always, I firmly resolve to die rather than offend Thee any more. I also purpose to receive the sacraments during my life and at my death

¹ *Const. Etsi pastoralis*, § 3, n. 4.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SERMON.

To proceed with order in speaking of the great sermon, which is the most important exercise of the mission, we shall treat separately of the three parts to which, according to rhetoricians, one should pay especial attention; we shall speak, then, 1, of the Invention; 2, of the Disposition; and, 3, of Elocution.*

I.

The Invention, or the Choice of Materials for composing a Sermon.

Great is the error of some who, before having found the materials, set themselves to determine the points and to compose the sermon. One must, before all, prepare the materials, that is, the texts of Scripture, the arguments, the comparisons, etc.; which are to serve to prove the proposition that one has in view. For this purpose one may profit by the many collections that exist, such as those of Joseph Mansi of Beyerlinck, of Lohner, of Spanner, of Father Houdry, and of others. Rhetoric, moreover, indicates to us the places whence

¹ We put here in the first rank the works of our holy Doctor himself; we shall find in them an abundant and a sure mine for every kind of subject.

* These three parts form the three articles of the chapter which in addition contains the following: 4. The Memory, the Pronunciation, and Gesture. 5. Special instructions for the sermons of the mission. 6. The exercise of a devout life. 7. The last sermon on perseverance, with the Papal blessing. 8. Other remarks relative to the sermon.—
ED.

we may draw, as from certain sources, the proofs needed for the sermon: some are called COMMON PLACES or TOPICS (*Loci Communes*); others PARTICULAR PLACES. The *common* places or topics are those that are serviceable for every kind of discourse; the *particular*, those that are proper to every particular discourse, to establish the fitness or unfitness, the necessity or special utility of that which one wishes to persuade.

But, ordinarily speaking, the common places or topics are those that serve to compose all the sermons; and it is of these that we shall here treat. They are divided into INTRINSIC PLACES or TOPICS, which are those that one finds in the nature of the subject itself, and into EXTRINSIC PLACES or TOPICS, which exist outside of the nature of the subject.

I. COMMON INTRINSIC PLACES OR TOPICS. (*Loci communes interiores.*)

The common INTRINSIC places or topics are fifteen in number:

1. The DEFINITION of the thing; for example: in establishing that sin is a great evil, because it removes us from God.

2. The ETYMOLOGY of the name; for example: *Sacerdos* signifies, according to St. Thomas, *Sacra dans* and *Sacra docens* [one who gives sacred things, and one who teaches them].

3. The ENUMERATION of parts (*Enumeratio partium*); for example: Temperance is useful for soul and body, for eternal life and for temporal life.—Or, when one affirms on the one hand what one denies on every other; for example: One is unhappy at death, not for having lived in poverty, in a low state of life, etc., but for having led a bad life.

4. The CONJUNCTION of words; that is, when one is derived from the other; as *hated* from *hatred*. It is thus that one says: God bears a sovereign hatred to sin; this

is the reason why he that is united with sin is sovereignly hated by God.

5. GENUS, as in this reasoning: It is sin that brings ruin upon men; so this unlawful friendship, your possession of what belongs to another, etc., will be your ruin.

6. SPECIES, as when one says: This man is just; therefore he is virtuous.

7. SIMILITUDE and COMPARISON (*Similitudo et Comparatio*). It must be observed that similitude requires a total resemblance between two objects. For a comparison it is sufficient that the objects resemble one another in some point; it may also take place either between equal things, or between things greater and smaller. From similitude we here draw the argument: The farmer, when he does not cultivate the earth, cannot expect a crop; so he that does not apply himself to the cultivation of the mind will never make progress, etc. To similitude belong EXAMPLES, PARABLES, and FABLES. The parable is a fiction in which one exposes possible facts; the fable, or apologue, is a fiction in which one exposes impossible facts, as when one should make animals or plants speak. Sermons more easily admit parables, rarely, however, fables; sometimes one may better employ fables in the instructions, in order to urge men to the practice of a virtue.

8. RESEMBLANCE, as when one says: It is proper to the brute to live according to the desires of its senses; the Christian should live according to the maxims of faith.

9. CAUSE (*causa*), which can be efficient or final, formal or material.—EFFICIENT cause, for example: God has created us; therefore he is our absolute master.—FINAL cause: God has created us, not for the vile and transient pleasures of the earth, but for the immense and eternal delights of paradise.—FORMAL cause: The soul is created after the image of God; therefore it is

more noble than all the treasures of the earth.—**MATERIAL** cause: Our body is composed of dust, therefore it must return to dust.

10. **EFFECT**; for example: Patience renders us agreeable to God, and helps us to remain in peace.

11. **CONTRARIES**, of which there are several kinds, namely: 1. **OPPOSITES**; for example: Meek persons are loved by God and men; the irascible are hatred by God and men.—2. **PRIVATIVES**: The sinner is deprived of God's grace, and consequently of peace, which is the companion of grace.—3. **CONTRADICTORIES**: He that loves God has everything, so that he is always content; he that does not love God finds himself deprived of the most precious good, which is the grace of God, and in this state he is always dissatisfied.—4. **INCOMPATIBLES**, or things that cannot coexist in the same subject: The love of God and the love of the world cannot exist together.

12. **ANTECEDENTS**; for example: *Quæ enim seminaverit homo, hæc et metet*—"What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap" (*Gal. vi. 8*).

13. **CONSEQUENTS**; for example: He that is unquiet shows that he is not resigned to the will of God.

14. **RELATIVES**; for example: If God is our master, we are his servants; consequently we are obliged to obey.

15. **ADJUNCTS**, or circumstances of the fact, which are enumerated in the well-known verse: *Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando*.—1. *Quis*; for example: The sinner offends a God so great, so powerful, and so good.—2. *Quid*; sin is a sovereign evil, because it deprives us of God, of paradise, and of peace.—3. *Ubi*: The sinner offends God in his presence.—4. *Quibus auxiliis*: The sinner, in order to offend God, uses the very gifts of God, such as health, riches, etc.—5. *Cur*: Why does the sinner consent to lose God, the sovereign good? To procure a little smoke, a miserable interest, a short

pleasure.—6. *Quomodo* : The Christian sins more grievously than the unbeliever, because he sins with more light and with greater remorse.—7. *Quando* : The sinner offends God during the very time in which God bestows favors upon him, preserves him, and provides for his wants.

2. COMMON EXTRINSIC PLACES OR TOPICS.

Common EXTRINSIC places or topics for the sermon are the following:

1. HOLY SCRIPTURE, from which we draw the strongest and most appropriate arguments for eternal salvation, as has been done by all the holy Fathers, and by Jesus Christ himself when he preached. St. Jerome says that there exists no more unworthy preacher than he that does not rest his sermons on holy Scripture. However, in sermons we must use texts of Scripture that are short, and that are taken in their proper sense, and we must avoid all forced and odd interpretations.

2. TRADITION and COUNCILS.

3. The OPINION OF THE HOLY FATHERS; and to give great authority to what one wishes to prove, it will be good to quote their own Latin words, and afterwards explain them more clearly to the people.

4. SCHOLASTIC THEOLOGY conduces greatly to prove certain maxims; but in the pulpit we should avoid treating of any point of controversy, and bringing forward subtleties which are more apt to confuse than to persuade the minds of the people.

5. The TEXTS OF THE CANONS AND THE DECREES OF THE POPES, whenever a case is presented.

6. HISTORICAL FACTS, especially the facts drawn from Scripture. As for other historical facts it will be proper to support them by indicating the author, the time, and the place; and they should be rarely given, so as to avoid the defect of those whose sermons are a complication of facts related one after another.

3. THE MANNER OF GATHERING MATERIALS.

The collection of materials for the sermon is made in the following manner. The proposition having been found, we write promiscuously on a sheet of paper the opinions, the arguments, the similitudes, and the examples that we have succeeded in discovering. Then after re-reading all, we examine the points to which the sermon may be reduced. After this, on another sheet we write separately every point designated by a special title, under which we again promiscuously inscribe the materials that belong to this point, giving to each a distinct number. When we are in possession of materials sufficient for each point, we set about putting in order the authorities, the arguments, the moral application, etc., everything in its place. This done, we begin to work out the sermon according to the following rules, of which we are now going to speak.

II.

The Disposition of the Parts that belong to the Sermon.

The parts of the sermon are nine in number, namely: The Exordium, the Introduction, the Proof, the Refutation, the Epilogue, the Moral Application, and the Exhortation. But all these are reduced to three principal parts, which are the Exordium, the Proof, and the Peroration: for in the EXORDIUM are united the proposition and the division; in the PROOF are united the Introduction which precedes and the refutation which follows it; finally, the PERORATION, or CONCLUSION, comprises the epilogue, the moral application and the exhortation.

It must, however, be observed that the foregoing nine parts are not always found in the sermon, the most of them being accidental: only the proposition and the proof are the essential and absolutely necessary parts; but I add that in regard to mission sermons one should

regard as necessary and essential the moral application and the exhortation.

We shall speak of each of these parts in particular.

I. THE EXORDIUM.

The exordium we may draw from innumerable sources, the principal one of which we here indicate.

1. *Ex visceribus causæ*; for example: if the proposition, or the aim is to show how much one should fear a bad death, the exordium may be as follows: Every man that is born is born to die; for this earth is only a place through which we are passing to eternity, etc.

2. *Ab opinione sive judicio*; for example: To believe that it is easy to die a good death after a life of dissipation, of wickedness, is folly. Or; To wish to defer one's conversion, and to wish to be damned, we should be convinced, are one and the same thing.

3. *A contrario*; that is: When one begins by a proposition contrary to that which one wishes to prove; for example: It is certainly a great happiness for some sinners who after a bad life are converted at their death, and are saved; but these cases are very rare: ordinarily he that leads a bad life dies a bad death. (This last proposition will be the subject of the sermon.)

4. *Ab exemplo*: By beginning with the narration of an example, which one afterwards adapts to the proposition of the sermon.

5. *Ab expositione*: By exposing some text of Scripture, or, the importance of the subject which one wishes to treat; for example: He that thinks of hell will not go to hell; hence, my dear Brethren, I wish to place before your eyes to-day the pains of hell, so that none of you may have to undergo this punishment.

6. *Ex abundantia*; that is: When the preacher announces at the beginning that the subject that he has in hand is very vast, and that therefore he must confine

himself to some points which he regards as the most important.

7. *Ex adjunctis*: When one begins with some circumstance of person, of place, or of time.

8. *Ex abrupto*: The exordiums drawn from the sources that precede are called LEGITIMATE; the exordium *ex abrupto* is called EXTRAORDINARY, and is rarely employed: it occurs when without any preamble one begins by an exclamation of reproach, of compassion, or of astonishment; for example: O sinner! when will you cease to flee from God, who has been seeking for you so long a time? Or: Poor sinners, poor unfortunate beings, who lead an unhappy life in this world, to spend afterwards a more unhappy life in the next!—Or: O all-powerful God! how canst Thou bear with these ungrateful men, who, enlightened and called by Thy mercy, always continue to offend Thee?

We note here that the exordium may be found defective either by being too long or too common, being applicable to every kind of discourse, or by having but little connection with the sermon, while the exordium should agree with the subject that one wishes to treat.

Rhetoricians assign to the exordium seven parts, namely: The introduction, the general proposition, the confirmation, the repetition, the connection, the particular proposition, and the division.

1. The INTRODUCTION is a little insinuation in order to arrive at the general proposition.

2. The GENERAL DISPOSITION is that which one promises in order afterwards to come to the particular or principal proposition of the sermon.

3. The CONFIRMATION is another proof of the general proposition.

4. The REPETITION reproduces the general proposition, in order to pass to the particular proposition.

5. The CONNECTION is the bond that unites the general proposition with the particular proposition.

6. The PARTICULAR PROPOSITION is the principal proposition, or that which one wishes to prove; which must always be understood when one says simply: The proposition.

7. The DIVISION is the indication of the different points of the particular proposition.

It must be observed that not all these parts of the exordium are necessary, especially in mission sermons, for which the three principal may be sufficient, namely: the general proposition, the connection, and the particular proposition.

The following is briefly an example of the exordium. If one wishes to prove how difficult it is to die a good death after a bad life, one should say: (GENERAL PROPOSITION, with the CONFIRMATION): We must be saved; for if we are not saved, we shall be damned; there is no middle way. (CONNECTION): Now, in order to be saved we must die a good death by leaving the world in the grace of God. (PARTICULAR PROPOSITION): But it is difficult to die a good death when we have lived a bad life, etc.—The general proposition may be amplified in various ways; for example: It is not necessary to be noble or rich in this world; but it is necessary to be saved.

The PARTICULAR PROPOSITION, or principal, is drawn from the subject which one wishes to treat; for it is the centre to which all the proof should converge, like so many rays. It should announce clearly and briefly a truth that one wishes to prove, never anything extravagant. Moreover, it is an absolute rule that unity should be preserved; otherwise one would have, not one sermon, but several. This unity, however, does not prevent a division into different points; this makes the hearers more attentive, and better impresses on their

minds the truth one preaches to them; but the points should always agree to form a single proposition.

The DIVISION may be made in various ways:

1. By the QUALITIES OF THE SUBJECT; example: We should always be prepared for death, first, because death is certain, and, secondly, because the hour of death is uncertain.

2. By the EFFECTS: The bad habit of sin renders salvation very difficult, first, because it blinds the mind of man, and, secondly, because it hardens his heart.

3. By the CAUSES: The death of the sinner will be very bad, first, because of the temptations of the devil; secondly, because of the remembrance of the sins committed; and, thirdly, because of the abandonment by God.

4. By the ENUMERATION OF THE PARTS: The general judgment will be terrible, first, on account of the presence of the divine Judge; secondly, on account of the examination; and, thirdly, on account of the sentence.

5. By the DIVERSITY OF CIRCUMSTANCES contained in this verse already quoted: *Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando.* Example: *Quis*: The sinner offends God, who is his Creator, his Redeemer, and his Preserver.—*Quid*: Sin is an offence against God, and an evil to the soul that commits it.—We explain in the same way the other circumstances.

The rule in regard to the points is that they should be announced in a few words, as briefly as possible, and that they should be restricted as to the number—two or three at the most. To subdivide afterwards the points into other points is a defect. It is not a defect, on the other hand, to restrict the sermon to the simple demonstration of the particular proposition without making any division of points; for example: He that abuses the divine mercy will be abandoned by it.—Or: Sin is the greatest of all crimes, because it shows contempt for

God.—The method is sometimes useful in order to have more liberty to enlarge on the matter that one treats, as one is not restricted to determined points.

2. THE PROOF.

We have already said that the proof contains three parts, namely: the Introduction, the Proof itself and the Refutation.

I.—THE INTRODUCTION is only a preamble in order to enter upon the proof; it may be drawn from the following sources, namely:

1. From the DEFINITION; for example: If we speak of scandal we may give the definition of St. Thomas: "Scandal is a word or action that is not becoming and is an occasion of sin to another."¹ We shall afterwards explain it.

2. From the DISTINCTION: If there is question of the occasion of sin, the introduction may be made as follows: To proceed with order we must distinguish the proximate occasion from the remote. The first is, etc.

3. From the DIFFICULTY OF THE SUBJECT: In speaking of the malice of mortal sin we may say: To understand what a great evil mortal sin is, we must understand what a great good God is; now, who will ever be able to understand the goodness, the power, the wisdom of God? etc.

4. From some GENERAL PROPOSITION to pass thence to a particular proposition: In speaking of the sacrilegious confession one may begin by describing the malice of sacrilege in general.

5. From some SYLLOGISM or EUTHYMEME, the conclusion of which leads to the proof of the proposition.

6. From some celebrated QUESTION, or some OPINION of a holy Father, or some EXAMPLE.

In every case one must take care that this introduc-

¹ "Scandalum est dictum vel factum minus rectum, præbens occasionem ruinæ."—2. 2. q. 43. a. 1.

tion should be short and proximate: **SHORT**, so that one passes at once to the proof; **PROXIMATE**, or drawn from the intrinsic principles of the subject which one treats.

II.—As to the **PROOF**, one must understand that the body of the discourse should be composed of the proof of the principal proposition; so that in order to persuade the hearers it should have the form of perfect reasoning—of course not after the manner of logicians but of orators; that is, exposed in a clearer and more extended manner. One should observe that it is always better to present few proofs by choosing the more convincing, and by explaining them well, than by amassing a large number that are of little value or are but little developed.

The following are the various modes of argumentation used by rhetoricians:

1. The **SYLLOGISM**; which is composed of three propositions, namely: the major, the minor, and the conclusion, exposed, as has been said above, in a way that is more ample than in simple reasoning. One proves the major before passing to the minor, and the minor before coming to the conclusion; this is, however, only done when the major or the minor stands in need of a proof; for if they are known and held to be certain, it is sufficient if one amplifies them without proving them.

2. The **ENTHYMEME**; which is a syllogism reduced to two propositions, the antecedent and the conclusion; one adds the proof to the antecedent if it is necessary.

However, the preacher should take care to invest the syllogism and the enthymeme with an oratorical form, so that they may not appear as such.

3. The **DILEMMA**; which consists of two different propositions, one of which being denied, the other is necessarily to be admitted; for example: Either God deceives man, or man deceives himself; now, God cannot deceive: therefore, it is certain that man deceives himself.

4. The **INDUCTION**; which consists in drawing a con-

clusion from a certain premise; thus: If the just tremble while living amid penances, prayers, etc., how much more should a sinner tremble who lives amid pleasures, honors, etc.!

5. The **SORITES**; that is, when, from several propositions or truths announced, one draws a particular conclusion; example: Blasphemy brings neither honor nor pleasure; why, then, blaspheme?

6. The **EXAMPLE**; when one argues from one case to another similar case.

We here remark that it is always good to vary the forms of reasoning by employing now the syllogism, now the dilemma, etc., and also by using interrogation, reproach, etc.

As for the order of **PROOFS**, some think that it is better to begin with the weaker, continue with the stronger, and conclude with the strongest. Others, on the contrary, and such is my opinion, think it preferable to give, in the first place solid reasons, in the last place the most decisive, and in the middle the weakest, by grouping them together so that thus united they may acquire more authority; for by beginning with the weakest reasons one might produce a bad impression upon some one of the hearers. For the rest the ordinary method consists in presenting first the reasons that carry conviction, then those that amplify the subject, and finally those that are most suitable to touch the heart.

The **TRANSITIONS** from one point to another should be natural, and should always preserve the unity of the sermon. To mark these passages, the most common forms are the following: Let us see, in the second point, etc.; After having seen, etc. When passing from one argument to another, one may say: Add to this; . . . Moreover; . . . So much the more, . . . etc.—There are other more elegant forms of transition; for example: by

uniting the end of the point or of the reasoning which one finishes to the beginning of that which follows. This union should be made at least in words if it cannot take place in the substance of things. One should take care never to pass abruptly from one object to a different object. For this purpose one may use the figures called Preterition, Concession, etc.

The AMPLIFICATION of proofs is REAL in reference to things, or VERBAL in reference to words: the first tends to convince the mind by the development of proofs; the second tends to determine the will.

The REAL amplification may be made by the reunion of several things, following this example of the Apostle: *Serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope: Patient in tribulation: Instant in prayer.*¹ Or, by GRADATION; example: It is a virtue to bear patiently with contempt; a greater virtue, to desire it; a virtue that is greater still, to rejoice at it.—Or, by REASONING, which one does by developing the circumstances of the thing.—Or, by COMPARISON, which one does by comparing the thing with another that is reported to be great, to show that that of which one speaks is still greater.

The VERBAL amplification may be made by expressive sayings, by epithets and synonymes, and also by metaphors and hyperboles.

But it must be observed that this vain luxury of words, of which certain preachers make a display, causes the hearers to feel wearied, and serves rather to weaken the sermon than to amplify it. We remark, moreover, that one should amplify not all that one says, but only the principal things.

What has been said of amplification may also be said of ATTENUATION; for, as Quintilian says, he that knows how to ascend, knows how to descend.

¹ "Domino servientes, spe gaudentes, in tribulatione patientes, orationi instantes."—*Rom. xii. 11.*

As regards MORAL DIGRESSIONS, we must observe that, although the proper place for moral applications is found in the peroration, yet it may well be permitted to make moral reflections in the course of the sermon by speaking especially of a vice or of a virtue, particularly after having given sufficient proof; this holds good above all in mission sermons. One should always take care that these moral applications should not be so long as to form another sermon in the sermon itself, nor should they be so forced as to appear, as we say, to have been lugged in by the head and shoulders, nor so frequent as to render the discourse tedious and languid, as happens to some who, while relating an example, are too much given to making moral digressions. It is indeed permitted to make incidentally a moral application, but excess fills the hearers with disgust. There is, however, no doubt that mission sermons should be more supplied with moral reflections; for it is this that makes most impression on persons that are but little instructed, and that form during missions most of the audience. However, these moral applications should be appropriate to the sermon, and put in a proper place, so as not to weaken the force of the proofs.

III.—After the proofs comes the REFUTATION of the objections. The various modes of REFUTATION are:

1. NEGATION, by exposing the falsity of the contrary argument.

2. CONTESTATION, by showing that the proposition that one sustains is more probable than that which is opposed to it.

3. ANTICIPATION, by opposing, to the difficulties that may be alleged, other more grave difficulties.

4. CONTEMPT for the contrary reasons, by simply saying that their falsity is evident.

5. RETORTION, by retorting the opposed argument.

Regularly, the refutation is put after the proofs; but

sometimes it is put immediately after the reason that one exposes and that can meet with some difficulty.

3. THE PERORATION.

The peroration, or conclusion, contains three parts: the epilogue, the moral application, and the exhortation.

I.—The EPILOGUE is only a recapitulation of the sermon. It should be short, so as not to form a new sermon; but it should contain the most convincing reasons of the discourse presented in another manner in view of the exhortation that is to follow; so that even in this recapitulation the preacher begins to move the hearts of the hearers.

II.—As for the MORAL APPLICATION, in regard to the correction of vices, one must at first be careful to avoid wounding particular persons; for such corrections made in public serve only to irritate the minds in such a way that these persons, seeing themselves thus publicly humbled, will conceive a hatred for the preacher and even for the mission, and become more and more perverse.

Moreover, it must be observed that by moral application we understand not only reprimands and reproaches uttered against vice, but also the pointing out of the remedies to be employed to correct one's self, and the means to be used to persevere in good conduct. The missionaries should, therefore, persuade themselves that what is most important and profitable to the people in the mission is to teach them practical things, that is, remedies against vice and the means to persevere in virtue, such as the following: To flee from the occasions, as public houses, dangerous places, bad company. To do violence to one's self to control movements to anger, to have ready on one's tongue some good words, in order to avoid blasphemies and imprecations; for example: O Lord! give me patience. O holy Virgin

Mary! help me. I beg God to sanctify you. And similar utterances. To join some confraternity. To hear Mass every day. To go to confession every week. To make every day a spiritual reading. To make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and also to the Blessed Virgin before one of her images. Every day, in the morning, to renew the good resolution not to offend God by asking him for the grace of perseverance; and in the evening, to make an examination of conscience with the act of contrition. If one falls into some sin, one should hasten to make an act of contrition with a firm purpose of amendment, and then go to confession as soon as possible. Above all, to have recourse to God and to the Blessed Virgin in temptations by often repeating the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and by continuing to invoke them until the temptation ceases.

These remedies and these means the preacher should repeat and recommend many times in the course of the sermons without allowing himself to be prevented by the fear of some learned critic who might reproach him for saying always the same thing. The preacher, and especially the missionary, must not look for the praise of the learned, but for the good pleasure of God and the salvation of souls, particularly of the poor ignorant people, who come in great numbers to the missions, and who derive less profit from the opinions and reasonings that one makes them hear, than from these easy practices that one takes care to inculcate on them by repeating them. I say, "By repeating them;" for the minds of these poor people, which are but little cultivated, easily forget what one teaches them, if one does not take care to repeat it several times, as one knows by experience.

III.—The EXHORTATION is one of the most important and most necessary parts of the sermon, especially during missions; for the profit derived by the hearers

not only consists in convincing themselves of Christian truths, but also, and above all, in taking the resolution to amend their lives, and in giving themselves to God. The missionary should, therefore, not act like some who at the end of the sermon begin at once to cry out to the people: Ask pardon of God, cry for mercy!—and, taking the crucifix, the cords, the torches,¹ are satisfied with this clamor, which will produce a great deal of noise, but very little fruit.

To obtain fruit one must study to find out the best means of touching the hearers, and of exciting not an apparent but a true compunction in their hearts. Without doubt, this compunction is the work of the hand of God; but the Lord wishes us to co-operate so as to make it as perfect as possible. This is the reason why it will be useful to speak here specially of the manner of moving the heart and of regulating the passions, which are the maladies of the soul: they darken the mind and weaken the will. Now, what does one need in order to subdue one's passions? One needs the hand of God. The preacher should, therefore, for this purpose, count more on the divine help by humbly invoking it than on all the eloquence in the world; otherwise his hearers will only admire his talent without being converted, like those of whom St. Augustine² spoke: "They admired, but were not converted." They will say: What a good preacher! what a beautiful sermon!—and they will continue to slumber in their vices. Moreover, to move others, it is of great importance that the preacher shows that he himself is penetrated with the truths that form the subject of his discourses.

Human passions are numerous: some belong to the

¹ Practices that were in vogue in some parts of Italy in the time of St. Alphonsus.

² "Mirabantur, et non convertebantur."

CONCUPISCIBLE appetite, others to the IRASCIBLE appetite. According to St. Thomas,¹ the first are:

1. LOVE, which has the good for its object: it is the strongest of all the passions. The preacher should especially strive by proper motives to inspire the people with love for God and for their neighbor: for God, because he deserves this love, first on account of his goodness, and then on account of his benefits; for their neighbor, because God commands this love.

2. HATRED: one inculcates hatred for sin by showing what is its malice, and what injury it causes; one takes away hatred for one's neighbor by setting forth how pleasing to God and how profitable to our soul is the pardon of injuries.

3. DESIRE, which is a movement of the soul towards a distant good. One shows that the goods in this life are of little value and of short duration, and that they are dangerous to salvation, while the goods of the next life are immense and eternal, and alone worthy of our desires.

4. AVERSION, which is opposed to desire, and makes us have a horror of the things that are hurtful to us.

5. JOY, which is a satisfaction produced by the possession of good. It is very useful, among other things, to set forth the peace that the grace of God brings to him that possesses it.

6. SADNESS, or grief, which is a pain that one feels at a present evil. One shows the pain that remorse of conscience causes sinners.

The following are the passions that belong to the IRASCIBLE appetite:

1. HOPE, which is a movement towards a distant but possible good.

2. DESPAIR, which is the contrary; one tries to per-

¹ 1. 2. q. 23. a. 4.

suade the hearers that it is impossible to find happiness in the goods of this world.

3. **FEAR**, which is a movement born of the apprehension of future evil.

4. **AUDACITY**, which is a movement that gives one strength not to fear the obstacles in the way of acquiring a desired good.

5. **ANGER**, which is a movement that leads to revenge. This passion may excite the love of penance in the sinner, who will wish to chastise his body by which he has offended God; for according to St. Augustine, the true penitent is a man justly angry with himself.

We must remark that in general one should in this exhortation guard against being too long; otherwise, one shall lose more than one gains.

III.

Elocution.

After having treated of the disposition of the parts, we must speak of the means and the methods suitable for rendering the discourse capable of convincing the understanding and determining the will.

Good elocution requires the concurrence of three things, namely, elegance, composition, and dignity.

I. **ELEGANCE** results from clearness and proper expressions, by avoiding new or antiquated, affected, or vulgar terms. It must be understood that eloquence consists in expressing the idea that one has conceived, and in making the hearers seize it with the same vividness with which it has been conceived.

II. **COMPOSITION** is the harmony of the discourse which is obtained from the good arrangement of periods and from their number expressed in suitable words. The period is a phrase composed of several parts, united with one another, to render entire the

idea that one wishes to express; the principal parts are called Members and the others Incidental. We distinguish three kinds of periods: the concise, the round, and the composite.

1. The **CONCISE** period, which is the shortest, should have at least two members, but not more than four. It has three qualities, but these are not always found together, namely, equality in the number of words, the harmonious correspondence between both members, and the opposition between the two, as in this text: *For you were heretofore darkness; but now light in the Lord.*¹

2. The **ROUND** period—that of which the parts form a harmonious union of sentences, of thought, and of words, to express a complete sense. One should therein avoid superfluous vowels and consonants, as well as repetition of the same words, or words formed of the same letters by having the same quantity of syllables, as also turns that represent the measure and cadence of verse.

3. The **COMPOSITE** period, finally, is that which is formed of several round or concise periods.

III. The **DIGNITY** of elocution results from the use of tropes and of figures, of which we shall speak farther on.

First of all, we must remind young preachers that what is said of periods rounded and composed of sonorous words, belongs properly to discourses pronounced in academies and in secular assemblies, but not to those that one pronounces in the churches. I know that there are orators who pretend that this is necessary even in sacred discourses in order to attract the people and to induce them to hear the divine word; but I also know that St. Paul protested against it when he said: *I came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom. . . . And my speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in showing of the spirit and*

¹ "Eratis enim aliquando tenebræ, nunc autem lux in Domino."—*Ephes.* v. 8.

*power.*¹ I also say that men of zeal and of charity do not go in search of choice expressions or of harmonious periods; they try to find the most efficacious method to deliver souls from hell and to persuade them to love God. I grant that preachers who attract the people by the charm of florid discourses have many hearers; but where is the fruit that they derive? Who, after having heard them, go to confession with compunction, moved by those ingenious descriptions and those rounded periods, in a word, by those flowers and those leaves, of which the sermon is composed? Origen,² comparing such preachers to women, says that the latter by their vanities succeed in pleasing men but do not please God, and their souls are without fruit. A sick man, as Seneca³ remarks, does not ask for a physician that speaks well, but for one that is able to cure him. What good, he would say to him, will your fine discourses do me when iron and water must be employed to cure me? St. Jerome,⁴ writing to Nepotian, gave him this advice: "When you teach in the church, not the clamor (*viva! viva!*) of the people should be excited, but the tears of the hearers will be your best praise."

Vain preachers may win the praises of some among the learned men, but they will bring no profit to any one. I say, "Of some;" for, whatever may be the trouble that one takes, one hardly succeeds in making

¹ "Veni non in sublimitate sermonis aut sapientiæ. . . Sermo meus et prædicatio mea, non in persuasibilibus humanæ sapientiæ verbis, sed in ostensione spiritus et virtutis."—*I Cor. ii. 1.*

² "Effeminatæ quippe sunt eorum magistrorum animæ, qui semper sonantia componunt, et nihil virile, nihil Deo dignum est in iis qui juxta voluntatem audientium prædicant."—*In Ezech. hom. 3.*

³ "Non quærit æger medicum eloquentem, sed sanantem. Quid oblectas? Aliud agitur: urendus, secandus sum; ad hæc adhibitus es."—*Epist. 15.*

⁴ "Docente te in ecclesia, non clamor populi, sed gemitus excitetur; lacrymarum auditorum laudes tui sint."—*Ad Nepot. de Vita Cler.*

one of those florid discourses in which the learned do not find now this, now that, to criticise. Such is then the folly of these orators who preach themselves instead of preaching Jesus Christ; they do all that they can in order to gain a vain approbation, and they do not even know how they may obtain it from every one. He who, on the other hand, wishes to preach Jesus crucified is always sure of success in his work, since he thereby pleases God; this should be the end of all our actions.

Oh, would to God that there were banished from the church such a vain mode of preaching! It is certain that if all preachers spoke in a simple and in an apostolic manner one would see the world changed. "Christian preaching," says St. Ambrose, "does not need pomp and cultured discourse; therefore fishermen, uneducated men, were chosen to preach the Gospel."¹ The Apostle, speaking of those that preach with pomp, speaks of them as *adulterating the word of God*.² Oh how expressive is this word *adulterating*! This is what St. Gregory well explains in the following passage: "The perverse man who serves vainglory is rightly said to adulterate the word of God, because by sacred eloquence he desires not to gain children to God, but to show his own science, and he devotes himself rather to his own pleasure than to the generation of spiritual children."³

Sermons preached with vanity serve only to render proud him who preaches, to make him who listens lose time, and what is worse, to enervate the word of God; for the florid style takes from the eternal truths the

¹ "Prædicatio christiana non indiget pompa et cultu sermonis; ideoque piscatores, homines imperiti, electi sunt, qui evangelizarent." —*In 1 Cor.* i.

² "Adulterantes verbum Dei." —*2 Cor.* ii. 17.

³ "Perversus quisquis, ac vanæ gloriæ serviens, recte adulterari verbum Dei dicitur, quia, per sacrum eloquium, non Deo filios gignere, sed suam scientiam desiderat ostentare, et voluptati magis, quam generationi, operam impendit." —*Mor.* l. 16, c. 28.

force that they have in themselves, as is said by St. Prosper or some other ancient author: "A sermon purposely cultured enervates the vivacity of the sentences."¹ Hence St. Paul thus declares: *For Christ sent me . . . to preach the Gospel: not in wisdom of speech, lest the cross of Christ should be made void.*² On this text St. John Chrysostom has written: "Some bestow labor upon external wisdom; he (Paul) shows that it not only does not help the cross, but it even destroys it;" so that the refinement of thoughts and elegance of expressions destroy, so to speak, the fruit of the Redemption wrought by Jesus Christ.³

Oh what a fearful account will those orators have to render to God at their death for having preached with vanity! St. Bridget⁴ saw the soul of a religious damned for having preached in this manner; and the Lord afterwards declared to the saint that through the organ of vain preachers it is not he that speaks, but the devil. A still more terrible example is that which is related by Father Cajetan Maria of Bergamo, a Capuchin, in his book entitled "*The Apostolic Man in the Pulpit.*" He says that a preacher of his Order related to him the following occurrence that happened to him a few years before: When still a young man and a lover of belles-lettres, he had preached with a vain eloquence in the cathedral of Brescia; but returning thither a few years afterwards, he spoke in a manner entirely apostolic. When asked the cause of this change, he answered: I knew a celebrated preacher, who was a religious and my friend, and had, like myself, a liking for vain eloquence.

¹ "Sententiarum vivacitatem sermo cultus ex industria enervat."

² "Misit me Christus . . . evangelizare, non in sapientia verbi, ut non evacuaretur crux Christi."—I Cor. i. 17.

³ "Alii externæ sapientiæ operam dabant; ostendit (Paulus) eam, non solum cruci non opem ferre, sed etiam eam exinanire."

⁴ *Rev.* l. 6, c. 35.

At the hour of death it was not possible to persuade him to make his confession. I went to him myself and spoke earnestly to him; but he only stared at me without saying a word. Then the Superior conceived the thought of having the Blessed Sacrament taken to his cell so as to touch him and induce him to receive holy Communion. The ciborium was brought, and those present said to the sick man: "Here is Jesus Christ, who has come to pardon you." But he cried out in a voice of despair: "It is this God whose holy word I have betrayed!" Then we all occupied ourselves, some with praying to the Lord to have mercy upon him, and others with begging the dying man to trust in God's mercy; but he began again to cry out with still greater force: "It is this God whose holy word I have betrayed!" Then he added: "There is no longer any mercy for me!" We continued to encourage him, but he cried out a third time: "It is this God whose holy word I have betrayed!" Then he said: "By a just judgment of God I am damned!" And immediately after he expired. The Father concluded by saying that this event had determined him to change his manner of preaching.

At least in purgatory the Lord will not fail to punish all these vanities that one shows in preaching. It is related of Father Francis dell' Aredo, who converted a great number of souls, that after his death he appeared to his confessor, and said that he had to spend several days in purgatory on account of some florid sermons that he had preached in his youth. This example is cited by Father Nadasi, and here is another which he also quotes: While a Father of the Society of Jesus, Rector of the college at Maiorica, was preaching a very elegant sermon, our Lord said to the Venerable Alphon-sus Rodriguez: "Your Rector will have to pay up for this sermon by the fire of purgatory."

It is certain that all the vanities shown in the pulpit

and all the applause received are not what gives confidence when one is dying. Several persons worthy of belief have assured me that a celebrated preacher of our time who preached in this manner with the applause of crowds of people, finding himself near death, ordered all his writings to be burnt. Moreover, it has been told me of the same preacher, that hearing on one occasion eulogies addressed to him on account of his pompous discourses, he answered: "These discourses will one day be the cause of my condemnation."

We should note what Muratori says in speaking of panegyrics in his book entitled *Christian Charity*. Here is what he says: "Ah! why so many panegyrics, which often end in a vain mental pomp, in far-fetched subtilities of a brain filled with self-love, which are beyond the comprehension of most people? . . . If the panegyric is to be profitable, it should be given with that popular and intelligible eloquence which enlightens and touches not only the ignorant, but also the learned. But this kind of eloquence is not always well known by him who imagines himself more learned than others." Seneca, writing to Lucillus, says that the orator should be more attentive to things than to expressions; then he adds, that the orator gives a bad idea of himself when he shows himself fond of such a trifling thing as the adorning of his discourse with leaves and flowers.¹ So spoke a pagan; how much more should a Christian speak in like manner!

But some one will say, What do you wish?—do you wish that all the sermons should be mission sermons? I answer by asking what one understands by mission sermons: if one understands sermons made at random and negligently, without following any rule and without

¹ "Quære quid scribas, non quemadmodum. . . . Cujuscumque orationem videris sollicitam et politam, scito animum esse pusillum occupatum"—*Epist.* 115.

order, I condemn, as every one does, such sermons. But if one understands sermons made after the apostolic fashion, in a simple style, within the comprehension of the people who make up the audience, I have already cited elsewhere¹ what has been written on this point in his golden book, *Popular Eloquence*, by the above-mentioned Muratori, who has certainly held and still holds to-day a distinguished place among the first literary men of Europe. He says that when one preaches to an audience in which are found not only the learned, but also the uninstructed, who ordinarily form the greater part, it is expedient to preach in a simple and popular style; for this kind of preaching will profit the common people, and the learned, if they do not find the charm of diction, will nevertheless draw more fruit by seeing themselves enlightened and impelled to devote themselves more to the good of their souls. Moreover, one admits that before an audience composed of people who are well instructed, the preacher should use more choice language. But to apply one's self to interweaving the sermon with flowers and leaves, that is, with learned researches, subtle and lofty reflections, pompous descriptions, choice terms and sonorous periods—all this is not suitable for the pulpit; for God does not cooperate with the success of such sermons; and without God's co-operation, what fruit can one ever hope to derive? Pastors of souls should, above all, guard against such vanities; for preaching by virtue of their office and their duty they are bound by a strict obligation to make themselves understood by all the members of their flock.

Besides, I also admit that Lenten sermons should be different from mission sermons; however, when an audience is composed mostly of people that are but little instructed, Muratori teaches, as has been said, that all the

¹ DIGNITY AND DUTIES OF THE PRIEST, Part II., Instr. iv. (Volume XII., page 269).—LETTER TO A RELIGIOUS, in this volume, page 17.

sermons should be simple and popular in order that one may derive fruit therefrom, and have the consolation that the hearers will go to confession after the sermon. I remember that when Father Vittelleschi preached in this simple way at Naples, not only was the church filled, but the confessionals were besieged by a crowd of persons who wished to go to confession. And as for the Lenten sermons, which are given in the country, where nearly the whole audience is composed of poor villagers, one should use, as Muratori expressly says, the simplest and commonest possible words in order to adapt the discourse to the gross intelligence of the hearers. At least, I would wish the preachers who go through the country, and do not care about changing the lofty style of their sermons, to give during the last week, in the evening, when the people return from the fields, the spiritual exercises in the form of a mission. I assure them that they will produce more fruit by these familiar exercises than by a hundred Lenten sermons.

However, as for the Lenten sermons, it is a consolation for me to know that even in great cities like Naples, this foolish and, so to speak, barbarous style, which was in use in the last century, has been rejected; at present priests commonly preach in a familiar and an easy style, and I am glad of that. On the other hand, I regret to hear that on the missions some young preachers have introduced the use of the florid style; and I am astonished that the Superiors permit such subjects, who boast of being called missionaries, to preach in this fashion. In every sermon the missionary should preach as a missionary. One of our young subjects, while preaching one day a sermon on the Blessed Virgin, used a lofty and polished style; not only did I make him come down at once from the pulpit, but I forbade him to say Mass for three days.

The missionary, I say, should always preach as a mis-

sionary, but especially during the missions; otherwise he will have to render a twofold account to God, either on account of the little fruit which he derives from the sermons, or on account of the bad example which he gives to others by departing from the mission style, which should be entirely simple and popular. I do not contend, as I have said above, that the mission sermons should not be composed with the order that is suitable to them according to the rules of the oratorical art, and even with the use, wherever necessary, of tropes and of figures, of which we will afterwards speak; but as Muratori says, all this should be arranged with simplicity, without the appearance of being so arranged; for mission sermons should be composed of easy teachings, of suitable applications, and of Christian practices. This is to break the bread, as God requires of all preachers, and especially of missionaries: *Deal thy bread to the hungry.*¹

I beg my reader to make with me the following prayer:

My Lord Jesus Christ, Thou who, to save souls, hast given Thy life, deign to enlighten and animate so many priests who could convert many sinners and sanctify the world if they preached Thy word without vanity and with simplicity, as Thou hast preached it Thyself and Thy disciples have followed Thy example. These priests, however, act otherwise: they preach themselves; and thence it happens that although the world is full of preachers, yet hell is filled with lost souls. O Lord! remedy this great evil, which afflicts Thy Church through the fault of preachers.

I. TROPES.

A trope is the employment of a word or a phrase in a signification different from its own on account of some

¹ "Frangere esurienti panem."—*Is.* lviii. 7.

resemblance. Tropes differ from figures in this, that they apply to words a sense other than their natural sense; this is not the case with figures, as we shall see later on. There are six principal tropes: metaphor, allegory, irony, hyperbole, antonomasia, and metonymy.

1. A METAPHOR is the transfer of a word to a sense that does not belong to it; it suffices for a metaphor that there be some resemblance among the things. It is thus, for example, that the priests are called the light of the world and the salt of the earth. The transfer may be made from an animate thing to an inanimate, and conversely. The use of metaphors should not be frequent; and they should not be obscure, or taken from objects either too sublime or too common.

2. AN ALLEGORY is a continued metaphor, as when one says that Jesus Christ is the vine and we are the branches; that the branches united to the vine produce fruit, while those that are separated from it can only be thrown into the fire.

3. IRONY is when one says the contrary of what one wishes others to understand. It is necessary, especially in speaking of God, that irony be clearly apprehended by the hearers, and that they understand it in its ironical sense.

4. HYPERBOLE consists in exaggerating or diminishing the expression of a thing beyond measure for fear of not saying enough, as when God says to Abraham: *I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven.*¹ The use of the hyperbole should be rare.

5. ANTONOMASIA is when, instead of the proper name, we give to a subject another name to express what is good or what is bad in the subject; as when Lucifer is called "the Proud" or "the Dragon." Antonomasia may be used in four ways: (1) by attributing specially to some one a name common to several, as when St.

¹ "Multiplicabo semen tuum sicut stellas cœli."—*Gen.* xxii. 17.

Paul is called by way of eminence "the Apostle," and St. John "the well-beloved Disciple;" (2) by giving to some one for a name the title that designates a particular function, as when a lover of feasting is called "a Gourmand;" (3) by taking the name of the place, as when St. Augustine is called "the Doctor of Hippo;" (4) by forming the name from remarkable deeds, as when St. Francis Xavier is called "the Apostle of the Indies."

6. METONYMY, by which one names an object for another on account of the natural bond that unites them; it is thus that one names the cause for the effect, and conversely, the container for the contained, the subject for the attribute, as in the following examples: 1. *They have Moses and the prophets*;¹ we understand thereby the books of Moses and the prophets; 2. *Death is in the pot*;² we take the vessel instead of the poisonous herbs that it contains, or death instead of these same herbs that caused it; 3. *My son, give Me thy heart*;³ God is asking a man for his heart, asks of him his love, which has its seat in the heart.

2. FIGURES.

The Figure is an ornament of words or of thought, which elevates the discourse above ordinary language. We shall at first speak of the figures of WORDS, and then of the figures of THOUGHT.

FIGURES OF WORDS.

Figures of words are produced in three ways—by addition, by subtraction, or by similitude.

I.—Figures by ADDITION are the following:

1. ANAPHORA, which consists in repeating the same word at the beginning of several phrases or various members of a period; it is thus that St. Ambrose, speak-

¹ "Habent Moysen et Prophetas."—*Luke*, xvi. 29.

² "Mors in olla."—4 *Kings*, iv. 40.

³ "Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi."—*Prov.* xxiii. 26.

ing of Debora, says: "A woman judged, a woman disposed, a woman prophesied, a woman triumphed."¹

2. EPIPHORA, by which one repeats the same words, not at the beginning but at the end of the phrases, as in the text of St. Paul: *They are Hebrews, so am I: They are Israelites, so am I: They are the seed of Abraham, so am I.*²

3. SYMPOCSE, or COMPLICATION, which is done by uniting the anaphora and the epiphora.

4. ANADIPLOSIS, or CONDUPLICATION, which consists in repeating one word or several words of the phrase that precedes; such as this passage of St. Gregory: "What do we admire, brethren? Mary coming or receiving the Lord? May I say receiving or attracting? but I should rather say attracting and receiving."³ When we repeat the word immediately, the figure is called EPIZEUXIS; example: *Be comforted, be comforted, My people.*⁴ But when one repeats the last word of the phrase, the figure is confounded with the anadiplosis; example: *Our feet were standing in Thy courts, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem which is built like a city.*⁵ And when the word that begins a phrase is repeated at the end of the following phrase, it is called EPANALEPSIS; thus: *O God, who shall be like to Thee? hold not Thy peace, neither be Thou still, O God.*

5. POLYPTOTON, or TRADITION, when a word is repeated in different cases and at different times; thus St. Paul: *Now I make known unto you, brethren, the Gospel which I*

¹ "Femina judicavit, femina disposuit, femina prophetavit, femina triumphavit."—*De Viduis.*

² Hebræi sunt, et ego; Israelitæ sunt, et ego; semen Abrahæ sunt, et ego."—*2 Cor. xi. 22.*

³ "Quid miramur, fratres? Mariam venientem, an Dominum suscipientem? Suscipientem dicam, an trahentem? sed melius dicam trahentem et suscipientem."—*In Evang. hom. 33.*

⁴ "Consolamini, consolamini, popule meus."—*Is. xl. 1.*

⁵ "Stantes erant pedes nostri in atriis tuis Jerusalem: Jerusalem, quæ ædificatur ut civitas."—*Ps. cxxi. 2.*

⁶ "Deus, quis similis erit tibi? ne taceas, neque compescaris, Deus."—*Ps. lxxxii. 2.*

preached to you, which also you have received and wherein you stand, by which also you are saved.¹

6. CLIMAX, or GRADATION, when the last word of the phrase that precedes becomes the first of the following, and when one thus advances by degrees from phrase to phrase, as the Apostle in this passage: *Tribulation worketh patience; and patience trial, and trial hope; and hope confoundeth not.*²

II. Figures by SUBTRACTION are the following:

1. ASYNDETON, or DISJUNCTION, or DISSOLUTION, when several words or phrases follow without a conjunction, as in this passage of Salvian when speaking of the penitent David: "He took off his garments, laid aside his purple, removed his diadem; he is changed in appearance and in heart."³

2. SYNECDOCHE, or COMPREHENSION, when one admits in the discourse some word that is implicitly understood, as when one puts the part for the whole, or the whole for a part; example: *I will visit the evils of the world.*⁴ By the word *world* we here understand Babylon.

3. APOSIOPESIS, or ELLIPSIS, OMISSION, RETICENCE, when one suppresses something in the discourse, but in such a manner as to leave understood what one does not say. Thus David says: *And my soul is troubled exceedingly; but Thou, O Lord, how long?*⁵ This, according to St. Thomas, means: "How long wilt thou delay to come to my assistance, so that I may rise?"⁶

¹ "Notum autem vobis facio, fratres, Evangelium quod prædicavi vobis, quod et accepistis, in quo et statis, per quod et salvamini."—*I Cor.* xv. 1.

² "Tribulatio patientiam operatur, patientia autem probationem, probatio vero spem; spes autem non confundit."—*Rom.* v. 3.

³ "Indumenta deponit, purpura exuitur, diademate exhonatur, cultu et corde mutatur."—*De Gubern. Dei*, l. 2.

⁴ "Visitabo super orbis mala."—*Is.* xiii. 11.

⁵ "Anima mea turbata est valde; sed tu, Domine, usquequo?"—*Ps.* vi. 4.

⁶ "Usquequo non exaudies, et non dabis auxilium, ut resurgam?"

4. ZEUGMA, or ADJUNCTION, when one refers several subjects to one and the same verb; thus St. Paul: *Let all bitterness and anger, and indignation and clamor, and blasphemy be put away from you, with all malice.*¹

III. Figures by SIMILITUDE are the following:

1. PARONOMASIA, or ANNOMINATION, or ALLITERATION, when one repeats the same word with some modification to signify another thing; it is thus that St. Augustine has said, in speaking of the Publican: *Quid miraris, si Deus ignoscit, quando ipse se agnoscit?*² And St. Ambrose: *Fluctus est quidam maris, non fructus.*³

2. HOMŒOPTOTON, or in Latin, *Similiter cadens* (similar case-endings), occurs when several phrases or several members of a period terminate by words in the same case, as in this text of Isaias: *Quærite Judicium: subvenite oppresso, judicate pupillo.*⁴

3. HOMŒOTELEUTON, or in Latin, *Similiter desinens* (like ending), occurs when several phrases or several members of a period terminate in the same manner, or in verbs with the same ending; such is the passage from St. John Chrysostom: *Considera pactum quod spondidisti, conditionem qua accessisti, militiam cui nomen dedisti.*⁵

4. ISOCOLON, or in Latin, *Compar*, exists when the members of a period are nearly equal in the number of syllables; thus Isaias: *Occidere vitulos et jugulare arietes, comedere carnes et bibere vinum.*⁶

5. EPANORTHOSIS, or CORRECTION, when one feigns to correct or to retract an expression, by replacing it by another that is more proper; thus, St. Augustine: *Magna pietas, quod thesaurizat pater filiis; immo magna vanitas: thesaurizat moriturus morituris.*⁷

6. ANTITHESIS, or OPPOSITION, when several terms are

¹ "Omnis amaritudo, et ira, et indignatio, et clamor, et blasphemia, tollatur a vobis."—*Ephes.* iv. 31.

² *Serm.* 115, n. 2, *E. B.*

³ *De Tobia*, c. 5.

⁴ *Is.* i. 17.

⁵ *De Martyr.* s. 2.

⁶ *Is.* xxii. 13.

⁷ *Serm.* 60, n. 3, *E. B.*

opposed to one another in a period, as in this passage of St. Paul: *By honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true.*¹

FIGURES OF THOUGHT.

Among the figures of thought some serve to teach, some to please, and others to move.

I.—Those that serve to TEACH, are the following:

1. DEFINITION.

2. DISTRIBUTION OR ENUMERATION of parts.

We have spoken above of these two figures when treating of the common, intrinsic places or topics.²

3. PROLEPSIS, OR ANTICIPATION, when the orator anticipates the objection and refutes it.

4. PAROMOLOGY, OR CONCESSION, when one grants something to opponents, in order to obtain what one desires and something more; thus St. Augustine: "If you wish to sin, seek a place where God does not see you, and do what you wish."³

5. HYPOMONE, OR SUSPENSION, when one excites the curiosity of the hearers and keeps them for some time in suspense.

6. PARALEPSIS, OR PRETERITION, when one briefly says what one declares one wishes to pass over in silence; thus St. Augustine: *Omitto dicere quia forte, dum vivis, thesaurizas furi.*⁴

7. PARADOX, when one ascribes to the same subject attributes that seem irreconcilable, and are yet true in fact; thus Origen: *Audi ineffabile paradoxum: per non factum, sed genitum, omnia facta, sed non genita.*

II.—The figures that serve to PLEASE are the following:

1. APOSTROPHE, OR CONVERSION, when the orator, showing emotion, addresses mountains, animals, or absent persons.

¹ "Per gloriam et ignobilitatem, per infamiam et bonam famam, ut seductores et veraces."—2 Cor. vi. 8.

² Page 180.

³ *Serm.* 132, n. 2, *E. B.*

⁴ *Serm.* 60, n. 4, *E. B.*

2. **HYPOTYPOSIS**, or **DESCRIPTION**, when one describes things in lively colors.

3. **PROSOPOPEIA**, when one introduces into the discourse either a dead, absent, or fictitious person, or an inanimate thing, and makes them speak or act. One must take care to adapt the language to the thing or to the person; one should not make a king speak as a plebian.

4. **PERIPHRASE**, or **CIRCUMLOCUTION**, a term that one uses to express in a longer way, but more suitable, what one does not wish to say in proper words.

5. **DIALOGISM**, when one makes one or several persons speak among themselves or with others; such is the monologue of the prodigal son in St. Luke: *How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and here I perish with hunger!*¹

III.—The figures that serve to **MOVE** are the following:

1. **EROTESIS**, or **INTERROGATION**, when one addresses some one: either to show compassion, as when God called Adam after his sin and said to him: *Where art thou?*²—or to complain; for example: *If I be a master, where is my fear?*³—or to reprove, as the Lord, speaking to his people: *What iniquity have your fathers found in Me, that they are gone far from Me . . . ?*⁴

2. **ANTIPHORA**, or **SUBJECTION**, when to a question addressed to one's self one adds the answer; thus St. Augustine: "Tell me for whom are you hoarding riches? For myself, you say."⁵

3. **EPHONESIS**, or **EXCLAMATION**, when one raises the voice to excite fear or some other emotion; for example:

¹ "Quanti mercenarii in domo patris mei abundant panibus, ego autem hic fame pereo!"—*Luke*, xv. 17.

² "Ubi es?"—*Gen.* iii. 9.

³ "Si Dominus ego sum, ubi est timor meus?"—*Mal.* i. 6.

⁴ *Jer.* ii. 5.

⁵ "Dic cui thesaurizas? Mihi, inquis?"—*Serm.* 60, n. 3, *E. B.*

O folly of sinners, to lead an unhappy life upon earth in order to lead a still more unhappy life in hell!

4. EPIPHONEMA, a sententious exclamation by which one finishes an interesting recital; thus after having related the deed of a young idolater who, while present at a sacrifice offered by Alexander, preferred to have his hand burn rather than to disturb the ceremony, Tertulian adds: "So great was in this pagan youth the reverence for discipline that he conquered nature!"¹

5. APORIA, or DOUBT, when the orator is at a loss what course to pursue.

6. PARRHESIA, or LICENSE, LIBERTY, when the orator freely makes known some truth without fear of reproach.

7. DEPRECATION, when, after having moved the minds of the hearers by reason, one begs them to put in execution what one has said.

8. COMMISERATION, when one shows compassion for the misfortune of others.

9. REPREHENSION, when one reproves the hearers; this one should never do in words that irritate.

IV.

Memory, Pronunciation, and Gesture.

I.—As for the MEMORY, but little is to be said; for memory is a gift of nature, and is perfected according as one cultivates it by continual practice. It is, however, very useful, in order to render the memory local, to mark the points of the sermon, and the beginnings of sentences and of arguments, or at least of the longer periods with letters larger than usual, and with additional numbers.

It is also useful to make an abridgment of the sermon by indicating in a brief and distinct manner the begin-

¹ "Tanta in puero barbaro fuit disciplina reverentiæ, ut naturam vinceret!"

nings, as has been just said, of the periods, of the sentences, etc.; this may at least be of service to the preacher, who, if he should forget some part of the sermon, can remember the part that follows, and thus free himself from an embarrassment which, as has happened to many, might oblige him to come down from the pulpit.

II.—As for PRONUNCIATION, as one expresses things by words, one should express the different sentiments of the soul by the modification of the voice: the preacher should speak, now by raising the voice, now by lowering it; now quickly, now more slowly; now with dignity, as when he quotes the words of Scripture; now with severity, and now with gentleness and feeling. In this many fail to such an extent that they annoy and weary the hearers, by adopting a kind of sing-song; by dragging the voice in the articulation of words; by being precipitate in their delivery; by excessively raising or lowering their voice; or by suddenly passing from a high to a too low tone of voice.

Without doubt, in order to captivate the attention of the hearers, to impress better on their minds the things that one preaches, especially in mission sermons, it is very useful to vary the tone of voice; for a monotonous discourse gives but little prominence to the things that are said, and that should be expressed with more or less warmth or gentleness. Nevertheless, immediate transitions from one tone to another always cause disorder and trouble. Ordinarily, the exordium should be pronounced in a moderate and grave tone; for the proposition and the division of the points, the voice is raised and becomes more distinct; in the proofs, it is modified conformably to the quality of the things that one says. Arrived at the peroration, or the final exhortation, the preacher should show himself moved in order to move the hearers by speaking to them in such a manner as to

excite in them the passion with which he wishes to penetrate them; for example: anger and hatred require an impetuous tone; hope and love, a gentle voice; joy, a jubilant tone; grief, a plaintive voice, broken by groans and sighs. On missions, in the moral applications, the voice should be raised, especially when one speaks against vice.

On missions it has been the custom to use a THIRD TONE,* which consists in pronouncing the words in a loud voice by prolonging the last syllable but one, especially in the last words of the members of a period. It is expedient to employ this means from time to time when it is suitable; for example, when there is question of threats, complaints, or chastisements, etc. I said: "From time to time;" for if one uses this third tone too often, as some do, one ends in producing no longer any impression, and one even gives annoyance, the ear of the hearers becoming accustomed to it.

III.—As for GESTURE, one should avoid gestures that are affected or too uniform, that are always the same, or so impetuous as to give to the body an excessive agitation by moving inordinately the hands, the head, or the eyes.

The gestures of the hands should be grave. It is ordinarily the right hand that makes the gestures; one uses the left hand only to point out objects placed at its side, or things that are separated or opposed to one another. One should not raise the hand higher than the head, nor extend it too much, nor hold it too short, or only before one's breast. In the exordium, however, at the first period, one should not make any gesture; it is only at the second period that one may begin to move the hands, which during the whole exordium should be moved but little, and it would be better for one to remain always standing in the middle of the pulpit.**

* This is hardly known outside of Italy.—ED.

** The pulpits in Italy are more or less wide in extent; this enables the preacher to move several steps to the right or to the left.—ED.

While the right hand is raised, the left, if it is not moved, rests on the pulpit, and not on the breast. One should avoid putting the hands on the hips or on the back, raising them in the form of a cross, striking them together, or striking the pulpit; which should be done but rarely. Moreover, one should guard against taking off the surplice and casting it at one's feet, or making with the body any other improper movement; for by the name of gesture one understands not only the movement of the hands, but also that of every part of the body, and especially of the head and eyes.

The movement of the head should be regulated by the movement of the hand by turning the head in the same direction, except when the preacher desires to excite in the hearers a horror of something, and in this case it is proper to turn the head in the opposite direction. It is a fault to turn violently the head, to shake it too much, always to keep it erect, or bent, or often inclined on the breast, or always in the same attitude.

As for the eyes, it is a fault to keep them closed, or always cast down, or always fixed on one side, especially on the side where the women are, as if one made more of one part of the hearers than of the other. The eyes should, moreover, accompany the movement of the head. The expression of the countenance should be varied according to the subject by expressing therein, for example, sadness in things that are sad, such as terrible things, or grievous sins, gravity in things that are grave, and joy in things that are joyous.

Finally, every posture should be modest. One may sit down, but only sometimes. One may also pass from one side of the pulpit to the other, but without precipitation. Ordinarily, it is proper to remain in the middle of the pulpit in order to be understood by all; it is, however, good to turn from time to time, now towards the right, now towards the left, but without going so far as

to turn one's back to the opposite side. It is also a defect to make contortions, or to incline the body too much over the pulpit. In a word, the preacher represents Jesus Christ, of whom he is the organ; hence the language, the gestures, everything, should be grave, as is befitting a minister of Jesus Christ.

It must also be here remarked, that when one takes in one's hand the crucifix, one should not wave it as if it were a banner, as some are accustomed to do; it should be taken and held with gravity and respect.

V.

Special Instructions in regard to Mission Sermons.

We have already spoken of several things that are to be observed in mission sermons; but it will be well to reunite here in an abridged form the principal instructions, in order that the missionary may have them all united before him. Besides, we shall also indicate here the different other things that refer only to the manner of preaching during the missions.

I. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SERMONS.

Mission sermons should have fewer Latin texts. If we examine the sermons of the Venerable Paul Segneri, a great master in the art of preaching, we shall find few Latin passages, but many practical reflections and moral applications. The quotations from Scripture should be few, but should be well explained and well pondered. It will be better to present a single text well pondered by taking care to draw from it suitable moral applications, than to group together several passages which serve more to gratify the vanity of the preacher than to benefit the people. So also in regard to the opinions of the holy Fathers, they should be few in number, should be short and ingenious, that is, of such a nature as to

explain the subject with taste and with a special emphasis.

The comparisons should be exposed in a simple and popular manner, but should not be so common as to be unsuitable for the pulpit.

Only a few examples should be given—two or three at the most will suffice for a sermon; and they should not be too long—this being accomplished by leaving out unimportant details.

The moral applications should be strong and well discussed. It will be observed, as has been said above,¹ that from them the greatest part of the fruit of the mission is derived. There should not be in every sermon a long string of moral applications, mentioned superficially in passing, for example, against enmity, theft, impurity, lying, etc. It will be better to endeavor every time to combat firmly and in detail one or two of the more common vices, such as blasphemy, hatred, theft, and especially impurity, which being the most common of all, needs to be more frequently combated in the sermons. One should, however, take special care to speak with modesty when one treats of this shameful vice. Moreover, in the moral applications one should avoid hurting the feelings of any one; for those that recognize themselves in any humiliating allusion, which the hearers may apply to them, will not only not derive any benefit therefrom, but will become prejudiced, because they will become incensed and more hardened in evil. One should also guard against ever censuring priests or religious, even in general.

2. THE FORM OF THE SERMONS.

As for the manner of preaching on missions, we have already spoken of this above,² when we spoke of the dignity of elocution. We have there quoted³ the opin-

¹ Pages 192 and 193.

² Page 199.

³ Page 205.

ion of the celebrated Muratori, who thinks that when one speaks to an audience composed of many uninstructed persons all the sermons should be preached in a simple and familiar style; and when addressing country people, one should adopt a style that is as popular as can be, provided it be not coarse, so that these poor people may be instructed and moved in their own way. Moreover, as distinguished from Lenten and Sunday sermons, the manner of preaching on missions should be more free and unconnected; for the periods should be concise and detached, so that he who has not heard or understood the first may understand the second, and he that enters the church at the middle of the sermon may at once understand what the preacher is saying. This could hardly be successful in the case of persons who are but little instructed if the discourse is unbroken; hence he who has not heard the first sentence will understand neither the second nor the third.

We must, furthermore, take notice of the good advice given by Muratori, namely, that in order to have the people continually attentive, it is very useful to employ often the interrogation or the figure called ANTIPHORA, or SUBJECTION, described above,¹ by which the orator puts a question and answers it himself; example: Tell me: Why are there so many that relapse after the mission? It is because they do not keep away from the occasion of sin. Or: What do these words of the Holy Ghost mean: *Desires kill the slothful?*² We thereby understand those who, having bad habits, always desire to amend their lives and never employ the means of doing so. Or, one makes this exclamation: Oh how touching are the words of Jesus Christ: *Him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out!*³ What also serves to

¹ Page 214.

² "Desideria occidunt pigrum."—*Prov.* xxi. 25.

³ "Eum, qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras."—*John*, vi. 37.

keep the hearers attentive, is often to claim their attention by saying: Pay attention to what I am going to tell you. Or: Hear the beautiful reflection made by a celebrated author. One should, however, avoid always using the same form and employing too often this means, and thus causing the hearers to grow weary.

To move the feelings of the hearers it is very useful to make an invocation, even in the middle of the sermon; for example: My God, how many unfortunate beings are damned in consequence of this illusion! Or: O Lord! how canst Thou tolerate these traitors, who promise Thee, and immediately afterwards, etc. Or: O holy Virgin Mary, obtain that these poor blind creatures may be enlightened, etc. Or: O God of goodness, Thou comest to seek us in order to save us, and we flee far from Thee in order to damn ourselves! It is also good sometimes to repeat in a grave manner some strong maxim; for example: We must die; we must die; it is an evil without a remedy! Or we may use some weighty exclamation; for example: O cursed sin! O great moment, the moment of death! or: eternally happy or eternally unhappy!

As regards the modulation of the voice, one must avoid the uniform and emphatic tone of the panegyrists: I am speaking of those that preach their own praises, and not those of a saint; for even panegyrics should, according to Muratori, be pronounced in such a way as to produce fruit and not merely wind. It is good sometimes, as has been said above, to use the THIRD TONE when there is question of inspiring fear or compassion. Besides, one should guard against always speaking in a forced tone, as is done by certain missionaries, who run the risk of bursting a blood-vessel, or at least of losing their voice, while, on the other hand, this manner of speaking wearies the audience without any special benefit. What rouses and conciliates the attention of

the people is to speak in a **tone**, now high, now low, but without excessive and sudden **transitions**; at one time to make a longer exclamation, at another, to make a pause, and then to continue with a **sigh**, etc. This variety of tone always keeps the hearers **attentive**.

3. THE ACT OF CONTRITION AND THE END OF THE SERMON.

It will be useful to mention here several things concerning the act of contrition, which is the most important part of the mission sermons. One shall derive but little profit from the sermon if the hearers remain convinced, without, however, being penetrated with compunction and without being resolved to amend their life;¹ now it is this last effect that it is intended to be produced by making an act of contrition.

At first, before making the people kneel down, one should endeavor to move them as much as possible to **kneel down** of themselves. At last, when the hearers are on their knees, before showing them the crucifix, one should make them all say: O Lord, pardon! O Lord, mercy! Afterwards, the torches having been brought in, and then the crucifix, one should make them recite several acts of contrition—two or three of them—each with its proper and distinct motive, in order that the sinners may repent and sigh, not inconsiderately, but with a motive and with reason. Otherwise if one contents one's self with saying, as some do: All should weep, should repent, should ask pardon of God;—all this without proposing the motives, then, undoubtedly, many people will cry out, will shed tears, when they hear others crying out, shedding tears, but they will do this without knowing the reason why; and the result will be a great deal of noise but no fruit. The preacher should, therefore, take care to wait till the cries cease before proposing the motive, so that the hearers may hear

¹ See above, page 195.

and understand him; if this is not done, he will by speaking during this commotion exhaust himself in vain. Hence the motive is to be proposed when the people are quiet. One shall say, for example: Sinners, my brethren, let each one of you address to Jesus Christ this petition: O Lord! why hast Thou waited for me till now, and hast borne with me after the many offences that I have heaped upon Thee? Hear what answer our Lord gives to you: I have waited for you, and I have borne with you in order to pardon you; repent, and I will pardon you, etc. (We will afterwards give other examples of these motives for the convenience of preachers.) After having proposed the motive, one should inculcate repentance by saying, for example: Let us now take courage! ask pardon of God; raise your voices, and say amidst tears and sighs: O Lord! I have offended Thee; I repent of my sins; I am sorry for them, etc.

It will also be very useful, when finishing, to have the people make a more formal and more extended act of contrition by calling upon them to repeat the words that one shall suggest one after the other. At first one shall tell the people to make an act of love to Jesus crucified by preparing them for it by some motive briefly expressed; then an act of hope of pardon by reposing confidence in the blood of Jesus Christ; and finally, the act of attrition followed by the act of contrition. But before forming this act, one should induce the hearers to make it for the confession for which they are preparing themselves; for, according to the probable opinion of a good number of authors, the act of repentance, as the matter of the sacrament, should be made in view of the absolution that is to be received. Then is to be added the good resolution never more to offend God, with the intention of going to confession the same evening or the day after, and to confess all sins without omitting any one of them through shame.

It must also be here remarked, that the preacher, at the beginning and at the end of every sermon, as also in the sermon itself, should always exhort the hearers to hear the sermon with the intention of confessing as soon as possible—that very evening or the following morning; for if one does not take this precaution in the beginning, it will easily happen that the people will put off confession till the last moment, and thus the mission will end in confusion and with little profit. Moreover, in telling the people to make a firm purpose of amendment, the preacher should at times insinuate, at the end of the act of contrition, a special resolution in regard to certain more habitual sins, as, for example, to avoid blasphemy, to restore the goods of others, to forgive enemies, not to violate chastity, and above all to flee from the occasion by reminding them several times during the sermons, that he who does not remove the proximate occasion cannot be absolved; this is also to be understood in regard to fathers and mothers that permit the betrothed of their daughters to enter the house. It is good to insist, and insist repeatedly, upon that which refers to the good resolution by saying, for example: Do not defer, make now, the resolution to do what God asks of you; make haste; do you perhaps wish that God should abandon you? This will surely happen if you do not make up your mind.

Before finishing the sermon, the preacher should urge the people always to have recourse to Mary by asking her for some particular grace, as holy perseverance, a happy death, love for God, etc.

At the end, when giving the people the blessing with the crucifix, one should suggest to them what they must say while receiving it; for example: O My God! I do not wish to lose Thee any more. Or: O Lord! if I should still offend Thee, let me rather die. O Lord! do not permit that I should again separate myself from

Thee. I have offended Thee enough; I do not wish to offend Thee any more in future. O my God! in the past, I have offended Thee; hereafter, I will love Thee.

The sermon concluded, one should avoid imposing upon the people the recitation of "Hail Marys" for the persons that have asked for them; they should be recited before the sermon; for if they are recited afterwards, the compunction produced by the sermon will grow cold. The best thing will be, to tell the women that they should return home with a contrite heart by thinking of the sermon that they have heard; as for the men, they should be told to remain, either to follow the missionaries who are to give the evening exhortation,¹ or to participate in the exercise of taking the discipline.²

4. EXAMPLES OF VARIOUS MOTIVES FOR THE ACT OF CONTRITION.

1. Sinners, my brethren, rid yourselves this evening of all fear. Of what are you afraid? During the many years that you have lived away from God, he did not cease to go in search of you; and now that you are disposed to change your life, would he repel you? Ah! do not hesitate; repent, weep, etc.

2. St. Augustine says: If a poor shepherd loses a heifer, he weeps; if he loses a sheep, he weeps; and you who have lost God, the sovereign good, do not weep.

3. My dear brethren, God comes in search of you to make peace with you; and you do not wish to make peace with God? Come then, etc.

4. Do you fear that Jesus Christ will reject you? Well, listen to what he says in the Gospel: *Him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out.*³ I cannot repel him who comes to me repentant. Do you understand this? Come, etc.

5. Oh, how God rejoices when he sees a sinner weeping over his sins! My brethren, how much displeasure

¹ Page 95.

² Page 117.

³ "Eum, qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras."—*John*, vi. 37.

have you not caused Almighty God! Give him, therefore, this evening, this pleasure by saying to him with your whole heart: O Lord, my God! I repent of having offended Thee.

6. Tell me, sinners: Did Jesus Christ deserve to be treated as he was treated? But this good Lord does not wish that you should despair; ask his pardon, etc.

7. Have you the desire to obtain pardon of God? Know that God desires still more to grant it to you.

8. You see here Jesus Christ; you see what your soul has cost him; you see what he has done for you; and you wished to lose Jesus Christ for a mere nothing!

9. You have turned your back upon God, and God has done the same to you; but hear what Jesus Christ says to you this evening: *Turn ye to Me . . . and I will turn to you.*¹ Leave sin, and return to me; I embrace you.

10. Sinners, during how many years have you fled from the Lord who comes to you? Hear what he says this evening to each one of you: My dear little sheep, stop, cease to run away from me, who wishes to do you good, who wishes to serve you.

11. The Lord speaks to you this evening as if bewailing your loss: *Why will you die, O house of Israel?*² But you answer: What shall I do? the sins have been committed. And thereupon the Lord answers: *Return ye, and live.*³ Return to me, repent, and I will pardon you.

12. See Jesus Christ, with open arms, calling you and saying to each one of you: My child, ask my pardon; for I will pardon you.

13. Sinners, you would no doubt like also to hear the words addressed by Jesus Christ to Magdalen: *Thy sins are forgiven thee.*⁴ Well, if you wish to hear them,

¹ "Convertimini ad me . . . et convertar ad vos."—*Zach.* i. 3.

² "Quare moriemini, domus Israel?"—*Ezech.* xviii. 31.

³ "Revertimini, et vivite."—*Ib.* 32.

⁴ "Remittuntur tibi peccata."—*Luke,* vii. 48.

cast yourselves weeping, like Magdalen, at the feet of your Saviour, etc.

14. Rejoice sinners, because you have not to treat with a man of this earth, but with God. If you had offended any person as you have offended God, I should say to you that there would be but little hope for pardon; but you have to treat with God, whose mercy is infinite. Should you have offended him for fifty consecutive years by committing every day a thousand mortal sins, it would be sufficient for you to say this evening: O Lord, I repent, etc. God will immediately answer you: And I will pardon you all the displeasure that you have caused me.

These motives are here presented as examples; one may form many others like them.

5. CONCLUSION.

Such are the rules of preaching; but the first rule is that which was given by the Venerable John d'Avila to a priest who had asked him for some good rule in order to preach well: "If you wish to preach well," he said to him, "love Jesus Christ much." To preach well is to attain the end of the sermon, that is, that the hearers are converted to God and that they put in practice what they are taught; now this is attained by those preachers that love God. We read in the chronicles of the discalced Carmelites that a Father, named Julian of St. Paul, although he had studied but little, preached with such success that the people came in crowds to hear him and were converted, every one of them deriving much fruit from his sermons. Some one having asked what good could be found in this preacher, whom every one went to hear, the following answer was given to him: "We go to hear him, because he is a saint: he sheds tears during Mass, he sleeps little, he always goes about with his eyes cast down, he is always praying, he

speaks only of God and of our welfare; and therefore we do what he tells us." John d'Avila had then reason to say that the first and most important rule for preaching well is to love God.

6. NOTE AS TO THE SERMONS USUALLY PREACHED IN OUR MISSIONS.

Beside the sermon on mortal sin, in which one shows precisely the malice of sin considered as a contempt for God, and besides the three sermons on the Last Things, or on death, judgment, and hell, which should always be given, one must not fail, before beginning to preach on the Last Things, to preach a sermon on confession, in which one should show especially the gravity of the sacrilege and the ruin brought upon the soul by the sin of concealing sins in confession.

Moreover, one should not omit to preach, immediately after the sermon on hell, a sermon on the Blessed Virgin, in which one should speak chiefly on the confidence that we should have in the protection of this divine Mother by having recourse to her in order to overcome the temptations and obtain a happy death.

Again, one should not omit the sermon on prayer, or the absolute necessity in which we are of always recommending ourselves to God to obtain perseverance in what is good and eternal salvation; and in this sermon one should suggest to the people the practical manner of recommending themselves to God, in the morning on rising, in the evening on retiring, when they visit the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin, and above all when they are assailed by temptations. This sermon should be preached on all the missions, since, without prayer, one cannot obtain perseverance; and when on any little mission time is wanting, one must speak at length of prayer in the last sermon that is followed by the blessing.

The other sermons are arbitrary; one may choose, as

one thinks fit, among them the sermon on the mercy of God, the spiritual and temporal chastisements of sin, the divine vocation, the importance of salvation, the vanity of temporal goods and temporal evils in comparison with eternal good and eternal evils, the number of sins, or abandonment on the part of God—a sermon of great use for the perseverance of sinners who are converted—final impenitence, scandal, and perseverance, a subject that is treated in the last sermon when the blessing is given.

VI.

The Exercise of the Devout Life.

The exercise of the devout life is one of the most useful of the mission. Souls that give up sin only when moved by the fear of divine chastisements, when the mission is finished and their emotion dissipated, easily return to their old vices; but those that remain attached to God by love, easily persevere. Hence I say that the exercise of the devout life is very useful; for one's only aim thereby is to point out the means necessary for perseverance while penetrating the hearers with love for Jesus Christ by the consideration of his Passion and of the love that he has borne to us. It is indeed great misery to see that preachers usually treat of everything else except of the love for Jesus Christ after God has done so much and suffered so much to gain our love. But let us come to our subject.

On the last days of the mission, before its close, the usual sermon is replaced by the exercise of the devout life, which exercise lasts three days, or at least two in small places.

On each of these evenings the preacher begins by giving a half hour's practical instruction on the means to be used to lead a Christian life. He should especially teach therein the manner of making mental prayer;

at first he should show them how useful and even how necessary it is to all kinds of persons in order that they may keep themselves in the grace of God; for Christians well know the truths of faith, but as they neglect to think of them, they do not live as Christians. Then he explains the manner of making meditation with facility so that every one can practise it. I have already shown in my little work *Instruction and Practice for Confessors*¹ the manuer of making mental prayer, which should be taught by pastors of souls. The teaching of this method is substantially reduced to the following points: At first, the one that wishes to meditate, places himself in God's presence, humbles himself before him, asks him for the light that he needs; afterwards, he begins to read, if he knows how to read, either to consider some point, whether of the Last Things, or of the Passion of Jesus Christ, or some other similar subject; and then he makes acts of contrition, of love, of confidence, of petition, and makes good resolutions.

One should recommend to the pastors to have daily meditation made in common with the people, either in the evening, or in the morning during Mass, by having some point of meditation read twice, namely, immediately before the beginning of Mass, and after the consecration.*

One should announce this to the people, but should add that those that cannot come to the church to make meditation with the others, should make it at least privately at home, in some retired place, and at a time when there is less noise in the house, and that, if they have no other time or no other way, they should at least make it while working or walking. Moreover, one

¹ *Homo apost. append.* 4, § 3.—Volume III. page 252, of the ascetical works.

* See the beginning of Chapter IX.

should exhort the fathers and the mothers to send their sons and daughters to church to make this exercise there, or to introduce it at home for the whole family, as some have already done.

The foregoing instruction finished, the preacher kneels down and announces a mystery of the Passion of Jesus Christ which should be meditated upon; one may also unite two mysteries, as the scourging and the crowning with thorns, or the journey to Calvary and the crucifixion. In this exercise one may use the *Reflections and Affections on the Passion*, a little work which I have added to the *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament*. Before beginning the meditation it will be well to sing a hymn of the Passion, the better to dispose souls for compunction and tender affections; for in these meditations one does not speak of things that inspire fear; all the moral applications and all the affections should have for their object the practice of virtues, and especially of a tender love for Jesus Christ. The preacher should, therefore, say at the beginning: I wish this evening no more tears of fear, but tears of tenderness and of love.

One begins the exercise for the preparation by making the ordinary acts: the act of faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament with the act of adoration, the act of humility with the act of contrition and the petition for light. Then, after having said an *Ave Maria*, one passes to the meditation of the mystery, which contains four parts: the representation, the reflection, the affection, and the firm purpose of amendment.

I. THE REPRESENTATION consists in exposing in a lively manner, before the eyes of the hearers, the mystery with all the most touching and most important circumstances; for example: Imagine, my brethren, that you see Jesus bound to the column, his head bent, his eyes fixed upon the ground, waiting for the tortures that the executioners are preparing for him, etc.

2. The REFLECTION; for example: Consider the pains of Jesus Christ and his confusion by seeing himself treated like a slave, and think that by your sins you have been the cause of the sufferings that your Saviour endures.

3. The AFFECTIONS, not only of compassion for Jesus Christ, a sentiment on which some dwell too much, but also of hatred for sin, and above all of love for our Redeemer. One should remark that in these meditations the principal part is the movement of the affections, and that the missionary should dwell thereon at greater length; for example: Say to him then: Here I am, O my Jesus! let me know what Thou desirest of me; I wish to perform it immediately. At this moment I should be in hell where I could no longer love Thee; but since it is permitted to me to love Thee still, I wish to love Thee.—Or: Faithful soul, dost thou not see that God calls thee to his love? Render thanks to him, and say to him: O my God! how could I in the past have been so ungrateful to Thee, who hast loved me so much? The life that remains to me I will spend entirely in weeping over the displeasure that I have caused Thee, and in loving Thee with my whole heart. O cursed years! what have you done? you have made me offend my dear Saviour, who has wished to die for me. O my God! I give myself entirely to Thee; accept me, O Lord, for hereafter I will belong entirely to Thee!

4. The FIRM PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT, or the resolution to put in practice the means given to each one to sanctify himself. It is this that should be inculcated from time to time: Courage, faithful soul, decide now to give thyself to God. Thou seest that Jesus Christ calls thee to his love; thou seest that he wishes to be loved by thee; do not resist any longer. He wishes you to give up that attachment . . . The mission is already coming to a close; make without delay a generous resolu-

tion, and thou wilt see the graces that God will bestow upon thee if thou obeyest his voice. Say without hesitation: Yes, my Jesus, I wish to please Thee; I wish to do all that Thou wishest me to do; help me; give me Thy love; I desire nothing more.

Following these examples, one should interweave the meditation with other acts of a firm purpose, of thanksgiving, of self-oblation, of resignation, and of petition, by specially asking for holy perseverance and the love of God. At the end one should briefly make the Christian acts of faith, of hope, of love, and of contrition; but the preacher should stop longer at the act of love and of contrition. The first evening he may exhibit a picture of the *Ecce Homo*; the second evening, the image of Christ crucified.¹

VII.

The Last Sermon, on Perseverance, with the Papal Blessing.

After the evenings consecrated to the exercise of the devout life comes the last sermon, with the papal blessing. I know that other Congregations have the custom of giving it before this exercise, and we ourselves followed this custom for some time; but experience has taught us that it is better to finish it in a different man-

¹ In regard to this, we read in the life of the holy author: "Affections on the Passion were then so tender in the mouth of Alphonsus that torrents of tears could be seen flowing in the church: before, the people wept through sorrow for having sinned; in this meditation, they shed tears of love. To move the sensibility of the people, he exhibited before their eyes, in the last of these meditations, a large picture which he had himself painted, and in which Jesus Christ was represented dead on the cross, having his limbs all covered with blood and wounds. This exercise, so touching, produced the greatest fruit on the missions" (Tannoia and Villecourt, l. 2, ch. 52).

We have collected the different teachings of St. Alphonsus on mental prayer, so that it forms a complete treatise: it is to be found in Volume III., page 252. — ED.

ner; for when the people have received the papal blessing, they easily neglect to be present at the exercise of the devout life, believing in some way that the mission is over; on the other hand, it is easy to have every one at this exercise in expectation of the blessing.

I. MANNER OF GIVING THE LAST SERMON.

On the day of the blessing there is no instruction; but the people should be kept occupied with the recitation of the Rosary, which the missionary prolongs by examples and moral applications. Then, before beginning the sermon, a short procession takes place with the Blessed Sacrament, accompanied only by priests: I have used the word *short*, because one should make only a few steps outside of the door of the church, where one should give with the Blessed Sacrament three blessings, one in the middle and two at the sides towards the fields, the priests chanting at each blessing the prayer of the Church: *Ut fructus terræ dare et conservare digneris: te rogamus, audi nos.*

After the procession has re-entered the church, the Blessed Sacrament is placed on the altar, where it is veiled. Then the sermon begins; in it one should speak of the necessity of perseverance for salvation, and should point out the means that are to be used in order to overcome the enemies of our salvation, namely, the world, the devil, and the flesh. One becomes victorious over the world by not caring for human respect. One should speak at length against this vice; because many souls who in the mission are converted and begin to lead a good life, yielding afterwards to this cursed human respect, for fear of being laughed at, abandon the Christian life and return to their old habits. At the same time, the hearers should be put on their guard against those impious men who, not wishing to do what is good, cannot see it in others without turning them

into ridicule and making satirical songs on them.—One overcomes the *devil* and his temptations by recommending one's self to God. Here one should again inculcate what should be repeated several times in the sermons, namely, that in temptations we must immediately have recourse to Jesus and Mary by invoking their holy names in order to obtain help.—The means of overcoming the *flesh*, or the impure vice, is also prayer, but the flight of the occasions must be joined to it. On this subject one should speak at length about the sad consequences of visiting persons of the opposite sex, and of going into bad company.

The advice that is to be left as a memento for the hearers is, chiefly, to frequent the sacraments, to make meditation every day, as also to visit the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin. Moreover, one should recommend to each family to recite the Rosary in common, and to every one in particular to say three "Hail Marys" in honor of the purity of Mary, in the morning after rising and in the evening before going to bed, adding a prayer for the grace of perseverance; to fast on Saturdays; to confess and communicate especially on each of the seven principal feasts of the Mother of God. One should also recommend the recitation, at the sound of the bell at three o'clock in the afternoon, of three "Our Fathers and Hail Marys," in memory of the agony of Jesus Christ. The following beautiful devotion should also be recommended: When a sick person is in his agony this should be announced by five or seven strokes of the large bell, and then every one should recite three "Our Fathers and Hail Marys" to obtain for the one that is dying a happy death. This is a salutary practice, not only for the sick, but also for all the rest who are reminded of death, which will one day overtake them. Finally, one should recommend the act of contrition that is to be made every evening.

This advice having been given, the preacher tells all to kneel down; then he says: The mission is now finished; before departing from you, I wish to leave you under the protection of the Blessed Virgin. Let each one of you repeat after me this prayer:

O my Queen, my Advocate, my Hope, and my Mother! I should have deserved to be banished from thy presence; but I know that thou, who art the Mother of mercy, doth not reject any one of those that have recourse to thy protection; I therefore, O my merciful Sovereign! take refuge under thy mantle. I promise to love thee and to serve thee hereafter, and to do all that I can that thou mayest also be loved by others. I likewise promise thee that when I am tempted to offend thee I shall always have recourse to thee, and shall say: My Mother, help me.—And thou, O my Queen! support me in all the temptations and all the dangers to which I shall be exposed to lose God. Above all, at the hour of death, do not abandon me, O my dear Mother! protect me and save me; for I protest that I shall live and die under thy protection.

2. MANNER OF TAKING LEAVE.

The foregoing prayer to the Mother of God having been finished, the preacher, before giving the blessing, takes leave of the people in the following manner:

You see now, my dear brethren, that the mission has drawn to a close. Before my departure, I wish you to pardon me if in my discourses I have caused displeasure to any one. For the rest, I have always spoken in general, without intending to offend any one in particular. All that was harsh and severe in what I said, was not said against you but against vice, because I should like to see every one of you saved. If, however, I have gone too far, if I have caused weariness, if I have been indiscreet in my reprimands, I ask your pardon. I ask you

especially to pardon me all the obstacles that I have placed, by my defects, in the way of your spiritual profit, and to pray to Jesus Christ also to pardon me.

I thank you for your attendance at the exercises of the mission, as well as for the obedience that you have shown. I bless all the sweat and all the labor that you have cost me during these days, and I offer all to God for your eternal salvation; I even protest that I am ready to give my life for each one of you, in order that we all that are here may have the happiness of saving our souls and of seeing ourselves all together in heaven.

I part from you, satisfied with the great work wrought in this mission. A simple thought fills me with sorrow, namely, whether there is any one among you who, notwithstanding the mission, still remains an enemy of God. Suppose that there is such a one among you, I would say to him: Poor sinner, you must know that, although the mission has come to an end, yet the mercy of God has not come to end for you. Do not despair; if you wish to make your peace with God, there is yet time: ask his pardon, and he will pardon you; here is Jesus Christ (here the crucifix is shown), who still calls you, having his arms open to receive you and to pardon you. My brethren, let each one among you now say to Jesus: O Lord! I trust that Thou hast already pardoned me; but if through my fault I have not yet been pardoned, deign to grant me pardon on this evening of the last day of the mission; for, O my God, infinite good! I repent of having offended Thee, etc. Ah! be assured, ye children of so good a Father. I do not doubt that he has pardoned you all. What you have to do in future for your salvation is to continue to live in the grace of God; for if you betray him again after the mission, I very much fear that he will abandon you. Courage, then, my brethren; make a good resolution; if that has not yet been made, make it this even-

ing; renounce the world. What have you profited by having committed so many sins? Ah! give yourselves now to God; begin to love this God, who has shown you so much mercy, and who, as I trust, now loves you so much; do not lose all the good that you have gained during these days.

My dear children, I depart from you; but see him whom I am leaving behind for you (here the crucifix is shown): I leave you this infinitely amiable God; learn how to love him.—Ye men, my brethren, I depart from you; but I leave you this excellent Friend, who loves you more than any other friend, more than any relative, more than your brother, more than your father, more than any person in this world.—Ye Christian women, I depart from you; but I leave in your hearts this God of love, who died for you; unite yourselves to him, learn how to return love for love.—And now I address myself to all of you: Souls redeemed by Jesus Christ, do not any more offend this good Saviour. What do you say? do you wish to offend him again? Say then: No, never, never. Ah! you say this too coldly; speak in a loud voice and say: O my God! never more will I offend Thee; rather will I die a thousand times than lose Thy grace. Now, if such is your resolve, raise your hand and give your word to Jesus Christ that you will no more offend him.

Now I am going to bless you; but before doing so, let me make an agreement with you: you will pray for me and I will pray for you; I will recommend you every day to God at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and you will say three “Hail Marys” every day for me after the recitation of the Rosary; and when you hear of my death, you must offer up a holy Communion for the repose of my soul.

3. MANNER OF GIVING THE BLESSING.

Although I am only an unworthy minister of Jesus Christ, yet I bless you all this evening, in the name of the Most Blessed Trinity, of the Father who created you, of the Son who redeemed you, and of the Holy Ghost who enlightened you, in the name of Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, in the name of St. Joseph, of St. Michael the archangel, and of the Guardian Angels, in the name of St. N., your Patron, and of all your holy Advocates, in the name of all the angels and of all the saints of paradise. I do not take the liberty of blessing your worthy bishop—rather should I receive the blessing from him; but I pray to God to bless him and to sanctify him more and more. You, my dear brethren, should always recommend him to God; for he does not cease to think of your welfare, and you are obliged to pray for him. Nor am I so bold as to bless the Very Reverend Vicar-General, the Very Reverend Canons, your pastor, or the other priests: I pray to Jesus Christ to bless them. Reverend Pastor, here are the members of your flock; we leave them all united with God; it is your duty to guard them in order that on the day of judgment you may present them in the state of grace to Jesus Christ. As a priest, I bless all the civil authorities, the Superiors of the congregations, and all those who during the mission have rendered us services, and have shown us so much charity.

Now, my dear brethren, it is you whom I wish to bless. In the name of Jesus Christ, I bless you soul and body—I bless your body and all its senses. I bless your eyes, in order that they may always be modest by never looking at any object that may lead you into temptation; I therefore specially bless your eyes. (Here the blessing is given with the crucifix.) I bless your ears, that you may never misuse them by listening to things

that offend God. I bless your mouth, that you may never employ it in uttering blasphemies, imprecations, immodest words, and wicked songs. (Here a second blessing is given.) I bless your feet, that when you can you may come to church to make mental prayer, as also visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin. I bless your hands. Young people, raise your hands: I wish to bless them. (Again the blessing is given towards the men.)—I bless all your children; devote yourselves to their sanctification, in order that one day you may find them all together in paradise. I bless all your relatives that cannot come to church—I bless all your lands, that they may bring forth abundant fruit. (Here the blessing is given towards the fields, on the right and on the left.) I also bless all your affairs, your goods, your animals, your hopes. My dear brethren, behave towards God as you should, and he will heap upon you spiritual and temporal goods. In fine, I bless all the bread that you eat, the ground upon which you walk, the air that you breathe; I include in this blessing all that concerns you.

But, above all, I bless your soul: this soul which was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ; I bless your soul and all its powers, the memory, the understanding, and the will.—I bless your memory, that you may not cease to recall to your mind all the graces that God has conferred upon you in this mission, and especially in this church. When you see this pulpit from which the Lord has spoken to you, this altar at which you have communicated, this confessional where Jesus Christ has pardoned you, remember all the graces that you have received there, and learn how to be grateful.—I bless your understanding, that you may every day make mental prayer, and that you may think often of God, who always thinks of you and of your welfare.—I especially bless your will, that you may love this God who de-

serves so much to be loved, and who loves you so much.—I bless, moreover, all the steps that you have taken to come to the church to hear the word of God, all the confessions and the communions that you have made, all the tears that you have shed during these days, as well as all the resolutions that you have taken, and all the promises that you have made to Jesus Christ, in order that you may be faithful to them.

Before I give you the last blessing, pray to the Blessed Virgin to bless you herself from on high, and to cause you to be blessed this evening by her divine Son. Receive now the papal blessing.—My Lord Jesus Christ, as I bless them on earth, so bless them from on high, and pardon them all their sins.—And you, my dear brethren, make again an act of contrition for your sins both mortal and venial, in order that you may receive in the blessing that I am going to give you a plenary indulgence of all your sins. Raise your voice while I bless you, and say: O Lord! I am sorry for all the offences that I have committed against Thee; henceforth I will love Thee.

Here the blessing is given with the crucifix by pronouncing, in a loud voice and intermittingly, these words: *Benedictio Dei omnipotentis, Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, descendat super vos et maneat semper.* Then the preacher will say:

During the singing of the *Te Deum* recite five "Our Fathers" and five "Hail Marys" and a "Glory be to the Father," to the intention of the Holy Father, in order to gain the indulgence. The *Te Deum* is now sung, in order to thank God for all the graces that he has conferred upon you; therefore, while the priests are chanting, thank God with tears of love for all the graces that you have received.—Let the Blessed Sacrament be unveiled. (The Blessed Sacrament having been unveiled the preacher from the pulpit intones the *Te Deum*,

which is continued by the clergy, who are assembled before the altar; then turning himself towards the people, he adds): Behold Jesus Christ; thank him with tears in your eyes, and promise him that you will sanctify yourselves.

The *Te Deum* finished, the celebrant, who should be one of the missionaries, after the prayers indicated in the Ritual, says five prayers: the first, that of thanksgiving, *Deus cujus misericordie*; the second, that of the Blessed Virgin, *Concede nos*; the third, that of the titular saint of the church; the fourth, for the Sovereign Pontiff; and the fifth for the civil authorities. Then the *Pange lingua** is sung, the Blessed Sacrament is incensed as usual; then the verse *Panem de celo* and the prayer *Deus qui nobis* are sung. After the prayer, the deacon takes the Blessed Sacrament, and gives it to the priest kneeling on the highest step of the altar; the priest turns with the Blessed Sacrament towards the people, and then, at the foot of the altar the preacher says: Brethren, I have blessed you with the crucifix; now Jesus Christ himself wishes to bless you in the Blessed Sacrament. See him here; reanimate your faith, and beg of him that, as we are this evening reunited in this church, we may one day have the happiness of finding ourselves all together in paradise. But in order to enter paradise, we must love God; say then to Jesus Christ while he is blessing you: My Jesus, I love Thee, and I do not wish to cease loving Thee.—O Lord! deign to bless them. Let the organ resound; let the bells be rung; and you, raising your voices, say with tears: My Jesus! etc.

* There is here question of the two strophes *Pange lingua* and *Tantum ergo*, which are found further on at the end of the *Acts for the Visit to the Blessed Sacrament*. It was a particular custom to chant these two strophes for Benediction, instead of the last two, *Tantum ergo* and *Genitori*, according to the common rule.—ED.

VIII.

Other Remarks Regarding the Sermon.

I. PRACTICES * AT THE END OF THE SERMON.

1. At the end of the act of contrition,¹ the preacher shall strike himself two or three times with a rope: I say, with a rope, and not with a chain; for a chain, if composed of massive rings, may very much injure the preacher, who, finding himself in fervor, would easily be led to strike himself without discretion; and if it is composed of hollow links it would indeed make a noise, but would inflict no pain. He should, therefore, take a rope, on two or three evenings of the mission, and strike himself during a considerable time in order that one may not judge this whole ceremony to be a mere sham. But he should refrain from tying the rope around his neck, as if he wished to strangle himself, as some do; this would appear to be a mere fiction. The preacher before striking himself shall take care to notice that he does this penance, not to expiate his own sins, but to obtain from God the grace of pardon for every obstinate soul that happens to be in the church.

2. In the sermon on death, before the act of contrition, it is usual to show a skull, to which the preacher should speak as follows:

Tell me, O skull: where is thy soul? is it in paradise, or in hell? Tell me: on the day of judgment in what state shall I find thee? wilt thou be crowned with stars, or surrounded by serpents and flames? Tell me: art thou the head of a man, or the head of a woman? If thou art the head of a man, tell me: What has become of all thy plans of fortune and ambition? whither has gone thy pride, thou who didst claim that every one

¹ Page 223.

* It is needless to remark that these practices are unknown outside of Italy.—Ed.

should respect thee?—If thou art the head of a woman, what has become of thy beauty? what has become of thy beautiful hair? Alas! worms have made them disappear. Where are thy beautiful eyes? Worms have consumed them. Where is thy tongue, with which thou didst sing so beautiful songs? Worms have devoured it. In a word, thou who didst flatter thyself to be so charming, see now thou art so hideous as to inspire terror.

After this the preacher, addressing the people, says: My dear brethren, you see what this skull is; so each one of you will be one day. There is no remedy: we must die! we must die! The act of contrition is then made.

3. In the sermon on hell it is customary to show the picture of a person that is damned. It has happened in our missions that sinners who remained insensible to all the other sermons, were moved at the sight of this picture and were converted. The manner of proceeding is as follows: The preacher, after having made the act of contrition, says:

I have spoken to you in this sermon about hell; but what could I say about hell? Nothing; for hell is known only by him who endures it. Ah! if this evening there came forth from hell a soul that is damned, in order to speak to you, it would know how to tell you what hell is. At least, my brethren, allow me to let you see a picture of one that is damned, in order that he may speak to you in his own way; here he is. Sinners, recognize yourselves in this picture, and see what you should be on account of your sins.

This picture should be carried by a missionary at the height of about ten or twelve palms above the ground; two other missionaries walk before him with two large torches, which they should take care to hold low enough and far enough from the picture so that the smoke does

not prevent it from being seen. The priests then move from the high altar and go to the door through the church, stopping from time to time, and turning the picture slowly now on one side, now on the other; the picture is then given to the preacher, who shows it from the pulpit, where he leaves it till the following evening exposed to the gaze of all; then he takes the crucifix and gives the blessing.

4. Another very touching practice is to carry the statue of the Blessed Virgin in procession to the church at the end of the sermon; this is the way it is done: Every evening this statue is exposed; but on this day we take it out of the church; immediately after the act of contrition, everything having been arranged beforehand, the door is opened, all the priests, in surplice and with lighted torches, are seen entering, carrying the statue of the Blessed Virgin, which they proceed to put, after walking through the church, in its usual place, near the pulpit.

5. It is also very useful if the missionaries walk in procession, in a penitential garb, strewn with ashes, and with a rope around their necks; they enter the door in procession, and afterwards take the discipline in the middle of the church. On another evening the priests of the place can hold a similar procession.

6. It might also be well, on one evening, after the sermon and the act of contrition, to have the people to make a general reconciliation, the women embracing the women, and the men embracing the men. But before this the preacher should call upon them to stand up; then he tells them that while peace is being made, the daughters should ask pardon of their mothers, the sons of their fathers, and that the persons who have offended their neighbors should go in search of those whom they have offended. All the missionaries should be present at this exercise, to see that the men are sepa-

rated from the women, and to prevent disorder; moreover, when the people show themselves insensible, it will sometimes be opportune for the missionaries to come forward to exhort and persuade them.

2. THE ERECTION OF CROSSES.

This ceremony is very touching; it is performed in the following manner:

After the last meditation of the exercise of a devout life, the preacher announces that as a remembrance not only of the Passion of our Saviour, but also of the mission, five crosses would be erected, and that the faithful who visit them can gain ten thousand years of indulgence by reciting five "Our Fathers" and five "Hail Marys" in memory of the Passion of Jesus Christ and of the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin (*Ap. P. Viva, in append. Jubil. in calce Trutinæ, § ult.*)*

—We may see what has been said above about this exercise (pages 126 and 151).

Hence, the meditation finished, five missionaries come from behind the high altar, carrying each a cross upon his shoulder, and walking one after the other with two torches before each cross. When they have reached the place destined to receive the crosses, they place them on the ground; and at the erection of each cross a suitable exhortation is given.

The preacher should take care that during the proces-

* Pope Pius IX., by a Rescript of March 27, 1852, deigned to grant other indulgences, namely: *A plenary indulgence*, on the anniversary of the erection of any cross, or on the Sunday following, as also on the Feasts of the Finding and of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross; conditions requisite: To confess and to communicate; to visit the cross, or one of the crosses erected, and a church or a public oratory and there to pray for some time to the intention of the Holy Father.

Indulgence of thirty days every time one recites devoutly before the crosses erected, five "Our Fathers," five "Hail Marys," and five "Glory be to the Fathers," in memory of the wounds of our Lord.—Ed.

sion the men leave the church first, and then the women, so as to avoid confusion; and during the exhortations the missionaries should watch that the two sexes remain separated, in order that everything that is unseemly may be prevented, as this ceremony usually takes place in the evening.

The exhortations should be very short, in order that they may be animated and may not cause weariness in those that are present. As five crosses are to be erected, five exhortations are to be given in memory of the five principal mysteries of the Passion, the same as those of the Rosary, namely: the agony, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the carrying of the cross, and the crucifixion. Every exhortation contains three parts: the exposition of the mystery, the announcement of the grace for which one asks, and the prayer. Thus:—In the first place, one exposes the mystery in memory of which the cross is erected.—Secondly, one announces the grace that should be asked of the eternal Father, through the merits of Jesus Christ, by the faithful who should come to visit this cross, in accordance with the mystery that is announced; for example: at the agony, one should ask pardon for one's sins; at the crowning with thorns, for victory over bad thoughts; at the scourging, one should ask for the virtue of chastity; at the carrying of the cross, for patience in trials; at the crucifixion, for holy perseverance.—Thirdly, at the erection of each cross one actually begs for the grace that refers to the mystery. -

At the end of each exhortation a missionary sings the following hymn:

I adore thee, holy cross,
My Saviour's painful bed,
Whereon for sinful man
Was placed that sacred head;
I adore thee, holy cross.

The following is an example of the first exhortation, which, differing from the four that follow, should be preceded by a short introduction; then follow the three parts designated above.

INTRODUCTION.—My brethren, the mission is already at an end, and it closes by leaving to your consideration how much Jesus Christ has suffered in order to save us. You should, then, in future unceasingly keep before your mind the remembrance of the love that your Redeemer has shown you in his Passion, as well as of the promises that you have made; this is the only reason why we erect these crosses.

EXPOSITION OF THE MYSTERY.—The first is erected here in memory of the bloody sweat endured by our Saviour in his prayer in the Garden of Olives. When you come to visit this cross, recite an "Our Father" and a "Hail Mary," and remember the bloody sweat and the agony which Jesus Christ suffered in the Garden of Olives while he was thinking of your ingratitude, etc.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF GRACE.—Through the merits of this pain which Jesus Christ felt, you should ask the eternal Father to grant you a great sorrow and pardon for your sins.

PETITION FOR GRACE.—Well, let us begin this evening. Raise the cross. (Here the cross is raised, and is to remain so.) Let all of you kneel down; let us adore this cross, and let us pray: O holy cross! we adore thee in memory of the bloody sweat and the agony which Jesus Christ suffered in the Garden of Olives.—And Thou, O eternal Father! by the merits of these sufferings of Thy well-beloved Son, give us a great sorrow for our sins and the pardon of all the offences that we have committed against Thee.

After this prayer the foregoing hymn is intoned. Afterwards, in the same way, exhortations are given for the four other crosses.

3. THE PLACING OF THE AUDIENCE AND OF THE PULPIT.

The placing of the audience and of the pulpit is of great importance to the success of the mission; the Superior should therefore pay considerable attention to this point. The following is a way of arranging the audience: The women are put together in the upper part of the church, that is, towards the high altar; and the men are to be in that part near the door. Care should be taken that the hearers are not placed too far from the pulpit; for when they see the preacher from afar, his words make but little impression, because they seem to them to be addressed to others, and not to themselves.

The pulpit should be placed in the middle or nearly in the middle, between the men and the women. In our missions we are accustomed to use portable pulpits; for these can be more easily put in the desired place, and they are more suitable for familiar language, which is the language of the missions. It is, however, true, that in places where the population is numerous, and where the churches are large, especially if they are very long, it is not opportune to use portable pulpits, which are very often low; for then those that are far off do not well see nor understand the preacher, whose voice remains as it were stifled: under these circumstances one must preach from the pulpit of the church.

One should, moreover, always take care, as much as possible, to separate the men from the women by means of curtains or benches, so that they may not even see one another.

In our missions it is not customary to expose the Blessed Sacrament every day; this is done only at the last sermon, when Benediction is given.

Near the pulpit it is usual to place a large statue of

the Blessed Virgin, in such a manner that the feet of the statue may be nearly at the height of the pulpit.

4. THE HOUR WHEN THE SERMON IS PREACHED.

There are pastors who desire that the sermon should be finished before the close of the day; for they say that if it is given in the evening many scandals will be the consequence. But this is mere prejudice, and altogether a mistake when there is question of missions. During the time of the mission, especially in villages, the hearers are composed mostly of workmen who live from hand to mouth, and who consequently are obliged to work every day to make a living. This being the case, if the sermon is given during the day it will be attended only by priests, by a few people of leisure, and by a small number of devout women who can leave their occupation; while most of the women, and especially the men, who need the mission most, will not be able to attend. They will scarcely come on holydays and on the last day, the day of the blessing, when they will be found insensible, because they have not heard the sermons: they will not then be absolved, and they will remain in the bad state in which they were before; so that the mission will be a failure, as this has happened in a certain place, because the sermon was preached before the men returned from the fields. It should be understood that the greatest fruit of the mission consists in the conversion of the men; for if the men remain bad, the women will also be bad.

But to this you may reply: If the mission is permitted to go on in the evening, many inconveniences will result therefrom; for every one knows the old proverb: Evil should not be done that good may arise therefrom—*Non sunt facienda mala, ut eveniant bona*. I reply: The proverb says: Evil should not be done—*Non sunt facienda*

mala. But it is not said: Evil is not permitted that good may arise therefrom—*Non sunt permittenda mala, ut eveniant bona.* Sometimes it is good to permit some evil in order that good may not be omitted, especially when there is question of the common good; for if one had to avoid all the inconveniences that may be caused in the exercises of piety, we should have to abolish in the Church all the feasts, the processions, the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and even the confessions and the communions, since all these works give rise to inconveniences; but the Church rightly permits these inconveniences in order not to hinder the common good.—Moreover, I answer that during the mission these supposed scandals hardly occur: then the people are more timorous; the wicked themselves abstain from committing any impertinence for fear of being regarded as men who have lost the faith, or at least, because they presume that they would not find those whom they wish to tempt ready to yield to their wicked designs. O God! can we suppose that those perverse men, who have so many occasions and means to do evil, will want to do so all the time of the mission? Let us add that, as to what concerns shameful scandals, the danger does not morally exist: care is taken that the church is always well lighted as soon as it becomes dark; there are many lights and many eyes; and as for things outside of the church, the women always return home in the company of persons who will not allow the least scandal to be committed before their eyes.

After all, let us concede that sometimes an impropriety may occur in some place; but which is a greater evil—to permit some rare impropriety of this kind, or to leave the whole population in the state in which it is, with its habitual sins, its wicked morals, its inveterate vices, its sacrileges, its scandals? For my part, I do not understand the zeal of those who, through fear of some

rare impropriety which scarcely occurs, believe it their duty to hinder the certain good of the mission, by taking away from the people the opportunity to hear the sermon. In the spring, when the days are long, the sermon may be successfully preached during the day; but in winter it is impossible for the mission to succeed when the sermon is given before the evening. During this season it should be given only about half an hour before the setting of the sun; often even, where the fields are distant from the centre of habitation, it will be necessary to begin it half an hour after sunset, and sometimes even later.

CHAPTER VIII.

OTHER EXERCISES THAT TAKE PLACE DURING THE
MISSION.

I.

The Morning Meditation.

DURING the mission, in the morning, before daybreak, a meditation is given for the convenience of persons who must work. There is no question here of the common and daily meditation which is usually made by pious persons or by communities, but of that which takes place in the missions, and which in substance is composed of all the parts requisite for the sermon, with this difference, that it demands a more moderate and more emotional style, admits less reasoning and fewer proofs, and should be shorter. The sermon usually lasts an hour and a quarter, inclusively of the act of contrition; but the meditation should not continue beyond three quarters of an hour.

The parts of meditation are: First, the exordium with the proposition, the preparation, and the proofs; then the reflections, the applications, and the practices; and finally, the act of contrition with the resolution. In regard to all these parts, we should observe what has been said on the subject of the sermon, Chapter VII., § 2.¹ As for the preparation, which is made in the meditation differently from the sermon, we have spoken of it in, § 6² which treats of the devout life.

It must be here remarked that in the places the popu-

¹ Page 184.

² Page 230.

lation of which is numerous, on the days on which many people come to church, especially on feast days, besides the meditation, it is usual to preach another sermon, though at a later hour.

II.

The Discourse for the Members of the Confraternity.

Nothing can be more useful to keep men in the path of virtue than to induce them to frequent a confraternity, the spiritual Father of which gives them an instruction on Sundays, and hears their confessions. We should, therefore, endeavor, as much as possible, to urge the men to have themselves admitted into the confraternity. The preacher should specially exhort them to join it; moreover, the evening after the sermon, it will be well to invite all those that wish to enter the confraternity to have their names registered in the church by a missionary. After this it will also be well for the preacher himself, or another missionary, on the morning of a feast day, to go to the chapel where the confraternity is to meet, and give a special instruction to the members; he should take care to give notice of this from the pulpit on the preceding evening, so that on the following day he may find them all assembled. The purpose of this instruction is to make known the great good that results from the frequentation of the confraternity, especially in the case of those that have been consecrated to the Blessed Virgin.

EXAMPLE OF THIS DISCOURSE.

*Now all good things came to me together with her.*¹ The great deluge at the time of Noe was the cause why all mankind perished, with the exception of eight persons who were saved in the Ark. In our time a deluge, not

¹ "Venerunt autem mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa."—*Wis.* vii. 11.

of water, but of sins, continually inundates the earth, and few persons escape it, especially among seculars; hardly are those saved that take refuge in an ark of salvation, that is, some confraternity of the Blessed Virgin. Among so many seculars, how many are there in the grace of God? There are some, but these frequent the confraternity.

My dear brethren, you have attended the mission; I trust that God, by the light of his grace, has made you see that there is no other good or happiness in this life than to save one's soul. The world calls him happy who is rich, who is honored, and it calls unhappy him who is poor and despised; but the truth is no one is happy but he who is in the grace of God and is saved, and that no one is unhappy but he who lives as an enemy of God and is damned. In a few days all things have an end for man; what will it then profit him to have gained the whole world if after dying he loses his soul, and goes to weep in hell for all eternity? Now I wish to show what hope of salvation there is for him who frequents the confraternity of the Blessed Virgin.

When a secular asks me what he should do in order to save his soul, I know of no more useful and sure means to counsel him than to enter a confraternity. The confraternity contains the most efficacious means to attain eternal salvation, so that every member of the confraternity may rightly say that he finds therein all that is needful: *All good things came to me together with her.*

In the first place, it is a great means of salvation for a secular to hear often the word of God, while, on the other hand, the holy Fathers regard him as damned who despises it; for the sheep of Christ willingly hear his voice, which he makes them hear through the mouth of his ministers: *My sheep hear My voice.*¹ In fact, seculars that give themselves up to the affairs of the world, and

¹ "Oves meæ vocem meam audiunt."—*John*, x. 27.

hear no sermons, easily lose the remembrance of the good and of the evil of the next world; and consequently, abandoning themselves to earthly pleasures, they live and die in the state of sin. But he who frequents the confraternity, hearing the priest speak of death, judgment, hell, eternity, easily resists with God's help the temptations that assail him, according to what the Holy Ghost says to us: *In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.*'

Secondly, to keep one's self in the grace of God it is necessary to frequent the sacraments; for they are the nourishment of the soul; they preserve its life; this is especially done by holy Communion, which is called bread: as the earthly bread preserves the life of the body, so the heavenly bread preserves the life of the soul. This is taught by the Council of Trent, which says: "This sacrament frees us from daily faults, and preserves us from mortal sins."²

Thirdly, he who visits the confraternity of the Blessed Virgin is enriched with graces by this divine Mother, through whose hands the Lord dispenses all his graces; this she tells us in these words that the Church applies to her: *With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me.*³—And St. Bonaventure says: "He who obtains grace from Mary shall be recognized by the citizens of paradise; and he who bears the impress of her name shall be inscribed in the Book of life."⁴ This is especially to be understood of the confraternity of Mary. We may see that to be enrolled as a member of the confraternity is the same as to be inscribed in the Book of

¹ "Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis."—*Eclus.* vii. 40.

² *Sess.* 13, cap. 2.

³ *Mecum sunt divitiæ . . . ut ditem diligentes me.*—*Prov.* viii. 18.

⁴ "Qui acquirit gratiam Mariæ, agnosceatur a civibus paradisi; et qui habuerit characterem nominis ejus, annotabitur in Libro vitæ."—*Psalt.* B. M. V. ps. 91.

life, provided we persevere in being faithful in frequenting the confraternity and in observing its rules; for, of what use would it serve to have one's name inscribed on the register, or if one enters it without frequenting the sacraments; this being one of its most important rules? There are some that enter the confraternity, not to honor the Blessed Virgin, nor to save their souls, but to domineer, to rule; and sometimes they begin to shout, to dispute in a manner more noisy than if they were at a house where gaming is going on. Those that act thus would do better to stay away from the confraternity.

I therefore recommend to each one of you, first, to frequent the confraternity, and not to omit to be present through frivolous reasons, as some do, who either in order to play, or to take a walk, or to perform some trifling thing, will say that their business prevented them. But I say to them in reply: Know that in this world, whatever may be your business, you have nothing more important than the salvation of your soul; for if you lose your soul, all will be lost to you. Tell me: would you neglect to gain a thousand pieces of gold in your efforts to gain a few little pieces of money? Hence it is, etc.—Rather lose all than lose one's soul. When Sunday comes, my dear brethren, leave everything in order to go to the confraternity. Be convinced that the Blessed Virgin will not allow you to suffer any loss on this account. It is said that her servants are clothed with double garments: *All her domestics are clothed with double garments.*¹ This means that they are provided with two kinds of goods, spiritual and temporal.

Besides the attendance at the meetings, I recommend to you not to omit confession and Communion, which the Rule prescribes; otherwise, if you happen to fall into sin and remain in the same state, of what use will the confraternity be to you?

¹ "Domestici ejus vestiti sunt duphribus."—*Prov.* xxxi. 21.

Finally, I recommend to you to come to the confraternity for the sole purpose of attending to your devotions. Let each one occupy his place, observe obedience, and fulfil the task that has been given to him, seeking only to save his soul in the confraternity. If you act in this way, you will see that the Mother of God will protect you, soul and body; particularly at the hour of death will she assist you with maternal tenderness.

Oh, how consoling it is at death to have served Mary! Father Binet relates that a pious servant of the Blessed Virgin, whom he assisted in his last moments, said these words to him before dying: "O my Father! if you only knew what contentment I feel for having served the Mother of God! I cannot express to you the joy that I experience at this moment." And he died in celestial peace.—I believe that a death full of consolation is reserved specially for the members who frequent the confraternity. The Duke of Popoli said that all the graces that he had received from God had been given to him through the hands of Mary, because he had frequented the confraternity. At the moment of death he called his son and said to him: "My son, frequent the confraternity of the Blessed Virgin; it is the greatest inheritance that I can leave you; it is that which I leave you."

ACTS OF THANKSGIVING AND PROMISE TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Now, my dear brethren, let us all prostrate ourselves at the feet of our Sovereign, and let us promise her not to neglect the confraternity; let each one repeat after me the following prayer:

Ah! my Queen and mother, I should now be in hell; it is thou who through thy intercession hast hitherto preserved me from it; I thank thee to-day for this benefit, and I ask thy pardon for the number of times that I have without a reason neglected to attend the confraternity. How many sins would I have avoided had I

attended it! Pardon me, O my Mother! and pray thy divine Son to pardon me all the offences that I have given to him.—Yes, O my Jesus! by the blood that Thou hast shed for me, and also by the love of Mary, pardon me; for I repent, etc.—(Let us now make our promise by saying:) O Mother of God! I promise thee that in future I will never without a good reason neglect any more the confraternity; I promise this to thee, and I give my consent that thou shouldst punish me if I fail to keep it. And thou, my Queen, help me in all my necessities, and principally in all the dangers in which I shall find myself of offending God. Above all, O my tender Mother! do not abandon me at the hour of death; assist me at this decisive moment, and let me die under thy mantle.

But you, my brethren, do not forget then to invoke her, and she will certainly come to your aid. Be, therefore, faithful to the promise that you have to-day made to Mary, and I promise you in her name that she will protect you during life and at your death. If you come to honor her in this chapel, she will one day lead you to paradise to reign there with her. Now I am going to bless you also in the name of Mary, in order that you may keep the promise that you have made to her. (Here the blessing is given with the crucifix.)

THE SECRET CONFRATERNITY.

It would also be of very great benefit to establish in honor of the Mother of God the SECRET CONFRATERNITY of the most fervent members. I will here briefly indicate the exercises that are usually performed in the secret confraternities: 1. A half-hour's spiritual reading is made; 2. The Vespers and Compline of the Holy Ghost are recited; 3. The Litany of the saints is said, and the members appointed then perform some act of mortification, as the carrying of the cross on the shoul-

ders, and the like; 4. A quarter of an hour's meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ is made; 5. Each one accuses himself of the faults committed against the rules, and receives a penance therefor from the Director; 6. A member appointed reads the *nosegay* of mortifications practised during the week, and announces the coming novenas, etc.; 7. Finally, the discipline is taken during a *Miserere* and a *Salve Regina*, and every one kisses the feet of the crucifix placed at the foot of the altar. As for the rules, the following are what the members should observe: 1. Every day, mental prayer of half an hour, visit to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin, examination of conscience in the evening, spiritual reading, recommendation to God of souls in purgatory and of sinners; 2. The avoiding of plays and of worldly amusements; 3. Frequent Communion, and the practice of some mortification, as the *cilicium*, the discipline, etc.; 4. When a member becomes sick, all the rest are obliged to visit him.*

III.

The Discourse to Maidens.

St. Ignatius, Martyr, writing to his disciples, exhorted them carefully to watch over the virgins, so that they might be constant in the promise that they had made to Jesus Christ of their virginity, which is so precious a gift before God. Virgins consecrated to the love of the divine Spouse are called by St. Cyprian the most noble part of the Church.¹ Therefore, besides St. Cyprian, several among the holy Fathers, as St. Ephrem, St. Ambrose, St. John Chrysostom, and others, have composed works that treat entirely of the praises of virginity.

¹ "Illustrior portio gregis Christi."—*De Discip. et Hab. Virg.*

* Further details in regard to confraternities may be found in the GLORIES OF MARY, Volume VIII., page 155.

The glorious Apostle St. Matthew, as Denis the Carthusian relates, did not wish to allow the virgin St. Iphigenia, who was consecrated to Jesus Christ, to marry a monarch, although he promised to embrace the faith with all his people. Thomas Cantipratensis relates that at Rome the sister of the Count of Puglia, promised in marriage by his brother to a lord, fled in the disguise of a man so as not to be forced to marry; but she was pursued by her brother, and overtaken near a rock that projected into the sea. Putting her confidence in God, she threw herself into the abyss, and afterwards walked upon the water as far as a desert in Greece, where she remained safe. I wished to quote these examples to show that it is not a useless work, but a work that is very agreeable to God, when priests take care to exhort young persons to consecrate to Jesus Christ the lily of their virginity. This is the reason why in our missions it is customary, on the morning of one of the last days, that a missionary, assisted by another priest advanced in years, addresses in a retired place an instruction on this point to all the young women.

EXAMPLE OF A DISCOURSE TO YOUNG WOMEN.

My dear sisters, I do not pretend to explain to you in this discourse all the merits and all the advantages obtained by young maidens in consecrating their virginity to Jesus Christ. I will confine myself to pointing them out briefly.

First, they become in the eyes of God beautiful as the angels of heaven: *They shall be as the angels of God in heaven.*¹ Baronius² relates that at the death of a pious virgin, named Geogia, a great number of doves were seen flying about her; and when her body was carried to the church, these doves placed themselves on the part

¹ "Erunt sicut Angeli Dei in celo."—*Matt.* xxii. 30.

² *Ann.* 480.

of the roof which corresponded to the place where the coffin was put, and flew away only after the burial of the deceased. Every one believed that these doves were angels, who thus honored her virginal body.

Moreover, when a young person renounces the world and devotes herself to the love of Jesus Christ, she becomes the spouse of the Son of God. In the Gospel our Saviour is called now Father, now Mother, now Shepherd of Souls; but in regard to virgins he calls himself their Bridegroom or Spouse: *They went out to meet their bridegroom.*¹

A young person who wishes to establish herself in the world, if she is prudent, makes careful inquiries about those that aspire to her hand, and tries to know which among them is the noblest and richest. Let us, then, address ourselves to the Spouse of the Canticles, who knows very well the prerogatives of the divine Spouse, and let us ask him what he is:—Tell me, O divine Spouse! what is he who loves thee and renders thee the most happy among all women?—*My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.*² My beloved, she says, is all white by his purity, and is ruddy by the love with which he is inflamed; he is, in a word, so beautiful, so noble, so affable, that one finds him to be the most amiable among all spouses.

When to St. Agnes was offered as her spouse the son of the Prefect of Rome, this glorious virgin was right when she answered, as St. Ambrose tells us, that she had found a far better match.³

Such was also the answer of St. Domitilla, niece of the Emperor Domitian, which she gave to persons who tried to persuade her that she could be married to Count

¹ "Exierunt obviam Sponso."—*Matt.* xxv. 1.

² "Dilectus meus candidus, et rubicundus, electus ex millibus."—*Cant.* v. 10.

³ "Sponsum offertis; meliorem reperi."—*De Virg.* l. 1.

Aurelian, since he consented that she should remain a Christian: "But, tell me," she answered them, "if to a young woman there was presented, on the one hand, a great monarch, and on the other, a poor plebeian, which of the two would she choose for a husband? To accept Aurelian, I should have to renounce the King of heaven; this would be folly, and I do not wish to be guilty of it." Hence in order to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, to whom she had consecrated her virginity, she gave herself up to be burnt alive—a punishment to which her barbarous lover had condemned her.¹

Generous souls who renounce the world for the love of Jesus Christ, become the cherished spouses of the Son of God. They are called First-fruits of the Lamb: *First-fruits to God and to the Lamb.*² Why the First-fruits? Because, says Cardinal Hugo, as the first-fruits are more agreeable than others, so virgins are objects of the Lord's predilection. The divine Spouse is nourished among the lilies: *Who feedeth among the lilies.* And what are these lilies, if not fervent souls who consecrate their virginity to Jesus Christ? Venerable Bede assures us that the chant of the virgins, that is, the honor which the virgins render to God by preserving to him intact the lily of their purity, is more agreeable to the Lord than the chant of all the other saints. In fact, the Holy Ghost declares that no good can compensate for the merit of virginity. *No price is worthy of a continent soul.*³ For this reason, according to Cardinal Hugo, one can obtain a dispensation from all other vows, but not from the vow of virginity. It is also on this account that theologians believe that the Blessed Virgin would

¹ *Croiset*, Exerc. 12 Mai.

² "Primitiæ Deo et Agno."—*Apoc.* xiv. 4.

³ "Qui pascitur inter lilia."—*Cant.* iv. 16.

⁴ "Omnis ponderatio non est digna continentis animæ."—*Ecclus.* xxvi. 20.

have been disposed to renounce the sublime dignity of the Mother of God rather than lose the treasure of her virginity.

Who then here below can ever comprehend the glory that God reserves in paradise for his chaste spouses? Doctors teach that in heaven virgins have their own glory, which is a certain crown or a special joy, of which other holy souls are deprived.

But let us pass to what directly refers to the subject that we actually have in view.

A young person will say: If I marry can I not also sanctify myself?—I wish you to hear the answer to this, not from my mouth, but from that of St. Paul; you will also see at the same time the difference between virgins and married persons. The following are the words of the Apostle: *The unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord: that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she that is married thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband.*¹ Then he adds: *This I speak for your profit: . . . for that which is decent, and which may give you power to attend upon the Lord without impediment.*²

Let us ponder well this advice of the Apostle. In the first place, I must remark that married women can, it is true, be holy in spirit but not in body, while a virgin that sanctifies herself is holy in spirit and in body, having consecrated to Jesus Christ her virginity: *Holy both in body and in spirit.* Note, moreover, these words: *Which may give you power to attend upon the Lord without impediment.*—Ah! how many obstacles have not married

¹ "Mulier inuupta et virgo cogitat quæ Domini sunt, ut sit sancta corpore et spiritu; quæ autem nupta est, cogitat quæ sunt mundi, quomodo placeat viro."—1 Cor. vii. 34.

² "Porro hoc ad utilitatem vestram dico, . . . ad id quod honestum est, et quod facultatem præbeat sine impedimento Dominum observandi."—*Ibid.* vii. 35.

women in order to sanctify themselves! the higher their rank the greater obstacles do they encounter. In order to sanctify one's self one must use the means, especially apply one's self much to mental prayer, frequent often the sacraments, and think without ceasing of God. But how can a married woman find time to occupy herself with the things of God? *She that is married thinks on the things of the world, how she may please her husband.* She must, says St. Paul, occupy herself with the things of the world; she has to provide for the wants of her family, for food, for clothing; she has to watch over the education of her children, to please her husband and the relatives of her husband; and this will be the cause, adds the Apostle, why her heart will be divided, as she is obliged to divide her affections between her husband, her children, and God. How can a married woman devote herself much to mental prayer and go frequently to Holy Communion if she does not find enough at home to provide for the wants of her family? The husband wishes to be served; the children cry, scream, or ask for a thousand things; how can she go to make meditation amidst so many occupations and embarrassments? It will hardly be permitted her to go to church to recollect herself and to receive Communion on Sundays. She will still have a good will; but it will be very difficult for her to attend to the things of God as she should. It is true that by this very privation she may gain merit by resigning herself to the will of God, who in this state requires of her only a continual sacrifice of resignation and of patience. But in the midst of so many distractions, of so much noise without meditation, without the sacraments, it will be morally impossible for her to have this heroic virtue of patience and resignation.

Ah, would to God that married women would have nothing else to deplore than to be deprived of the time

necessary to attend to their devotions! The greatest evil is the danger in which these unfortunate persons continually find themselves of losing the grace of God, being obliged to see frequently their brothers-in-law or other relatives, or friends of their husband, either at home or elsewhere. Of this young persons are ignorant; but this is well known by married women, who are every day exposed to all these dangers, and is also well known by the confessors who hear them. We do not speak of the sad days which all married women must spend. The bad conduct of the husband, the disagreeable things caused by the children, the necessities of housekeeping, dependence on a mother-in-law or sisters-in-law, the pains of child-birth that is always accompanied by danger of death, suspicions, troubles of conscience in regard to the education of the children—all this forms a chain of tribulations in which married women can only lament, happy indeed if they do not lose their soul, and if God gives them the grace not to pass from the hell of this life to an eternal hell in the next. Such is the lot that awaits young women who give themselves up to the world.

But you will say, Among all the married women are there none that have sanctified themselves?—I beg your pardon, there are some; but who are they? Those that sanctify themselves by martyrdom, those that know how to suffer everything for God, with a patience that nothing can overcome. How many are there that rise to such perfection? They are as rare as white flies. And if you meet with any one of these, you will learn that she is always weeping for regret of having entered the world, while she could have consecrated herself to Jesus Christ. For myself, I do not remember to have ever found among married women a single pious person who was content with her state of life.

True happiness is therefore the inheritance of virgins

consecrated to Jesus Christ. They are free from the dangers to which married persons are necessarily exposed. Their affections are not fixed on children, nor on men of the world, nor on perishable goods, nor on vain ornaments, nor on any kind of dependence. While married women are obliged to adorn themselves with care, and at great expense, to appear in the world according to their rank and to please their husbands, a virgin consecrated to Jesus Christ needs to cover herself only with a garment, however common it may be; she would even create scandal if she dressed herself with elegance. Moreover, virgins are not troubled with the care of a house, a family, a husband; their sole concern, the only desire of their hearts, is to please Jesus Christ, to whom they have dedicated their souls, their bodies, and all their affections. Thus they have more liberty of spirit to think of God, and more time to give themselves up to prayer and the frequentation of the sacraments.

But let us hear the excuses put forward by certain persons that have but little love for Jesus Christ.

I would renounce the world, one says, if I could enter a convent, or at least if it were always permitted me to go to church to make my devotions there; but I cannot remain at home, or I have brothers who ill-treat me, and on the other hand, my relatives refuse to allow me to frequent the church.—Before answering you, I shall put this question to you: Do you wish to leave the world to lead a comfortable life or to sanctify yourself; to do your will or that of Jesus Christ? And if you wish to leave the world, to sanctify yourself, and to please Jesus Christ, I ask you a second question: Tell me: in what does sanctity consist? Sanctity does not consist in remaining in the convent, nor in spending the entire day in the church, but it consists, on the one hand, in practising mental prayer and going to communion when one can, and on the other, in obeying, in rendering one's

self useful to the house, in living in retirement, and in suffering pain and contempt for God. And if you were going to a convent, what, think you, would you do there? Would you always be there in the choir, or in your cell, leaving it only in order to go to the refectory and to recreation? In the convent there is no doubt a time fixed for meditation, for Mass, and for Communion; but after that, the religious must be employed in the service of the house, especially the lay-sisters, who, as they do not go to the choir, are engaged in work, and have consequently less time to devote to prayer. All say, the convent, the convent! Ah! pious persons who are poor have greater facility to devote themselves to prayer and to sanctify themselves in their own house than in the convent! How many are there who to my knowledge are sorry for having entered the convent, especially in certain houses where the community is large, and where the poor lay-sisters have scarcely time to say the Rosary.

But you will reply: I have a father and a mother who have a disagreeable temper; I have at home impertinent brothers, who ill-treat me; I cannot remain there.—Well, if you go out into the world, will you find no one to contradict you; no mother-in-law, no sisters-in-law, no children, no husband? Ah! how infamous the treatment on the part of husbands, who at first make fine promises, and afterwards are no longer husbands, but become the tyrants of their unfortunate wives, whom they treat no longer as their companions, but as slaves! Ask all married women whether what I say is not true; or rather, without making inquiries, have you not already learnt this truth from the example of your mothers? At least, when you have given yourselves to God, if you have to suffer at home, you bear all for the love of Jesus Christ, and the Lord well knows how to make your cross light and sweet; but what a pain to **have** to suffer, and to suffer for the world, without con-

solation and without merit! Believe me, if Jesus calls you to his love, if he wishes you for his spouses, listen without fear to his voice; you will not fail to be consoled and even to rejoice in the midst of sufferings. This will, however, only be the case as long as you love him and conduct yourselves as his true spouses.

Learn, then, what are the means that you should use so as to live as true spouses of Jesus Christ, and to attain sanctity.

In order that a virgin may be holy, it is not sufficient that she should preserve her virginity and that she be called a spouse of Jesus Christ: it will be necessary that she should practise the virtues that are proper to a spouse of Jesus Christ. We read in the Gospel¹ that heaven is like virgins; but what virgins?—no doubt wise, but not foolish, virgins. Wise virgins were led to the nuptials; but the foolish found the doors shut, and the Bridegroom said to them: I know you not: You are virgins, but I do not recognize you as my spouses.—The true spouses of Jesus Christ follow their divine Spouse wherever he goes: *These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.*² What is it to follow the spouse? St. Augustine³ explains this to us: It is to imitate him by walking in his footsteps in body and in soul. After having consecrated to him your body, you must give him your whole heart, so that your heart may be entirely occupied in loving him.

1. The first means is mental prayer, to which you should particularly apply yourselves. But do not believe that in order to make mental prayer it is necessary to be in the convent or to spend the entire day in the church. It is true that at home there is often noise, and there is much disturbance caused by persons who come

¹ *Matt.* xxv. 1.

² "Sequuntur agnum quocumque ierit."—*Apoc.* xiv. 4.

³ *De S. Virginit.* c. 27.

and go; however, if one wishes one can always find a place and a time for devoting one's self to prayer, as when the house is more quiet, either in the morning before others rise, or in the evening after they have retired. Nor is it necessary, in order to pray, that one should always be on one's knees: one may meditate even while working or while walking, when there is no other more suitable time; it is sufficient if one occupies one's self with God, as when one reflects on the Passion of Jesus Christ or on some other pious subject.

2. The second means is the frequentation of the sacraments of confession and Communion.—For confession we should choose a Director to whom we should be entirely submissive; without doing so we should not walk on the right road.—As for Communion, it must depend entirely on obedience; but we must desire it and ask for it. This divine bread needs a soul that hungers after it; Jesus Christ wishes us to have a longing for him. It is frequent Communion that makes the spouses of Jesus Christ faithful to this heavenly Spouse, particularly in keeping them in holy purity. The Blessed Sacrament preserves in the soul all the virtues; but it is especially effective in preserving intact the lily of virginity, according to the words of the Prophet, who calls it: *The corn of the chosen ones, and wine which maketh virgins to spring forth.*¹

3. The third means is retirement and vigilance.—The divine Spouse compares his well-beloved to a lily surrounded by thorns: *As the lily among thorns, so is My love among daughters.*² If a virgin wishes to live in the midst of society, of amusements, and other worldly frivolities, it will be impossible for her to remain faithful to Jesus Christ; she must, therefore, keep herself constantly

¹ "Frumentum electorum et vinum germinans virgines."—*Zach.* ix. 17.

² "Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias."—*Cant.* ii. 2.

among the thorns of obedience and of mortification, and should behave, especially towards men, not only with the greatest reserve and the greatest modesty in her looks and her words, but also when necessary with a rigid austerity, and even with rudeness. Such are the thorns that preserve lilies, that is, virgins; without these precautions they would soon go astray.—The Lord also compares the beauty of his spouse to that of the turtle dove: *Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle-dove's.*¹ Why? Because the turtle-dove is naturally inclined to flee the company of other birds, and loves to be always alone. A virgin, therefore, appears beautiful in the eyes of Jesus Christ when she leads a retired life, and does all she can to keep herself retired and hidden from the eyes of others. St. Jerome says that this Spouse of souls is jealous.² Hence it is very displeasing to him to see a virgin, after having consecrated herself to his love, seeking to appear in the world and to please men. Those persons that are truly virtuous prefer to disfigure themselves rather than be the object of a bad desire.—The venerable Sister Catharine of Jesus, before becoming a religious of St. Teresa, washed herself with dirty water, and then exposed herself to the sun so as to spoil her complexion.—Bollandus³ relates that St. Andregesina, having been promised in marriage, begged the Lord to make her quite deformed, and her prayer was immediately heard. She at once appeared covered with leprosy so that every one fled from her; but after the espousals had been dissolved, she recovered her former beauty.—We read in the *Mirror of Examples*, that there was in a convent a young virgin who had consecrated herself to God, and whose eyes had charmed a prince. The latter having threatened to set fire to the

¹ "Pulchræ sunt genæ tuæ sicut turturis."—*Cant.* i. 9.

² "Zelotypus est Jesus."—*Ep. ad Eust.*

³ *Vita S. Ansb.* 9. febr.

convent if she did not yield to his desires, what did she do? She tore out her eyes, and sent them to him in a basin with this message: "Here are the darts that have wounded your heart; take them, and leave me untouched."—The same author also quotes the example of St. Euphemia, whom her father had promised in marriage to a count. Seeing that this suitor neglected no means to make her his wife, she one day took a knife and cut off her nose and her lips, saying: "Vain beauty, thou shalt not be to me any longer an occasion of sin!" Baronius¹ also relates that St. Ebba, abbess of the monastery of Coldingham, fearing an invasion of the barbarians, cut off her nose and her upper lip as far as the teeth, and that after her example all the other religious, to the number of thirty, did the same thing. The barbarians actually came, and seeing them thus disfigured, they became furious, set fire to the monastery, and made all perish in the flames. The Church honors them as martyrs.—They were incited to this heroic act by an impulse of the Holy Ghost; it is not permitted to others to act in this way. You see, moreover, in these examples what virgins who love Jesus Christ have done in order to escape the lust of men. Every fervent young maiden should at least endeavor to conduct herself with modesty, and expose herself as little as possible to the gaze of the world. If it should unfortunately happen that a virgin should be the victim of any violence, without her fault, let her be assured that her purity has not been tarnished. Hence St. Lucia answered the tyrant, who threatened to have her dishonored: "If I am outraged against my will, I shall obtain a double crown." We know the adage: "Not the feeling, but the consent, wounds the soul." Besides, you must be convinced that a young maiden who conducts herself with modesty and reserve will not fail to make herself respected.

¹ *Anno* 870, n. 39.

4. The fourth means in order to preserve purity is the mortification of the senses.—St. Basil says: “It is altogether improper for a virgin to violate chastity, with the tongue, with the ears, with the touch, much less with the heart.”¹ A virgin, in order to remain pure, should be chaste with her *tongue*, by always speaking modestly, and only through necessity with men, and in this case in a few words; chaste with her *ears*, by avoiding to listen to discourses about the things of the world; chaste with her *eyes*, by keeping them shut or lowered to the ground in the presence of men; chaste with regard to the *touch*, by using the greatest precaution both in regard to others and in regard to herself; but she should be especially chaste in her *heart* by trying to resist every immodest thought by promptly having recourse to Jesus and Mary.—For this purpose it will also be necessary for her to mortify her body by fasts, by abstinence, by disciplines, by *ciliciums*; but in order to practise these mortifications permission from the confessor must be asked: without this they would be rather hurtful to the soul, as they might inspire one with pride. No one should therefore practise such penances without having obtained permission from one’s Director; but one should desire the permission and ask it, for Directors do not grant it as long as we do not show them a desire to obtain it. Jesus is a Spouse of blood; he has espoused our souls on the cross, on which he has shed the last drop of his blood: *A bloody spouse thou art to me.*² This is the reason why spouses that love him love to suffer tribulations, diseases, pains, ill-treatment, injuries, and they receive them not only with patience, but with joy. In this sense the passage of Scripture is understood, namely: *These follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.*³

¹ “Nulla in parte moechari convenit virginem, non lingua, non aure, non oculo, non tactu, multoque minus animo.”—*De Vera Virg.*

² “Sponsus sanguinum tu mihi es.”—*Exod.* iv. 25.

³ “Sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit.”—*Apoc.* xiv. 4.

They follow Jesus their divine Spouse by singing his praises with joy, even in the midst of reproaches and pains, after the example of so many holy martyrs who expressed their happiness amid tortures, or while they were on their way to the place of execution.

5. Finally, in order to obtain the grace of perseverance in a holy life, you should take care often to recommend yourselves to the Queen of heaven, the most pure Mother of God. She is the mediatrix who prepares and who concludes the union of souls with her divine Son; it is she that introduces and presents them to him as his spouses: *After her shall virgins be brought to the King.*¹ It is she, finally, that obtains for these chosen spouses the virtue of perseverance; without the help of Mary they would become so many faithless spouses.

PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST.

(The preacher, after having made all his hearers go down on their knees at the foot of the crucifix, or a statue of the Infant Jesus, which would suit better under the circumstances, thus continues:)

You, then, who are listening to me—I am addressing myself to young maidens who feel themselves called by the divine Spouse to renounce the world for the love of him—you who have conceived the pious design of not belonging to the world, but to Jesus Christ, I do not wish that you should on this very day make this vow, and that you should contract immediately the engagement to keep perpetual chastity; you should make this vow when God inspires you and when you have obtained for this purpose the consent of your confessor. I wish only that by a simple act, without contracting any obligation, you should render thanks to Jesus Christ for the favor that he has done you of having called you to his love, and that you should offer yourselves to belong

¹ "Adducentur Regi virgines post eam."—Ps. xlv. 15.

entirely to him during your whole life. Speak to him in the following manner :

Ah! my Jesus, my God and my Redeemer, who didst die for me; pardon me if I also call Thee my Spouse: I am bold enough to do so, because I see that Thou deignest to invite me to this honor; it is a favor for which I know not how to thank Thee. At present I deserve to be in hell, and instead of punishing me Thou wishest me to become Thy spouse. Yes, my divine Spouse, I renounce the world, I renounce everything for love of Thee, and I give myself entirely to Thee. What is the world to me? My Jesus, Thou shalt henceforth be my only good, my only love. I see that Thou wishest to possess my whole heart; I wish to give it to Thee entirely: please accept my offering; do not repel me as I deserve to be repelled. Forget all the displeasure that I have given Thee in the past; I repent of it with my whole soul; ah! would that I had died before offending Thee! Pardon me, inflame me with Thy holy love, and grant me the grace to be faithful to Thee, and never more to turn my back on Thee. Thou, my Spouse, hast given Thyself entirely to me; here I am, I give myself entirely to Thee.

O Mary, my Queen and my Mother! bind, chain my heart to Jesus Christ, and attach it in such a manner that it may never be separated from him.

(At the end, the preacher gives them the blessing with the crucifix, saying:)

Now I am going to bless you, and by this blessing I wish to unite you to Jesus Christ in order that you may never more leave him; and while I am blessing you, you should give him your heart, saying :

My Jesus, my divine Spouse, in future I will love Thee, Thee alone, and nothing more.

CHAPTER IX.

EXERCISES OF PIETY WHICH ARE RECOMMENDED TO BE PERFORMED AFTER THE MISSION.

I.

Exercises to be Performed by the People.

I. WE should recommend to the people *meditation* in common in the church; ¹ this can be more easily done in the morning during the first Mass in the following manner: A priest or a cleric, before the beginning of Mass, reads at first the preparatory acts mentioned in the book, then a short point of meditation, and the Mass begins immediately, the people continuing to meditate on the point that has been read; after the consideration another point is read; and at the end of Mass the Christian Acts, which are also found in the book, are recited.

It must be remarked that the priest who presides at the meditation should read and not dictate it. It is true that many priests would have the talent to develop the subject of meditation; but if one adopted this method, two inconveniences would result therefrom. The first is that the priest who dictates the meditation would be easily led to speak the whole time, and the people would thus become accustomed, not to meditate, but to listen; so that if any one should not be able to come to the church, and should have no one to dictate the meditation, not knowing how to meditate by himself, he would do nothing. The second inconvenience is that this priest will not be able, nor would he be willing, to

¹ See what is said on this subject, page 231, and *seq.*

be always present at the exercise, and if he were absent, this useful devotion would not take place. This has occurred in certain places where a priest had begun to dictate every day the meditation for the people; but afterwards, either because he found the number that attended too small, or because he grew tired of such an office, he omitted it, and thus the meditation in common was given up. The meditation should, therefore, be read, and be read in a loud voice and with pauses, so that all may hear it and understand it. Moreover, it is strongly recommended never to omit this pious and useful exercise, even when only a few persons attend, as very often happens; it suffices if one sees some of the faithful persevere in this exercise.

2. The *visit to the Blessed Sacrament* should be recommended; it is made in the following manner: A priest, vested in surplice and stole, exposes the Ciborium before six burning candles, and then reads the Christian Acts, such as are found in the little book composed for this exercise. It will be well to make this visit about sunset, when the people have returned from the fields. After this the acts are read out of the book composed for this purpose.¹

3. The devotion of *visiting the crosses* should also be recommended.²

4. One should recommend *devotion for the dying*, namely, when a person of the place is in his agony: this should be announced by five strokes of the large bell, and every one should recite a *Pater* and an *Ave* for the happy passage of this soul into eternity.

5. One should recommend the *pious exercises for young women* to be performed every Sunday in some church or chapel, in the following manner:

At first the Rosary is recited, and is concluded by the

¹ The Acts are to be found at the end of this work.

² See page 247.

singing of a pious hymn. Then the priest, who has been appointed, gives a short instruction on all that those present have to practise during the week, according to the rules given afterwards. He then teaches them how they should make mental prayer, the acts for Communion, for the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, for the Mass, and even for the time of work; how they should frequently raise their mind to God. He also instructs them on the virtues, mortification, humility, patience, and particularly prayer; how they should recommend themselves to God, in the morning, the evening, during the day, and especially in temptations, by often invoking the holy names of Jesus and Mary until the temptation ceases.

After this instruction the Rosary of the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin is recited. A conclusion is made by a little sermon or a short meditation, which lasts only a quarter of an hour, inclusively of the act of contrition. The matter of the discourse, or meditation, should usually be sin, death, judgment, hell, paradise, eternity, or the Passion of Jesus Christ.

The discourse finished, all those present are sent to make together a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin; after this they return home. The whole exercise should not last longer than an hour and a half.

The preacher will appoint two of the older members, who shall have the care of the others, shall see that the recitation of the Rosary is begun, and also who are absent, so as to give information of such absence to their parents. He will also appoint two others to act as overseers, whose duty it will be to notify the authorities if any one should behave badly, that thus she may be corrected.

RULES OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICES OF DEVOTION WHICH SHOULD BE
OBSERVED BY EVERY UNMARRIED WOMAN WHO PERFORMS
THE PIOUS EXERCISES.

1. In the morning, on rising, she should thank the Lord, then make an offering of all that she is to do and to suffer during the day; then she shall say three "Hail Marys," that the Blessed Virgin may keep her under her protection during the day and preserve her from every sin.

2. She should make mental prayer during half an hour, or at least a quarter of an hour, on the Passion of Jesus Christ or on the eternal truths, and this at the time and at the place most suitable for her—either in the church or at home.

3. She should hear Mass every time that she is able, and make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, if not in the church, at least at home.

4. In the evening she should make the examination of conscience with the Christian Acts, of faith, hope, charity, and contrition; and before going to bed, she should again place herself under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by saying three "Hail Marys."

5. She should receive Communion every Sunday, and oftener if she can, but always in accordance with the advice of her spiritual Father.

6. In honor of Mary she should recite every day five decades of the Rosary; she should fast every Saturday on bread and water, or as well as she can, and during the novenas of the seven feasts of the Blessed Virgin, according as the preacher may direct.

7. She should try always to lead a retired life, avoid going to banquets, to festivals, and frequenting the houses of others, even of relatives. She should flee as from death the danger that is to her of joking and laughing with men; if through necessity she must

Speak to them, she should do so in a few words and with her eyes cast down. She should never remain at the window or be seated at the door of the house, and should never sing profane songs.

8. She should keep silence in the church and in the streets; she should even keep silence for an hour when at home.

9. She should dress modestly, wearing a garment of a dark color and a veil when she goes to church or walks the streets. She should wear neither gold nor jewels, nor any other object of vanity.

10. She should avoid every venial sin committed wilfully, especially lies, imprecations, and acts of impatience. She should patiently bear sufferings, injuries, and all contradictions, and then say: My Jesus, may all be for Thee. Mary, my Mother, give me patience. May God sanctify me! etc.

11. She should obey her confessor in all that regards her soul, and her parents in whatever regards the government of the house. I said: "The government of the house;" for if her parents wished to marry her by force, she would not be obliged to obey.

12. At the death of any member who has frequented the exercises, all the others should offer up for her five Communions, and say the Rosary for her for a week.

II.

The Exercises that are to be Recommended to the Priests.

As for the priests of the place, we should recommend to them, chiefly, the frequentation of their Congregation, at which, first, a quarter of an hour's spiritual reading should be made, then a quarter of an hour's meditation; afterwards a case of conscience is proposed. It would also be well for the instruction of young ecclesiastics to exercise them in preaching sermons, or instructions, or

exhortations, which are to be given at Christmas or during Passion week. At least, the conference of cases of conscience should not be omitted, and should be given in the following manner: First, he who has been appointed shall propose some question and give the reasons for and against, and conclude by expressing his own opinion; then the others shall bring forward their own views and raise difficulties.

Besides this exercise of the Congregation, an effort should be made to establish, if possible, an academia for moral cases, in which, two or three times a week, every one in his turn shall explain a treatise, so that when one has finished, another may begin; the most important treatise may thus be discussed, for example: *De Restitutione, de Contractibus, de Penitentia, de Matrimonio, de Censuris, de Conscientia, de Legibus, de Præceptis Decalogi*, etc.—It is certain that we learn much more in these conferences than in all the studies to which we apply ourselves in our rooms. The fact is, Moral Theology is a science so vast and so complicated that he that studies it by himself without discussing it with others reads much, but will retain little. In the academia, however, not only are the principles learnt better, but they are better impressed upon the mind, and by thus applying themselves many priests render themselves capable of assisting souls and avoiding at the same time idleness, which usually is the cause that leads so many secular priests astray.

It is also to be recommended to parish priests, and to other capable priests, to preach every Saturday evening, in honor of the Blessed Virgin, a little sermon, which is to be concluded by the narration of some grace granted by the Blessed Virgin to her servants, with a prayer at the end asking for her protection. Moreover, we should also recommend that the priests should make every year, on some feast of Mary, a solemn novena, with exposition

of the Blessed Sacrament and sermon every day of the novena. The priests should keep before their minds the promises made by this divine Mother to those that seek to honor her, according to what is read in her Office: *They that work by me, shall not sin. They that explain me, shall have life everlasting.*¹

¹ "Qui operantur in me, non peccabunt. Qui elucidant me, vitam æternam habebunt."—*Eccus.* xxiv. 30.

CHAPTER X.

GENERAL REMARKS ABOUT THE GIVING OF MISSIONS.

I.—WHEN several villages happen to be situated at a short distance from one another, there are Superiors who are accustomed to give a mission in a church that occupies a central position, imagining that the people of the surrounding places will attend this mission, and thus a single mission will suffice for all the villages together. In this way these Superiors reason, and act accordingly.

For myself, I say that such a mission will not be of use to any of the neighboring villages; it will hardly be of benefit to the place where it is given; and even for the latter it can have but little success on account of the confusion and the concourse of inhabitants from other places; for if only a few people were to come from the different villages, they would form a large number, but usually very little fruit would be produced. Missions of this kind would serve only for the purpose of being able to say that a mission has been given in those places; but to tell the truth, one should say that none has been given. The following are my reasons: The fruit derived by the people in attending the mission consists in hearing the sermons, and in hearing all or nearly all of them in the order in which they are preached in the missions. This series of sermons on the eternal truths, namely, the importance of salvation, the malice of sin, final impenitence, etc., with the four Last Things, is that which makes, so to speak, a powerful assault upon souls plunged in the mire of sin, and gains them to Jesus

Christ. Now when the mission is given in a church for several of the neighboring places, it happens that the greater part of those that come from the surrounding villages do not hear all the sermons; they scarcely hear two or three of them; for as the mission is given outside of their place, they attend it, each one in his turn, so as not to leave their homes without protection; and then, in order to be soon enough back to their homes, those that come from afar often leave the sermon at the most important part of it. Moreover, such a mission is profitable to the devout souls of those places, but not to others, who, however, stand most in need of it; for having troubled consciences, and feeling a repugnance for the word of God, they easily dispense themselves from going to the mission, alleging various excuses, such as: It is too far, the sermon is over too late, it is cold, the church is small, etc.—But when the mission is given in the place itself, and all attend it, men and women, sinners will also attend, although they will do so with repugnance; yet they will do so through human respect, in order that others may not point their finger at them. They will attend, and God will touch their hearts, as frequently happens in the missions.

From all this I conclude that it is better to give the mission separately in every village, even if this cannot be done in the same year; for in those places where it is given, every one will profit by it, and especially those that need it most. As for the other villages, it may, at least, be hoped that emulation will prompt the people also to procure for themselves during the subsequent years the benefit of a mission; then, finally, it will not be said that all have received this benefit, when in reality they did not receive it.

Moreover, when a mission is to be given in some city or village, the population of which is very large, especially if many of the habitations are far distant from the

principal church, and more so if this church cannot hold all the people, it will be well, and even necessary, to give several missions at the same time in different churches. This is what we have done with great fruit in several cities, as at Nola, Sarno, etc.; particularly at Foggia and at Salerno, where, besides the mission at the cathedral, five other missions were given in as many different churches. To proceed with order, the following method has been followed: At first the mission is begun in the principal church, in which it should last at least for two weeks; during this mission, eight or ten days after it has been begun, a feast day is chosen to open the little missions, the exercises of which should continue for about twelve days. Experience has proved that these small missions have sometimes been more successful than the large missions.

II.—The Superior should take care that in each mission there be a sufficient number of missionaries to hear the confessions, according to the population of the place; for it should be borne in mind that the principal fruit of the missions, above all in country places where there are few confessors, and where the latter belong to the place itself, consists in repairing many of the sacrilegious or invalid confessions, on account of the great repugnance that penitents feel of making known their miseries to one whom they know, and whom they see every day. Monsignor Falcoia, Bishop of Castellamara, who formerly belonged to the Institute of Pious Workers, and who was the first director of our Congregation,* said that after having spent forty years in the missions when in certain places there are few missionaries, the mission is conducive to the ruin rather than to the saving of

* That is, this worthy prelate was the spiritual director of the Founder, who took care to take counsel of him in all the affairs of his Institute. (Villecourt, l. 1, ch. 21, and l. 2, ch. 17.) We see here the humility of the saint.—ED.

souls. He does not speak thus without a reason; for the exercises of the mission rouse consciences, and those that before were quiet and in good faith, after having heard the instructions and the sermons, begin to have a thousand doubts. Now if these souls have not the opportunity to confide their scruples, of which they feel ashamed, to strange confessors, since they feel a repugnance to manifest them to those of the place, and find themselves in bad faith on account of the doubts that they now have, they will make sacrilegious confessions, and will lose their souls in consequence of the mission.

For myself, in the missions that I had to conduct when I had not a number of missionaries in proportion to that of the faithful of the place, I found it better not to give the mission, and to give it at another place for which the number of confessors was sufficient; for when it becomes necessary to call the resident priests to hear confessions, all or most of the sacrileges that exist will continue to exist. If many souls, overcome by shame, continue to confess sacrilegiously when even confessing to us missionaries, although we do not know them, and we are soon to leave them, what hopes will there be that they will rid themselves of their shame when they confess to the same confessors of the place or of the neighborhood that know them? One cannot say that these persons, having then an opportunity to confess to strangers, will leave those of the place; for while seeing their ordinary confessor in the confessional, they will feel too great a repugnance to allow themselves to be seen going to a stranger, and they thus continue to commit sacrileges.

It is, therefore, always expedient for the bishop to suspend from the power of hearing confessions during the mission all the priests of the place where the mission is given. If the bishop does not do this, let at least the missionary who gives the exercises to the priests beg the confessors of the place to be kind enough to allow

their penitents during this time the liberty of confessing to the missionaries, and even to impose this upon them by virtue of obedience, because it is not a rare thing that persons of whom one thinks the least are precisely those that need this the most.

Our confessors should here take notice that, although it is not necessary to have every one to make a general confession, especially if one is pressed for time, and a large number of persons must confess, yet, when the penitent asks to make a general confession, there being a necessity of making it, because the preceding confessions were sacrilegious or invalid, one should allow them to make it by distinguishing the species and the number of sins as exactly as one can. If one, however does not see that the preceding confessions have been certainly null, one should permit the penitent to say what he wishes, and should afterwards put this question to him: Well, now, do you accuse yourself of all the sinful thoughts, words, etc., which you committed from your youth?—But one should take care to let him say so; otherwise not receiving the satisfaction that he expected in making a general confession, he will, as often happens, go to other missionaries, and much time will be lost.

The missionaries should, finally, observe that during the mission, especially when there is a great concourse at the confessionals, it is not necessary to stop too long to examine and to instruct devout souls in the matter of advancing in perfection. This is not the opportune moment to occupy one's self with the care of such a thing, when other souls are waiting to be delivered from the miserable state of damnation in which they find themselves.

III.—During the sermon, and even during the instruction, it would be well if one ceased to hear confessions, first, because the noise that is made by the preacher's

voice will prevent the confessor from hearing the words of the penitent, and the penitent from hearing the words of the confessor; so that the confessions take up twice the usual time, and also leave behind them trouble and disquietude. Moreover, in order that the mission may produce its fruit, it is necessary for every one to hear the great or principal sermon, which is its most important exercise. Now when confessions are heard during the sermon, it happens that this exercise is lost, not only to the persons that confess, but also to all those that surround the confessional, and who, desirous of confessing soon, will think only of entering the confessional as soon as possible; thus preoccupied, they pay but little attention to the sermon. Hence for one person that is confessing, there are twenty or thirty others who, while waiting for their turn, lose the fruit of the sermon; and besides, by the noise that they make in entering the confessional, they disturb the preacher and the whole audience.

IV.—Before beginning the mission we should obtain from the bishop all the powers necessary for producing fruit, as the power of absolving cases reserved to the bishop, either *Nobis* or *A nobis*, also with the censure, as also the communication of the chapter *Liccat*, and the faculty of dispensing from vows, oaths, and impediments of marriage. Moreover, no mission should be accepted except at the request of the inhabitants of the place, or at least of the parish priest.

V. The mission usually lasts twelve days, of which the first eight are devoted to moral sermons and the Last Things, the three following days to the exercise of a devout life and the last to the blessing. In small places it lasts at least ten days, of which seven are for the sermons, two for the exercise, and the last for the blessing. But in large places, with a population of four thousand or more souls, the mission should be prolonged

as long as it is necessary; it has happened to us that we continued it for eighteen, twenty-four, and even thirty-six days, as at Foggia. In a word, the Superior should see that the mission be continued till he can prudently judge that all the faithful have had time to confess.

VI.—It must be remarked that the missions should not be renewed too frequently in the same place; it is expedient that they be given at an interval of at least three or four years. If in the second mission one does not see the minds of the people as much moved as they were in the first mission it does not follow that it is less fruitful. When a mission is given in a place where there has been none for a number of years, it always produces a more lively impression than a second one given at an interval of three or four years; but if the minds are less moved, the fruit derived is often greater: those that have relapsed into sin enter again the right path; and those that have persevered are confirmed more in that which is good.

VII.—In conclusion, I find it proper to quote some other excellent counsels, which the venerable Father Segneri, the great missionary of Italy, has left for the good direction of missions and of missionaries.

1. The confessions of women should be heard only in the confessionals.

2. Public confessions, especially of women, should not be permitted. Nor should enemies be allowed to ask the pardon of their adversaries before the parties have been well disposed for reconciliation.

3. The confessors should not without necessity charge themselves with making personally restitution for their penitents; and in the case in which the latter would not intrust the matter to others, one should at least take care to procure a receipt from him to whom the restitution is made.

4. Without some special necessity, one should avoid

collecting alms for the poor; also one should accept no money to distribute as alms, as this gives rise to troubles and to calumnies.—I add that one should also avoid meddling in certain temporal affairs, which, although useful to some, may injure or displease others; for this may be the cause of wicked talk and destroy for many the fruits of the mission.

5. The missionaries should not disperse among the different houses to take their meals or their rest.

6. The mission finished, they should depart immediately and refuse every invitation to remain in order to rest themselves.

7. They should not trouble themselves if they see that obstacles are being put in the way to hinder the success of the mission, and they should not be discouraged if at the beginning they meet with a poor reception, for they should rest assured that in the end they will win the affection of all.

8. As a reward for all their labors and all their sufferings, they should expect (admirable advice) on the part of men; contempt, detraction, and ingratitude; for this is the usual reward of those that labor only for the glory of God

CHAPTER XI.

THE DUTIES OF THE SUPERIOR OF THE MISSION.

1. ON arriving at the place where the mission is to be given, the Superior fixes the hours of the exercises and of all other matters, in the following manner: * Leaving the house in the morning at 13 o'clock; return home at 19 o'clock (midday). Instruction and catechism (these two exercises begin at the same time), at 22 o'clock. Sermon at 23 o'clock. Supper at 3.30. Examination of conscience before going to bed at 4.30. Retiring at 5 o'clock.

Such is the time-table that is usually followed during winter, which is besides the season most suitable for missions.—I use the word *usually*, for when there is a concourse of penitents, we remain in the confessional for seven hours in the morning, our custom being not to hear confessions in the afternoon, and no missionary can leave the church without the permission of the Superior.—I have also used the words *during winter*; for in spring there are not seven hours of sleep, but six, or at least six and a half, because then we have an hour or an hour and a half of sleep after dinner. At this season we rise at about 8 o'clock, and we go to bed at night at 1 or at 1.30 o'clock; half an hour having elapsed after rising, we go at once to the church, the meditation at this time of the year following the rest given after

* The hours here mentioned are after the Italian usage; twenty-four o'clock finishes, and one o'clock begins about half an hour after sunset. See this subject treated more fully in the note, page 269 of Volume XI.—Ed.

dinner. In winter after the half-hour given for rising, and during which all should observe silence, we make a half-hour's meditation, which should never be omitted; then we go at once to the church.

At table when all are seated in order, silence is always observed, and the Life of a saint is read, the Superior beginning by reading a little, and the others continuing the same one after the other. In the evening, however, it suffices if one of the missionaries reads a little while out of a book treating of the Blessed Virgin.

As regards the food, it must be observed that nothing edifies the people so much as the mortification and the frugality of the missionaries, while on the contrary nothing scandalizes them more than when they see men treating themselves well in regard to eating and drinking. During the mission the people are always curious to know what the missionaries eat; and in certain places where a mission had been given several years before, we have found persons who related with indignation that the missionaries had themselves well treated by living on fowl, choice fruit, with foreign wines, and the like. In another place of this kingdom a mission was given by good preachers and good confessors; but I was told that very little good was done, because the missionaries had a first-class table. Hence in our missions it is an established rule, that at dinner on days on which flesh-meat is allowed there is to be given only soup with boiled meat, and on fasting-days soup with another frugal portion; at supper, salad and other similar food, with a little cheese and fruit. Only on the last day, the day of the blessing, there may be more food, but never fowl, game, choice fish, pastry, or other sweetmeats. The subjects should wait at table, each one in his turn, according as they are appointed by the Father Econome.

After dinner and after supper there will be a half-hour's recreation. As soon as the time of recreation has

passed, the missionaries are exhorted to cease their pleasantries and all useless discourse, and each one should attend to the duties of his employment; those that are free should occupy themselves with hearing confessions till the hour of instruction, of prayer, or of study. During the instruction and the sermon those that have some exercise to give on the following day should strive to prepare themselves as well as possible for it. Besides, unless any one has received from the Superior permission to remain at the house, all the missionaries, especially those that are young, if they have no other occupation, should be present at the instruction, or at least at the great sermon. After the sermon and the discipline they all retire to the house, where they hear the confessions of the men till the hour for supper.

In all these observances the Superior should endeavor to set the example, being the first especially in rising at the signal in the morning, in retiring in the evening to go to bed, in keeping silence, and in hearing confessions; for if he fails in his duty he will easily see that the others will also fail, and what is worse, by failing himself he will not have the courage to reprove others.

II. The Superior should appoint the missionaries for each exercise of the mission, namely, one for the sermon, another for the instruction; one for the meditation in the morning, another for the catechism, which is usually given by the Prefect of the church. The latter should take care to notify the priests of the hour in which they may say Mass, one after the other, in order that they may not come together to say Mass at the last hour.

The Superior also appoints a missionary for the exercises that are to be given to the *priests*, and another for giving them separately to the *seminarians*, if there is a seminary in the place; for if the seminarians are present at the exercises of the priests they will profit very little.

Moreover, he appoints one to give in the morning separate exercises to the *gentlemen* in some chapel or other place of meeting. These special exercises are of great benefit to the instructed persons of the place, because in certain places such people hardly attend the mission; but when the exercises are expressly given to them, they all usually attend them. Then when we speak familiarly with them and *ad cor*, many give themselves to God, and their good example leads to the reform of the entire population.

He should, likewise, appoint some one to give the exercises to the *nuns* or religious Communities, if there are such in the place, and if they request to have them; but they should not be offered to them nor should any engagement be made with them.

Another Father should be appointed by him to give the exercises to the *prisoners*, and to hear their confessions.

He will give to the Fathers, in turn, the less important exercises, as the exhortations, the Rosary, the discipline, etc.—He should, moreover, appoint one or two to go to hear the confessions of the sick who may call them.—He also chooses one or two, especially at the beginning of the mission, to go, before the sermon, to invite the people to come to church.

Besides, at the beginning of the mission he should charge some missionaries to visit the most respectable people of the place, such as the principal functionaries, and also other persons of distinction, if there be any. As for the bishop, the vicar-general, and the principal man of the place, the Superior himself should visit them; and if these dignitaries do not live in the place, but in the neighborhood, he should at least take care to send two missionaries to visit them, and to ask the bishop for his blessing, and the chief magistrate for his protection, if it be necessary for the success of the mission.

III. Finally, the Superior appoints an *Econome* who is to take charge of the house, in regard to the food, beds, the means of travelling, and all the expenses that are incurred during the mission.

The Superior should also appoint the *Prefect of the church*, who is charged with the duty of placing the pulpit and the statue of Mary at the side of it, of preparing the crucifix and the torches, and of finding clerics to carry them; the Prefect has, moreover, to arrange all that is needed for the general Communion and for the blessing on the last day, as also to prepare the Calvary or the crosses that are to be erected.

Besides, he is to appoint the *Prefect of peace*, who is to gather information in regard to the enmities that exist in the place, and to devote himself to the work of reconciliation.

CHAPTER XII.

VIRTUES THAT THE MISSIONARIES SHOULD ESPECIALLY PRACTISE DURING THE MISSIONS.

1. Obedience.

IF during the mission one does not obey the Superior with exactness, all will be disorder, confusion, and trouble, and success will not be attained; for when there is no obedience to the orders of the Superior, all the exercises of the mission are thrown into confusion, and the consequence will be innumerable misunderstandings, either between the Superior and the subjects, or among the subjects themselves, because this will give rise to rivalries, jealousies, murmurs, which will create many annoyances and disappointments. How can such a mission redound to the greater glory of God? A vessel directed by different pilots cannot but make a disastrous voyage.

Every missionary should therefore be blindly obedient in everything that the Superior ordains. We may draw his attention to that of which he is ignorant or to that which he does not notice; but after having represented the case, we should be satisfied, abstain from replying, and especially from disputing; otherwise the Superior as well as the subject will become disquieted, and in the agitation that follows the work will be done unwillingly, while to the labors of the mission it is necessary that we bring a tranquil and cheerful mind.

2. Humility.

No one should have the temerity to ask for any office or to be employed as preacher. One would cause great

scandal if one showed, directly or indirectly, a desire to preach or to give an instruction, or some other exercise of which one has not the care. One would deserve to be taken no longer on the missions, or to be always kept, so to speak, in the corner. Let every one show rather a desire to be engaged in the most humble employments; for example, to teach catechism, to say the Rosary, and the like. The best thing would be to appear always ready to hear confessions, especially the confessions of men. Here, in passing, we would remind confessors that when penitents come who are not disposed, they should never be sent away to examine their conscience, especially if they are but little instructed, as we have said in the *Instruction and Practice for Confessors*;¹ the confessors should examine them themselves according to the order of the commandments. In fact, to hear confessions in the missions is a less brilliant employment, but the most important and the most useful for the glory of God. The preacher is honored by every one; he is called a saint, an excellent missionary; his hands, his garments, are kissed, people recommend themselves to his prayers, whilst he that spends nine or ten hours every day in the confessional is not mentioned, not even looked at. But perhaps this confessor will acquire more praise before God in a single day than the preacher with all his sermons and all his efforts, with all the acclamations and applause that he receives from the people.

Father Segneri wisely remarks that the missionary should expect from his labors only the glory of God and the good of souls, taking for himself detraction, contempt, and vexations, and referring to God all the honors that are paid to him; otherwise, if he views with complacency his talents and his success, he will lose more than he gains of all his labors. To him will

¹ *Homo apost. tr. ult.* § 3, n. 18.

be said : *You have received your reward.* All the missionaries should be disposed to suffer with humility the cold reception or any other unpleasantness that they may meet with from the inhabitants of the place. The same Father Segneri said that he who has not the courage to bear with contempt and with bitterness, is not fit to be a missionary.

3. Mortification.

Every one should be satisfied with the food and with the bed that are given to him, without asking for anything. When we go on a mission, we should go with the thought and the resolution not to take a walk for recreation's sake, but to suffer in order to gain souls for Jesus Christ. We should abstain from going to see the curiosities that are in the place, unless they happen to be objects of devotion; we should also refrain from going out of the house for the purpose of distracting ourselves or even from remaining at the windows or on the balcony of the house in which we live. The people look upon the missionaries as saints, as men dead to all the things of this world, as if they had neither flesh nor senses, so that every act on their part that does not appear holy astonishes and scandalizes them.

4. Piety.

This virtue should be especially conspicuous when we celebrate the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Every priest whom we see saying Mass hurriedly and with but little piety, as we have said in several places of our writings, gives scandal to the people; but the scandal would be greater if a missionary were seen celebrating Mass after the manner of indevout priests. It would not be proper to say that during the mission devotions should be abridged in order that more time may be given to confessions and to other exercises; for the words of the

confessor and of the preacher will make little impression if the audience is not convinced of the sanctity of him who speaks.

Every one should, therefore, endeavor to celebrate Mass with suitable devotion, and even during the time of the mission with a little more devotion than usual, in order to edify the people. Besides, we should not fail to make thanksgiving after Mass, as is prescribed in our Constitutions; however, during the mission it would be a fault to spend more than a quarter of an hour in making it, when there are many penitents waiting to go to confession.

5. Modesty.

The missionaries should observe great modesty both in their looks and in their words.

They should take care always to observe modesty of the eyes in the church; in the streets, and in the houses where there are women. They should know that the people are very attentive in observing whether any missionary looks women in the face. A missionary, now dead, was a holy man; nevertheless in a certain place he had neglected to keep his eyes under control, and it was said of him: "He may have been a saint, but he used to look women in the face."

Especially should the missionary be modest in his words; let him never speak of the defects of others, and let him speak well of every one. Religious and priests should always be held in great esteem, and when others are detracting their neighbor, he should at least be silent if he cannot excuse him.

6. Courtesy and Gravity.

The missionaries should be courteous to every one especially by saluting all those whom they meet on the way, however humble may be their condition. Nothing

attaches the people to the missionaries and draws them to God so much as to see themselves saluted by them. This is, however, to be understood of men, not of women; for when they meet women, they should salute them with uncovered head without raising the eyes. All courtesy and deference should therefore be paid to the people of the place; they should avoid disputing with them, and yield to them in all that does not compromise the interests of the mission.

But to this courtesy and deference must be joined gravity and proper reserve; hence the missionaries should avoid being intimate with any person of the place and for this reason they should abstain from talking to others about news and about anything that does not profit the mission. For a greater reason should they refrain from entering the houses without necessity and without the permission of the Superior.

Appendix.

WE shall here treat of five points on which it is necessary to instruct the people so that the mission may be successful: 1. Love for Jesus crucified; 2. Devotion to the Mother of God; 3. Necessity of prayer in order to be saved; 4. Flight from dangerous occasions; 5. Ruin of souls who through shame omit to confess their sins.

I.

Love for Jesus Crucified.

In the missions we usually speak only of the four Last Things and of other subjects apt to excite fear; little is said, except incidentally, of the love that God bears us, and of the obligation that we have to love him. No one will deny that terrifying sermons are useful, and even necessary, in order to awaken sinners who have fallen asleep in their sins; but we should be convinced that conversions brought about only by the fear of divine chastisements are of short duration; they last only as long as this fear continues in full strength; when, however, it is dissipated, the soul, having become quite feeble by the sins committed, easily succumbs to every new attack of temptation; if the holy love of God enters not the soul it will be difficult for it to persevere.

Persuaded of this truth, St. Peter of Alcantara usually treated in his sermons of terrible subjects, as death, judgment, hell, by which he startled his hearers by representing to them the rigor of the divine justice against the obstinate; at the same time, however, he allayed their fears by pointing out to them the remedies,

for the sins committed. He inspired them with hope of pardon through the merits of Jesus Christ according to the sweet promises made by our Lord, who wished to suffer so much and to die of sorrow on the cross in order to obtain for sinners pardon and grace to resist in future the temptations of the flesh and of hell. It is thus that the saint attracted to Jesus Christ all that came to him—the learned and the unlearned,—in such crowds that the churches where he preached could not contain the people, and conversions became general.

The missionary should therefore chiefly endeavor in every sermon that he preaches to leave his hearers inflamed with this holy love. But this end is not attained by speculative sermons, in which one demonstrates the excellence of divine love, to attain which it is above all important for us to make others understand the love that Jesus Christ has borne us in his Passion. St. Francis de Sales says: "All love that does not take its origin in the Passion of our Lord is frivolous." When, on the other hand, a Christian believes and practically represents to himself all that Jesus Christ has suffered in order to save him, he cannot but be penetrated with love for Jesus Christ; and therefore we may rightly hope that he will persevere till death in the state of grace.

In reference to this matter I find it proper to note here what was told me of a celebrated missionary, who is now dead. As he was charged to preach the principal sermon in a place of several thousand inhabitants, he preached among others a speculative sermon on divine love, and invited a well-informed priest to come to hear him. This priest told me that the discourse was learned, filled with texts of Scripture and of the holy Fathers, and of theological teachings; he was praised by the small number of hearers that could understand him; but the greater part of the people derived no fruit or

nearly none, because they could understand very little of what he said. The preacher would certainly have produced much more fruit if he had confined himself to explain in an humble way the love that Jesus Christ bore to us by coming into the world to suffer and to die for us.

Hence in our missions, especially on the last three days, we speak only of the Passion of our Lord, so that the souls may become attached to Jesus Christ; and not only on the last three days, but on every day of the mission, it will be well for the preacher to interweave, wherever this is suitable, some exhortation on the love that we owe to Jesus Christ. Moreover, we would do well to induce the audience to procure, each one, a pious image of Jesus crucified, to whom they should take care often to recommend themselves during the day by asking of him the graces that they desire, above all the grace of loving him till death; and this grace every one should ask of the divine Mother, of his guardian angel, and of all his holy patrons, that is, the grace of loving Jesus Christ, which comprises all graces.

It will also be useful for the preacher to teach the people, from time to time, some holy maxims which every good Christian should keep engraven on his heart, in order to continue in the grace of God and in union with his holy will; for example: To lose everything rather than to lose God. If God is lost, all is lost. What friend have we who has loved us as much as God? All that God wishes is good. We should therefore accept everything that comes from his hand.

It will also be useful to teach some ejaculatory prayers, to reanimate in the heart the love for God; for example: *Deus meus, et omnia*—My God and my all. My God, it is only Thee that I wish, and nothing else. Whom shall I love if I do not love Thee, my Jesus, who hast died for me? etc.—These pious affections will con-

tribute much to keep burning in the heart the sacred fire of divine love.

II.

Devotion to the Mother of God.

During the mission we should often recommend devotion to the Blessed Virgin. This devotion is not one of those that one calls supererogatory. According to the teaching of many saints and all the masters of the spiritual life, it is regarded as necessary, not by absolute necessity, but at least by moral necessity; so that one fears for him who lives habitually a stranger to such a devotion. To convince ourselves of this truth, it is sufficient to know that the holy Church in her hymns makes us call the Blessed Virgin *our hope—Spes nostra, salve.*

This agrees with what St. Bernard writes; he thus calls Mary: "A full aqueduct, so that others may receive from her plenitude."¹ He afterwards says: "The Redeemer when about to redeem mankind conferred upon Mary the price of the redemption."² And he concludes: "If there is any hope in us, if there is any grace, if any salvation, we know that it all comes from Mary."³ He again says: "No grace comes from heaven to the earth unless it passes through the hands of Mary."⁴ And elsewhere he says: Such is his wish that we should have everything through Mary."⁵ Father Natalis Alexander,

¹ "Plenus Aquæductus, ut accipiant cæteri de ejus plenitudine."—*De Aquæd.* n. 3.

² "Redempturus humanum genus, pretium universum contulit in Mariam."

³ "Si quid in nobis est, si quid gratiæ, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare."—*De Aquæd.* n. 6.

⁴ "Nulla gratia venit de cœlo ad terram, nisi transeat per manus Mariæ."—*Apud S. Bernardin. Pro Fest. V. M.* s. 5, c. 8.

⁵ "Sic est voluntas ejus, qui totum nos habere voluit per Mariam."—*De Aquæd.* n. 7.

dwelling on these last words of St. Bernard, thus expresses himself: "God wishes that all the good that we expect from him should be obtained through the most powerful intercession of Mary."¹ And Father Con-
tenson wishes the same thing to be understood when he says that none will participate in the blood of Jesus Christ except through the intercession of his divine Mother, and puts into the mouth of our Lord these words: "No one shall participate in my blood except through the intercession of my Mother."²

And why should we expect everything good from God through the intervention of Mary? The same St. Bernard gives us the reason of this in another place, by saying that it is because Mary is wanting neither in power with God to obtain for us all the graces that we desire, nor in good-will to save our souls: "She is wanting neither in the power nor in the will."³ In another place he declares that Mary is the whole foundation of his hope: "She is my greatest reliance, she is the entire motive of my hope."⁴ And he exhorts us to ask in the name of Mary for all the graces that we desire to receive from God: "Let us ask for grace, and let us ask for it through Mary."⁵ Finally, the saint assures us of divine grace and eternal salvation if we persevere in devotion to Mary. He thus beautifully expresses himself: "Following her, you will not wander from the path; invoking her, you will not despair; thinking of her, you will not err; clinging to her, you will not fall; having her as

¹ "Deus vult ut omnia bona ab ipso expectemus, potentissima Virginis Matris intercessione impetranda."—*Ep.* 50 *in calce Theol.*

² "Nullus sanguinis mei particeps erit, nisi intercessione Matris meæ."—*Theol. ment. et cord.* t. 2, l. 10, d. 4, c. 1.

³ "Nec facultas ei deesse poterit, nec voluntas."—*De Assumpt.* s. 1, n. 2.

⁴ "Hæc maxima mea fiducia est, hæc tota ratio spei meæ."—*De Aquæd.* n. 7.

⁵ "Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus."—*Ibid.* n. 8.

your protectress, you need fear nothing; having her as your guide, you will not grow weary; being propitious to you, she will help you to arrive at your destiny."¹

To the writings of St. Bernard may be added what many other saints say of the Blessed Virgin. St. Ephrem addresses these words to her: "In no other except in thee, O most faithful virgin! do we put our confidence."² St. Bonaventure writes: "No one can enter heaven, unless he enters through Mary as through a door."³ And St. Bernardine of Sienna: "All the gifts and graces are dispensed by God through Mary's hands, to whom she wishes, when and how she wishes."⁴ In another place he says to her: "Thou art the dispenser of all graces; our salvation is in thy hands."⁵ St. Peter Damian also says to her: "Nothing is impossible to thee, to whom it is possible to inspire with confidence even those that have despaired of salvation."⁶ And he adds at the end, that the Son honors his Mother in refusing her nothing for which she asks him: "The Son honors thee by refusing thee nothing."⁷

In order not to be too diffuse I omit here very many other passages taken from authors who express the same thing; but from all that precedes, we rightly conclude

¹ "Ipsam sequens, non devias; ipsam rogans, non desperas; ipsam cogitans, non erras; ipsa tenente, non corruis; ipsa protegente, non metuis; ipsa duce, non fatigaris; ipsa propitia, pervenis."—*De Laud. V. M.* hom. 2.

² "Nobis non est alia quam a te fiducia, o Virgo sincerissima!"—*De Laud. B. M. V.*

³ "Nullus potest cœlum intrare, nisi per Mariam transeat, tamquam per portam."—*In Luc. I.*

⁴ "Omnia dona et gratiæ, quibus vult, quando vult, et quomodo vult, per ipsius manus dispensantur."

⁵ "Tu Dispensatrix omnium gratiarum; salus nostra in manu tua est."—*S. de Nat. M. V. s. 8.*

⁶ "Nihil tibi impossibile, cui possibile est etiam desperatos in spem beatitudinis relevare."

⁷ "Filius, nihil negans, honorat te."—*De Nat. B. M. V. s. 1.*

that devotion to the Blessed Virgin is not only useful, but even morally necessary, according to what St. Bernard says, as is quoted above: "No grace comes from heaven to the earth unless it passes through the hands of Mary." At the present time this is a very common opinion among Catholics, as we have proved in our book the *Glories of Mary*,¹ in which I quote many theologians who call this an opinion that is absolutely common.

However, this opinion does not please Muratori, who in his book entitled *Well-regulated Devotion*, says of the maintained proposition, "God does not grant any grace except through the mediation of Mary,"² that it is a hyperbole, an exaggeration that has escaped the lips of some saints. But I do not know how this great scholar has been able to see in this a hyperbole, after Jesus Christ has deigned to choose this privileged creature for his Mother and for his co-operatrix in the redemption of the human race. It cannot be denied that it was a most proper thing that, since Mary had honored and loved Jesus Christ more than all men and all angels, he should have wished to raise her to this prerogative, namely, that all the graces which are to be dispensed to redeemed men—graces which are the fruit of his merits—should pass through the hands of his Mother, as through a channel of graces, according to the opinion of St. Bernard. What conduces much in favor of our proposition is that the holy Church in the *Salve Regina* tells us to call this divine Mother, *Vita, spes nostra*—our life, our hope. One should then fear very much for the salvation of him who esteems but little the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and neglects to obtain her intercession; for according to the opinion of St. Bernard, he thereby

¹ Part I. Ch. V.

² "Nulla gratia venit de cœlo ad terram, nisi transeat per manus Mariæ."

closes to himself the channel of graces necessary to his salvation; and it is this that the preacher should above all inculcate.

III.

Necessity of Prayer in order to save our Souls.

In regard to the necessity of prayer it must be remarked that although God wishes the salvation of all men, as the Apostle declares: *Who will have all men to be saved;*¹ and that according to the remark of St. Thomas on these words, the Lord, wishing the salvation of all men, does not allow any one to be in want of the grace of which he stands in need: "And, therefore, grace is wanting to no one, but communicates itself to all as far as possible;"² nevertheless, theologians teach that no one is saved except with the help of God, and this help he does not obtain unless he prays for it.³ Thus Genadius⁴ expresses himself, and St. Augustine adds that except the first graces, as the vocation to the faith, or to penance, God does not grant the rest, and especially the grace of final perseverance, except to him who asks for it.⁵ Hence theologians commonly conclude, with St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, and the same St. Augustine, that for adults prayer is necessary by necessity of means, so that without prayer it is impossible, according to the present disposition of Providence, to save one's soul.

This is what is signified by Scripture when it says: *We ought always to pray.*⁶ *Ask and you shall receive.*⁷ *Pray*

¹ "Qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri."—1 *Tim.* ii. 4.

² "Et ideo gratia nulli deest, sed omnibus, quantum in se est, se communicat."—*In Heb.* 12. lect. 3.

³ "Nullum salutem suam, nisi Deo auxiliante, operari; nullum, nisi orantem, auxilium promereri."

⁴ *De Eccl. Dogm.* c. 26.

⁵ "Alia non nisi orantibus præparasse, sicut usque in finem perseverantiam."—*De Dono persev.* c. 16.

⁶ "Oportet semper orare."—*Luke*, xviii. 1.

⁷ "Petite, et accipietis."—*John*, xvi. 24.

*without ceasing.*¹ For St. Thomas² says that the words *We ought, Ask, Pray* express a precept which imposes a grave obligation, especially in three cases: 1. When any one is in the state of mortal sin; 2. When any one is in danger of committing sin; 3. When any one is in great danger of death. Outside of these cases, theologians (see *Lessius, de Inst.*, l. 2, c. 37, d. 3, n. 9, et seq.) say that he who neglects for a month, or at least for two months, to recommend himself to God, is not excused from mortal sin. The reason of this is that ordinarily during this time the devil, who unceasingly is trying to gain souls, will not fail to cause him some grave temptation, and that in grave temptations he who does not pray, and does not ask God's help, of which he stands in need in order not to fall, will very easily fall. In fact, we should be convinced that without the help of God we have not the strength to resist the violent movements of bad passions and the vehement suggestions of the enemy who comes to assail us, even though we should have taken a thousand good resolutions and made to God a thousand promises; if we then do not recommend ourselves to God, we shall certainly be conquered. We must add that the Council of Trent condemns him who should say that man in the state of grace can persevere in it without the special help of God: "If any one saith that the justified either is able to persevere, without the special help of God, in the justice received; or that, with that help, he is not able; let him be anathema."³ Hence, in order to persevere, the ordinary divine help does not suffice; we need extraordinary help, which is not obtained except through prayer.

¹ "Sine intermissione orate."—1 *Thess.* v. 17.

² P. 3, q. 39, a. 5.

³ "Si quis dixerit justificatum, vel sine speciali auxilio Dei in accepta justitia perseverare posse, vel cum eo non posse, anathema sit." *Sess.* vi. can. xxii.

In this we should be greatly encouraged by the innumerable promises that the Lord has made us, as well in the Old as in the New Testament, that he will hear any one that prays to him. What should, above all, inspire us with great confidence is the consideration of the two promises made by Jesus Christ, in which he teaches us to pray with the certainty of obtaining the graces that we ask in his name. In one promise he says: *Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you; in the other: If you shall ask Me anything in My name, that I will do.*¹ When we, therefore, pray to God in the name of the Son, or to the Son in his name, we should be sure of obtaining the grace that we ask; for God cannot fail in his promises. This is to be, however, understood whenever the graces asked for are spiritual goods, the before-mentioned promises not having for their object temporal goods, which the Lord grants to us only so far as they are more profitable to the soul. As for spiritual goods, the Apostle St. James wishes us to ask for them with great confidence, because God grants them in abundance to all: *Ask of God, Who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not.*² The last two words signify much: they signify that when any one addresses God prayers useful to his eternal salvation, and when he prays with faith, God will certainly hear him; even when the soul has been unfaithful to him he grants it the grace that it asks, and does not reproach it for the faults that it has committed. When, therefore, we solicit spiritual goods, we should firmly believe that we shall obtain them, and they will be granted to us, as our divine Master has assured us when he says: *All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe*

¹ "Amen, amen, dico vobis; si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis."—*John*, xvi. 23.

² "Postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluentem, et non improperat."—*James*, i. 5.

that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.' After this, the preacher should not omit to recommend to him who prays always to be careful to interpose the intercession of Mary, according to the advice given by St. Bernard quoted above: "Let us ask for grace, and let us ask it through Mary."

In concluding this point about the necessity of prayer, I cannot but complain of those preachers, and also of the authors of books of piety, who speak little of prayer; but I especially complain of confessors who take little care to remind their penitents of this necessity of praying in temptations: they carefully tell them to make a firm resolution and to promise to God never more to offend him; but they do not take the trouble to make them understand that when one is tempted, especially against purity, good resolutions and promises are of little use if one does not invoke God's help. When the temptation is strong, we should at once recommend ourselves fervently to God; and if the temptation continues, we should continue to implore the help of God in order not to fall until it ceases, or at least until it grows weaker. Experience proves that the invocation of the holy names of Jesus and Mary, in temptations, is an excellent means not to give consent to them. But I say that if one sees so much backsliding among penitents who are contrite, it is because confessors pay so little attention to persuading them that in the suggestions of the devil they should immediately ask God to assist them.

Some will be astonished at seeing me requiring of preachers that during the missions they should attend to inculcating these two practices on the minds of the hearers, namely, to have recourse to God in temptations, and as is said in the second point, to recommend one's self often to the Blessed Virgin. I say that they

¹ "Omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis."—*Mark*, xi. 24.

will be astonished, because commonly these are two things that preachers always recommend and leave as remembrances, especially in their last sermon.—Yes, I say that such is the custom; but I answer that in order to induce the hearers to take the firm resolution to execute these two things that are so important to salvation, it is not sufficient to recommend them once and to leave them as remembrances in the last sermon: we should recommend them in all the sermons in order that the people may keep them engraven on the memory, and put them in practice in the future.

IV.

The Flight from Dangerous Occasions.

This fourth point should often be recommended in the mission; for an innumerable multitude of souls are lost by not wishing to avoid the occasions of sin. Oh, how many souls are now in hell who cry out, weeping: Unhappy me, if I had kept from this occasion I should never have damned my soul for all eternity!

The Holy Ghost reminds us that he who loves the danger will fall into sin,—will perish: *He that loveth danger shall perish in it.*¹ St. Thomas explains to us the reason; commenting on this text, he says that when we voluntarily expose ourselves to danger, or when we neglect to keep from it, God abandons us in it.² And St. Bernardine of Sienna³ assures us that among the counsels of Jesus Christ the counsel of fleeing from the occasion of sin is the most important, is, as it were, the foundation of religion.

The preacher should then take care to remind the people that when they are tempted, especially if the oc-

¹ "Qui amat periculum, in illo peribit."—*Eccles.* iii. 27.

² "Cum exponimus nos in periculo, Deus nos derelinquit in illo."

³ T. I, s. 21, a. 3, c. 3.

casation presents itself, they should avoid reasoning with the temptation. What the devil desires is precisely that we should parley with it; for thereby he will easily conquer us. We must in this case flee from the occasion at once, and invoke the names of Jesus and Mary without listening to the enemy who tempts us.

St. Peter assures us that the devil prowls around every soul to devour it.¹ On this text St. Cyprian says that the devil goes about without ceasing, and examines by what door he may enter. When a dangerous occasion presents itself, the devil at once says to himself: Here is the door by which I can enter this soul. And immediately he begins to tempt the soul. If we then neglect to flee from the occasion, we shall certainly yield to it, especially when the object of the temptation is a carnal sin. Hence the devil is not so much afraid of our good resolutions and our promises not to offend God as to see us flee from the occasion; for, if we do not flee from it, it becomes a bandage which is put over our eyes, and makes us forget all the eternal truths, all the lights received, and all the promises made to God. And if any one finds himself sunken in impure sins, he should avoid as much as possible the occasions, not only the proximate, but also the remote occasions, for he is less capable of resisting. We should not, then, labor under the illusion by pretending that it is a necessary occasion which we need not avoid; for Jesus Christ has said: *If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee.*² Even if it were your right eye, to escape damnation it would be necessary to pluck it out and cast it from you, that is, by fleeing from this occasion, however remote it may

¹ "Adversarius vester diabolus . . . circuit, quærens quem devoret.
—1 Pet. v. 8.

² "Quod si oculus tuus dexter scandalizet te, erue eum et projice abs te."—Matt. v. 29.

be; for on account of your weakness it is proximate for you.

St. Francis of Assisi, speaking of persons who have the fear of God, gives an excellent advice concerning remote occasions: he says that for persons who fear to lose God, the devil, in the occasions, does not at first excite them to grave faults; he begins by attaching them with a hair, which afterwards, in time, may through his suggestions become a chain, and he thus succeeds in dragging them into mortal sin. Hence in our relations with persons of the other sex, we should take care to break off from the beginning every kind of attachment, however feeble it may be, by avoiding even the remote occasions, such as looking them in the face, saluting them with affection, receiving notes or presents from them, and much more, saying tender words to them.

We should, above all, be convinced that we who are by nature sensual have not the strength to preserve the virtue of chastity; God only in his goodness can grant us this strength. Now it is true that the Lord hears him who prays to him; but if any one exposes himself to the occasion, and knowing it, does not remove from it, his prayers are not heard, according to the words of the Holy Ghost already quoted: *He that loveth danger shall perish in it.* Alas! how many are there who, for not having fled from the occasions of this kind, although they led holy lives, ended by falling into sin and becoming hardened in it? *With fear and trembling,* says the Apostle, *work out your salvation.*¹ He that does not tremble, and dares to expose himself to dangerous occasions, above all to occasions of carnal sins, will be saved with difficulty.

Since these counsels about the flight of dangerous occasions is so important, it is not sufficient if the

¹ "Cum metu et tremore, vestram salutem operamini."—*Phil.* ii. 12.

preacher speaks about it once to his people, or even devotes an entire sermon to it, as some do, and do well; but as these occasions are numerous, and men are careless about avoiding them, the world becoming thereby so corrupt, we must come back to this point and insist upon it several times during the mission. On this depends the salvation of those persons who, although they come to the mission, yet are not present at the sermon on the flight from dangerous occasions.

I add another remark, which it would be well to make all understand, and especially confessors. When a penitent has never avoided the occasion in which he has been accustomed to sin, it will be necessary for him to make a general confession, because one should judge that all the confessions that he has made in this state are null. One should also presume the same thing in the case of those who, although they have always confessed their sins, yet never gave any sign of amendment, and fell back a little while after into sin; only a general confession can induce these people to amend their lives.

V.

The Ruin of Souls who through Shame omit to Confess their Sins.

In the missions we should moreover strongly and often inculcate the necessity of overcoming the shame that one feels in confessing one's sins. Those who are experienced missionaries know that this cursed shame has been the cause of the loss of many souls. It follows that as the principal fruit of the missions consists in the remedy that they apply to this evil, they are not only useful but even necessary for country places; for as there is only a small number of confessors, who are very often the relatives or friends of their penitents, false shame has more force in making the people conceal sins in confession.

It is a pity to see how many souls the devil gains by this means, especially in matters concerning impure sins; for he makes them lose shame at the moment of committing them, and gives this shame back to them when there is question of mentioning them in confession. St. Antonine, speaking of this matter, relates that a holy hermit, seeing one day the devil in the church going among those that wished to confess, asked him what he was doing there; the evil spirit answered: "To induce these people to commit sin. I have taken shame from them; now I return it to them in order that they may not confess it." St. John Chrysostom also says: "God has given shame to the commission of sin, and confidence to the confession of it. The devil inverts this: he inspires him who sins with confidence, and him who confesses with shame."¹

Alas! Christian soul, you have sinned; if you do not confess your sins you will certainly be damned. Why then do you not confess your sin? You answer: I am ashamed.—Hence rather than overcome this shame you wish to be condemned for all eternity to the fire of hell? It is a shame to offend so good a God who has created us; it is not a shame to confess to have offended him. But since you do not wish to manifest your sin, refrain at least from going to confession. To the sin that you have committed do you wish to add the sacrilege of a bad confession? Do you know what you are doing when you commit a sacrilege? For the sins on account of which you have deserved hell there is no other remedy than the blood of Jesus Christ, who will purify you if you confess it well; but by concealing your sin, you even tread under foot the blood of Jesus Christ.

The present mission is for you a good occasion for

¹ Pudorem dedit Deus peccato, confessioni fiduciam. Invertit rem diabolus: peccato fiduciam præbet, confessioni pudorem.—*De Penit.*
hom. 3.

making your confession to a priest who does not know you, whom afterwards you will see no more, and who will no more see you; if you do not wish to profit by this occasion, God will perhaps not grant it to you again, and you will be damned. Remember that if you do not confess now, the devil will gain absolute sway over you, and then perhaps God will abandon you, and there will be no more hope for you. Courage, then! go to confession immediately.

What do you fear? Ah! here are no doubt the pretexts that the devil will suggest to you:

1. What will my confessor say when he hears that I have fallen in such a way?—Well! he will say that you have been weak, as happens to so many others who live in this world; he will say that you did wrong to sin, but that you afterwards performed a noble deed in overcoming shame to confess your sins.

2. At least he will not fail to give me a scolding.—Oh no, why should he scold you? Know that confessors cannot have greater consolation than when they hear a person accusing himself of a sin that he has committed; for then he can securely absolve him and thus deliver him from hell.

3. I have not enough confidence to manifest this sin to my spiritual Father.—Well! go to confession to another priest of the place or to a stranger.—But if my confessor hears that I have gone to confession to another, he will be offended, and will no more hear my confession.—And you, in order not to displease your confessor wish to commit a sacrilege and to damn your soul? If you go to hell, will your confessor be able to talk you out of it?

4. Who knows whether the confessor will not make known my sin to others?—What folly to think that a confessor could wish to commit so great a crime as to break the seal of confession by manifesting your sin to

others! To how many confessors are you to declare your sin? It suffices that you tell it once to one priest only, who hears your sin as he hears a thousand others in other confessions. But why have you so many unreasonable fears, and have not the fear of damning yourself by not confessing your sin? This should deprive you of all consolation and all peace; for, if you do not confess your sin, there will remain in your conscience a viper that will gnaw your heart during your whole life in this world, and after death, during all eternity in hell.

Well now, let us take courage, and make known to the confessor the recesses of your conscience; immediately after confession you will find the peace that you have lost, and you will ever thank God for having given you the strength to overcome the devil. Hasten, therefore, to be delivered from this viper that causes you so much pain, and become reconciled with God. Hear what I say: It is sufficient for you to say to the confessor: My Father, I have a scruple about my past life; but I am ashamed to mention it.—Speak thus, and then it will be the confessor's duty to deliver you from the serpent that torments you as if you were one of the damned, although you are not yet in hell.

I have wished to mention here in a practical manner those pretexts which induce so many poor souls to conceal their sins and are the cause of their damnation. As this cursed shame is everywhere prevalent, especially among women, we must make them understand the answers given above to the false pretexts which the devil puts before them in order to make them conceal their sins.

It is true, I am well aware that, in the missions, usually a special sermon is preached to move the hearers not to hide any sin through shame; but I say that this point is so important that even an entire sermon is not sufficient: first, because it may happen that souls need-

ing it most are not present; secondly, because for persons who have concealed their sins for a long time, it is not enough to hear the remedy spoken of but once; the preacher should often insist upon this matter, which I regard as the most important that one has to treat in the missions; for even in the missions many persons, although they have been present at the sermons, have continued to hide their sins. This is particularly necessary when one preaches in conservatories in which many girls and women are living together. As the occasions of sin are more frequent there, sins are also more frequent; and for persons that live in these establishments it is more difficult to have a confessor to whom they would confess with less repugnance; hence we should oftener speak to them about false shame, which causes them to conceal sins in confession, and it is very useful to make a deep impression upon their minds by relating to them melancholy examples.

In all the missions given by our Congregation it is customary for him who explains the catechism to relate every day one of the terrible examples of persons damned for having concealed sins in confession. Many of these examples are found in good authors, and I have given some of them in my treatise *INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PEOPLE ON THE COMMANDMENTS*. I think the preacher would do well to put to a profitable use similar examples. They may be of benefit not only to him who preaches the sermon, but also to him who gives the instruction or meditation, and even to him who gives the exercises to priests; for among them are often found parish priests, preachers of Lenten sermons, and other ecclesiastics who are anxious to preach in a profitable manner.

Pious Acts

TO BE MADE IN THE COMMON VISIT TO THE BLESSED
SACRAMENT AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

In the visit which the people are to make the priest should read these Acts in a loud voice and with pauses, and the people should repeat them after him.

Visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

O my soul! revive thy faith and thy confidence: thou art in the presence of the infinite majesty of thy God, who for the love of thee descended one day from heaven to the earth, became man, and wished to die on the cross to save thee, and who now remains here in the Blessed Sacrament to hear thee, and to grant thee the graces that thou askest of him; speak to him, then, and say:

ACT OF FAITH AND OF ADORATION.

My God, because Thou art infallible truth, and hast revealed what we should believe, I believe all that Thou teachest me to believe. I believe that Thou art the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, and that in eternity Thou rewardest the just in paradise and punishest the wicked in hell. I believe that Thou art only one God in essence and three in Persons, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. I believe, O eternal Son of God! that, becoming incarnate and being made man in the womb of Mary, Thou wast crucified for our salvation, and that now Thou remainest in the Blessed Sacrament to nourish us with Thy flesh in holy Communion, and to hear our prayers on Thy altars when we come to

visit Thee. Prostrate, therefore, at Thy feet, I, a miserable sinner, unworthy to appear before Thee, and worthy only of being in hell, as I have so often deserved, I adore Thee, O infinite Majesty, by uniting myself to the adorations that are rendered to Thee by all the angels and all the saints, with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

ACT OF HOPE.

My dear Redeemer, trusting in Thy promises, because Thou art faithful, powerful, and merciful, I hope that Thou wilt grant me through the merits of Thy Passion the pardon of my sins, perseverance in Thy grace till death, and finally the happiness of going to see and love Thee eternally in paradise.

ACT OF LOVE.

My dear Lord and my God, because Thou art an infinite good, worthy of an infinite love, I love Thee with my whole heart above all things, and I would wish to see Thee loved by all men of this world as much as Thou deservest to be. I rejoice that Thou art and wilt always be infinitely happy.

ACT OF CONTRITION AND OF A FIRM PURPOSE.

My dearly beloved Redeemer, if I had abandoned all for Thee by spending my whole life in the desert, and if afterwards I had died by the violence of the torments endured for Thy love, it would certainly be nothing in comparison with the cruel death that Thou my God hast wished to suffer for me. But how have I treated Thee in the past? I have repaid Thee with ingratitude. Instead of loving Thee, how many times have I offended Thee by turning my back upon Thee, by despising Thy grace and Thy love! I repent of this, O my Jesus! I regret with my whole heart of having offended Thee—Thou who art infinite goodness. Ah!

would that I had died rather than have ever displeased Thee! I hate and I detest more than every evil all the injury that I have heaped upon Thee. O Lord, my God! I promise Thee, and I am resolved for the future to die rather than offend Thee again; I also make the resolution to receive the sacraments during my life and at my death. The time that remains to me to live, whether it be short or long, I will spend entirely in loving Thee, O infinite Majesty, my only good, more amiable than every other good! But of what use will be all these promises that I have made to Thee, if Thou dost not help me, O God of my soul! Without Thy help I should betray Thee again, and I should do worse than before. This is, then, the grace that I ask of Thee, and that I hope through the merits of Thy Passion: give me holy perseverance, and do not permit it to happen that I should ever again be separated from Thee; let me die rather than see myself again incur Thy displeasure.

ACT OF THANKSGIVING.

My Jesus, I thank Thee for all the graces that Thou hast conferred upon me: for having created me, for having redeemed me by Thy blood, for having made me a Christian by the sacrament of baptism, and for having borne with me so long a time, when I was in disgrace with Thee. How unhappy should I be had I died in this state! I should now be in hell, I should be lost there forever, O my God! and I could no longer love Thee. I thank Thee, therefore, for having waited for me with so much patience, and for having pardoned me, as I trust that Thou hast done, with so much mercy. I especially thank Thee for having left Thyself for us in the Blessed Sacrament, for having so many times given Thyself entirely to me in Holy Communion by making Thyself our food, and for having at this moment deigned to admit me to Thy presence. I thank Thee for all these

benefits, and I am confident that I will render Thee more perfect thanksgiving during all eternity in paradise, where I hope to sing Thy praises forever.

OFFERING.

My Jesus, through love of me Thou didst wish to die in torments and insults on an infamous gibbet; what can I render Thee in return for so much goodness: I have only myself to offer Thee; I therefore, O Lord, my God, offer and consecrate myself entirely to Thee; I give Thee my soul, my body, my will, by submitting myself in all things and forever to Thy holy will; do with me as Thou willest. Make that I shall always love Thee in this life and in the next, and then dispose of me and of all that I am as Thou wishest. Tell me what Thou wishest of me; I am ready to do all with the help of Thy grace.

PRAYER.

O Lord! I recommend to Thee the Sovereign Pontiff, all the Prelates, and all the priests: fill them with Thy spirit, in order that they may sanctify the whole world. I recommend to Thee unbelievers, heretics, and all sinners: give them the light and the strength that they need, in order to give up sin and to study to love only Thee, who art the sovereign good. I recommend to Thee all the dying, all my relatives, my benefactors, and my friends; and I recommend to Thee also, in a special manner, my enemies; for Thou hast given me the command to do so: make them happy, and make them saints. I recommend to Thee the holy souls in purgatory: alleviate their sufferings, and abridge the time of their exile, in order that they may soon go to enjoy Thy presence in heaven.

Finally, in regard to myself, I pray to Thee, O my Jesus, whom I adore on this altar in the Blessed Sacrament! from the height of this throne of love,

grant me by Thy merits a great sorrow for my sins, and the pardon of all the offences that I have committed against Thee. Give me holy humility and meekness, in order that I may bear with patience all kinds of contempt and all persecutions. Give me the grace to mortify myself by abstaining from all that is not pleasing to Thee. Give me perfect resignation to Thy holy will, so that I may embrace with peace all the crosses that come to me from Thy hand. Give me sufficient light to know Thy holy wishes, and sufficient strength to fulfil them. Give me great confidence in Thy holy Passion and in the protection of Mary, Thy Mother. Give me the sovereign gift of Thy love, with a great desire of loving and pleasing Thee, so that in future I may always say to Thee what I now say: My God, it is Thou only whom I wish, and nothing more. Give me perseverance in Thy love till death, so that I may never lose Thy holy grace. Above all, do I ask Thee to help me always to ask of Thee this holy perseverance, by recommending myself always to Thee and to Thy holy Mother, especially when I am tempted to offend Thee; make me always repeat then: Jesus and Mary, help me.—Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus, Thy Son, grant me all these graces.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

My Jesus, I love Thee with my whole heart, and I desire to be always united with Thee. Since I cannot now receive Thee sacramentally, I receive Thee spiritually. Come, then, into my heart; I embrace Thee, and unite myself wholly to Thee, and I beg Thee not to permit me to be ever separated from Thee.

After this we may recite the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and then the following hymn should be sung:

Pange, lingua, gloriosi
Corporis mysterium,
Sanguisque pretiosi,

Quem in mundi pretium,
Fructus ventris generosi,
Rex effudit gentium.

Tantum ergo Sacramentum
Veneremur cernui;
Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui;
Præstet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.

V. Panem de cælo præstitisti eis.

R. Omne delectamentum in se habentem.

Oremus.

Deus, qui nobis, sub Sacramento mirabili, passionis tuæ memoriam reliquisti: tribue, quæsumus, ita nos Corporis et Sanguinis tui sacra mysteria venerari, ut redemptionis tuæ fructum in nobis jugiter sentiamus. Qui vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Visit to the Blessed Virgin.

O great Queen of heaven, Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary! I, a miserable sinner, salute and honor thee as the Mother of my God. Thou art among all creatures the most beautiful, the most holy, the most amiable, and the best beloved of the Lord. My Sovereign, I love thee above all things after God; I wish to see thee loved by every one. I exceedingly rejoice at thy greatness, and I thank the Lord for having so much glorified thee. I also thank thee, who art my Mother, for all the graces that thou hast obtained for me from God in the course of my whole life. I offer myself to thee to be thy perpetual servant, and I place myself under thy protection; I place in thee all my hopes. Accept me, O my Queen! and do not reject me as I deserve to be rejected. I know that thou art so powerful with God that he

grants thee everything for which thou dost ask him. O Mother of mercy! O Refuge of Sinners! I place my soul into thy hands; pray, have pity on me: recommend me to thy divine Son, and obtain for me the pardon of all my sins, the love for God, and holy perseverance in his grace till death. Above all, I beg thee to obtain for me the grace of always recommending myself to thee, especially when I am tempted to offend God. Do not cease to help me during my life and my death. My tender Mother, I confide in thee; it is thou that is to save me through the merits of Jesus, thy Son, and through thy intercession. Amen. So I hope; so may it be.

PRAYER OF ST. BONAVENTURE.

O Jesus, who for my sake didst not spare Thyself in anything! impress upon me Thy Passion, in order that, on whatever side I may turn, I may look upon Thy wounds, and may find rest only in Thee and in meditating on Thy sufferings. Amen.

Method of Giving Missions.*

1. The Beginning of the Mission.

IN the first place, it must be remarked that no one should go on a mission without having been sent by the Superiors; and the latter should never send missionaries, if they have not been asked for by the bishop or by the people of a place, with the consent of the bishop, of whom a request should be made for permission in writing and for the necessary powers. The subjects may not only show themselves disposed to give the mission, but may also modestly and resignedly manifest a desire to do so.

Then, when they are on the point of setting out, they should inform the bishop, the arch-priest, or the parish priest of the time when they will arrive at the place where the mission is to be given, in order that the people may receive notice by the placards that are to be posted in conspicuous places; so also, in order that on their arrival the bells may be rung as on a festival, and the clergy may come to receive them, at the entrance of the city or village, with the cross which is afterwards handed to the Superior. The giving of this notice will also be necessary in order that the house, the beds, and the things necessary for the kitchen may be prepared or provided for.

* In the Italian editions these regulations are found among the Letters and Circulars addressed by the holy founder to the members of his Institute; we may here see, briefly, how he directed his missions in the kingdom of Naples.—ED.

Before their departure they shall recite in common, in the church, the *Itinerarium Clericorum*; then, after having received the blessing from the Superior, who at this time will appoint him whom they should obey in his stead, they shall set out. On the journey they should select a suitable time for making their exercises of piety.

On their arrival at the place of their destination, the clergy having come to meet them, as has been said above, the Superior shall take the cross, and they shall go in procession to the church while reciting in a loud voice the *Benedictus*. Arrived at the church, they shall visit, before all, the Blessed Sacrament, then the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and the altars of the holy patrons and titular saints, and pray to them most fervently that they may assist them in this great undertaking. They shall specially offer their homage to the guardian angels of the place, of the church, and of individuals, and implore their help for the sanctification of those souls confided to their care.

When the fatigue of the journey does not prevent them, and the hour on a festival is suitable, especially if the number of the people in the church is sufficiently large, they may on that very day begin the mission by preaching the first sermon, which should be preceded by the recitation of one of the three parts of the Rosary. But as this rarely happens, a short address should usually be given to the people assembled, by informing them of the end that the missionaries propose to themselves in coming to that place. They should be told that the missionaries bring with them a heart filled with charity towards all the people; that they come to work for the salvation of their souls by placing before their eyes the eternal truths—truths of which they have neglected to think; by instructing them in the things necessary to save their souls, and by hearing their confessions with all the charity and patience that their state requires. Then

without making an act of contrition, the people shall be dismissed, after they have been informed of the time when the mission is to begin on the following day.

It should, however, be understood that, in regard to the beginning of the missions, one should not be positively restricted to an inviolable rule; the circumstances of the places, persons, etc., should be considered, and one should begin the missions in a most suitable manner, either by a discourse on the spot and making briefly an act of contrition, or by a discourse in the church, after having walked through the place, or by a regular sermon with or without an act of contrition.

When the mission does not begin on the day of arrival, the evening exhortation¹ should not be omitted, and it should continue during three or four evenings, according to the necessities of the place. The first exhortations given as an invitation should be more tender, expressing compassion for souls; the others shall be strong. They shall not be long, and should last a half or a quarter of an hour. They should not be given every evening in the same place; nor shall they be given immediately near suspected places, but where they can be heard by a large number. To give these exhortations the missionaries should always leave the church with the cross, burning candles, and the little bell, while singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. Arrived at the place where a stop is to be made, the little bell should be rung, and there shall be said with a loud voice: Praised be the Most Blessed Sacrament and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin! Then, after having announced to the people that the mission has begun or is to begin the day after, the exhortation should be given. When it is finished, the people, who are accustomed to follow, should be conducted to the church or at the entrance, where an act of

¹ Page 95.

contrition is made, and then they may be dismissed with a blessing with the crucifix. The women should be notified not to follow; for after having heard the exhortation, they should go home. The missionaries should attach great importance to these exhortations, which usually produce very great fruit in the holy missions; they should not on any account be omitted; they should not be improvised; and before going forth to give them, one shall take care to prepare for them by fervent prayers.

If the day after the arrival is a festival, and the mission has not been begun by the first sermon, confessions should not be heard in the morning of this festival, but an impassioned sermon should be delivered on the efficacy of the holy mission in securing the eternal salvation of Christians, or on the miserable state in which Christianity is found, or on the dangers to which those that have sinned have exposed themselves, etc.—This sermon should not be concluded by an act of contrition, but by an exhortation to profit by the grace that our Lord has sent in this mission, with an explanation of the exercises that are performed in the course of it; and an invitation that all should attend all these exercises, especially the procession which is to leave the church after dinner. The clergy should specially be invited to come to this procession, clad in long cassocks without surplice.

At twenty-one o'clock,¹ when all the priests have assembled in the church, the procession with the cross should start from the church and pass through the city or village while singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin; the place most populated having been reached, a stop should be made, and a Father from an elevation shall deliver a short discourse to the people, to induce them to profit by this occasion to change their lives;

¹ Old Italian reckoning, that is, two hours and a half before sunset.

but no act of contrition need be added. Then all should re-enter the church. During the procession the Fathers who take part in it may say a few words of exhortation wherever they meet people congregated, by inviting all of them to come to the sermon. The church being reached, one of the three parts of the Rosary with its mysteries should be recited (this should be done every day before the sermon), and then the Father shall ascend the pulpit to preach, but without surplice and without stole, and he shall conclude it with a fervent act of contrition drawn from a motive suggested by the sermon.

If the exercises of the mission has not been announced in the morning, as has been said above, the people should be informed of this after the first evening sermon; they should be exhorted to frequent all these exercises with all possible fervor, the hour for each exercise being mentioned to them. The ecclesiastics, the magistrates, the principal men, should be requested to be the first to be present for the sake of good example; and even when it is possible, two Fathers shall go, in the name of all, to visit and invite the chief man of the place, the governor, or any other distinguished person, to obtain their assistance and their favor; and if the mission is given in the city, they should send a similar invitation to the Chapter when it has assembled before or after Vespers; and its assistance and support should also be asked.

2. Various Exercises.

The exercises should take place punctually at the time fixed; namely, the meditation at an early hour in the morning; Christian doctrine or catechism, early after dinner; the exercises for priests in a retired place, after Vespers; and the evening sermon at an hour convenient for the close of the day; however, if the people cannot assemble so soon, as frequently happens in winter:

where there are workingmen, the sermon may be given later, unless the will of the bishop, or some other reasonable cause, is opposed to such an arrangement.

I. In the morning, as soon as a sufficient number of people have assembled, one of the three parts of the Rosary is recited, unless this would interfere with the Masses, and much more, with hearing confessions. Then a Father shall enter the pulpit and salute the people, saying: Praised be the Most Blessed Sacrament and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary! After this he shall say the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. Then he shall give, remaining on his knees, a short familiar MEDITATION,¹ preceded by the Christian Acts. This meditation shall be made on a subject pertaining to the purgative way; but care should be taken not to take the subject that is to be treated in the evening sermon, or at least, the same points. The Father shall conclude by making acts of contrition, without however taking the crucifix. This exercise, including all the acts, should not last more than three quarters of an hour.

II. During the day, the exercise of the CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, or CATECHISM,² shall take place. It shall be intrusted by the Superior to a subject whom he shall judge to be the most capable; and this exercise should be regarded as one of the most precious and most important of the holy mission.

An instruction shall be given on the precepts of the Decalogue and on the manner of confessing, and shall be given at a time most convenient for the people. If the people can come in the morning at the first hour, the instruction is to be given first, and then the meditation; in case the number of missionaries is insufficient, one may even omit the meditation, but never the instruction; however, when only the instruction is given,

¹ Page 254.

² Page 169.

one should make moral reflections, and finish with acts of contrition, etc.; and in smaller and poorer places only an instruction made in this manner will do good.

Afterwards, the Prefect of the church shall assemble the children to instruct them on confession and Communion.¹

III. Before the sermon a Father shall say the ROSARY² of the Blessed Virgin, and begin by a short introduction or a short example, in order to dispose the people to recite it with devotion; he shall announce the mysteries with some short consideration, having always in view to make the people recite one of the three parts of the Rosary; for the principal end for which this exercise has been introduced is to obtain from the Blessed Virgin that she should deign to co-operate in the success of the mission. However, when the instruction takes place after dinner, it will be better to recite the Rosary before the instruction, in order to have more people to recite it; then, between the instruction and the sermon, a hymn shall be sung, but these hymns should never be sung in the pulpit.

IV. Then the principal or great sermon³ is to be given at the most convenient hour, as has been said, and without surplice or stole; it should last at most an hour and a half, inclusively of all the acts that are to be performed at the end with the crucifix and the torches. The preacher should be mindful not to finish the sermon without urging the people to invoke the Blessed Virgin; and for this purpose a statue of Mary should be exposed.

In regard to the ceremonies, it is forbidden to utter maledictions, to use the chain or any other instrument to draw blood, to burn one's self with the torch, and the like. But the Superior may sometimes permit the use of

¹ Pages 140 and 156

² Page 130.

³ Page 179.

the rope and of the skull, when this is done with zeal, prudence, and discretion.

It has been established by the General Chapter, that in the missions and spiritual exercises a sermon on the Blessed Virgin should always be preached, this being most profitable, as experience proves. The Fathers should endeavor, in all their sermons, always to make mention of the love for Jesus Christ and of recourse to the Blessed Virgin; since all of us, if we wish to save our souls, should truly love Jesus Christ, and often have recourse to the divine Mother.¹

The Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament shall take place only on the day of the blessing, as is seen farther on.

V. After the evening sermon the exercise of the DISCIPLINE² shall be performed for the men, four or five times during the mission; and on the last evening the exercise of trailing the tongue; but when the exercise of the discipline takes place, the evening exhortations shall cease.

As for the discipline, a Father shall, first, give a short exhortation drawn from the sermon, and then, in the middle of the discipline, at some verse of the *Miserere*, he shall also say a few words of compunction. The discipline shall last only during this *Miserere*; then one of the people should be made to say three "Hail Marys" in honor of the Immaculate Conception, with the face on the ground, and finish by a penitential hymn.

On the two or three last evenings, after the discipline, an EXHORTATION OF PEACE³ should be given, and those that come to be reconciled shall embrace each other before the crucifix; but before calling the enemy, a Father shall secretly listen to the one that presents himself; he should gather information about the cause of the enmity,

¹ Page 302.

² Page 118.

³ Page 126.

and shall see whether he that has come is the offended party who wishes to pardon, whether the enmity is not secret, or whether the reconciliation might not have some other inconveniences.

VI. The last day before the exercise of a devout life,* the sermon of the BLESSING¹ shall be preached after dinner, in the following manner:

At first the recitation of the Rosary shall be begun; and there will be no instruction; in the middle of the Rosary the procession of the Blessed Sacrament will take place, which a Father shall carry only outside of the door of the church, when he shall give three blessings towards the fields, the first blessing being given in the middle, and the other two at the right and the left; then the procession returns, and the Blessed Sacrament is exposed on the altar; and if the preacher has not yet arrived, the Rosary should be continued. The preacher having ascended the pulpit, on this day, with surplice and stole, the Blessed Sacrament should be veiled; then follows the sermon, with the benediction with the crucifix. Afterwards five "Our Fathers" and five "Hail Marys" are recited to gain the indulgence of the mission just finished, and the preacher shall intone the *Te Deum*. The priest at the altar shall sing the prayer *Deus cujus misericordiæ*. After this the *Pange lingua* and the *Tantum ergo*, etc., should be sung; and before the blessing, the preacher shall address from the altar another exhortation to the people, by having them promise to come to the exercises of the devout life.

VII. On the morning of this same day there shall be a GENERAL COMMUNION of grown persons; for the Com-

¹ Page 234.

* This custom of preaching the last sermon before the exercise of the devout life was followed by St. Alphonsus only during the first years of his apostolate, as has been explained above, page 234.—ED.

munions of children of fifteen years of age and over should be made separately on another day, either before or after, as may appear best.

Before the Communion of grown persons, the preacher or another Father shall ascend the pulpit, placed in the middle of the church, and as a preparation for Communion, shall make with the crucifix the acts of faith, humility, love, and contrition; then he shall have them make peace; after that he shall make the act of desire, and then Communion shall be given; he shall conclude with thanksgiving.

At the Communion of children, peace shall not be made, but hymns in honor of the Blessed Sacrament are to be sung as preparation and thanksgiving. After the thanksgiving, they shall go in procession through the city or village, singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin; on their return to the church, some instruction adapted to their age should be given, and after the blessing with the crucifix they shall return home.

VIII. The last three days, or at least, in certain places, the last two, the EXERCISES OF THE DEVOUT LIFE¹ are to be given, and should never be omitted, according to a decree of the Chapter; one should try to introduce them permanently. In the afternoon, after having recited the little chaplet of the Sorrows of Mary, or of the Infant Jesus, and the Rosary if time permits, the preacher himself shall give from the pulpit a half-hour's instruction on mental prayer, on the preparation for Communion and thanksgiving after it, and on the rule of life that is to be followed for self-sanctification. Then, on his knees and without a surplice, he shall give a meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ and on the Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, whose statue should be draped in mourning. He shall conclude by acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition firm purpose,

¹ Pages 230 and 234.

with the protestation of wishing to die fortified with the sacraments, and by putting into the act of contrition some pious hymn on the Passion of Jesus Christ; and he will dismiss the people with the blessing with the crucifix.

IX. One should not fail to make the mission last at least ten or twelve days in small places.

Moreover, it must be observed that if there should be some little hamlet away from the place of mission, the Superior may send some Fathers there to preach and to hear confessions as long as he shall judge this to be necessary.

It will be the duty of the Prefect of the church (1) to read the prayers; (2) to give notice to the Fathers of the time in which they may say Mass in succession, so that they may finish before the hour of going to the house; (3) to notify the Fathers of the time when the exercises are to take place; (4) after having been told by the Superior, to give the sign when the Fathers should retire; (5) to procure what is needful for the church; (6) to give instructions in catechism, to give the colloquies, exhortations, to say the Rosary, etc.

3. Rules of Conduct for the Fathers on Missions.

I. No one shall go on missions by himself; in little missions there should be at least two, or at least, in case of necessity, the Father should be accompanied by a lay-brother or a strange priest. They shall always go united by that charity *qua major esse non potest*, remembering that it is a special commandment given by his divine Majesty to the apostles, and through the apostles to all the missionaries who should follow them: *Hoc est præceptum meum, ut diligatis invicem, sicut dilexi vos. Mandatum novum de vobis, ut diligatis invicem. Pater sancte serva eos, . . . ut sint unum, sicut et nos.*² They should also remember the qualities of charity, enumerated by

¹ Pages 292 and 297.

² *John*, xv. 12; xiii. 34; xvii. 11.

the Apostle: *Charitas patiens est, benigna est; charitas non æmulatur, non agit perperam, non inflatur*, etc.¹—However, when they must go to give invitations, or do anything that regards the service of God, and have not to spend the night elsewhere, they may be accompanied by some priest or cleric, if their own companions are too few.

II. They shall always travel to the missions on foot, as was done by his divine Majesty, and as was done by the holy apostles, unless strict necessity obliges them to use an ordinary and plain conveyance; they shall not travel on horseback without necessity. No entreaties whatsoever should induce them to accept any other convenience for travelling, unless they must make the journey by water.

Outside of the missions, if a carriage is offered them, they may use it, provided they need not change their dress; the same thing holds good if any person of distinction should invite a Father to ride in his carriage.

~ III. The place where the mission is to be given having been reached, the time for the exercises should be arranged, and the arrangement should be adhered to as much as possible. There shall be seven hours of sleep in winter, and in spring six and a half hours, with an hour of rest after dinner. Missions should not be given in summer.

The Fathers during the mission should regularly retire from the church about noon, and they should go to bed in the evening about two hours before midnight.

The Superior shall at the same time appoint the Fathers who have to take charge of the church, of the reconciliations, and of the domestic arrangements.

IV. In the church the Fathers shall keep the confessionals to which they have been assigned.

V. In the place where the mission is given they should

¹ 1 Cor. i. 34.

take care always to avoid familiarity and useless conversation with externs.

VI. At the house they shall make a half-hour's meditation twice a day, and at least once when they have not sufficient time.

VII. At table silence should be kept. They shall read the lives of the saints during dinner, and a book on the Blessed Virgin at least during part of the supper; but on days of general Communion, and when they are tired from hearing confessions or from some other cause, the reading should continue only a little while.

A half-hour's recreation will be sufficient as well after dinner as after supper.

VIII. In regard to the expenses of the mission, nothing should ever be asked unless it be a house, beds, furniture, and some kitchen utensils.* If afterwards some one offers them food or wine, or even all that is needed for their meals, they shall receive all with thanks; but they must not fail to refuse whatever is superfluous, and all delicacies. They should usually have only two portions, namely, soup and boiled meat, there being added at most some other frugal portion, as cheese and fruit; they shall touch nothing else, and shall plead their Rule in excuse; for in this manner others will be edified, expense and even scandal will be avoided.

It shall never be permitted to accept money, even for Masses, nor delicacies, as fowl, birds, dainties, sweetmeats, fine confectionery, and the like; nor, finally, presents to be carried away, of whatever kind they may be.

Here is what should be the ordinary food in the missions: at dinner, soup, boiled meat, cheese and fruit; at

* It should be known that St. Alphonsus and his companions when on missions, often numbering from fifteen to twenty Fathers in large places, lodged in a special building, and were served by their own lay-brothers, without being a burden to any one.—ED.

supper, salad and another portion, cheese and fruit when they can be had: otherwise, one must arrange things as well as one can; but one should always be careful to avoid luxury, delicacy, and what is superfluous in the quantity of food.

IX. In the missions or other exercises of devotion for the people, when the bishop asks for them or prescribes them, the spiritual exercises shall be given to the religious or nuns, and one may be extraordinary confessor; but outside of these occasions, such a thing is forbidden, except for the nuns of the Most Holy Saviour when they show a great veneration for these exercises.

Table of Mission Sermons.*

I. Introduction to the Mission.

GOOD that is effected by the holy missions, see Letter to a bishop, page 73

2. Motives for Conversion.

The importance of salvation, sermon XII.

Dangers to eternal salvation, s. IX.

Death is certain and uncertain, s. XXXIII.

The death of the sinner, s. XXXVIII.

The practical death, or what ordinarily happens at the death of men of the world, s. XLIV.

Straits and anguish of dying Christians who have been negligent during life about the duties of religion, s. LI.

The death of the just, s. XI.

The particular judgment, s. XXXVII.

The general judgment, s. L.

The pains of hell, s. X.

The remorse of the damned, s. VIII.

The eternity of hell, s. L.

The unhappy life of sinners, and the happy life of those that love God, s. XIII.

The mercy of God towards sinners, s. XXXII.

The vanity of the world, s. XXXV.

All ends and soon ends, s. XLIII.

* These sermons, to be preached in the missions, are to be found in Volume XVI of the Centenary Edition.—ED.

3. Obstacles to Conversion.

Dangers to eternal salvation, s. ix.

Delusions of sinners, s. xiv.

The malice of mortal sin, s. vi.

The evil effects of bad habits, s. xx.

Bad thoughts, s. xlvii.

The predominant passion, s. xlix.

Scandals, s. xxiii.

The sin of anger, s. xxxiv.

Blasphemy, s. liii.

Impurity, s. xlv.

The vice of speaking immodestly, s. xl.

Concealing sins in confession, s. xvii.

4. Means of Conversion.

In what true wisdom consists, s. v.

Means necessary for salvation, s. iii.

The conditions of prayer, s. xxvi.

Heaven, s. xvi.

The love of Jesus Christ for us, and our obligation to love him, s. iv.

The love of the three divine Persons for men, s. xxix.

The tender compassion that Jesus Christ entertains towards sinners.

The value of time, s. xxiv.

5. Perseverance in Conversion.

In the last sermons of the mission we recommend perseverance to the people. We speak to them chiefly of the great danger to which those expose themselves who fall back into sin after the mission; and therefore we try to impress upon the memory of the faithful the means to be employed to avoid a relapse into sin, namely, in the first place, the avoiding of the occasions, of bad company, and of human respect; in the second place,

the frequentation of the sacraments and prayer, or recourse to God in temptations, being careful to ask him every day for the grace of holy perseverance.

We add the sermon on the Blessed Virgin, which we recommend in such a way that it should never be omitted; for it produces greater fruit than all the rest. I know by experience that a certain sinner, who had been insensible to all other sermons, was converted by the sermon on the Blessed Virgin. We should not regard this sermon as an extraordinary thing on missions: Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice, in all his missions, never omitted the sermon on the Blessed Virgin; the same thing must be said of Father Segneri, Junior. This is the practice in our Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, and I know that other missionaries have followed the same custom. It is certain that if a soul acquires a true devotion to the Mother of God, and continues to recommend itself often to her intercession, this great Queen will obtain for it the grace of persevering in virtue; for she is called the Mother of Perseverance.

The sermon on prayer should also never be omitted, since it is of the highest importance; for if those that have followed the mission do not continue to recommend themselves to God, it is certain that they will not persevere. When there is no time to treat this sermon separately, the preacher, at least in the other sermons that he preaches in the mission or spiritual exercises, should not omit frequently to exhort his hearers always to recommend themselves to Jesus and to Mary, since prayer, according to the teaching of St. Augustine, is the only means of obtaining God's grace, and especially holy perseverance.

The following are the sermons that refer to perseverance:

The abuse of divine mercy, sermon *XLI*.

The miserable state of relapsing sinners, s. XXI.

The avoiding of the occasions of sin, s. XXII.

The avoiding of bad company, s. XLII.

Human respect, s. XXVII.

Obedience to the confessor, s. XXV.

Holy Communion, s. XXXI.

The efficacy and necessity of prayer, s. XXIX.

Confidence with which we should recommend ourselves to the Mother of God, s. VII.

Moreover, before preaching the last sermon, several Congregations of Missionaries, such as the Pious Workers, the priests of the Purity of Mary, and our Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, are accustomed, on two or three days, to give, instead of a sermon, a meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ; this exercise is very useful for the perseverance of the faithful who have made the mission. He that leaves sin only through fear of chastisement, after the mission is finished loses sight of what has frightened him, and easily relapses into his old sins; but he that is attached to God through love, easily perseveres in a good life. Hence, on these two or three days, the preacher of the mission will give a half-hour's instruction on mental prayer by teaching the people the manner of easily making it; he shall also teach them the manner of making preparation and thanksgiving for Communion. Then he shall make the meditation by considering the mysteries of the Passion, and by interspersing it with pious affections, acts of contrition and of love, and holy resolutions.—The missionaries shall recommend to the parish priest to have meditation made every day in common for the people.

TABLE OF SERMONS TO BE PREACHED IN A RETREAT.

Advantages of the spiritual exercises (as an introduction), see Volume III, page 285.

In what true wisdom consists, sermon v.

The value of time, s. XXIV.

The abuse of divine mercy, s. XLI.

The straits and anguish of dying Christians who have been negligent during life about the duties of religion, s. LI.

The particular judgment, s. XXXVII.

The pain of loss which the damned suffer in hell, is XLVIII.

The confidence with which we should recommend ourselves to the Mother of God, s. VII.

The love of Jesus Christ for us, and our obligation to love him, s. IV.



ST. ALPHONSUS published these INSTRUCTIONS in Italian in the course of the year 1767, during his episcopate. In the following year he published the same in Latin, with this title: *Institutio catechistica ad populum in præcepta Decalogi et Sacramenta*. The literal translation of the title of the Italian edition is as follows: "Instructions for the people on the precepts of the Decalogue, in order that they may be better observed, and on the sacraments, in order that they may be better received, for the use of parish priests and of missionaries and of all ecclesiastics that are employed in teaching Christian doctrine."

We read in the Life of the holy author: "This work forms, it is true, only a small volume, but its usefulness is very great; it was also favorably received especially by the parish priests. The royal examiner speaks of it thus: 'Whether one considers the matter of the thoughts of his treatise, or the manner in which they are expressed, every one that examines it with attention must see that it is worthy of its author's name, that is to say, of a learned man full of zeal for God's honor and the salvation of souls.'

"In this work the holy prelate again attacks those rigorous minds who, in affecting great purity of doctrine, and in pretending to bring back the faithful to the favor of the Christianity of primitive ages, oppress souls by an insupportable yoke, with which Jesus Christ never loaded them. 'This is not the doctrine of the Church,' he said, 'for she glories in being a mother, and not a cruel step-mother. Jansenius and his followers have invented this severity; I would ask if the number of souls whom they have caused to fall into hell through an erring conscience does not exceed the number of those whom they have led to paradise. Besides, it is clear that the sentiments which they have adopted are not those of the holy bishops whom we honor on our altars, nor of those saintly laborers who have sacrificed their blood and their life for the salvation of but one soul. We have not yet seen a Jansenist who has lost an hour's sleep to insure the salvation of a soul.'" (Tannoia and Villecourt, l. iii. ch. 38.)

He who spoke thus was himself one of those evangelical laborers so devoted to the salvation of souls, and one of those bishops of high perfection whom the Church honors on her altars. The wise teachings that he gives us have produced and do not cease to produce in the whole Church wonderful fruits of salvation,—ED.

Hints to the Catechist

IN ORDER TO MAKE HIS INSTRUCTIONS MORE PROFITABLE.¹

1. THE catechetical instruction to the people consists of three parts: 1. The INTRODUCTION; 2. The EXPOSITION of the mystery, sacrament, or precept to be spoken of; and, 3. The MORAL, with the means and remedies to be employed against the different vices.

1. Introduction.

The INTRODUCTION must consist in a statement of the subject-matter of the instruction, and of the different points into which the subject is divided. If the matter be connected with that of the preceding instruction, the catechist may begin by briefly repeating the points explained in that instruction; but if the matter be different, he may begin by showing the importance of the subject of which he is about to speak.

2. The Exposition.

With regard to the EXPOSITION of the mystery, sacrament, or precept, the catechist must attend to several things.

I. He must prove the mystery, sacrament, or precept to be explained by authorities, by reasons, by similes, and authentic facts. I say authorities, but let them be few, and be sparing of Latin quotations, as the illiter-

¹ There is question here of the large catechism, about which instruction is given to adults; as for the little catechism for children, see page 156.

ate, of whom the audience at catechism generally consist, understand little or no Latin. Scholastic questions are not suited to the pulpit, and must therefore be altogether avoided, but particularly before the uninstructed, who are easily disturbed by such questions, and may often draw from them erroneous conclusions.

II. Care must be taken not to propound doctrines which may lead the hearers to a pernicious looseness of conscience. It is one thing to speak in the confessional, where all the circumstances of the case are weighed, and you have to deal with a particular person, and another to speak in the pulpit, where a proposition may be misunderstood by those who are inclined to laxity, and may lead them to loose and improbable conclusions. However, it is necessary to correct the erroneous consciences of some, who believe there is sin where there is none. For example: Some uninstructed persons imagine that their judgments and suspicions are rash even when they have sufficient foundation to judge and suspect. It is necessary to teach them that such judgments or suspicions are neither rash nor sinful, and therefore not matter for confession. Others believe it to be a mortal sin simply to curse a creature—such as the day, the wind, the rain, and the like; others think it a grievous detraction to make known to a parent the sins of his children, even though it be necessary for their correction; others imagine that they sin by not observing a precept of the Church, such as hearing Mass, abstaining from servile work, or fasting, even when they are excused by a legitimate cause. In all these, and similar cases, the catechist should explain that there is no sin.

III. When any actions are certainly sinful, it is the duty of the instructors to teach that they are so, even though some persons should think the contrary; but particularly when there is reason to fear that these per-

sons will contract a habit of these acts, which they will not be able to correct without great difficulty after they have come to the knowledge of their sinfulness. For example, some think it only a venial sin to curse holidays, such as Holy Saturday, Easter, and Pentecost; it is necessary to teach them that such curses are really injurious to God, and mortal sins. Some also believe that it is only a venial sin to expose themselves to the proximate occasion of sin. The catechist must explain that those who do not abstain from voluntary proximate occasions of grievous sin are guilty of a mortal sin, even though they have the intention of not committing the bad act, to the danger of which they expose themselves. It is also necessary to teach that those who use superstitious and *vain observances* for the cure of diseases, or the like, are guilty of mortal sin. He must also inculcate on those who are prepared to take revenge for an insult which they may receive, that they are continually in a state of sin, and that, if they die in that disposition, they will be lost. So, also, women must be taught it is a sin to take pleasure in being admired and desired by men, if this pleasure arises from vanity, and not from a wish to be married to them.

IV. There are some catechists who are fond of filling their instructions with amusing and curious stories, and assert that this is necessary to draw a large audience, and to keep up their attention and prevent tediousness. This one thing I know, that the saints, in their instructions, instead of exciting laughter, moved the people to tears. We read in the life of St. John Francis Regis, that the people wept throughout the catechetical instructions which he gave in the missions. I do not censure a jest which naturally arises from the subject treated; but to tell ridiculous stories, for the purpose of making the people laugh, is to turn the instruction into a farce, and is unbecoming the sanctity of the

church, and the dignity of the pulpit from which the word of God is announced, and in which the instructor fulfils the office of an ambassador of Jesus Christ. *For Christ therefore, says St. Paul, we are ambassadors.*¹ The people certainly take delight in hearing and laughing at such trifles; but what profit do they draw from it? After the laughter, the hearers will be so distracted, that it will be very difficult afterwards to compose their thoughts; and instead of listening to the moral (which our witty catechist will find rather hard to adduce from his jokes, and at the same time avoid appearing to be a quack), if nothing worse happens they will continue to revolve in their minds the witty expressions and ridiculous incidents which they have heard. Such a catechist may acquire the character of a facetious and pleasing instructor, but he will not be considered a man of sanctity and zeal, and therefore will produce but little fruit in the hearts of his hearers. It is a mistake to imagine that without jests of this sort the people will not come to the catechism, nor be attentive to it. I say that greater numbers will come to the church, and will pay more attention to the instruction, when they find that they draw fruit and devotion from it, and that their time is not spent unprofitably.

V. The catechist must pay great attention to the language of his instructions. The style of catechetical lectures should be altogether simple and popular, and does not admit of polished language or rounded periods. These are, as St. Francis de Sales says, the pest even of sermons. Preachers who are full of the Spirit of God do not seek after leaves and flowers of this kind, for by them the fruit of God's word is lost, while hell gathers its harvest of souls. The word of God has no need of ornaments; the simpler it is, the more fruit it bears.

¹ "Pro Christo ergo legatione fungimur."—2 Cor. v. 20.

Oh! how many preachers shall we see condemned to eternal torments, for having adulterated God's word with their flowery language! If all preached like the apostles, hell could not make such havoc among souls as it does at present, with all these elegant and pompous sermons. Even panegyrics, as the great Muratori says, should be simple, so as to move the people to imitate the virtues of the saints, not so as to make them bestow a little smoke and empty praise on the preacher. But I have written a little work¹ on this point, in which I show, with Muratori, that all sermons and panegyrics should be simple and popular. For the chief part of the audience is made up of the lower orders, who will find little or no profit unless the language is popular and adapted to their capacity; and this applies to all sermons. But in missions it is an unpardonable mistake to preach in an elegant style, particularly at catechism, where the object is to teach the illiterate what they must believe and practise, how they must make their confessions, and how they should recommend themselves to God. If the style is not altogether popular, and suited to their capacity, the time both of the instructor and of the people is lost. I said that the style should be popular, not childish; some speak with the most childish simplicity; but childishness is never fit for the pulpit. I also said that the language should be accommodated to the capacity of the people. The instructor, then, must use short sentences, so he will have his audience more attentive. It is useful frequently to propose questions, and to reply to them; it contributes greatly to keep up the attention of the people, and to fix the instruction in their memory. Many practical examples of this will be found in the following pages.

¹ Page 17: LETTER TO A RELIGIOUS.

3. The Moral.

In the MORAL, the catechist must not only instruct the understanding, but also more particularly endeavor to move the will of his hearers to avoid sins and to adopt the remedies against them. The sins committed through the malice of the will are much more numerous than those that are committed through ignorance of the understanding. The moral of a catechetical instruction should be shorter than that of a sermon. It should be delivered with warmth, but not in the style of a sermon, and without declamation. It is sometimes useful in the instruction to exclaim against some commoner form of vice, against some current worldly maxim, or against those frivolous pretences which wicked men employ to excuse their vices, or as when they say: "All are not to be saints; we are but flesh and blood; God is merciful; others do as we do." These excuses must be answered with great vigor, so as to root out the prejudices by which many persons regulate their conduct, and therefore never amend their lives. But these declamations must be rare; otherwise the instruction will assume the appearance of a sermon, which is quite out of order.

Let the catechist, then, not only aim at completely extirpating these false maxims, but also labor to impress on the minds of his hearers some really salutary truths, which will contribute greatly to preserve souls in the grace of God. For example: "What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" Death puts an end to all things. Eternity has no end. Let all be lost, provided God be not lost. Sin is the only evil which we have to fear. He possesses all things who possesses God. All pains are little to him who has merited hell. A man must conquer all his passions to preserve his soul. What does a Christian know, if he has not learned to bear an insult for God's sake?

He who prays receives all he wants. What comes from God is all really good and supremely useful. Sanctity consists in loving God. The love of God consists in doing his will in all things. This kind of maxims of Christian morality should be often repeated, as occasion offers, that they may be impressed on the minds of the people, and take deep root in them.

The catechist must frequently repeat, in his instructions, certain admonitions which are peculiarly necessary for the salvation of souls:

1. He must caution people against making *sacrilegious confessions* by concealing sins through shame. It is certain that through this accursed shame numberless souls are lost. Some are so much under its influence that they make sacrilegious confessions even to the missionaries. Hence, it is necessary to speak frequently on this subject, but particularly in the missions; for the person who conceals a sin during the retreat will never afterwards confess it. To deter the people from these sacrileges, it will be useful to relate a number of instances of souls that have been damned for sacrilegious confessions. I have given several such examples at the end of this book.

2. It is necessary to inculcate frequently the necessity of avoiding dangerous occasions; for, if proximate occasions, especially of carnal sins, are not avoided, all other means will be useless for our salvation.

3. It is necessary to inculcate the *necessity of prayer*, or of frequently asking help from God to avoid sin. •He who does not recommend himself to God, but particularly in the time of temptation, is certainly lost; and, therefore, the catechist must, in his instructions, frequently exhort the people, in all temptations, but particularly in temptations against purity, to invoke Jesus and Mary, and to continue to invoke them as long as the temptation lasts. He who prays is not afraid of

falling into sin, for he has God to help him. St. Teresa used to say that she would like to stand on a mountain, and cry out only these words, "O souls! pray, pray, pray."

4. The instructor must frequently exhort the people to the love of God; he who does not love God, and only abstains from sin through fear of hell, is in great danger of relapsing into sin as soon as the lively sensation of fear ceases; but he who has once come to love Jesus Christ, will afterwards find it hard to fall into mortal sin. For this purpose the meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ is most profitable. St. Bonaventure says that the wounds of Jesus Christ are wounds which would soften hearts of stone and inflame minds of ice.¹ Hence it is necessary to make a short mental prayer every day, and to make frequent acts of love to Jesus Christ, and to ask frequently of God the gift of his love.

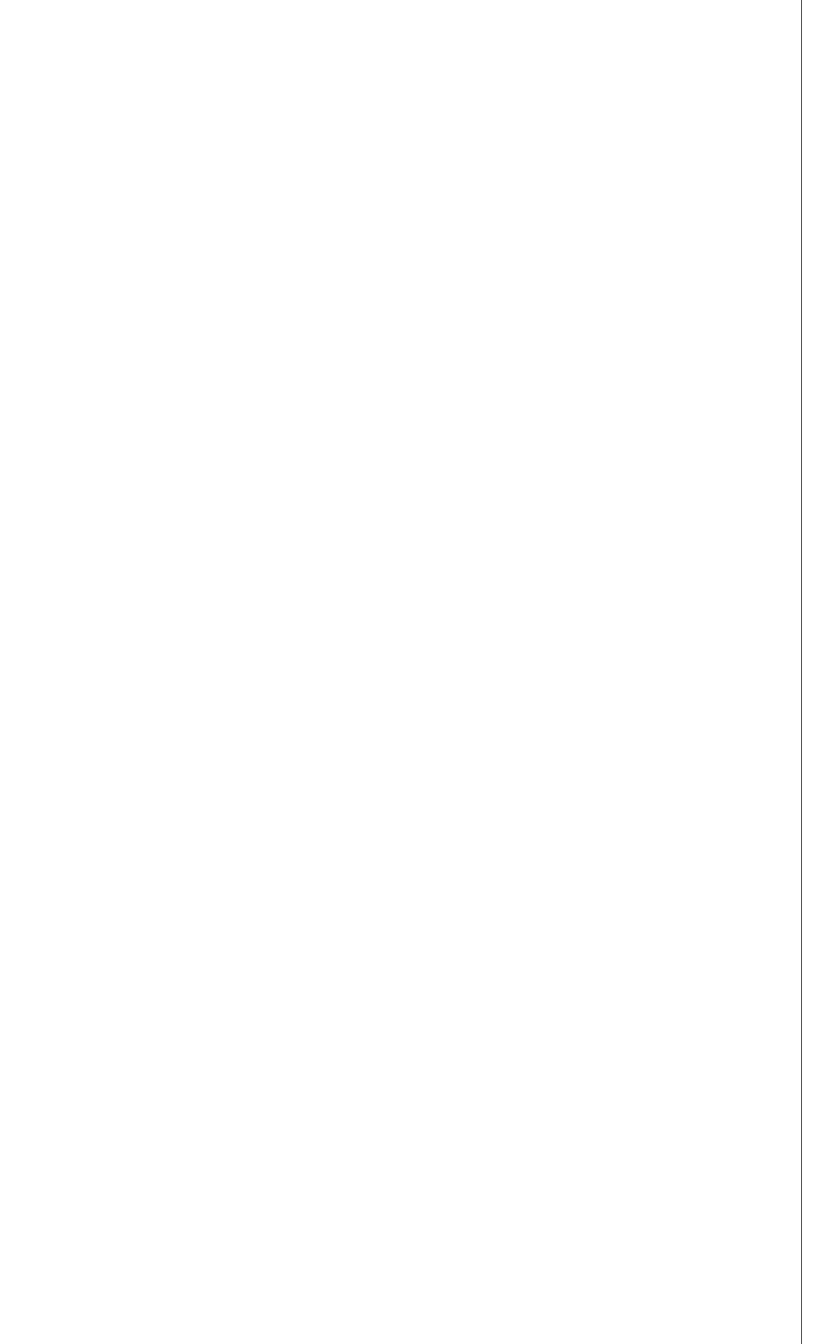
5. The instructor must, above all, recommend to the people *frequent confession and Communion*, from which souls receive strength to persevere in the grace of God. It is not enough to say this once; he must repeat it over and over again; because all the people are not present at the instruction on confession and Communion, and also because the frequent repetition of an advice contributes to impress on them the necessity of putting it in practice. But it may be said, that the people grow tired of hearing the one thing over and over again. But what then? Some fastidious people may be annoyed, but all the rest will derive profit, especially the uninstructed, who, unless they hear the same thing over and over again, forget it at once.

6. The instructor should, as often as an opportunity presents itself, teach practical lessons to the people, and even suggest the words which they should use in certain

¹ "Vulnera, corda saxea vulnerantia, et mentes congelatas inflammantia."—*Sim. div. am.* p. I, c. I.

circumstances. For example, when a person receives an injury or insult from another, he should be taught to say to his enemy, "God make you a saint; God give you light!" But if this does not allay the other's rage, let him be ready to hold his tongue. When any misfortune happens, let him say, "God's will be done! O Lord, I suffer this willingly for my sins." These, and such practical lessons, should be frequently repeated that they may be fixed in the minds of the people, who will certainly forget all the Latin quotations and the curious erudition of the instructor, and will only remember what they are taught to practise.

All these hints will appear trifling to your pedants, but they will be really very useful for the soul.



Instructions for the People on the Ten Commandments and on the Sacraments.

PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION.

1. Original Sin.

To fulfil his duties, it is, first of all, necessary for man to know what is his last end, in which he may find his perfect happiness. The last end of man is to love and serve God in this life, and to enjoy him for eternity in the next. Thus, God has placed us in this world not to acquire riches, honors, or pleasures, but to obey his commands, and, by obedience to them, to gain the eternal beatitude of paradise.

For this end, the Lord created Adam, who was the first man, and gave him Eve for his wife, that from them mankind might be propagated. He created them in his grace, and placed them in the terrestrial paradise, with the promise that they should be thence transferred to heaven to enjoy complete and eternal felicity. During their sojourn on this earth he gave them for their food all the fruits of that garden of delights; but, to try their obedience, he forbade them to eat the fruit of only one tree, which he pointed out to them. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and would eat the forbidden fruit, and for this sin they were deprived of divine grace, were instantly banished from paradise, and, as rebels to the divine Majesty, were, with all their posterity, condemned to temporal and eternal death. Thus was heaven shut against them and all their descendants.

This is the original sin in which, as children of a re-

bellious father, we are all born children of wrath and enemies of God. When a vassal rebels against his sovereign, all the descendants of the rebel become hateful to the prince, and are banished from the kingdom. Thus original sin, by the disobedience of Adam, deprives us of the grace of God.

According to the doctrine of the Church, the Blessed Virgin Mary had the privilege of being exempt from original guilt. It is certain that she was also free from all actual sin. Such is the doctrine of the Church, as the Council of Trent has declared: "If any one saith, that a man once justified . . . is able, during his whole life, to avoid all sins, even those that are venial,—except by a special privilege from God, as the Church holds in regard of the Blessed Virgin,—let him be anathema."¹ [In the Bull "*Ineffabilis Deus*," published by Pius IX., in the year 1854, it was solemnly defined that the Blessed Virgin was, from the first moment of her conception, preserved from all stain of original sin.] But, if she contracted no guilt from which she required to be redeemed, must it be said that she was not redeemed by Jesus Christ as well as all the other children of Adam? No; she was redeemed, but redeemed in a more excellent manner. Others are redeemed after having incurred original guilt; Mary was redeemed by being preserved from it. And this privilege was justly given to her alone—that blessed woman whom God had predestined to be his own Mother.

But all the rest are born with the infection of the sin of Adam, in punishment of which we have our understanding darkened to the knowledge of eternal truth and our will inclined to evil. But by the merits of

¹ "Si quis hominem semel justificatum dixerit . . . posse in tota vita peccata omnia, etiam venialia, vitare, nisi ex speciali Dei privilegio, quemadmodum de Beata Virgine tenet Ecclesia; anathema sit."
—*Sess. vi. can. xxiii.*

Jesus Christ at our baptism we obtain the divine grace and the remedy for all our misery. We thus become the adopted sons of God and heirs of paradise, provided we preserve till death the grace given to us in baptism. But if we lose it by mortal sin we shall be condemned to hell, and can obtain pardon only by the sacrament of penance.

2. Actual Sins.

With regard to the sins that we actually commit, we must distinguish mortal from venial sin.

I. To understand the nature of *mortal sin*, it is necessary to know that, as the soul gives life to the body, so the grace of God gives life to the soul. Hence, as the body without the soul is dead, and fit only for the grave, so by sin the soul dies to the grace of God and is doomed to be buried in hell. Hence grievous sin is called mortal because it kills the soul. *The soul that sinneth, the same shall die.*¹ I said that the soul is doomed to hell. But what is this hell? It is a place to which all who die in sin go to suffer eternal torments. *These shall go into everlasting punishment.*² But what pains shall they suffer in hell? Every conceivable pain: there the damned are immersed in a sea of fire, tortured by all sorts of torments, overwhelmed with despair, and abandoned by all for all eternity.

But is it reasonable that a soul should suffer an eternity of torments for a single mortal sin?—He who speaks thus shows that he does not understand what a mortal sin is. Mortal sin is to turn your back upon God. Thus it is defined by St. Thomas³ and St. Augustine⁴ a turning away from the unchangeable good. Hence

¹ "Anima quæ peccaverit, ipsa morietur."—*Ezech.* xviii. 20.

² "Ibunt hi in supplicium æternum."—*Matt.* xxv. 46.

³ L. 2, q. 87, a. 4.

⁴ *De Divers. Quæst.* l. 1, q. 2, n. 18.

God says to the sinner, *Thou hast forsaken Me, thou hast gone backward.*¹ Mortal sin is an insult offered to God by sinners. *I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised Me.*² It is a dishonor done to the divine Majesty. *By the transgression of the law thou dishonorest God.*³ It is to say to God, I will not obey Thee. *Thou hast broken My yoke, . . . and thou saidst, I will not serve.*⁴ This is the essence of mortal sin; and for it one hell is not enough: a hundred or a thousand hells would not be sufficient to punish a single mortal sin. If a person unjustly injures a peasant he deserves to be punished: if he does it to a nobleman, a prince, or an emperor, he merits far greater chastisement. But what are all the kings of the earth and even all the saints of heaven in comparison with God? They are as nothing. *All nations are before him as if they had no being at all.*⁵ Now, I ask, what chastisement is due to an insult offered to God, and to a God who has died for the love of us?

However, it must be observed that for mortal sin three things are required: full advertence, perfect consent, and grievous matter. If any of these three be wanting, the sin is not mortal: it can be only venial, or perhaps no sin at all.

II. *Venial sin* does not kill, but it wounds the soul. It is not a grievous offence, but still it is an offence against God. It is not so great an evil as mortal sin; but it is a greater evil than all the other evils that can happen to creatures. A lie, a venial curse, is a greater evil than if all men, all the saints, and all the angels were to be sent to hell.

¹ "Tu reliquisti me, dicit Dominus; retrorsum abiisti."—*Jer.* xv. 6.

² "Filiis enutrivisti et exaltavi, ipsi autem spreverunt me."—*Is.* i. 2.

³ "Per prævaricationem legis, Deum inhonoras."—*Rom.* ii. 23.

⁴ "Confregisti jugum meum, rupisti vincula mea, et dixisti: Non serviam."—*Jer.* ii. 20.

⁵ "Omnes gentes, quasi non sint, sic sunt coram eo."—*Is.* xl. 17.

Some venial sins are deliberate, others are indeliberate.

1. *Indeliberate* venial sins, or sins committed without full advertence or perfect consent, are less culpable; all men fall into such sins. The Blessed Virgin only had the privilege of being exempt from them.

2. *Deliberate* venial sins, which are committed with full advertence and consent, are more criminal, particularly when there is an affection for them; such as certain feelings of hatred, of ambition, certain rooted attachments, and the like. "Who," says St. Basil, "shall dare to call any sin light?"¹ It is enough to understand that it offends God, to make us avoid it more than any other evil. The deformity of a venial sin was once shown to St. Catharine of Genoa; she afterwards felt surprised that she did not die of horror at the sight of it. And let him who thinks little of venial sin remember, that if he does not amend, he will be on the point of falling into some mortal sin. The more venial sins the soul commits, the weaker she becomes, the greater the power which the devil acquires over her, and the fewer the helps that God bestows upon her. *He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little.*²

3. Conclusion.

Let us, then, be careful to avoid sin, which alone can make us unhappy in this life and in the next; and let us continually thank the goodness of God for not having already sent us to hell for our sins. Let us henceforth attend to the salvation of our souls, and let us consider how little is all that we do for the salvation of our souls—all that we do for eternal life.

St. Augustine³ relates that when the Emperor Gratian

¹ "Quis peccatum ullum leve audeat appellare?"—*Reg. brev. int.* 4.

² "Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet."—*Eccclus.* xix. 1.

³ *Conf.* 1. 8, c. 6.

was in the city of Treves, two of his courtiers went one day to visit a monastery of certain good religious, which was outside the city. In that holy solitude they began to read the life of St. Antony, which lay on the table of one of the religious. One of them, enlightened by God, said to the other: "My friend, after all the anxieties and labors of the world which we endure, what can we obtain? While we remain at court, the most we can hope for is to gain the emperor's favor. This is the greatest happiness that we can expect, and if we gain it, how long will this happiness last? But if I wish for the friendship of God, I can have it this moment." After this he went on reading, and by God's illumination saw more and more clearly the vanity of the world, and resolutely said to his companion: "Now, I will forsake all things and save my soul. I this moment resolve to remain in this monastery to think only of God. If you will not follow my example, at least, I beseech you, do not oppose my design." His companion said that he was resolved to follow his example. Two young women also, who had been betrothed to them, when they heard of their change, left the world and consecrated their virginity to God.

But, to make sure of our eternal salvation, it is not enough to begin: it is necessary to persevere; and in order to persevere, it is necessary to be humble, always distrusting our own strength, confiding only in God, and continually asking his help to persevere. Woe to that man who trusts in himself and glories in his own works.

Palladius¹ relates that a certain solitary, in a desert, spent day and night in prayer, and led a most austere life, and therefore was honored by many. The unhappy man began to think well of himself, and, on account of his virtues, regarded himself sure of perseverance and salva-

¹ *Hist. laus*, c. 44.

tion. But afterwards, when the devil appeared to him in the form of a woman, and tempted him to sin, the unhappy man was unable to resist the temptation, and fell. Immediately after his fall, the devil burst into loud laughter and disappeared. The solitary afterwards left the desert, returned to the world, and fell into all kinds of vice; thus he became a warning to show how dangerous it is to trust in your own strength.

Still more frightful was the end of the celebrated Brother Justin, who, after refusing offices of great dignity that were offered to him by the King of Hungary, became a religious of the Order of St. Francis, and made such progress in the spiritual life, that he had frequent ecstasies. One day, during dinner, in the convent of *Ara Celi*, he was, in the presence of the entire Community, raised into the air, and borne aloft to venerate an image of the Blessed Virgin, which was hanging on the wall. On account of this prodigy, Eugene IV. sent for him, embraced him and made him sit down, and had a long conversation with him. By this act of respect on the part of the Pope the unhappy man was so puffed up, that St. John Capistran said to him when he saw him, "Brother Justin, you went out an angel, and you have come back a devil." He afterwards fell into pride and many other vices, and at last he killed a brother in religion. He then fled into the kingdom of Naples, where he committed many other crimes, and died in prison an apostate monk.

PART I.

Instructions on the Commandments.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

“Thou shalt have no other God before me.”¹

THIS first commandment obliges us to give to God due worship and honor. What this God is, it is impossible to understand. But let it be enough for us to know that his principal attributes are as follows :

1. God is *independent*. All things depend on God, but he depends on no one ; and, therefore, he possesses all perfections, in regard to which no one can set any bounds to him.

2. God is *Almighty*; for he can do whatever he wishes; by one act of his will he created the world. He first created the heavens, and the angels, who are pure spirits, and he created them in the state of grace. But Lucifer, when he was commanded to adore the Son of God, who was to be made man, through pride refused to obey, and induced a third part of the angels to join with him in his rebellion against God. These rebellious angels were instantly banished from heaven by the Archangel Michael, and condemned to hell. They are the devils, who tempt us to sin, in order to make us

¹ “Non habebis deos alienos coram me.”—*Exod.* xx. 3.

companions of their torments. Miserable should we be, if we had not God to assist us. We should not have strength to resist their temptations. But God requires, as the condition of giving us this assistance, that in our temptations we instantly turn to him, and ask his assistance; if we act otherwise, we shall be defeated by our enemies. The angels who remained faithful were immediately admitted into the enjoyment of the glory of paradise; and from among these angels, the Lord has appointed those who were to be our guardians: *He hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*¹ Let us every day give thanks to our angel guardian, and entreat him to assist us always, and never abandon us. Next the Lord created the earth and all those things that we see. He then made man, that is, Adam and Eve, as we have already said. So God is the Lord of all things, for he created all things; and as he created all things by one act of his will, so by another act he can, if he pleases, destroy all things. This is what is meant by God's *omnipotence*.

3. God is also *most wise*. He governs all things created without labor or inconvenience. He sees and has before him all things, past and future, and knows all our thoughts better than they are known to ourselves.

4. God is *eternal*; he always has been, and always will be, and nothing in him ever had a beginning, or shall have an end.

5. God is *immense*; he is in heaven, on earth, and in all places.

6. God is *holy* in all his works, and it is impossible for him to be in any way wicked.

7. God is *just*; he leaves no sinful act unpunished, and no good act without reward

¹ "Angelis suis mandavit de te, ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis."
—Ps xc. 11.

8. God is all mercy to penitent sinners, and all love to the souls that love him. In a word, God is infinite goodness; so that he cannot be better nor more perfect than he is.

This God, our Creator and Preserver, we are bound to love and honor, principally by acts of the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. "God," said St. Augustine, "is to be worshipped with faith, hope, and charity."¹

I.

Faith.

I. WHAT IS FAITH?

Faith is a virtue, or a gift which God infuses into our souls in baptism; a gift by which we believe the truths which God himself has revealed to the holy Church, and which she proposes to our belief.

2. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

By the *Church* is meant the congregation of all who are baptized (for persons not baptized are out of the Church), and profess the true faith under a visible head, that is, the Sovereign Pontiff. I say *the true faith*, to exclude heretics, who, though baptized, are separated from the Church; I say *under a visible head*, to exclude schismatics, who do not obey the Pope, and, on that account, easily pass from schism to heresy. St. Cyprian well says: "Heresies and schisms have no other origin than this—the refusal to obey the priest of God and the notion that there can be more than one priest at one time presiding over the Church, and more than one judge at a time filling the office of Vicar of Christ."¹

¹ "Deus fide, spe, et charitate, colendus."—*Enchir.* c. 3.

² "Neque enim aliunde hæreses obortæ sunt, aut nata schismata, quam inde quod Sacerdoti Dei non obtemperatur, nec unus in Ecclesia.

We have all revealed truths in the sacred Scriptures, and in the traditions gradually communicated by God to his servants. But how should we be able to ascertain what are the true traditions and the true Scriptures, and what is their true meaning, if we had not the Church to teach us? This Church Jesus Christ established as the pillar and ground of the truth.¹ To this Church our Saviour himself has promised that she shall never be conquered by her enemies. *The gates of hell shall not prevail against her.*² The gates of hell are the heresies and heresiarchs that have caused so many miserable, deluded souls to wander from the right way. This Church it is that teaches us, through her ministers, the truths that we are to believe. Thus, St. Augustine says: "I would not believe the Gospel, were I not moved by the authority of the Church."³

3. WHAT IS THE MOTIVE OF FAITH, AND HOW SHOULD WE MAKE AN ACT OF FAITH?

The cause or motive, then, which imposes on me the obligation to believe the truths of faith is, because God, the infallible Truth, has revealed them, and because the Church proposes them to my belief. So we should make out a rule of faith in this way: "My God, because Thou, who art the infallible truth, hast revealed to the Church the truths of faith, I believe all the Church proposes to my belief."*

ad tempus Sacerdos et ad tempus Judex vice Christi cogitatur."—*Epist. ad Cornel.*

¹ "Ecclesia Dei vivi, columna et firmamentum veritatis."—*1 Tim.* iii. 15.

² "Portæ inferi non prævalebunt adversus eam."—*Matt.* xvi. 18.

³ "Ego Evangelio non crederem, nisi me Ecclesiæ Catholicæ commoveret auctoritas."—*Cont. Epist. Fund.* c. 5.

* We shall find farther on, § IV., a formula which explicitly contains all the truths that one must believe by necessity of means and of precept. See, moreover, page 140.

This is the reason or motive which makes me believe the truths of revelation. Let us now see what are those truths which we are obliged to believe.

4. WHICH ARE THE PRINCIPAL ARTICLES OF FAITH?

There are four principal articles of faith:

1. There is an ever-present God.

2. He is a rewarder who rewards with the eternal glory of paradise all who observe his law, and punishes all who transgress it with the everlasting torments of hell.

3. In God there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these Persons, though distinct from one another, are but one God, because they are one essence and one divinity. Hence, as the Father is eternal, omnipotent, infinite, so are the Son and the Holy Ghost equally eternal, omnipotent, and infinite. The Son is begotten of the intelligence of the Father. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the will of the Father and the Son, by the love with which they love each other.

4. The Incarnation of the Eternal Word—that is, of the second Person—the Son, who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was made man in the womb of the Virgin Mary—for the person of the Word assumed the nature of man, so that the two natures, the divine and the human, were united in the person of Jesus Christ, who suffered and died for our salvation. But what necessity was there that Jesus Christ should suffer for our redemption? Man had sinned; and to obtain pardon it was necessary that man should make a full satisfaction to God for the sins that had been committed. But how could man make such satisfaction to the infinite majesty of God? What, then, did God do? The Father sent the Son to take upon himself our nature; and the Son, Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, atoned to the

divine justice in behalf of man. Such is the debt and the love that we owe to Jesus Christ. Denis the Carthusian tells us of a young man who, at Mass, did not kneel down at the words of the Creed, *Et homo factus est*; upon which a devil with a club appeared to him, and said: "Thou ungrateful wretch, dost thou not thank the God who was made flesh for thee? If he had done for us what he has done for thee, we should be always prostrate in thankful adoration. And thou dost not even make a sign of thankfulness." Then he gave him a terrible blow with his club, and left him half dead.

5. WHICH ARE THE THINGS THAT WE MUST KNOW AND BELIEVE AS NECESSARY BY NECESSITY OF MEANS, AND OTHERS BY NECESSITY OF PRECEPT?

Moreover, we must know that some articles are to be believed by necessity of means, without which we cannot obtain salvation, others by necessity of precept.—The necessity of *means* implies that if we do not believe certain articles of faith, we cannot be saved.—The necessity by *precept* signifies that we must believe certain other articles; but if it happens that we are ignorant of them by an invincible ignorance, we are excused from sin and may be saved.

I. To know and believe the first two articles already laid down, namely, that there is a God, and that he is a just rewarder of virtue and punisher of vice, is certainly necessary as a *means* of salvation, according to the words of the Apostle, *For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him.*¹ Some authors hold that the belief of the other two articles—the Trinity of Persons, and the Incarnation of the Word—is necessary by necessity of precept, but not necessary

¹ "Credere enim oportet, accedentem ad Deum, quia est, et inquirentibus se remunerator sit."—*Heb.* xi. 6.

as a means without which salvation is impossible; so that a person inculpably ignorant of them may be saved. At any rate it is certain, as Innocent XI. declared,¹ when condemning a contrary proposition, that he who is ignorant of the two mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity, and of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, cannot receive absolution.

II. We are obliged only by necessity of *precept*, which, however, binds under grievous sin, to know and believe the other articles of the Creed, at least the principal articles among them—such as, that God has created heaven and earth; that he preserves and governs the universe; that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the true Mother of God, and is ever a Virgin; that on the third day after his death Jesus Christ rose from the dead by his own power; that he ascended into heaven, and there sits on the right hand of his Eternal Father. By this it is meant that Jesus Christ, even as man, sits at the right hand of God—that is, that he permanently possesses a glory equal to that of the Father, as Bellarmine explains in his catechism.² I said *even as man*. For as God, Jesus Christ is, in all things, equal to the Father; but, as man, he is inferior to the Father, but, because our Saviour is at the same time both God and man, and only one person, therefore the humanity of Jesus Christ in heaven has a glory and majesty equal to that of the Father, not by its own dignity, but because it is united with the person of the Son of God. When a king sits on his throne, the regal purple that he wears is there upon the throne with him; thus the humanity of Christ by itself is not equal to God, but because it is united with a divine Person, it is seated on the same throne with God, with a glory equal to that of God.

We are also bound to know and believe that, on the last day of the world, all men shall rise, and shall be

¹ *Prop.* 64.

² *Doctr. Christ.* c. 3, a. 6.

judged by Jesus Christ; we must also believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true Church. Hence they who are out of our Church, or separated from it, cannot be saved, except infants who die after baptism. We are obliged to believe the communion of saints—that is, that each of the faithful in the state of grace partakes of the merits of all the saints, living and dead. We must also believe in the remission of sins—that is, that our sins are remitted in the sacrament of penance, provided we are sincerely penitent for them. Lastly, we must believe in eternal life—that is, that he who is saved by dying in a state of grace will go to heaven, where he will enjoy God for all eternity; and, on the other hand, that he who dies in sin will be sent to hell, where he will be tormented for all eternity.

Moreover, every Christian is obliged to know the precepts of the Decalogue, and those of the Church, and the principal obligations of his own state of life, whether he be an ecclesiastic or secular, married or single, lawyer or doctor, etc.

Every one is bound also to know and believe the seven sacraments, and their effects, particularly the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, and Eucharist, and the other sacraments when he is about to receive them.

All are obliged to know the "Our Father." The "Our Father," or Lord's Prayer, is a prayer that Jesus Christ himself composed, and left to us, that we may know in what manner to ask the graces that are most necessary for our salvation. St. Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble, on one occasion, when he was ill, repeated the "Our Father" three hundred times in one night. His chamberlain advised him not to repeat it so often, for fear of increasing his illness. The saint answered, that the oftener he said it, the faster he recovered. It is particularly useful to repeat over and over again the words, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" for the greatest grace

that God can bestow upon us is to make us do his holy will here on earth. It is also very profitable to repeat the petition, "and lead us not into temptation," begging the Lord to deliver us from the temptations in which he foresees that we should fall.

Moreover, every one should learn the "Hail Mary," in order to know how to recommend ourselves to the Mother of God, through whom, as St. Bernard says, we receive all the graces God gives us.

All should likewise know that there exists a purgatory, a place for expiating sins after death, where the faithful suffer those temporal punishments for their sins that they did not fully undergo in this life. We should, therefore, be mindful to pray and offer our suffrages for the holy souls in purgatory, whom we are, as far as we can, bound to relieve in their sufferings; indeed, the least pain of purgatory is greater than all the pains of this life put together; for the pains of these spouses of Christ are most intense, and these poor souls are unable to assist themselves. If, on this earth, our neighbor were suffering great pain, and we could relieve him without any great inconvenience, should we not be obliged to do so? We are equally bound to render assistance to these holy souls, at least by our prayers.

We should also know that it is very useful to us to obtain the intercession of the saints, and particularly of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is of faith, as the Council of Trent¹ has declared against the impious Calvin, who said it was wrong to ask the assistance of the saints. Nay, according to the doctrine of St. Thomas we mortals are absolutely bound to go to the saints, in order to obtain, through their intercession, the divine graces necessary for our salvation; not because God cannot save us without the intercession of the saints, but because the order established by God requires that, while we remain

¹ *Sess. xxv. De invoc. Sanct.*

in this life, we should be converted. The order of the divine law requires that we who are absent from the Lord, while we remain in our mortal body, should be brought back to him by means of the saints—to God by the prayers of the saints.¹ This doctrine is also held by other theologians.² We should likewise venerate the relics of the saints, the cross, and sacred images.

6. WHICH ARE THE PROOFS OF THE TRUTH OF OUR FAITH?

Before I proceed farther, I will answer an objection which may be made. A man may say, the truth of our faith is clear and evident: but how can it be clear when there are so many mysteries, such as the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word, and the Eucharist, which are obscure and incomprehensible?

I answer, the mysteries of the faith are obscure, but not its truth. The truth of our faith, that is, that our faith is true, is evident by the plainest and most irrefragable arguments. The mysteries of faith are obscure to us, and God himself wishes them to be obscure: first, because he wishes to be honored by our believing, though we cannot comprehend all the truths that he has revealed; and, secondly, because we acquire merit by believing what we do not see. What merit should a man have for believing something because he sees and comprehends it? St. Gregory says that faith has no merit if human reason furnishes a proof for it.³ But if we are unable to comprehend the material things of this world—for who is there that comprehends how the magnet attracts iron?

¹ "Hoc divinæ legis ordo requirit, ut nos, qui manentes in corpore peregrinamur a Domino, in eum per Sanctos medios reducamur."—*In 4. Sent. d. 45, q. 3, a. 2.*

² *Contin. de Tournely. De Relig. p. 2, c. 2, a. 5, q. 1. Sylvius, In 2. 2, q. 83, a. 4, concl. 2.*

³ "Fides non habet meritum, cui humana ratio præbet experimentum."—*In Evang. hom. 26.*

how a single grain of corn, sown in the earth, produces a thousand other grains? Who comprehends the action of the moon, or that of lightning?—what wonder is there if we cannot comprehend the mysteries of God?

The objects, then, of our faith are obscure; but the truth of our faith is established by so many evident proofs, that he who does not embrace it can only be called a fool. These proofs are numerous. We shall mention only three of them:

1. The first is taken from the prophecies written in the Holy Bible so many ages before the event, and afterwards exactly fulfilled. Long before it happened, the death of our Redeemer was foretold by several prophets,—David, Daniel, Aggeus, and Malachy foretold the time and circumstances of his death. It was foretold that in punishment of the murder of Jesus Christ by the Jews, their temple should be destroyed, and they should be driven from their country; that they should remain blinded in their sin, and should be scattered over the whole earth. We know that all this has taken place. It was also foretold that, after the death of the Messiah, the world should be converted from idolatry to the worship of the true God—and this was done by the holy apostles, who, unaided by learning, nobility, riches, or the protection of the great, and even in spite of the opposition of the potentates of the earth, recalled the world to the worship of the true God, inducing men to forsake their gods and their inveterate habits of vice, in order to embrace a faith that taught them to believe so many mysteries which they could not comprehend, and imposed on them so many precepts hard to be observed, because they are so contrary to our bad passions; such as to love our enemies, to abstain from pleasures, to bear insults, and to place all our affections, not on the goods that we see, but on the goods of a future life that we do not see.

2. We have further evident proofs of our faith in the multitude of miracles wrought by Jesus Christ, by the apostles and other saints, in the presence of the very enemies of the faith, who, when they could not deny the prodigies, said that they were performed by diabolical agency. But true miracles that surpass the power of nature, such as the raising of the dead to life, giving sight to the blind, and the like, cannot be wrought by devils; they have no power to work such miracles. God cannot permit a miracle except in confirmation of the true faith; should he permit a miracle in confirmation of error, he himself would deceive us. Therefore, the true miracles that we witness in the Catholic Church (it is sufficient to mention the miracle of St. Januarius*) are infallible proofs of the truth of our faith.

3. The constancy of the martyrs is again a very strong argument in favor of our faith. In the first ages of the Church, in the reign of the tyrants, there were so many millions of persons, and among them so many tender virgins and children, who, rather than deny the faith of Jesus Christ, endured with joy torments and death. Sulpitius Severus writes¹ that, in the time of Diocletian, the martyrs presented themselves to their judges with a desire of martyrdom that surpassed the avidity with which men of the world pursue the riches and honors of the earth.

The martyrdom of St. Mauritius, and the whole Theban legion, is one famous in history. The Emperor Maximian commanded all his soldiers to assist at an impious

¹ *Hist.* l. 2, n. 32.

* The cathedral at Naples possesses the relics of this glorious martyr, with his blood collected during his execution and preserved in two vials. Every time that his head is brought in sight of his blood enclosed in the two vials, this blood, which is congealed and solid, liquefies and boils as living blood in the presence of all the spectators. (*Victories of the Martyrs*, Chap. LXV., page 284.)—ED.

sacrifice which he was going to offer to his false deities. St. Mauritius and his soldiers, because they were all Christians, refused to obey the order of the emperor. Having heard of their refusal, Maximian, to punish their disobedience, ordered them to be decimated—that is, the head of every tenth man in the legion to be cut off. Each of them desired to die; and the soldiers who were left alive envied the happiness of those who were put to death for Jesus Christ. As soon as this was made known to Maximian, he ordered them to be decimated a second time; but this only increased their desire of martyrdom. In the end the tyrant ordered them all to be beheaded; and all, with joy in their faces, laid down their arms, and, like so many meek lambs, gladly and without resistance submitted to death.

Prudentius¹ relates that a child seven years old, whose name is unrecorded, was tempted by Asclepiades to deny the faith of Christ; but when the boy refused, saying that he had been taught this faith by his mother, the tyrant sent for her, and in her presence caused the child to be scourged till his whole body became one wound. All the spectators shed tears of pity; but the mother exulted with joy at the sight of the fortitude of her son. Before death, the child, being thirsty, asked his mother for a little water. “Son,” said the mother, “have patience a little while; you shall soon be satiated in heaven with every delight.” The prefect, enraged at the constancy of the mother and the son, commanded his head to be cut off instantly. After the execution of the order, the mother took the dead child in her arms, and kissed him with feelings of the most joyful triumph because he had laid down his life for Jesus Christ.

¹ *Peristeph. hymn. 10.*

7. PRACTICAL CONCLUSION.

From all that we have said, we ought to gather that we are bound to return God the most heart-felt thanks for having given us the gift of the true faith. How great is the number of infidels, heretics, and schismatics! Catholics do not amount to a tenth part of the human race. God has placed us in this number; by his providence we were born in the bosom of the true Church. Few thank him for this great benefit. Let us at least be careful to thank him for it every day.

II.

Hope.

I. WHAT IS HOPE?

Hope is a virtue which God infuses into our souls, by which we expect from the divine mercy, with certain confidence, eternal beatitude through the merits of Jesus Christ, and also by means of the good works that we shall perform with God's assistance.

2. WHAT IS THE OBJECT OF HOPE?

Hence the primary object of Christian hope is eternal life—that is, God himself, whom we hope to enjoy; the secondary objects are the means to obtain everlasting happiness, which are God's grace, and our good works which we shall perform with the assistance of grace.

3. WHAT IS THE MOTIVE OF HOPE?

The motive or formal object of hope is the omnipotence of God, by which he is able to save us; his mercy, by which he wishes to save us; and the fidelity of God to his promise to bring us to glory through the merits of Jesus Christ, provided we pray to him for salvation

through the merits of Jesus Christ. Behold the promise: *Amen, amen, I say to you, if ye ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*¹ Without this promise we should have no certain grounds to hope for our salvation, and for God's grace to obtain it.

4. HOW IS THE BLESSED VIRGIN OUR HOPE?

But if God is our hope, for what reason does the holy Church make us call the Blessed Virgin Mary our hope: *Spes nostra salve?*

We must make a distinction: God, as the author of grace and of every good, is our principal hope; and Mary is our hope, because she prays for us to Jesus Christ. Hence, St. Bonaventure thus addresses her: "Through thee, O first finder of grace, Mother of salvation, we have access to the Son, that, through thee, he may receive us, who through thee was given to us."² He meant to say, that as we have access to the Father only through Jesus Christ, who is the mediator of justice, so we have access to the Son only through Mary, who is a mediatrix of grace, and by her prayers obtains for us and dispenses those graces that Christ merited and provided for us. Hence, St. Bonaventure called Mary the entire ground of his hope.³ So also the holy Church teaches us to call her "our life, our sweetness, and our hope."⁴

5. HOW DO WE SIN AGAINST HOPE?

How is the precept of hope violated? It is violated—

1. By despair of the divine mercy. Thus Cain sinned

¹ "Amen, amen, dico vobis: Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis."—*John*, xvi. 23.

² "Per te accessum habemus ad Filium, O inventrix gratiæ, Mater salutis! ut per te nos suscipiat, qui per te datus est nobis."—*In Adv. Dom.* s. 2.

³ "Hæc est tota ratio spei meæ."—*De Aquæd.*

⁴ "Vita, Dulcedo, et Spes nostra."

when, after having killed his brother Abel, he said: *My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon.*¹ As if God, who has said: *Turn ye to Me . . . and I will turn to you,*² could not pardon him even though he should repent of his sin.

2. The precept of hope is violated by presumption, or thinking to be saved either without God's assistance, or without renouncing sin.

If we wish, therefore, to obtain holy perseverance, we must always distrust ourselves, and place our confidence in God. He who trusts in his own strength to conquer temptations will receive no aid from God, and will be defeated by his enemies. They who wish to overcome temptations must have recourse immediately, and with confidence, to God. *None of them, said David, that trust in Him shall offend.*³ And God himself says: *Because he hoped in Me, I will deliver him.*⁴

6. HOW DO WE MAKE AN ACT OF HOPE?

This, therefore, is the way of making an act of hope: My God, trusting in Thy promises, through the merits of Jesus Christ, because Thou art almighty, merciful, and faithful, I hope to receive from Thee the glory of paradise hereafter, and the means necessary to obtain it here.*

Hope is necessary for the attainment of eternal life; but hope alone is not sufficient for salvation: in order to gain everlasting glory, good works are also necessary. The saints have made all conceivable sacrifices to gain heaven.

¹ "Major est iniquitas mea, quam ut veniam merear."—*Gen.* iv. 13.

² "Convertimini ad me, . . . et convertar ad vos."—*Zach.* i. 3.

³ "Non delinquant omnes qui sperant in eo."—*Ps.* xxxiii. 23.

⁴ "Quoniam in me speravit, liberabo eum."—*Ps.* xc. 14.

* This act is reproduced afterwards, § IV., with a further explanation.

St. John Damascene, in his life of Josaphat, the monk, relates that this young man was the son of a king, and heir to the throne, but, enlightened by a celestial admonition, in order to secure his salvation, he despised all the riches and delights of the earth, and fled from the royal palace, and retired into a desert, where he spent all the remaining days of his life in prayer and penitential austerities. At his death, angels were seen carrying his blessed soul to heaven.

Listen to what a woman did in order to gain heaven. Socrates¹ relates that when the Arian Emperor Valens had commanded the prefect of the city to put to death all the Catholics who should assemble at a certain place in order to perform their devotions, the prefect, on his way to execute the barbarous order, met a young woman carrying an infant in her arms, and walking very quickly. Being asked where she was going, she replied: "I am going to the place where the other Catholics assemble." "But do you not know," said the prefect, "that they are all to be put to death?" "It is for that very reason," rejoined the woman, "that I am hastening thither with this my only child, that we may have the happiness of dying for Jesus Christ, and of going to enjoy him in heaven." As soon as the prefect heard this, he returned to the emperor, and related the fact. Confounded by the generous resolution of the woman, the emperor ordered her to be left in peace.

III.

Charity.

I. WHAT IS CHARITY?

Charity is a virtue which God infuses into the soul, by which we love God above all things, because he is infinite goodness, and by which we love our neighbors as ourselves, because God commands us to love them.

¹ *Hist. Eccl.* l. 4, c. 13.

2. WHAT IS THE MOTIVE OF CHARITY?

The motive of loving God is his infinite goodness, for which he deserves to be loved for himself alone, though there were no reward for loving him, nor any chastisement for not loving him.

While St. Louis, King of France, was once travelling, he encountered a woman on the road with a lighted torch in one hand, and a vessel filled with water in the other. When she was asked why she carried them she answered: "I should like to set fire to heaven with my torch, and to extinguish hell-fire with the water, that God might be loved, not for the hope of heaven, nor for the fear of the torments of hell, but simply and solely because he deserves to be loved."

3. WHEN SHOULD WE MAKE ACTS OF CHARITY OR LOVE OF GOD?

Let us now examine when we are bound to make acts of faith, hope, and charity. These acts should be made from time to time because it is by acts that virtues are preserved. We are obliged to make acts of the love of God more frequently than acts of faith and hope; for in the Holy Scripture God tells us that we ought to meditate constantly on this precept of loving God, sitting in our house, walking in our journey, sleeping and rising: that we should bind it as a sign on our hands, keep it before our eyes, and write it on the entry and doors of our house.¹ This passage of Deuteronomy signifies that we should continually endeavor to make acts of divine love; for he who does not frequently exercise himself in loving God can scarcely observe his law. St. Teresa used to say that acts of love are the fuel that keeps the holy fire of divine charity burning in our heart.

Some theologians hold that we are bound to make an act of charity at least on every festival; others, once a

¹ *Deut.* vi. 6, etc.

week. I say that we are obliged to make an act of divine love at least once a month. But it is right that every Christian should make acts of faith, hope, and charity every day.*

4. WHEN SHOULD WE MAKE ACTS OF LOVE FOR OUR NEIGHBOR?

Hence we should, at least once a month, make a formal act of the love of our neighbor; because, without frequent acts of fraternal charity, we shall scarcely practise the charity that we owe to our neighbor.

With regard to the precept of fraternal charity, it is necessary to know that Pope Innocent XI. condemned the following proposition: "We are not bound to love our neighbor by an internal and formal act."¹ This proposition has been condemned; because we are bound to love all men, not only externally, but also internally with the heart, and by formal acts of love. Hence, it is a sin to take complacency in the misfortune of a neighbor, or to be grieved at his welfare. This is the meaning of the precept: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*²

However, it is not sinful to desire or to be glad at the temporal misfortunes of an obstinate sinner, in order that he may amend his life, and cease to give scandal, or to oppress the innocent. It may often happen that, without losing charity, we may rejoice at the ruin of an enemy, or be sorry for his exaltation, if we believe that his ruin will be the salvation of others, and that his prosperity will bring oppression and injustice in its train. Such is the doctrine of St. Gregory.³ But he

¹ "Non tenemur proximum diligere actu interno formali."—*Prop.* 10.

² "Diliges proximum tuum sicut te ipsum."—*Matt.* xxii. 39.

³ "Evenire plerumque solet, ut, non amissa charitate, et inimici nos ruina lætificet, et rursum ejus gloria contristet, cum et ruente eo, quosdam bene erigi credimus, et proficiente illo plerosque injuste opprimi formidamus."—*Mor.* l. 22, c. 11.

who delights in the death or in any other misfortune of a neighbor, for any temporal benefit to himself, is guilty of sin. But observe, that it is one thing to rejoice in the cause which is productive of any advantage, and another to take complacency in the effect produced by that cause. It is lawful to rejoice in the effect, but sinful to be glad at the cause. For example: it is lawful to rejoice at the acquisition of property which comes to us after the death of a parent; but it is unlawful to rejoice at his death; for Innocent XI. has condemned the proposition¹ which asserts that it is lawful for a son to rejoice at the death of his father, on account of the inheritance that shall fall to him.

We are bound, then, to love our neighbor with an internal love; and, therefore, we ought, at least once a month, as has been already said, to make an explicit act of fraternal charity. We will speak in the sequel of the external acts of charity that we owe to our neighbor.

IV.

Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Let us now see how we are to make all the acts of which I have spoken.

I. AN ACT OF FAITH.

“My God, because Thou who art the infallible truth hast revealed to the Church the truths of faith, I believe all that the Church proposes to my belief: and I believe that Thou art my God, the Creator and Lord of all things, who rewardest for all eternity the just in heaven, and chastisest forever the wicked in hell. I believe that Thou art one in essence, and three in Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons and only one God.

¹ *Prop.* 15.

I believe that the second Person, that is, the Son, in order to save us sinners, was made man, died on a cross, and rose again from the dead."

These are the four principal mysteries. Let us also make an act of faith in the other truths, which we are bound by a strict precept to believe :

"I also believe that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the true Mother of God, and is and has always been a virgin. I believe that on the third day after his death, Jesus Christ rose again by his own power, and, after forty days, ascended into heaven, where he sits at the right hand of his Eternal Father, that is, in equal majesty and glory with the Father. I believe that on the last day, when all men shall rise again from the dead, Jesus Christ will come to judge them. I believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true Church, out of which no one can be saved. I believe in the communion of saints—that is, that each of the faithful, while he remains in the state of grace, shares in all the merits of the just. I believe that God remits sins to penitent sinners. I believe in the seven sacraments, and that through them the grace of Jesus Christ is communicated to us. I believe in the Ten Commandments of the Decalogue. In fine, I believe all that the holy Church believes. I give Thee thanks, O my God! for having made me a Christian, and I protest that in this holy faith I wish to live and die."

2. AN ACT OF HOPE.

"My God, trusting in Thy promises, because Thou art faithful, powerful, and merciful, I hope, through the merits of Jesus Christ, for the glory of heaven and the means to obtain it; that is, the pardon of my sins, and final perseverance in Thy grace."

3. AN ACT OF LOVE AND CONTRITION.

“My God, because Thou art infinite goodness, worthy of infinite love, I love Thee above all things with my whole heart, and for the love of Thee I also love my neighbor: and I am sorry, and repent with my whole soul for having offended Thee, the sovereign good. With the aid of Thy grace, which I ask for this moment and for my whole life, I purpose to die rather than evermore offend Thee, and I purpose to receive the holy sacraments in life and at death.”

Every Christian is bound to make these acts when he comes to the use of reason, and when he is in danger of death. During life, we are, as has been already said, obliged to make acts of the love of God and our neighbor, at least once a month. At any rate, we are not obliged to make these acts as frequently as the acts of charity. However, we are sometimes bound indirectly, or by accident, to make these acts, such as when we receive the sacraments, or when we are tempted grievously against faith, or hope, or charity, or chastity; and when, by any of the preceding acts, we can free ourselves from the temptation. Nevertheless, let us be careful to make them always at least once a day: and let us make the act of charity more frequently. Because, my dear Christians, we may be sure that he who does not come to love God truly, will scarcely persevere in the grace of God; for, it is very difficult to renounce sin merely through fear of chastisement; and he who abstains from sin through such a motive, perseveres but a short time. Let us, then, implore of God to give us his holy love, and let us endeavor continually to make acts of love, which are so pleasing to him.

V.

Prayer.

I. NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

Let us also attend to the obligation we are under to recommend ourselves to God, that he may give us his aid to conquer temptations and to persevere in his grace. We cannot merit the grace of final perseverance, as the Council of Trent¹ has declared. It is a gift which God gives gratuitously to whom he pleases, but he infallibly gives it to all who ask it with humility and confidence. Theologians commonly teach that to pray, that is, to recommend ourselves to God and to ask his graces, is necessary for all adults as a means of salvation; and that, for him who neglects prayer, it is impossible to persevere in grace and to be saved. And they therefore conclude that a Christian who neglects for an entire month to recommend himself to God is guilty of mortal sin

2. EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

The Lord desires to give us his graces; but he will have us ask them. For, *every one that asketh, receiveth.*² Mark the words *every one*, which shows that even sinners, who ask God's grace, obtain it: "Every one," says the author of the Imperfect Work, "whether he be a just man or a sinner."³ It is true that a sinner is unworthy of God's graces, but according to St. Thomas⁴ the efficacy of prayer is founded, not on the merits of the person who prays, but on the mercy of God, and his

¹ *Sess. VI., c. xiii.*

² "Omnis enim qui petit, accipit."—*Matt. vii. 8.*

³ "Omnis, sive justus, sive peccator sit."—*Homil. 18.*

⁴ *2. 2, q. 83, a. 16.*

fidelity to his promises. He has said: *Ask and you shall receive.*¹ These are the words of God, they cannot fail.

It is necessary to observe that this promise has been made only for spiritual, but not for temporal, favors. Because he loves us, the Lord often refuses temporal blessings such as riches, honors, and bodily health. He foresees that they would be injurious to the soul, and therefore he withholds them. Therefore, when we ask temporal favors, we should pray for them with resignation, and on condition that they may be profitable to our souls, otherwise the Lord will not grant them to us. But we ought to ask spiritual graces absolutely and unconditionally.

3. QUALITIES OF PRAYER THAT IT MAY BE EFFICACIOUS.

We should pray with confidence, with humility, and with perseverance.

1. With *confidence*. *All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.*²

2. With *humility*. *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*³

3. With *perseverance*. Thousands of graces are necessary for the attainment of salvation. To save our souls, we stand in need of a chain of graces, which must come from God. And there must be on our part a chain of prayers to correspond to this chain of graces. If our petitions cease, God's aid will also cease, and we shall never be saved. Hence, as we are continually tempted to offend God, we must continually pray to him for aid. We must always act like beggars with God, always say-

¹ "Petite, et accipietis."—*John*, xvi. 24.

² "Omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis."—*Mark*, xi. 24.

³ "Deus superbis resistit; humilibus autem dat gratiam."—*James*, iv. 6.

ing: Lord, assist me; Lord, be with me; keep Thy hand upon me; give me perseverance, give me the gift of Thy love. We must begin to make these petitions as soon as we rise in the morning, and continue to repeat them during the day, in hearing Mass, in our visits to the Most Holy Sacrament, before going to bed at night, and particularly when we are tempted, saying: My God, assist me; Mother of God, help me. In a word, if we wish to be saved, it is necessary to have always on our tongue a prayer to Jesus Christ and our Mother Mary, who obtains from her Son whatsoever she wishes.*

VI.

Charity to our Neighbor. †

The love of God and the love of our neighbor are but two sides of the same thing. *This commandment, says St. John, we have from God. That he who loveth God, loves also his brother.*¹ He who loves not his neighbor loves not God. However, charity has its proper order.

I. WHAT ORDER IS TO BE PRESERVED IN OUR CHARITY TO OUR NEIGHBOR.

We ought to love God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves.² "*Sicut te ipsum,*"—as ourselves, but not more than ourselves. Hence, we are not bound to prefer the good of a neighbor to our own unless when the good of the neighbor is of an order superior to ours, and when he is in extreme necessity. The order of goods is this: first, the spiritual life of the soul; then, the temporal

¹ "Qui diligit Deum, diligit et fratrem suum."—*1 John*, iv. 21.

² "Diliges proximum tuum sicut te ipsum."—*Matt.* xxii. 39.

* And through her hand we receive all the graces. (Pages 374 and 380.)

† There is here question of *exterior* acts of charity towards our neighbor; as for *interior* acts, they have been spoken of above, page 384.

life of the body; next, reputation or character; and after that property. Therefore, when he is in extreme necessity, we are obliged to prefer a neighbor's good to our own of an inferior order; that is, his spiritual salvation to our temporal life; his life to our reputation; and his reputation to our property. But we are bound by this obligation, as I have said, only when he is in extreme necessity. If he is not in such necessity, we are not bound to prefer his good, though it be of a superior order. So, if I am unjustly assailed by another, who attempts to kill me, I can lawfully defend myself, and (provided I have no other means of escaping death) I can take away his life, though, by dying in that state of sin, he should lose his spiritual life and be damned: for, in that case, it is not necessary for my neighbor to kill me in order to save his soul.

2. WHOM SHOULD WE LOVE AS OUR NEIGHBOR?

By the precept of charity we are bound to love all who have died in favor with God. We cannot love the damned; on the contrary, we are bound to hate them eternally as the enemies of God.

We must love all the *living*, even though they be sinners, and even though they be our own enemies.

I say *even sinners*; for, though they are now indeed enemies of God, they may still be reconciled with him, and may obtain eternal life.

I also say, *even our enemies*; because the law of Jesus Christ is a law of love. God wishes that all, even our enemies, should love us; and in like manner, he commands us to love even those who hate us. The pagans love all who love them; but we Christians are obliged to love even those who wish us evil. *But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.*¹ When a Christian forgives

¹ "Ego autem dico vobis: Diligite inimicos vestros; benefacite his

an enemy, he may be sure of obtaining from God the pardon of his sins; for the Lord has said: *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.*¹ But, on the other hand, he who will not pardon others, cannot expect forgiveness from God. *For,* says St. James, *judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy.*² It is but just that God should not have compassion on the man who has not compassion on his neighbor. "With what face," says St. Augustine, "can he ask forgiveness of his sins, who refuses to obey him that commands him to pardon others?"³ Do you wish to take revenge for the injuries that your neighbor has done you? If you do, God will take vengeance on you for the numberless insults that you have offered to his divine Majesty.

It is not thus the saints act: the saints seek to do good to those from whom they have received evil. St. Ambrose settled a pension sufficient for his comfortable maintenance on an assassin who had made an attempt on his life. St. Catharine of Siena performed the office of a servant for a woman who had endeavored to destroy her reputation. In the life of St. John the Almoner, it is related that one of his relatives, who had been outrageously insulted by an inn-keeper in Alexandria, laid his complaint before the saint. St. John said to him: "As this publican has been so audacious, I will teach him his duty, and will treat him so as to excite the wonder of the whole city." And what did the saint do? He ordered his steward never afterwards to exact the yearly rent that the inn-keeper had to pay him. Such was the revenge that the saint inflicted, and that truly excited *qui oderunt vos, et orate pro persequentibus et calumniantibus vos.*—*Matt. v. 44.*

¹ "Dimittite, et dimittemini."—*Luke, vi. 37.*

² "Judicium enim sine misericordia illi qui non fecit misericordiam."—*James, ii. 13.*

³ "Nescio qua fronte indulgentiam peccatorum obtinere poterit, qui. Deo præcipiente veniam dare, non acquiescit."—*Serm. 273, E. B. opp.*

the wonder of the whole city. Thus the saints sought revenge, and thus they became saints.

But, on the other hand, how miserable is the soul that bears hatred to a neighbor! The author of the "Parish Priest's Companion" relates a story of two men who hated each other, one of whom, being on the point of death, was persuaded by his confessor to be reconciled to his enemy. The sick man consented; the other came, and peace was made between them. But as he was going out of the sick man's room, he said: "This fellow would never be reconciled to me if he had not lost all hopes of ever being able to take revenge." The dying man overheard the words, and answered: "If I recover you shall see whether I will not take revenge." But he was choked with passion and died. Nevertheless he had his revenge as he had promised. For one day, while his enemy was in the street, a frightful spectre appeared with an iron mace in his hand, and said to him: "I have come to have revenge; as we have been enemies in life, we will be enemies forever in hell." And he killed him with his mace.

3. WHAT ARE OUR DUTIES TOWARD OUR NEIGHBOR?

I. Among the obligations, then, of the precept of charity, the first is to love all men, not only with an internal, but also with an external love. Hence, we are bound to exhibit to an enemy all the ordinary signs of benevolence which we show to friends. We are bound to salute him when he salutes us; and with regard to Superiors, and persons whose rank is superior to ours, it is our duty to salute them before they salute us. And if without a grievous inconvenience I can salute even an equal, and thus free him from the hatred that he bears me, I am obliged to do so. Moreover, if a person who had received an injury or wound from another should say, that he forgave the person who inflicted the injury

or wound, but should refuse to remit the injury, on the pretence that it is useful to punish malefactors, I should scarcely absolve him, because I can hardly be persuaded, if there are no other just causes to excuse him, that he is free from the desire of revenge.

II. The second obligation that we owe to our neighbor is to give him alms when he is in need, particularly if he is ashamed to beg, and we have it in our power to assist him. *But yet that which remaineth, give alms,*¹ is the precept of Jesus Christ. However, it is necessary to make a distinction: when a poor person is in extreme necessity, and in danger of death, we are obliged to relieve him with those goods that are not necessary for the preservation of our life. When he is in grievous necessity, we are bound to assist him with our superfluities, that is, those things that we have beyond what is necessary for our state or condition.

How many blessings will God bestow upon us if we give relief to the poor! The Archangel Raphael said to Tobias, *Alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting.*² Alms delivereth from death—that is, eternal death; for no one can escape temporal death. It purgeth away sins—that is, it obtains for us the divine graces to enable us to cleanse our souls from sin. And maketh to find mercy and life everlasting; because by the mercy we show to others, God is moved to extend mercy to us, and to bring us to the glory of heaven. *He that hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and He will repay him.*³ When we can do nothing else, let us at least assist our neighbor by recommending him to God.

¹ "Quod superest, date eleemosynam."—*Luke*, xi. 41.

² "Eleemosyna a morte liberat; et ipsa est quæ purgat peccata, et facit invenire misericordiam et vitam æternam."—*Tob.* xii. 9.

³ "Fœneratur Domino, qui miseretur pauperis; et vicissitudinem suam reddet ei."—*Prov.* xix. 17.

If we have nothing else to give him, let us at least say a "Hail Mary" for his soul.

In the life of St. Francis Xavier, it is related that he one day asked of Peter Veglio, a man who was in comfortable circumstances, a marriage-portion for a young woman who was exposed to great danger. Peter was playing chess, and jocosely said to the saint: "How can you expect that I will give you my own property, when I am trying to win what belongs to another?" And then added immediately: "Here is the key of my desk; go, and take as much as you want." The saint took three hundred crowns, and afterwards said to his friend: "Peter, know that God has accepted your alms, and on his part I promise that, during life, you shall always have the means of living in comfort; and before you die, in order that you may be well prepared for death, you shall be warned of its approach by wine tasting bitter in your mouth." The prediction was verified. One day as Peter was drinking, his wine tasted bitter; and immediately he began to prepare for death. Thus he led a happy life, and died a happy death.

Alms, then, "make us find the divine mercy"—that is, mercy for past sins, but not license to sin with impunity. "For," says St. Augustine, "he who would corrupt, as it were, the divine justice by charity to the poor, shall be damned in spite of all his alms, and shall experience the divine justice."

III. The third obligation is fraternal correction, which we ought to apply to our neighbor when he is in mortal sin, or in danger of falling into mortal sin, and when there is reason to hope that the correction will be profitable to him. *Go and rebuke him,*¹ says Jesus Christ. You are obliged to do this, even when the person who sins is your Superior, or even your father. And, according to St. Thomas, if the first admonition has not been

¹ "Vade, et corripe eum."—*Matt.* xviii. 15.

effectual, you are bound to repeat the correction several times, where there is reason to hope that it will be useful.

We are bound to this obligation:

1. When the sin of our neighbor is certain, but not when it is doubtful;

2. When there is no other person capable of giving the admonition, and when it is not expected that any other will give it;

3. When there is no ground for a prudent fear that by correcting him, we shall suffer a grievous loss or inconvenience. For when we have just reason to apprehend such loss or inconvenience, we are excused from the obligation of correction, because it is only an obligation of charity. But fathers and mothers are bound to correct their children, even when the correction is attended with grievous inconvenience. But we shall speak at length on this point in treating of the fourth commandment.

Remember, however, that it is frequently requisite to defer the correction, and wait for a more convenient time and occasion, that the admonition may be more profitable.

IV. The fourth obligation of fraternal charity is, when we are able to *comfort the afflicted*, and particularly the sick. Jesus Christ says that what is done to the poor he accepts as done to himself. *As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.*¹ St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that it was more pleasing to her to be employed in assisting a neighbor than to be united with God in ecstasy; and for this she assigned the following reason—"When I am in ecstasy God assists me; but, in relieving a neighbor, I assist God." Hence, St. Cyprian writes,

¹ "Quamdiu fecistis uni ex his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis."—*Matt.* xxv. 40.

“that he who assists his neighbor makes God his debtor.”¹

I may here relate that act of heroic charity towards a neighbor which the ecclesiastical historians tell us of St. Didymus. St. Theodora was a virgin, whom a tyrannical magistrate, in hatred to the faith, sent to a brothel. St. Didymus went to see her there, and said to her: “Theodora, fear no injury from me; I am come to save your honor. Take my clothes and put them on, and leave me yours. In this way you may escape unsullied from this place of infamy;” and so it was. St. Theodora, in her soldier’s dress, was not recognized, and escaped unsullied; and St. Didymus remained there dressed as a woman. For this act he was condemned to death by the tyrant. Theodora, hearing of this, went to see him in his prison, and said to him: “I consented that you should save my honor, but not that you should rob me of the crown of martyrdom: this belongs to me of right. If you intended to rob me of it, you deceived me.” The judge, when he heard of this holy contest, condemned both to be beheaded; and both had the happiness of suffering martyrdom for Jesus Christ.

V. The fifth obligation of fraternal charity is, to *show good example* and *not to give scandal* to our neighbor. Scandal is defined an improper word or act that leads another to sin.

Scandal is twofold—*direct* and *indirect*. It is direct when a person deliberately intends to induce others to commit sin; and indirect when he uses language, or gives an example, calculated to lead others into sin. Both the one and the other are mortal sins when they are actually the occasion of any one committing a grievous fault.

There are also two other kinds of scandal—*scandal of the weak*, and *pharisaical scandal*. A person gives scandal to

¹ “Deum computat debitorem.”—*De Opere et Elem. ad fin.*

the weak when he does an indifferent, or even a good act, which is to others, on account of their weakness, an occasion of sin; for example, a young woman knows that by going to the chapel, or to the park, she gives a dissolute young man, who waits there for her, an occasion of bad thoughts. She is, in such a case, obliged, if she can do it without great inconvenience, to take away the occasion by abstaining from going there. But for how long? Must she forever abstain from going to these places? No; but only as long as Christian prudence dictates; otherwise it would be a grievous inconvenience, and to that charity does not oblige her.

Pharisaical scandal is the scandal taken by those who, without reason, and through their own malice, wish to be scandalized at any action. The occasions of this kind of scandal we are not bound to avoid, because it is not true scandal.

The worst kind of scandal is that which is given by those who are tale-bearers. They hear one person speaking ill of another, and immediately go and relate to the other what they have heard; from tale-bearing of this kind arise hatred, discord, and quarrels. For all these sinful consequences, tale-bearers have to render an account to God. Observe the advice of the Holy Ghost on this point: *Hast thou heard a word against thy neighbor?—let it die within thee.*¹ Have you heard a person speaking ill of another?—let what you have heard die within you; tell it to no one.* Others, though there is no intention of marriage, carry love-messages to married or unmarried women. Others perform the very office of the devil by positively tempting a neighbor to sin; and some go so far as to teach others to sin, and to point

¹ "Audisti verbum adversus proximum tuum? Commoriatur in te."
—*Ecclus. xix. 10.*

* See Chapter VIII, n. 4.

out the means of committing it—the devil himself does not go so far as this. Some (and this is a common scandal) speak immodestly before women, before young persons, and even in the presence of innocent little children. Oh, what havoc of souls do they cause! It is a saying of William of Peraldo that obscene words are the spittle of the devil,¹ which murders souls. “It is but one person who speaks,” says St. Bernard, “and he speaks but one word, and destroys thereby a multitude of souls.”²

Miserable is the man that gives scandal! Our Lord says: *He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea.*³ Is there the least glimmer of hope for a man who is cast into the sea with a millstone about his neck? The Gospel appears to say that there is no greater hope for the salvation of the authors of scandal. St. John Chrysostom writes that the Lord is more inclined to show mercy to those who commit other more grievous sins, than to those who are guilty of the sin of scandal. What! says the Lord to the authors of scandal, are you not satisfied with offending me by your own sins? Do you wish to induce others also to insult me? In the *Mirror of Examples*, it is related that Jesus Christ said one day to a scandalous sinner, “Accursed wretch, you have despised what I have purchased by my blood.”

A mortal sin of scandal is committed by women who go about with their bosom immodestly exposed, or who expose their limbs improperly. Also by actors in im-

¹ “Sputa diaboli, mentes necantia.”

² “Unus loquitur, et unum tantum verbum profert, et tamen multitudinis audientium animas interficit.”—*In Cant.* s. 24, n. 4.

³ “Qui autem scandalizaverit unum de pusillis istis, qui in me credunt, expedit ei ut suspendatur mola asinaria in collo ejus, et demergatur in profundum maris.”—*Matt.* xviii. 6.

modest comedies, and still more by the persons who compose such comedies; also by painters who paint obscene pictures, and by the heads of families who keep such pictures in their houses. The father who speaks obscenely, or blasphemes the saints, in presence of his children, and the mother who brings into her house to live among her daughters young men who are in love with them, or betrothed to them, or other suspected persons, are guilty of a still more grievous sin of scandal. Some mothers say: *I do not suspect any evil.* I answer, that it is their duty to suspect; otherwise they will have to render to God an account of all the sins which may follow.

*Woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh.*¹ Listen to a horrible thing that happened in the city of Savona in the year 1560. I have read it in the chronicles of the Capuchins, and it is also related by Father Ardia. There was a woman who, even after marriage, did not cease giving scandal. This woman one day fell into a fit, and while she was in a state of unconsciousness, she saw the Lord condemning her to eternal fire. When she recovered the use of her senses, she did nothing but cry out, "Alas! I am damned, I am damned!" A confessor came to comfort her, but she answered, "What have I to do with confession? I am damned." Then her daughter approached the bed, in order to encourage her, but she cried out: "Ah, accursed child! on your account, too, I am damned: for through you I have given scandal to others." After these words the devils, in presence of all who were in the apartment, raised her up to the ceiling, and then dashed her so violently against the floor that she instantly expired.

The author of the *Parish Priest's Companion* relates that a boy, who associated with a dissolute young man, was scandalized by his bad example, and lost his inno-

¹ "Væ homini illi per quem scandalum venit!"—*Matt. xviii. 7.*

cence. On the following morning, the boy went to the house of his companion, that they might, as usual, go to school together. The father of this wicked young man went to the room in which he slept, to reprove him for his sloth; but on opening the door he was driven back by a frightful spectre. The mother ran to the window, and saw her unhappy son dead on the bed, with his head hanging down, black as a coal, and covered with marks of fire. The parents learned from the boy the scandal that had been given to him on the previous day, and thus perceived the cause of the vengeance inflicted on their unhappy son.

Is there, then, no hope of salvation for him who has been guilty of the sin of scandal to others? Yes; the mercy of God is infinite; but he who has given scandal must do great penance, and must unceasingly ask pardon of God; he must also repair the scandal by giving good example, by frequenting the sacraments, and leading a life of piety.

Fearing that he had given scandal by dissuading a person from a religious vocation, St. Raymond de Pennafort left the world, and became a religious of the Order of St. Dominic.¹

We read in the *Mirror of Examples* of a young woman who was tormented by the attention of a young man who had fallen in love with her eyes, that she tore out her eyes and sent them to him, with this message: "Take my eyes and do not trouble me any more." St. Euphemia cut off her nose and lips to prevent herself from being seduced. St. Euphrasia said to a soldier who made an attempt on her virtue: "If you will leave me alone I will tell you of certain herbs that will make you invulnerable," and she consented that the soldier might first try the efficacy of her receipt upon herself. After she had prepared the herbs, the simple soldier

¹ *Bolland*, 7 Jan.

struck a hard blow with his sword upon her neck, and of course cut her head off. Such were the deeds which these great women performed in order to take away all occasion of scandal.

VII.

Religion.

I. WHAT IS RELIGION?

By the first precept of the Decalogue we are also obliged to practise the virtue of religion.

It is a *virtue which renders to God the honor due to him*. It also includes the duty of venerating the divine Mother, the angels, and the saints. We should venerate their relics and sacred images, for in these we do not venerate the metal, the wood, or the canvas of the images, as the idolaters did, but the saints whom these images represent to us.

The vices opposed to the virtue of religion are *superstition* and *irreligion*.

2. WHAT IS SUPERSTITION?

Superstition consists in giving to God or the saints a false honor, as would be the case if a person gave to the Blessed Virgin the adoration due to God, as some heretics did, or if a person exposed false relics of the saints to the veneration of the faithful, or should publish false miracles. It is also superstition, and a most grievous sin, to give to creatures what is due to God.

Superstition contains four kinds of sin: *Idolatry*, *divination*, *magic*, and *vain observance*.

1. *Idolatry*, such as the worship of the pagans, who adored as gods men who were dead, and even animals, statues, and other creatures.

2. *Divination* consists in seeking, by an express or tacit compact with the devil, to know things that are future or occult, through his agency, as those who try to discover a theft by turning a sieve,

3. *Magic* is nearly the same thing as divination, and consists in seeking to produce, through the devil, any effect that exceeds human power.

All these are most grievous sins, against which God has threatened the most severe chastisements. *The soul that shall go aside after magicians and soothsayers, and shall commit fornication with them, I will set my face against that soul, and destroy it out of the midst of its people.*¹

4. *Vain observance* consists in endeavoring to attain any object, or to get rid of any infirmity or pain, by the employment of certain vain and disproportionate means, such as by uttering certain words, by saying a prayer in a certain posture, with yellow candles, or with a fixed number of candles, or with the eyes closed, or making the sign of the cross with the left hand. Give up all such vain, foolish practices. Either you expect the favor from God, and in that case these things are not wanted, or you expect it from the devil, and that is a most grievous sin, because it is not lawful to have any communication with the enemy of God.

Abstain, then, from all these kinds of superstition: such as from those signs, cards, or words that persons employ in order to prevent worms from doing injury; to tie up dogs in order to remove pain, stop the flowing of blood, make tempests cease, gain the affection of others, and the like. All these are most grievous sins. Be assured that all these superstitions are lies, deceits, and thefts; if you believe in them, you will lose, not only your money, but your soul also. When you meet with any tribulation, have recourse to the Most Holy Sacrament, to the crucifix, to the Virgin Mary, to St. Antony of Padua, to St. Vincent Ferrer; get some of the oil from their lamps, get a medal of the Immaculate Virgin or a little picture of a saint; so without sinning

¹ "Anima quæ declinaverit ad magos et ad ariolos . . . ponam faciem meam contra eam, et interficiam illam de medio populi sui."—*Lev. xx. 6.*

you will obtain the favor you seek; but if you have recourse to any superstitious means, you will not receive the favor you want, and you will lose your soul.

3. WHAT IS IRRELIGION?

Let us now say something on *irreligion*, which is an irreverence offered to God, and contains three species—*tempting God, sacrilege, and simony.*

1. A person would be guilty of tempting God if he threw himself into a deep pool of water to try whether God is able to save him; to tempt God in such a manner is a mortal sin.

2. *Sacrilege* may be committed in three ways:

First, by offering an injury to a person consecrated to God—that is, by striking an ecclesiastic or a religious. A person who strikes an ecclesiastic or a religious incurs excommunication. It is also a sacrilege to commit a sin against purity with a person who has made a vow of chastity.

Secondly, it is a sacrilege to defile a holy place by any external sin, whether in act, or in word, by theft, by speaking obscenely, by blaspheming God or the saints, etc.

Thirdly, it is a sacrilege to profane holy things, such as to receive a sacrament in the state of mortal sin, to treat with contempt the relics of the saints, the cross, sacred images, beads, and the like. It would be a still greater sacrilege to employ sacred things as a means of committing any sin.

4. Finally, *simony* consists in buying or selling anything spiritual for a temporal price. Hence, it is a sin against religion to endeavor to purchase by money, service, or anything temporal a relic of a saint, absolution from a confessor, any ecclesiastical order, any benefice from a bishop, and other things of the same kind.

CHAPTER II.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

“Thou shalt not take the name of thy God in vain.”¹

THIS commandment imposes three obligations: not to utter blasphemies, not to be guilty of false oaths, and to fulfil vows. Let us treat each of these separately.

I.

Blasphemy.

God is honored by praise and prayer: he is dishonored by blasphemy.

I. WHAT IS BLASPHEMY?

1. Blasphemy is committed by attributing to any creature a divine attribute; for example, by saying that the devil is omnipotent—that he is infinitely holy or wise. Hence, it is a sin to believe that the devil knows all future contingent things, such as what numbers a man will throw with the dice, and the like. God alone knows all the things that are future; the devil can only know external things that have already happened, and from present things make some guess at the future.

2. Blasphemy is also committed by ascribing to God what is injurious to him: by saying, for example, *Cursed be God*, or *bad luck to God*, or *in spite of God*. But to say that *God does what is unjust, that he creates men and afterwards forgets them*, is a heretical blasphemy.

3. But blasphemy may also be committed by acts;

¹ “Non assumes nomen Domini Dei tui in vanum.”—*Exod.* xx. 7.

for example, if a person should contemptuously spit against heaven, or if he should trample on the cross, on beads, or images.

4. It is also grievous blasphemy to curse the saints or holy things, such as the Mass, the Church, holidays, Easter Sunday, Christmas Day, Holy Saturday, or the like.

5. It is blasphemy to curse the souls of men, particularly of the dead, unless the curse be intended for the souls of the damned.

6. To say—not, *ill befall such a saint*, but—something else which conveys no grievous insult, is no very great blasphemy. Nor is it blasphemy to say, *ill befall St. Giles, St. George*, when you only refer to the place so called, not to the saint.

7. To curse creatures—such as the wind, the rain, the year, the day, and the like—is not blasphemy nor a grievous sin, but only a venial fault, provided such maledictions are not referred to God, as would be the case if a person said, *Cursed be the wind of God, the day of God*; and provided also that they are not creatures in which the power and greatness of God are shown forth in a special manner, as they are in heaven and the human soul. It would be blasphemy to curse the world, unless the malediction were confined to the wicked world, of which St. John says: *The whole world is seated in wickedness.*¹

8. It is not blasphemy to curse in general terms the faith of another person, provided no words such as *the Christian faith*, or *the holy faith*, be used, for, if such words be not used, the curse may be intended for the human faith, or the fidelity of the person to his word.

9. Neither is it blasphemy to curse the dead, unless the malediction be uttered or intended against the saints, or the souls of the dead. The reason why it is not

¹ "Mundus totus in maligno positus est."—1 *John*, v. 19.

blasphemy nor a grievous sin to curse the dead in general terms is, because the word *dead* signifies men deprived of life; particularly since the word *dead* is applicable, not to the souls, but, strictly speaking, to the bodies; for the bodies only die, but not the souls. I add, it is certain that a man who is living has both a body and soul: and, according to St. Thomas¹ and the generality of theologians, it is not a mortal sin to utter an imprecation or curse against him, unless the evil implied in the curse be interiorly desired. Now, if to utter a curse against a living person, in whom there certainly are a soul and a body (without internally wishing evil to him) is not a grievous sin, why should it be mortally sinful to utter an imprecation against a dead man, without desiring any evil to befall him? I add, moreover, that they who curse the dead ordinarily do not intend to curse their souls. In general, they intend to injure not the dead, but the living, against whom they are enraged. This is not merely my opinion; I have seen only three authors who have written on this point. They all hold the doctrine I have laid down. Besides, I have asked the opinion of several learned men in Naples, and of the three celebrated Congregations of secular missionary priests, of Father Pavone, of the Archbishop and of St. George, which Congregations contain the flower of the Neapolitan clergy; and all have been of my opinion.*

For my part, I know not how some persons can have courage to condemn certain actions as mortal sins, when

¹ 2, 2. q. 76, a. 1.

* We should here bear in mind that cursing the dead was one of the habits of the people of Italy. Many regarded this as a grievous sin, so that in Puglia it was made a reserved case. The inconveniences that resulted from this severity induced St. Alphonsus to publish, on this question, about the year 1746, a learned dissertation, of which he here gives a summary.—(Villocourt, l. 2, ch. 26 and 46.)

all theologians, ancient and modern, teach that no act should be condemned as a mortal sin unless it be certain that it is mortally sinful. "One thing," wrote St. Raymond to one of his friends, "I advise you, do not be too prone to decide sins to be mortal where you have no certain proof from Scripture."¹ And St. Antoninus taught, "unless there is express authority of Holy Scripture, or of a canon or definition of the Church, or an evident reason, it is very dangerous to determine a sin to be mortal; for even though it be not mortal, if it is defined to be so, the person who acts against this decision will sin mortally."² But if the confessor cannot clearly make out that it is a mortal sin, it is not fitting that he should burden the conscience with the guilt of mortal sin. But, to curse the dead, even without internally wishing evil to them, is a sin; it is at least a venial sin, and more grievous than other venial sins. Some people have the dead always in their mouth. What a shameful vice!

2. HOW GREAT IS THE SIN OF BLASPHEMY?

Let us now say something on the enormity of any blasphemy. In the Old Law, God ordained that every blasphemer should be banished from the city and the camp, and that he should be stoned by all the people. *Bring the blasphemer without the camp. . . and let all the people stone him.*³ Not very long ago, when a man uttered a blasphemy in Venice, an officer was sent from

¹ "Unum tantum consulo, quod non sis nimis pronus judicare mortalia peccata, ubi tibi non constat per certam Scripturam."—*Summ.* l. 3, *de Pœnit.* § 21.

² "Nisi ad hoc habeatur auctoritas expressa Scripturæ sacræ, aut Canonis, seu determinationis Ecclesiæ, vel evidens ratio, non nisi periculosissime determinatur; nam, si determinetur quod sit ibi mortale, et non sit, mortaliter peccabit contra faciens."—P. 2, tit. 1, 6, 11, § 28.

³ "Educ blasphemum extra castra . . . et lapidet eum populus universus."—*Levit.* xxiv. 14.

the court to seize the blasphemer in his own house; his tongue was cut out. Even at the present day, the penalty sanctioned by the King of Naples against blasphemy is, to brand the forehead of the blasphemer with a red-hot iron, and then to send him to the galleys; but the penalty is not often inflicted, because human motives prevent the witnesses from giving testimony against blasphemers. To accuse a blasphemer through hatred of his person is not right; but it is a good and holy act to convict blasphemers, in order that the accursed vice of blasphemy, and the scandal that it gives to those who hear it, may be abolished by the infliction of chastisement.

I say the *scandal*; for children, by listening to the blasphemies of grown-up persons, learn to become blasphemers. What a misery to see so many little ones who know nothing about the things of God and yet know very well how to curse St. Peter or St. Mark. St. Peter! St. Mark! What evil have these saints done you, that you should blaspheme them? You quarrel with your wife, your master, or with a servant, and you assail the saints! The saints continually pray to God for us; and will you blaspheme them? I wonder that the earth does not open and swallow up the blasphemer! Some are found to blaspheme him who keeps them in existence! Instead of thanking God for preserving their life, and not sending them to hell, they blaspheme his divine Majesty.

Every blasphemy uttered against a saint or a holiday is a most grievous sin. St. Jerome says that compared with blasphemy, every sin is small.¹ St. John Chrysostom says that when a person blasphemes, his mouth should be instantly closed. The holy Doctor says: "Strike him on the mouth; bruise it so that he cannot

¹ "Omne quippe peccatum comparatum blasphemie, levius est."—*In Isaiam*, c. 18.

“speak.”¹ Blasphemers are worse than the damned, for they blaspheme the author of their torments, but you blaspheme your benefactor.

Oh! what frightful chastisements have I seen inflicted by God on blasphemers! In the kingdom of Naples, a man who had blasphemed the crucifix of a certain place suddenly fell dead as he was passing before the crucifix. Not many years ago, in another place (I have spoken with a person who was present), a coachman blasphemed a saint, and was immediately upset into the water; the pole of the carriage pressed on his neck, and he was drowned. But if a blasphemer escapes chastisement in this life he shall be punished all the more in the next. Our Lord showed St. Frances of Rome the special and horrible torments of the tongue that blasphemers suffer in hell.

3. EXHORTATION.

My brother, if you have been hitherto in the habit of blaspheming, endeavor now with all your strength to get rid of that accursed vice. What profit do you derive from your accursed blasphemies? You gain nothing by them; on the contrary they keep you always in beggary. You receive no pleasure from them; what pleasure can you feel in cursing holy things? You receive no honor from them, but infamy; blasphemers are avoided and hated, even by their fellow blasphemers.

But I want you to understand that unless during this mission you renounce this vice, you will never get rid of it. It increases with years, because with years your sorrows and infirmities increase; and thus acts of impatience become more frequent. Thus, you will take this vice with you to the grave. A blasphemer, who had been sentenced to be hanged, the moment he was thrown off the gibbet, gave way to the bad habit he had

¹ “Da alapam; contere os ejus.”—*Ad pop. Ant. hom. 1.*

contracted, burst out into a blasphemy against a saint, and so ended his life. A coachman, who had the habit of this vice, blasphemed at the hour of his death, and died miserably. Make now a good confession; make a firm resolution during this mission to blaspheme no more. And for the future say every morning, as soon as you rise, three "Hail Marys," in honor of the Blessed Virgin, that she may obtain for you the grace to be delivered from so horrible a vice. And when you meet with any occasion of impatience, accustom yourself to curse the devil or your sins, and leave the saints alone. Banish forever from your mouth the curse and imprecation, and say instead: Mary, pray for me; Virgin Mary, give me patience and strength. In the beginning you will have great trouble in conquering yourselves, and shaking off the habit of blaspheming. But when the habit is once overcome, you will, by God's assistance, easily abstain altogether from this vice.

But that you may conceive a greater horror of blasphemy, listen to the vengeance that God once inflicted on a blasphemer. Cardinal Baronius relates in his *Annals*¹ that an inhabitant of Constantinople, after having uttered a blasphemy, went to take a bath. After washing, he suddenly rushed out of the bath, crying out that he was a dead man, at the same time lacerating his legs with his nails, and tearing the flesh off his arms with his teeth. He was seized, and wrapped up in a sheet; but this, instead of mitigating, only increased his tortures, so they took it away again; but his skin adhered to it, and came away with it, and thus the miserable man died, and became the prey of the devils, who carried him off to be tormented forever in hell.

St. Gregory also relates² in his dialogues that a child five years old, the son of a Roman nobleman, by listening to the blasphemies of the servants, contracted a

¹ *Ann.* 494.

² *Dial.* l. 4, c. 18.

habit of blaspheming, and was not corrected for it by his father. One evening, after having been guilty of several blasphemies during the day, he was suddenly seized with terror in the presence of his father, and began to cry out: Oh! look at those black men, who want to take me away with them! He threw himself in the arms of his father, and began as usual to blaspheme, and so expired in the act. Woe to you, O fathers! who do not correct your children when they blaspheme; and still greater woe, if you give them bad example by blaspheming in their presence.

II.

Oaths.

I. WHAT IS AN OATH?

An oath is an invocation of the name of God to attest the truth of what is asserted.

It is an oath to say, in confirmation of an assertion: *By God, or by any saint, or by anything sacred; by the sacraments, by the Gospel, by the Church, by the cross, by the Mass.* It is also an oath to swear by any creature in which the goodness and power of God shine forth in a special manner, such as when a person swears by his soul, by heaven, or by the earth.

Is it an oath to say, *God lives; God sees it?* It is necessary to make a distinction. If God be called on to attest the truth of what is asserted, it is an oath; but if the words be uttered by way of assertion, without calling God as a witness, there is no oath.

Neither is it an oath to say, *By my conscience; or By my faith;* unless divine faith is expressed or understood.

It is not an oath simply to say, *I swear that such is the case;* that is, provided the person who uses the words has not been asked to swear by God, or by any saint, or by anything sacred.

2. HOW MANY KINDS OF OATHS ARE THERE?

There are four kinds of oaths:

1. An *assertory* oath, by which a person swears to the truth of an assertion.
2. A *promissory* oath, by which a person swears to fulfil a promise.
3. An *imprecatory* oath, when, for example, a person says, *May God chastise me unless I do such a thing.*
4. A *comminatory* oath, when a person says, *Unless you do such a thing, by God, I will make you repent.*

3. WHEN DOES ONE SIN ON ACCOUNT OF AN OATH, AND TO WHAT IS ONE OBLIGED ?

In assertory oaths, he who asserts a falsehood is guilty of sin.

In promissory oaths, it is a sin to swear without the intention of fulfilling the promise. But if, in a matter of small moment, a person swore with the intention of performing his promise, that afterwards did not adhere to it, it is very probable, as several theologians say, that he would not be guilty of a mortal sin, because God is called on to attest the present intention of the man who makes the promise, and not the future execution of the promise.

Two rules ought to be observed with regard to promissory oaths. The first is, that the oath can never oblige a person to do what is unlawful.¹ The second is that when the thing promised is lawful, the oath is always binding.² For example: if through fear of injuries threatened by a robber you promise on oath to send him what he asks, are you bound to fulfil your promise? Yes, you are bound to adhere to your promise, because, although the robber extorted the promise unjustly, there

¹ "Juramentum nunquam obligat ad illicitum."

² "Juramentum servari debet, semper ac servari potest."

is nothing unlawful in its fulfilment. However you may go to the bishop for a dispensation from the oath, and then you will be no longer bound by the promise that had been extorted by threats. "If there is a sufficient cause, it is lawful to swear, without the intention of swearing, whether the matter is small or great."¹ This proposition is a proposition condemned by Pope Innocent XI. But can a person swear to fulfil a promise without having the intention of taking an oath? No; that cannot be done; it would be contrary to the declaration of Innocent XI.

Imprecatory oaths bind only when the name of God or something sacred is invoked.

The same is to be said of *comminatory* oaths. But when the punishment threatened is unjust, the oath does not bind. Thus the oaths that fathers unjustly make in threatening their children are not obligatory; such as "By God! I will kill you, if you do not return soon, if you do not finish this work," etc.

To be lawful, an oath must have three conditions: *truth, justice, and judgment.*² It must have *truth*—that is, the person who swears must be certain of the truth of his assertion; it is a sin to swear to what is doubtful. An oath must have *justice*, hence a person is guilty of a double sin by swearing to do what is unjust or unlawful. It must have *judgment*—that is, there must be a reasonable cause for taking the oath; otherwise, though the oath may have truth and justice, the person who takes it will be guilty, not of mortal, but of venial sin.

It is necessary also to remark, that he who swears falsely before a judge in a court of justice is guilty of a double sin; and should his testimony do injury to a neighbor, he is bound to make restitution for the damage

¹ "Cum causa, licitum est jurare sine animo jurandi, sive res sit levis, sive sit gravis."—*I'rop. damn.*

² *Jer.* iv. 2.

done. A witness is always bound to give true answers whenever he is lawfully interrogated by a judge.* But some one may say: "Father, if I told the truth, my neighbor would be damaged; through charity for him, I said that I knew nothing about him." Oh, what charity! Will you, in order to treat a neighbor with charity, commit a most grievous sin, and condemn yourself to hell? It is thus that crimes are multiplied; witnesses deny what they have seen, malefactors are acquitted, and thefts, homicides, and so many other evils increase. If the guilty were punished, we should not hear of so many crimes.

4. WHEN DOES THE OBLIGATION OF AN OATH CEASE?

How is the obligation of an oath taken away? It may be taken away by *annulment*, by *dispensation*, *commutation*, and *relaxation*.

1. It may be *annulled* by any one who has dominative power, such as a father, a husband, a guardian, prelate or abbes; and to annul an oath a just cause is not necessary.

2. By *dispensation* or *commutation*, and such dispensation or commutation may be given by the Pope or bishop; but to grant a dispensation or commutation a just cause is required.

3. By *relaxation*: this may be given by the bishop, and by all who have episcopal faculties.

III.

The Vow.

With regard to the obligation of a vow, I have to say to the people a few things that all ought to know; the knowledge of the rest is necessary only for Superiors or confessors.

* See Chapter VII. n. 1.

I. WHAT IS A VOW?

It is a deliberate promise made to God to do or to omit some act, the performance or omission of which is possible, and more perfect than the opposite.

1. I said that it is a *promise* which is understood to be made with the intention of imposing an obligation; for if the promise be made without an intention of imposing an obligation, it is not a vow. When there is a doubt whether there was any intention of imposing an obligation, it is presumed that there was such an intention; because every act is presumed to be done as it ought. When it is doubtful whether a person has made a vow, or only a simple resolution, he should be asked whether in making it he was under the impression that, were he to transgress it, he would commit a grievous sin. If such were his impression, the vow must be regarded as a true and valid one.

2. I said a *deliberate* promise; because, for a vow, the perfect use of reason and free will are necessary. Hence, vows made by children before the age of seven years are not obligatory, unless it be certain that at the time of making the vow they had the perfect use of reason. Hence, also, a vow made by a person through fear excited by another in order to extort the vow imposes no obligation.

3. I have said, to do or to omit some act, the performance or omission of which is *possible* and *more perfect* than the opposite; for if the matter of the vow be impossible, the promise does not bind. But if it be in part possible, and if the object of the promise be divisible, the vow obliges to what is possible, provided it be the principal matter of the vow. I have also said, *more perfect*, for if the object of the vow be indifferent, or an inferior good, the vow is invalid, unless the circumstances render it more perfect.

Remember that if a person do the thing to which he bound himself by vow, although at the time of doing it he did not advert to the vow, he is not obliged to do it again in order to fulfil his promise; for, every one has a general intention of first satisfying his obligation, and then doing what is merely an act of devotion. For a person who is in doubt about having made a vow it is safer to fulfil it, but he is not strictly bound to do so. A person who is certain of having made a vow, and not certain of having fulfilled it, is obliged to do what he promised, because the obligation of the vow still holds good.

2. WHEN DOES THE DELAY IN THE EXECUTION OF A VOW BECOME A MORTAL SIN?

Many theologians say that, if one defers it for two, or at most for three years, he is guilty of a mortal sin. This is to be understood of vows the matter of which is not perpetual, but temporary—such as, to visit a holy place; to get Masses said; and the like. But when the matter of the vow is perpetual, theologians say that then to defer the execution of the vow for six months is a grievous sin.

But I entreat all, and particularly women (ordinarily speaking), to abstain from making vows. So many persons make vows, and afterwards years and years pass away, and the vows are not fulfilled. When you wish to offer anything to God, make not a vow, but a simple resolution, which imposes no obligation. And if any one sees that he can scarcely fulfil a vow already made, let him procure a commutation from the bishop, or from a confessor to whom the bishop has given power to commute the vow.

3. HOW DOES THE OBLIGATION OF THE VOW CEASE?

It is taken away, 1, by *a change of the matter*; that is, when some circumstance occurs, which, had it been fore-

seen, would have prevented the person from making the vow.

2. It is taken away by *annulment*, as we have said regarding oaths. A vow may be annulled by a father, a husband, or any other person who has dominative power. And to take away the obligation of a vow in this manner a cause is not necessary. A father or a husband may, without cause, invalidate the vow of a child or of his wife, and then the obligation of the vow ceases.

3. The obligation of a vow is taken away by *dispensation* or by *commutation*, which may be obtained from the Pope or from one's own bishop. But for the validity of a dispensation or commutation a just cause is necessary; without it it is null.

There are five vows from which no one but the Pope can dispense, namely, a vow of perpetual chastity, of entering a religious Order, of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome, and of St. James in Compostella. These are called the five reserved vows. They are reserved only when the vows are made through *a love of virtue*, not when they are penal or conditional vows. For example, when a person makes a vow to enter religion if he returns to gaming, or on condition that he is freed from a certain infirmity, the vow is not reserved. It may be dispensed or commuted by the bishop, because it has not been made through a love of virtue.

CHAPTER III.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

“Remember to sanctify the Sabbath-day.”¹

THIS precept imposes two obligations: the first is, to abstain from servile works on Sundays and holidays; the second is, to hear Mass on these days.

In the Old Law the festival day was Saturday; but the apostles changed it to Sunday, a day sanctified by God over and over again, as St. Leo has remarked. For it was on Sunday that the world was created; that Jesus Christ rose from the dead; and that the Holy Ghost descended on the apostles. The precept of sanctifying the Sunday, according to St. Thomas,² and the generality of theologians, is *moral*, so far as it is the duty of all men to employ some part of their life in the worship of God; but *ceremonial*, so far as it determines the exact time of this worship. So far as it is moral, all men are bound to observe it. As a ceremonial precept it is no longer obligatory; because the Old Law has ceased. Hence we are bound to the observance of festivals by a precept of the Church, which has determined the days that are to be kept holy.

I now ask, Why has God instituted festival days? He has instituted them that every Christian, having attended

¹ “Memento ut diem Sabbati sanctifices.”—*Exod.* xx. 8.

² “Præceptum de sanctificatione Sabbati est morale, quantum ad hoc, quod homo deputet aliquod tempus vitæ suæ ad vacandum divinis; . . . sed in quantum in hoc præcepto determinatur speciale tempus, est cæremoniale.”—2. 2, q. 122, a. 4.

to the concerns of his body during the other days of the week, may attend on the festivals to the concerns of his soul, not only by hearing Mass, but also by hearing a sermon, visiting the Blessed Sacrament, recommending himself to God, and by performing other acts of piety. But how do many persons spend the holidays? In gambling, in drinking to excess, in obscene discourses. I may here tell you a story related by Surius.¹ In the city of Dia there was a holy bishop called Stephan. Being unable to correct a great irregularity among his people who spent the holidays and Sundays in gaming, dancing, and drunkenness, he begged of God that a multitude of hideous devils might appear in the city on a certain day. So it happened, and so much terror was excited, that all cried aloud for mercy. The people promised to amend and the holy bishop by his prayers delivered them from these horrible monsters.

I.

The Obligation of Abstaining from Servile Works.

I. HOW MANY KINDS OF WORKS ARE THERE?

It is necessary to distinguish three kinds of works—*servile*, *liberal*, and *common*.

1. Servile works, as St. Thomas² teaches, are in the mystic sense sins, but literally they are the works that are usually performed only by servants. They are also called corporal works—such as building, digging, sewing, working iron, stone, or wood, and similar occupations, which require bodily labor. These are, properly speaking, the works which were forbidden in the Old Law. *You shall do no servile work thereon.*³

2. *Liberal works* or occupations, which are called

¹ Die 7. sept. Vit. c. 9.

² *Sent.* 3, ch. 17, q. 1, a. 5, sol. 2.

³ "Omne opus servile non facietis in eo."—*Lev.* xxiii. 7.

works of the mind, are those that are performed by men in a liberal condition of life—such as to study, to teach, to play music, to write, and the like. These are permitted on holidays, even though performed for gain. Theologians also reckon transcribing among the *liberal* works, because transcribing is connected with the instruction of the mind.

3. Finally, *common* works, called also *intermediate works*, are those that are performed, not only by servants, but also by men in a liberal condition of life.

2. WHICH ARE THE WORKS FORBIDDEN ON FESTIVALS?

On festivals, servile works only are prohibited, but not those which are called *liberal* or common. This is the doctrine of theologians who follow the opinion of St. Thomas.¹ Corporal works that have nothing to do with the ceremonies of worship, are called servile only so far as they properly belong to servants, but not so when they are commonly performed as well by persons of liberal condition as by servants. Before this passage, the saint had explained that in the precept of sanctifying holidays servile works only are understood to be forbidden. Hence, according to the more common and more probable opinion, it is not forbidden on holidays to travel or to fowl; because these are at least common to persons in a servile and liberal condition of life. Fishing, when attended with great labor, appears to be a servile work, as may be inferred from the canon law in which the Pope² has given the dispensation to fish for sardines.

It is necessary to remark that the third command-

¹ "Opera etiam corporalia, ad spiritualem Dei cultum non pertinentia, in tantum servilia dicuntur, in quantum proprie pertinent ad servientes; in quantum vero sunt communia et servis et liberis, servilia non dicuntur."—2. 2. q. 122, a. 4.

² *De Feriis*, c. 3.

ment forbids all work connected with the law courts, such as to cite parties, to carry on trials, to pronounce or execute sentences, unless they are excused by necessity or piety.¹

It is also forbidden on festivals to sell goods in public shops; but this is permitted at fairs and markets where it is the custom to do so, or when the things sold are necessary for daily use, such as food, wine, beer, and the like.

3. WHAT CAUSES PERMIT SERVILE WORK ON A HOLIDAY?

1. A *dispensation* of the bishop or even of the parish priest, when there is a just cause for dispensation, excuses servile work on festivals.

2. Servile work on holidays is excused by any *custom* existing in the place, provided the custom is permitted and not censured by the bishop.

3. *Charity*, or the relief of a neighbor who is in need, is a sufficient excuse.

4. *Necessity*, as when a person would not have food for the day if he did not work, or when a person works in order to avoid a grievous loss. Hence it is lawful to reap corn, to gather grapes in the vintage, to gather corn, hay, olives, chestnuts, and other fruits that are in danger of being damaged. It is also lawful to do whatever is necessary for the day, such as to prepare food, to arrange and sweep the house, to make the beds, etc.

5. *Piety* excuses servile work; thus, it is lawful to cultivate the ground belonging to poor churches, or to build them through charity; but this cannot be done without the leave of the bishop, or without great actual necessity.

6. *Smallness of matter* excuses from the violation of the precept. But what should we consider to be sufficient matter for mortal sin? Some theologians say, that to

¹ *De Feriis, c. ult.*

work for an hour is a mortal sin; others extend the time to two hours; but unless there is a just cause, the shortness of the time employed in work does not excuse from venial sin.

4. CONCLUSION.

Some will not work on the other days of the week, and on holidays they are not ashamed to work for half the day, and even compel their servants and children to work. "Father," they say, "we are poor." But it is not every kind of poverty that excuses from working on festivals. Your poverty or necessity must be such that, unless you work, you will not have food for the day for yourself and for your family. Every one who lives by his labor is poor, and in some necessity; but such necessity does not excuse from sin.

Let children remember that when a parent commands them to work on a holiday, in opposition to the law of God, they are not bound to obey him: on the contrary, if they work, they are guilty of sin. They are excused from sin only when, if they do not work, they will suffer a great loss, or at least a grievous inconvenience; for the precepts of the Church are not binding when the observance of them is attended with grievous inconvenience.

But the servants of a master who obliges them to work on holidays of obligation should plainly say to him: "This is a holiday; I am a Christian, and I will not work." If the master compels them by grievous threats, it is their duty to leave him, and to seek a master who observes the Christian law.

I will tell you how God punishes those who work on holidays of obligation. In the diocese of Fano (Pontifical States) they were celebrating the feast of St. Ursus, the bishop and the patron of the place. A countryman went on that day to plough as usual; and when he was

asked why he did not respect the festival of St. Ursus, he answered: "If he is Ursus, I am a man in want of bread." At these words the earth opened, and swallowed him up alive, with his plough and oxen; and the marks of the chasm may still be seen in the place where it happened, which is now called Villa de Rossano.

My good man, what do you expect? Do you imagine that by working on festivals you will improve your fortune? You are mistaken. By your work you will only increase your misery. There were two shoemakers; one of them lived in comfort with his family; the other, though he was always working, Sundays and week-days, was ever starving, and had nothing to give to his children. This man began once to complain of his misery, and said to the other, who always observed the festivals: "Friend, how do you contrive to live? I work and toil unceasingly, and yet I am not able to provide food for my family." The other replied: "I have a friend to whom I go every morning—he supplies me with whatever I want." The former rejoined: "Introduce me to your kind friend." The other promised to comply with his request, and brought him one morning to the church, where they heard Mass. On leaving the church the former said: "Where is the friend who provides for you?" The other answered: "Did you not see Jesus Christ on the altar? He is the friend who supports me." Thus my brethren, be assured that it is God alone, and not sin, that provides for us. He provides for all who observe his law, and not for those who despise it.

It is right that all should know (many already know it) that in 1748 Benedict XIV. permitted the inhabitants of the kingdom of Naples and Sicily to work on all holidays, except on the Sundays and principal festivals; but did not exempt them from the obligation of hearing Mass. The festivals on which they are not allowed to work are all Sundays, Christmas-day, the Circum-

circumcision (that is, New Year's Day), the Epiphany, Ascension Day, Corpus Christi; the festivals of the Conception, Nativity, Annunciation, Purification, and Assumption of the Most Holy Mary; the feasts of St. Peter and St. Paul, of All Saints, and of all the principal patrons of every city or town of the diocese. [In the United States: All Sundays in the year, the Circumcision of our Lord (January 1), the Ascension of our Lord, the Assumption of the B. V. Mary (August 15), All Saints (November 1), Immaculate Conception (December 8), Nativity of our Lord, or Christmas-day.]

II.

The Obligation of Hearing Mass.

I. WHAT IS MASS?

It is the sacrifice which is offered to the divine Majesty of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine.

2. HOW SHOULD ONE HEAR MASS?

To satisfy the obligation of hearing Mass, two things are necessary: an intention and attention.

1. It is necessary to have an *intention* of hearing Mass, so that a man who is forced into church against his will, or who enters only to look about him and see the place, or to wait there for a friend, or for any other purpose except hearing Mass, does not fulfil the obligation. But, should a person hear Mass through devotion, believing that the day is not a holiday, is he bound, when he finds that it is a holiday, to hear another Mass? No; it is enough to have done the work commanded without having adverted to the intention of fulfilling the precept of hearing Mass.

2. It is necessary to hear Mass with *attention*—that is, to attend to the sacrifice that is celebrated. This atten-

tion may be external and internal. It is certain that a person who hears Mass without external attention does not fulfil his obligation; for example, if during the Mass you are asleep, or are drunk, or are employed in writing, talking, or other external operations, you do not fulfil the precept of hearing Mass.

It is disputed among theologians whether a person who attends Mass without internal intention satisfies his obligation; that is, if he sees what is going on, but is at the same time interiorly distracted, and employed in thinking not on God, but on other things. Many theologians say that he is guilty of a venial, but not of a grievous sin, as often as he is voluntarily distracted, and that he fulfils the substance of the precept because he hears Mass with a moral presence. But the greater number of theologians, following St. Thomas, teach that such a person does not fulfil the obligation of hearing Mass, namely, when he is conscious that he is distracted, and not attending to the Mass, and positively wishes to continue in his distractions.

Hence I exhort you, in hearing Mass, to reflect on the great sacrifice which is being offered. Meditate on the Passion of Jesus Christ; for the Mass is a renewal of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ offered on the cross. Or meditate on some eternal truth—on death, judgment, or hell. Let him who knows how to read make use of some little book, or let him recite the office of the Blessed Virgin. Let those who cannot read, if they will not meditate, say the Rosary, or some other vocal prayers: let them, at least, attend to what the priest is doing.

Does a person who makes his confession during Mass satisfy the obligation of hearing Mass? No; for then he would attend it as a criminal accusing himself of his sins, and not as a person offering sacrifice; and it is certain that all who hear Mass offer sacrifice along with the priest.

Hence it would be advisable during Mass to offer the holy sacrifice for the ends for which it was instituted. The Mass was instituted, 1. In order to honor God; 2. To thank him; 3. To obtain the satisfaction for sin; 4. To obtain the graces we stand in need of.

During the Mass, then, we ought, *first*, to offer to God the sacrifice of his Son in honor of his divine Majesty; *secondly*, in thanksgiving for all the benefits we have received from him; *thirdly*, in satisfaction for our sins; and *fourthly*, to implore of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, the graces necessary for our salvation. At the elevation of the Host, let us ask God to pardon our sins, for the sake of Jesus Christ, and at the elevation of the chalice, let us beg of God, through the merits of that divine blood, the gift of his love and holy perseverance. And during the Communion of the priest, let us make a spiritual Communion, saying: My Jesus, I desire to receive Thee; I embrace Thee; do not permit me to be ever separated from Thee.

3. WHAT SIN IS IT WHEN ONE IS ABSENT FROM A PART OF MASS?

There are several other things that must be noticed. *First*, he who is absent from a considerable part of the Mass is guilty of mortal sin. But what part of the Mass is to be regarded as considerable? According to some theologians, a person who is present from the beginning of the Offertory, or of the secret prayer which the priest says after the Gospel, to the end of the Mass, is not guilty of mortal sin; because, as St. Isidore writes, in ancient times the Mass began with the Offertory. However, the more probable and more common opinion is that it is a grievous sin to be absent from the beginning of the Mass to the end of the first Gospel. But it is commonly taught that a person who is absent from the beginning of the Mass to the Epistle, or during the part of the Mass that follows the Communion of the

priest, does not sin mortally. I say that he who is not present at the Consecration, or at the Communion of the priest, does not satisfy the obligation of hearing Mass.

In the second place, you take notice that Innocent XI. condemned a proposition¹ which asserted that the obligation of hearing Mass is fulfilled by being present at the half of two Masses celebrated at the same time by two different priests. But is the obligation fulfilled by a person who hears the half of two Masses successively—that is, the half of a Mass celebrated by one priest, and another half of a Mass afterwards celebrated by a different priest? Many theologians answer in the affirmative, provided the person is present at the Consecration and Communion of the same Mass.

4. WHERE SHOULD ONE BE TO HEAR MASS?

It must be remembered that a person satisfies his obligation, who, in hearing Mass, remains in the choir behind the high altar, or behind a wall or a pillar in the Church, or immediately outside the Church, though he does not see the priest, provided he is united with the people in the church, so that at any rate, from what they are doing, he may know what the priest is doing at the altar.

With respect to those who have oratories in their houses, only the following persons can satisfy the obligation of hearing Mass there: 1. The heads of the family to whom the privilege is granted; 2. Their family, that is, their relatives and connections to the fourth degree, provided always they live in the same house, and at the expense of the privileged party, and provided that one of the privileged persons is present at the Mass; 3. With regard to servants, it is only those that board in the house, and are required by the master

¹ *Prop.* 53.

during the Mass—either to serve the priest, or to assist the master when he kneels or sits down, to read the meditation, or the like. [Only these persons can satisfy the obligation by hearing Mass in the oratory; the rest must go to the parish church; but this usually applies only to Catholic countries.]

5. WHAT ARE THE CAUSES THAT EXCUSE FROM THE OBLIGATION OF HEARING MASS?

1. A physical or moral impossibility is an excusing cause. A person is in a *physical* impossibility when he is confined to bed by sickness, when he is in prison, or when he is blind, and has no one to conduct him to the church.

2. A person is in a *moral* impossibility of hearing Mass when he cannot go to the church without exposing himself to the danger of some grievous temporal or spiritual evil.

Hence the persons on guard in cities, or in armies, or entrusted with the care of herds of cattle, or of houses, or of infants, or of the sick, are exempt from the obligation of hearing Mass, when they have no person to take their place.

Any grievous inconvenience is also an excusing cause; hence the sick who are convalescent, and unable to go to the church without great pain, or danger of relapse, are excused from the obligation of hearing Mass.

Also servants who cannot leave the house without grievous inconvenience to their master or to themselves, who, for example, if they left the house, would be in danger of being dismissed, and would scarcely be able to get employment from others.

A notable distance from church (theologians say three miles) is a sufficient excuse; a less distance excuses from sin when it is raining or snowing, or when a person is infirm, or the road to the church is very bad.

In those places where it is prevalent, the custom of not leaving home for some time after childbirth, or after the death of a near relative, is a sufficient excuse for not hearing Mass. But some absent themselves from the church, and go to public places. Such persons are not excused by the custom of the place from hearing Mass.

Persons may sometimes be excused by want of clothes, or the means of appearing in church in a manner suited to their condition; but if there be a chapel in the neighborhood in which Mass is celebrated at an early hour, they are bound to go there and hear Mass.

My dear Christians, would that I could persuade you all to hear Mass every day! Oh, how great a treasure is the Mass to all who hear it with devotion and piety! Besides the indulgences which are granted for hearing Mass, great graces are obtained (Innocent VI. annexed an indulgence of more than three thousand years to each Mass that is heard). The fruits of the Passion of Jesus Christ are applied to every one that hears Mass; for, as I have already said, each person who hears Mass offers sacrifice along with the priest, and offers to God, for himself and for others, the death and all the merits of the Saviour.

Now see what great temporal and spiritual blessings are bestowed on those who hear Mass. Three merchants one day agreed to set out together from Gubbio. One of them wished to hear Mass before his departure; but the others would not wait for him, and set out by themselves. But in passing over the river Corfuone, which had swelled to a great height in consequence of the rain that had fallen during the night, the bridge gave way, and they were drowned. The third, who had waited to hear Mass, found his two companions dead on the bank of the river, and thankfully acknowledged the grace he had received on account of having heard Mass.

Listen to another fact still more appalling. It is related that in the court of a certain prince there was a page who was so devout that he never omitted to hear Mass every day. Another page, through envy, accused him to the prince, saying that he was too familiar with the princess, his wife. The prince was so enraged, that without further examination he gave orders to some iron-founders, who had care of a furnace, to throw into it the first of his pages that should go to the place, and immediately to make known to him the result. He then sent the page who had been accused to the place in which the furnace was. On his way the page heard the bell for Mass, and waited to be present at the holy sacrifice. Not hearing immediately what he expected from the persons employed at the furnace, the prince sent the other page to see what had happened. The miserable accuser, being the first that arrived, was cast into the furnace, and burned alive. The innocent page afterward appeared, and being reproved by the prince for not having promptly obeyed his order, said that he had stopped on his way to hear Mass. The prince began to suspect the accusation to be false, sought for better information, and discovered the innocence of the devout page.

6. WHY HAVE FESTIVALS BEEN INSTITUTED, AND HOW SHOULD WE USE THEM?

God has instituted festivals that we may honor him, and lay up merits for heaven, by going to the confraternity, or to the church, to hear a sermon, to say the Rosary, to visit the Most Holy Sacrament, to recommend ourselves to the Virgin Mary, or to our holy advocates.

But how many are there who spend the festivals in dishonoring God, and gaining greater merits for hell? How do so many spend the holidays? In disputes and

quarrels (how many murders are committed on festivals!); in making love, even in the church; in standing in a public place to indulge in bad thoughts, in immodest discourses with wicked companions, or in going to the tavern to gamble, to blaspheme, and to get drunk. The parish priest preaches, and some will not hear his Mass in order to avoid the trouble of hearing a sermon. Of what use, then, are holidays to such persons? They serve only to bury the soul deeper in hell by multiplying sins.

I have said that some, for the purpose of escaping the sermon, absent themselves from the church. St. John Chrysostom says that it would be better for some if they never entered the church; because they commit greater sins by their irreverences than they would by not coming at all. It would not be so criminal not to come at all to church, as it is to come in such a manner. Oh, what a horrible thing to see the irreverences which are committed nowadays in churches! And after all this, we hear of persons complaining of the rigor of the divine chastisements!

Many authors state that it was in punishment of irreverences committed in the church that the kingdom of Cyprus was lost, and fell into the hands of the Turks. Eugene Cistenius, who was ambassador of Ferdinand I. at the court of Soliman, relates that at the sepulchre of Mohammed the Turks neither speak, nor spit, nor cough, nor turn about to look at any object of curiosity; and in leaving the temple they walk backwards, in order to avoid turning their back to the sepulchre. Compare this with the conduct of Christians in church! They speak in a loud tone; they look about in every direction to gaze at the women, and see who is pretty and who is ugly; they indulge in bad thoughts; and some even have the temerity to come to the church to make love, without one thought of the reverence due to Jesus

Christ in the Holy Sacrament. Ah, my God, how does it happen that the church does not fall upon such persons? Why does not Jesus Christ depart from us, as he has done before now?

Verme tells us that in a church where scandalous irreverence was committed, a horrible voice was once heard at the elevation of the Host, pronouncing these words: "People, I depart hence." Then the Host was seen raised up to about the middle of the church, and the same words were again heard: "People, I depart hence." Then it gradually ascended as high as the roof, when the same words were heard for the third time: "People, I depart hence." The Host then vanished, and immediately the church fell, and the miserable congregation was crushed beneath the ruins. Ah, brethren! how can God bear with us when he sees that in order to offend him we go to the church in which he dispenses his graces to us?

III.

Fasting on Vigils and during Lent.

Before I conclude this precept of sanctifying holidays, I will explain briefly the fast which the holy Church commands us to observe on vigils in honor of the festivals which occur on the subsequent day, and in Lent, as a preparation for the celebration of Easter. [We must here include the fast of the Ember days, and add the abstinence that is to be observed on Fridays throughout the year.]

I. WHAT MUST WE DO IN REGARD TO FASTING?

In the fast of the Church three things are commanded: 1. To abstain from forbidden meats; 2. To eat but one meal in the day; 3. Not to eat the meal before the hour prescribed.

With regard to the abstinence, the use of flesh-meat and of white-meats (milk food) is forbidden, except in places in which the custom exists of eating white-meat (milk food) and eggs. But this is to be understood only for vigils; for, with regard to Lent, it is certain that the use of white-meats is opposed to the condemnation of the thirty-second proposition by Alexander VII. Benedict XIV.¹ has declared that a person who has obtained the permission of his physician and parish priest or confessor, to eat flesh-meat during Lent, or on vigils of the saints, cannot take flesh-meat and fish at the one meal, but must abstain from fish if he eats flesh-meat, but not if he uses only white-meats (milk food). [See diocesan regulations as to fasting.]

2. The *second* obligation of the fast is to eat but one meal in the day, and a small collation, which must not exceed eight ounces. Some persons eat at collation more—ten, fifteen, or even twenty ounces: what a fast! “But, Father, I eat so that I am still hungry after eating.” But this is not enough. In ancient times Christians ate only once a day—in the evening; and except at that meal, they tasted nothing during the day. The Church afterwards permitted a collation, but not to exceed eight ounces. A person who notably exceeds the quantity allowed for collation is guilty of a mortal sin. However, young persons who have not attained the age of twenty-one, and the old who have completed their sixtieth year, and require to eat more frequently than once a day, are excused from the obligation of fasting. They also are excused who are employed in laborious business, such as laborers, weavers, masons, etc. Women who are pregnant, or who give suck, are exempt from the obligation of fasting, and also the poor, who at their one meal could not get sufficient food to support them during the day.

¹ *Ad Arch. Compost.* 8 Jul. 1744.

3. The *third* obligation imposed by the law of fasting is, according to the present custom, not to take the meal before mid-day. Hence to dine an hour before mid-day on fast days is a mortal sin, as the generality of theologians rightly maintain, in accordance with St. Thomas,¹ who says that he who notably anticipates the hour prescribed for the meal violates the fast.

It is necessary also to remember that Benedict XIV., and still more clearly Clement XIII.,² declared that persons who have obtained permission to eat flesh-meats or white-meats (milk food) are obliged to take but the one meal in the day; and at their collation they can use no other food than that which is permitted to those who are bound to fast, and are not dispensed; that is, at their collation they cannot use either flesh-meat or white-meats.

¹ *In 4 Sent.* d. 15, q. 3, a. 4, sol. 3.

² *Brev. Appetente*, 20 Dec. 1759.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

“Honor thy father and thy mother.”¹

THIS commandment principally regards the duty of children to their parents; but it also comprehends the duty of parents to their children; the mutual obligations of masters and servants, and of husband and wife.

I.

The Obligation of Children towards their Parents.

A child is obliged to love, to respect, and to obey his parents. He is bound first to love them.

I. HOW DOES ANY ONE SIN AGAINST THE LOVE THAT HE OWES TO HIS PARENTS, OR AGAINST FILIAL PIETY?

He commits a mortal sin against this obligation of love:

1. If he desires any grievous evil to his father or mother; and in this he is guilty of a double sin: he sins against charity and against the filial piety due to a parent.

2. He sins if he detracts from the reputation of his parents; and he then commits three sins, one against charity, another against filial piety, and the third against justice.

3. He is guilty of sin if he neglects to assist his parents, as well in their temporal as in their spirit-

¹ “Honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam, ut sis longævus super terram quam Dominus Deus tuus dabit tibi.”—*Exod.* xx. 12.

ual necessities; thus, if a parent is dangerously ill, his children are bound to admonish him of his danger, and to induce him to receive the last sacraments. A child is obliged to support a father or mother when they are in great want. *Son*, says Ecclesiasticus, *support the old age of thy father.*¹ Our parents have provided for us in our childhood; it is but just that we support them in their old age. St. Ambrose² says that the stork supplies its parents with food when it sees them old and unable to provide for their wants. How horrible the ingratitude of the son who, though he knows that his mother is dying of hunger, squanders away his money in the tavern!

It is wonderful what love has been shown by children to their parents. In Japan, in 1604, there were three brothers, laborers, who had to support their mother, but with all their efforts they could not give enough. What then had they to do? It so happened that the emperor had issued an edict promising a large reward to any one who should bring a thief to justice. The brothers, therefore, agreed among themselves that one should pretend to be a thief, and that the other two should bring him to prison, and so support their mother with the reward they would obtain. They then cast lots which of them was to die—for death was in that country the punishment of theft; the lot fell on the youngest, who was bound and taken to prison; but when his two brothers left him there it was observed that they embraced him with tears. When this was told to the judge he ordered the other two to be followed to their home. On their arrival there the mother was told what had been done; but she said that she would rather die than that her son should die for her sake. "Take back the money," she said, "and restore

¹ "Fili, suscipe senectam patris tui."—*Eccclus.* iii. 14.

² *Exam.* l. 5, c. 16.

me my son." When the judge heard of this he acquainted the emperor with it, who so admired their filial piety that he settled a large pension on the three brothers. Thus did God reward their love and affection to their mother.

But now listen, on the other hand, to the chastisement that God inflicted on an ungrateful child. Bishop Abelly¹ mentions a fact related by Thomas Cantipratensis, which occurred in his own time. There was a rich man in France who had an only son whom he wished to marry to a person far superior to him in rank. The parents of the lady consented to the marriage on the condition that the father of the young man would transfer all his property to the son, and depend on him for his support. The father consented. In the beginning he was treated with great kindness; but after some time, in order to please his wife, the son banished him from his house, and gave him but little assistance. The father came to ask relief one day when his son had prepared a great banquet for his friends, but his son drove him away with harshness and disrespect. He was, however, soon punished, for as soon as he had sat down to table a toad flew on his face which no skill could remove. Then he began to repent of the ingratitude with which he had treated his father, and went to the bishop to receive absolution. The bishop enjoined as a penance that he should go through all the provinces of the kingdom with his face uncovered, confessing his sins, as an example for other children. Cantipratensis states that the fact was related to him by a Father of the Order of St. Dominic, who had seen the unhappy man in Paris with his face horribly disfigured, and had heard the circumstances from him.²

¹ *Verités princ. instr.* 28.

² The author quoted, adds that this repentant sinner having faithfully done the penance and repaired his fault, the toad disappeared.—ED.

Be careful, then, O children! to love your parents, and to assist them when they are in poverty, in sickness, or in prison. If you do not, you must expect to receive great chastisement from God. At the very least, he will permit your children to treat you as you have treated your parents. Verme relates that a son had banished his father from his house; the father fell sick and went to the hospital, and sent to his son for a pair of sheets. The son sent them to him by one of his own children. The child took only one of them to his grandfather; and when his father asked him why he had not taken both, he answered, I have kept the other for you when you go to the hospital. You see, then, as you treat your parents so your children will treat you.

2. HOW DOES ONE SIN AGAINST THE RESPECT DUE TO ONE'S PARENTS?

In the second place, a child is obliged to show respect to his father and mother. *Honor thy father in work, and word, and all patience,*¹ says God. It is, then, the duty of a child to honor his father *in work and word.*

Hence it is a sin to reply to parents in a tone of resentment, or in a loud, disrespectful tone of voice. It is a greater sin to deride them, to mock them, to utter imprecations against them, to insult them by calling them *fools, beasts, robbers, drunkards, sorcerers, miscreants,* or any such opprobrious names. Words of this kind, when uttered in their presence, are mortal sins. In the Old Law, they who injured their father or mother were condemned to death. *He that cursed his father or mother shall die the death.*² At present they are not punished with temporal death, but they are accursed by God and

¹ In opere et sermone, et omni patientia, honora patrem tuum."—*Ecclus.* iii. 9.

² "Qui maledixerit patri suo vel matri, morte moriatur."—*Exod.* xxi. 17.

condemned to eternal death. *He is cursed of God that angereth his mother.*¹

It would be a still greater sin to raise the hand, or to threaten, as though you were going to strike a parent. Few shall be your days, you who have struck your mother. For the Scripture says,—*Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest live a long time, and that it may be well with thee in the land.*² If, then, he that honors his parents shall have a long life, and comfort in this world, surely the child that maltreats a father or mother shall live but a short time, and shall live in misery.

St. Bernardine of Siena³ relates that a young man who had died on the gibbet appeared to have the hoary beard of old age. It was revealed to the bishop, while praying for his soul, that if, in punishment of his disobedience to his parents, God had not abandoned him to the crimes which brought him to a shameful death, he should have lived to a great age.

St. Augustine⁴ tells us of a still more terrible case. In the province of Cappadocia there was a mother who had a great number of children. One day her eldest son first insulted her and then beat her. The other children did not interfere with their brother as they ought to have done. The mother was enraged at this conduct, and committed another sin; she went to the church, and, before the baptistery in which her children had been baptized, she cursed them all, begging of God to inflict on them a chastisement that would excite the terror of the whole world. All her children, accordingly, were seized with great tremor in all their limbs. They were afterwards dispersed in different places,

¹ "Et est maledictus a Deo, qui exasperat matrem."—*Ecclus.* iii. 18.

² "Honora patrem tuum et matrem, . . . ut longo vivas tempore, et bene sit tibi in terra."—*Deut.* v. 16.

³ T. 2, s. 17. a. 3, c. 1.

⁴ *De Civ. D.* l. 22, c. 8.

carrying with them the marks of their mother's malediction; and she, grieving at the scourge that had fallen on her children, yielded to despair, and strangled herself. St. Augustine adds that while he was one day in a church which contained the relics of St. Stephen, two of these young men came in trembling to such a degree that every one took notice of them, but through the intercession of St. Stephen they were restored to health before the relics of the saint.

I will give another example. A young man was barbarously dragging his father by the feet along the road. When they had reached a certain place the father said: "Have done, my son; no farther: for I once dragged my father thus far; and in punishment of my sin God has justly permitted me to be dragged here by you."

O children, have you heard how God punishes those who maltreat their parents? You will perhaps say: "I have a father and a mother who are unendurable." But attend to what God says: *Son, support the old age of thy father, and grieve him not in his life.*¹ "Son," says the Lord, "do you not see that your father is a poor old man, afflicted with the evils of old age? You must not grieve him in the few remaining years of his life." The Scripture adds: *And if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy strength.*² The aged sometimes appear to be unreasonable; but it is in bearing with their fits of impatience that the virtue of children consists.

3. HOW DOES ONE SIN AGAINST THE OBEDIENCE DUE TO ONE'S PARENTS?

In the third place, a child owes obedience to a parent in all things that are just. *Children*, says St. Paul, *obey*

¹ "Fili. suscipe senectam patris tui, et non contristes eum in vita illius."—*Ecclus.* iii. 14.

² "Et si defecerit sensu, veniam da, et ne spernas eum in virtute tua."—*Ibid.* iii. 15.

*your parents in the Lord.*¹ Hence, a child is bound to obey his parents in what concerns the service of the family, and particularly in all that regards morals—for instance, when they command him not to play or associate with low companions, or to enter a suspected house, and if he disobeys he is guilty of sin.

Theophilus Rainaud relates that on the borders of France and Savoy there was a young nobleman who was disobedient to his widowed mother; for though she had over and over again commanded him to come home before dusk, and not to stay out till midnight, as was his habit, he still persisted in doing so. So one night she ordered the door to be locked. When he came and found it closed against him, and could not make himself heard, call as loud as he would, he began to curse and reproach his mother, and then, along with his brother and a servant, who were with him, he took shelter in a neighboring house. After going to rest the brother and servant heard a frightful noise, and saw a hideous giant entering the room in which the young man lay. The giant took him by the feet, stretched him on a table, and cut him in pieces with a sabre, and then gave him to be devoured by four horrible dogs. The brother and servant afterwards made search for his body, but could not find it. The brother was so terrified that he became a Carthusian, and after a holy life died a holy death.

This is how God chastises children who are disobedient to their parents. But I must say one word on the text of St. Paul, already quoted: *Children, obey your parents in the Lord.*² Mark the words *in the Lord*. They mean that we should obey parents in all things that are pleasing to God, but not in what is offensive to him. If, for example, a mother commanded a child to commit

¹ "Fillii, obedite parentibus vestris in Domino."—*Eph.* vi. 1.

² "Obedite parentibus vestris in Domino."—*Eph.* vi. 1

theft, or to strike a person, is he obliged to obey her? Not at all—he sins if he does obey. Thus, also, in choosing a state of life, whether to be married or to remain single, to become a priest or a religious, a son, according to St. Thomas,¹ and all theologians, is not bound to obey his parents. However, a son who contracts a marriage that brings dishonor on the family is guilty of sin. With regard to entering religion, if your parents are poor and in great necessity, and if you can by your industry relieve them, it is not lawful for you to abandon them and become a religious. But, on the other hand, fathers or mothers who oblige their children to become priests or monks commit a mortal sin; and if they force their daughters to become nuns, or to enter a monastery, they incur excommunication, according to the Council of Trent.²

Parents are guilty of sin if they force a child to marry who wishes to lead a life of celibacy, or if they hinder a child from entering a religious Order. Some parents make no scruple of turning away children from their vocation; but they ought to know that it is a mortal sin to do so. We are to be saved according to the vocation God gives us; and, therefore, the child, if he enter the religious Order to which God calls him, will be saved; but if, at the instigation of his father or mother, he remain in the world, he will lead a wicked life, and be damned. But some parents care not whether a child is damned or not, provided he remains in the family. "Such fathers," says St. Bernard, "should not be called fathers, but murderers of their children."³ But God will chastise them severely, not only in the next, but also in this world; he will make the very child whom they diverted from his vocation the in-

¹ 2. 2, q. 104, a. 5.

² *Sess.* xxv. c. 13.

³ "Non parentes, sed preemtores."—*Epist.* iii.

strument of their chastisement; for, having lost his vocation, he will abandon himself to vice, and bring ruin on the family. Oh, how many families have been ruined on account of parents making children give up their vocation! I will give you an instance.

In his exposition of the 4th and 25th psalms, Father Alexander Faia, of the Society of Jesus, relates that at Tudela, in Spain, in Old Castile, a very rich man had an only son, whom he had destined to perpetuate the family. But the son, having a vocation for the Society of Jesus, sought admission with so much earnestness that the Superiors at last received him. When his father heard of this, he went to the novitiate and made so many complaints, that to please him the son went home again. But he felt himself again called to forsake the world. Being unwilling to return to the Society, he entered into the Order of St. Francis. But the father induced him a second time to renounce the religious state. Soon afterward it happened that the old man wanted his son to marry a person he had fixed upon; but his son had selected another lady. This gave rise to so many altercations, and even hatred, that one day, in a quarrel, the son killed his father. For this he was taken, tried, and hanged.

Fathers and mothers, take care not to interfere with the vocation of your sons or daughters: do not hinder them from giving themselves to God. What greater source of consolation can a father or mother have than to see a son or a daughter consecrated to God, and leading the life of a saint? The mother of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, who was the Marchioness of Castiglione, seeing him called to the Society of Jesus, endeavored, though he was her eldest and only son, to facilitate his entrance into religion. This is the real duty of parents, to help and induce their children to become saints. And should your parents even endeavor to prevent you

from entering a more perfect state, where you could serve God better, do as Theodore, a young man mentioned in the life of St. Pachomius, did. He was an Egyptian, an only son, and heir to large possessions. On a certain festival he prepared a great banquet: on that day God made him feel that all his riches would profit him nothing at the hour of his death. That very day he shut himself up in his chamber, and besought the Lord, with many tears, to make known to him the state that he ought to choose in order to secure his eternal salvation. God inspired him to go to the monastery of Pachomius. He forsook all things, and fled from his family. His mother went to St. Pachomius with an order from the emperor to restore her son; but Theodore prayed to God with so much fervor that he obtained also for his mother the grace to leave the world, and retire into a convent of nuns.

II.

Obligation of Parents towards their Children.

There are two principal obligations of parents towards their children—to provide food for them, and to give them a religious education.

I. WHAT IS THE DUTY OF PARENTS IN REGARD TO THE SUSTENANCE OF THEIR CHILDREN?

A father is bound to give sustenance to his children, though they are disorderly, though they have squandered away their portion, and though they have contracted an unsuitable marriage. And why? Because they are still his children. Therefore, a father is guilty of sin if, without a just cause, he banishes a son from his house, or if at death he deprives a child of his legitimate portion, or if he refuses a dowry to a daughter who wishes to marry a person suited to her condition. But what are we to say to those inhuman fathers who

squander their money in eating and gaming in the tavern, and leave their poor children in want of bread? The most savage beasts are careful to provide food for their offspring. Men alone are brutal enough to suffer their children to die of hunger!

We may here remark, that brothers also, when they are able, are bound to provide for their brothers, and give a dowry to their sisters, when in great distress. This is the common opinion of theologians.

2. WHAT IS THE DUTY OF PARENTS IN REGARD TO THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN?

With regard to education, it is certain that the good or ill success of children depends on the good or bad education that they receive from their parents. God has instituted matrimony, that, with the direction and instruction of their parents, children may come to serve God, and be saved; otherwise they would be mere outcasts, if they had no one to tell them what to do, nor to correct and chastise them if they neglected to correct their vices and improve their lives; for it often happens that, when admonition fails, the fear of punishment is effectual.

We see, by experience, that holy parents bring up holy children. St. Catharine of Sweden, because she was the daughter of St. Bridget, became a saint. St. Henry the Emperor became a saint because he was the son of St. Stephen, King of Hungary. Queen Blanche, the mother of St. Louis, King of France, was a great servant of God, and thus he became a saint. This good mother used to say to her son in his childhood, "My son, I would rather see you dead in your coffin than guilty of mortal sin." I remember another good mother, whose great care was the sanctification of her children. She would say, "I do not want to be the mother of children damned in hell."

But, on the other hand, there are fathers and mothers who care not whether their children are virtuous or wicked—whether they are saved or damned. Origen has justly said, that parents shall have to answer for all the vices of their children. It is unquestionably the fact that, ordinarily, parents are the cause of the sins of their children, though the children will have to answer for their own faults. Some fathers and mothers, through fear of displeasing a child, neglect to reprove and chastise him, and are thus the cause of his ruin. Barbarous and cruel fathers and mothers! Tell me now, if a father saw his child fall into the water and, though the child might easily be saved by dragging him out by the hair, were to let him be drowned for fear of hurting him by pulling his hair, would you not call that father cruel and unfeeling? Far more cruel is the father who, through fear of giving them pain, neglects to correct or chastise his children for their faults. Would it not be cruelty in a father to give to an inexperienced child a razor with which he might inflict on himself a deadly wound? Much more cruel is the father who gives money to his children to spend on their appetites, or who permits them to associate with bad companions, or to frequent a dangerous house; for the greatest concern of parents should be to remove their children from the occasions of sin.

When admonition or correction is not sufficient, it is necessary to inflict corporal chastisement, especially while the children are young; for when they are grown up, it is impossible to restrain them. *He that spareth the rod hateth his son.*¹ Parents hate the child whom they neglect to chastise when he stands in need of chastisement, and they shall be chastised by the Lord. In punishment of not having chastised his children as he ought,

¹ "Qui parcit virgæ, odit filium suum; qui autem diligit illum, instanter erudit."—*Prov.* xiii. 24.

the high-priest Heli and his sons all perished together in one day, by the judgment of God, as we read in the Scriptures.¹

But a parent must chastise his children in moderation, not in passion, as some fathers and mothers do; such chastisement produces no fruit; on the contrary, it makes children more perverse. First, they should admonish, then threaten, and in the end chastise; but always with the tenderness of a parent, and not with the harshness of a galley-sergeant; with discretion, and without imprecations or offensive words. It will be sufficient to shut them up in a room, to diminish their food, to forbid them to wear their best clothes, and, when necessary, to use the rod, but not a thick stick. Do not, therefore, touch your children while your passion continues. First allow your anger to cool, and then calmly inflict chastisement.

3. HOW DO PARENTS SIN IN REGARD TO THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN?

1. Parents, then, are guilty of sin against the duty of educating their children, if they do not instruct them in matters of faith, and in what regards their eternal salvation. They ought at least to send them on Sundays to the parish church to learn the Christian doctrine, and not send them on errands, as some do. So their children grow up without knowing how to make their confession, and are even ignorant of the principal articles of faith; they know not what is meant by the Trinity, by the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, by mortal sin, judgment, hell, heaven, or eternity; and through their ignorance they are damned. But their parents will have to account to God for them.

2. A parent violates his duty towards his children, if he does not correct them when they are guilty of blas-

¹ 1 *Kings*, ii. 4.

pheming, of stealing, or of uttering obscene words, or if he neglects to chastise them when chastisement is necessary; and parents are bound to inquire what kind of life their children lead, what places they frequent, and with what sort of persons they associate when they leave home. This is a duty of every parent. I should like to know, then, how is it possible to excuse mothers who allow their daughters to keep company with persons in love with them? They desire to see their daughters married, but they do not care whether they commit sin. These are the mothers of whom David speaks, who, for the interest of the family, immolate their daughters to the devil. *And they sacrificed their sons and their daughters to devils.*¹ Some mothers bring young men into the house to amuse themselves with their daughters, that they may be under an obligation of marrying them, and that they may be bound with the chain of sin. But do not such mothers see that for every sin that these lovers commit they themselves are bound by a new chain of hell? "Father," they say, "there is no harm in it." Is there no evil in it? Do you expect that tow thrown into the fire will not burn? Oh, how many mothers shall we see condemned on the day of judgment for seeking to hasten the marriage of their daughters by such means as this!

3. Parents are guilty of sin if they neglect to make their children receive the sacraments at the proper time, or to make them observe the festivals and precepts of the Church.

4. They commit a sin (and this is a double sin) if they give scandal to their children by blaspheming, or by speaking immodestly, or by committing any other scandalous sin in their presence; for a father is bound to give good example to his children, who, like young monkeys, imitate whatever they see, but with this differ-

¹ "Immolaverunt filios suos et filias suas dæmoniis."—*Ps.* cv. 37.

ence, that they more readily imitate bad actions to which our corrupt nature is inclined, than examples of virtue, to which nature has a repugnance. How can children begin to lead a life of virtue when they hear their father blaspheming, talking scandal, and insulting his neighbor, uttering imprecations, expressions of revenge and obscenity, and indicating his diabolical maxims: You must not submit to maltreatment from any one. God is merciful: there are some sins that he tolerates. Mothers say to their daughters, "You must talk, and not be so stiff and unyielding." What virtue can be expected from children who know that their father spends the whole day in the public-house, and comes home drunk; that he frequents a house of ill-fame, that he goes to confession only at Easter, or perhaps not even then? St. Thomas¹ says, that such parents, as much as in them lies, oblige their children to commit sin. Hence arises the ruin of so many souls that are damned; because children take bad example from their parents, and afterwards give bad example to their children: and thus fathers, children, and grandchildren all go to hell. Some parents complain that their children are vicious. *Do men, says Jesus Christ, gather grapes off thorns?*² Did you ever see grapes gathered from thorns? How, then, can the children be virtuous when the parents are vicious? It would be a miracle if they were.

Hence we see that a father who leads a bad life never corrects the vices of his children. For, after giving bad example to his children, he is ashamed to reprove them for the sins that he himself commits. And if he ever does correct them, the children disregard his admonitions. Did you ever hear of the crab that saw his little ones walking sideways, and at once scolded them, and

¹ "Eos ad peccatum, quantum in eis fuit, obligaverunt."—*In Ps.* xvi.

² "Numquid colligunt de spinis uvas?"—*Matt.* viii. 16.

said: "Why do you walk sideways like that?" They replied: "Father, let us see how you walk." The father walked more crookedly than they did, and therefore he never dared to rebuke them after. It is the same with the parent who gives bad example. He is ashamed to correct the faults of his children. He sees them running to the precipice, and remains silent, because he has not courage to censure what he himself does. But it is certain that a parent who does not correct the faults of his children is guilty of sin. What, then, must a parent who scandalizes his children do? St. Thomas says, that he should at least entreat his children not to imitate his bad example. But of what use, I ask, is this ignominious reproof, if the father continues to give bad example? The truth is, that when a parent gives bad example, neither corrections nor entreaties nor chastisements produce any fruit; all is lost.

4. RULE OF LIFE FOR A FATHER OF A FAMILY.

A father who desires to regulate his family well should endeavor first to remove from his house all evil, and afterwards to promote virtue. What I say of fathers is intended also for mothers

I. With regard to removing evil.

1. A father must prevent his children from associating with bad company, or with ill-conducted servants, or with a master who does not give a good example.

2. He must remove from his house any male or female servant that may be a source of temptation to his daughters or sons. Virtuous parents do not admit into their house young female servants when their sons are grown up.

3. He should banish from his house all books that treat on obscene subjects, or on profane love, romances, and all similar works; such books are the ruin of innocent young persons. Videumaun tells us of a young

man who was an example to all his fellow-citizens. He accidentally read an obscene book, and fell into such horrid crimes that he became the scandal of the entire people. His conduct was so scandalous that the magistrates were obliged to banish him from the city. Another young man, who had failed in his efforts to seduce a woman, put a book in her way that treated on love, and thus he made her lose her honor and her soul. A parent is still more strictly bound to remove the class of books that has now become so common, which, besides the other poison, contains also errors against faith or against the Church.

4. He is bound to remove from his house immodest pictures, particularly if they are obscene. Father Rho tells us that Cardinal Bellarmine went into a private gentleman's house, where he happened to see some immodest pictures; so he said to him: "My friend, I am come to entreat you for God's sake to do a work of charity in clothing the naked." The gentleman promised to do so; so the Cardinal pointed to the picture, saying: "There are the naked people I mean." Oh, how delighted is the devil when he sees in any house an immodest picture! It is related in the life of Father John Baptist Vitelli that a troop of devils was once seen in the hall of a certain nobleman offering incense to an immodest picture that hung there, in return for the souls which they gained by it.

5. A parent should forbid his children to frequent masquerades or public dancing-houses, or to act a part in comedies. He should not allow his daughters to be taught by any strange man. Oh, how dangerous is it for young women to receive instructions from men! Instead of learning to read, they learn to commit mortal sins. A parent should get his daughters instructed by a woman, or by a little brother; I say *little*, for even in a brother, when he is grown up, there is some danger.

Parents must be very particular never to allow their sons and daughters to sleep in the same bed, and much less in the same bed with their father and mother. They should also take care not to permit their daughters to converse alone and familiarly with any man, though he be the first saint in the world. The saints in heaven only are incapable of falling; but the saints on earth are flesh like others, and if they do not avoid the occasions of sin, may become devils. Hence, a father will do well to recommend the most virtuous and steady of his daughters to let him know secretly whenever she sees any of her sisters keep up such familiarity, or when she sees any other disorder in the family.

II. With regard to the advancement of piety.

1. A father should make all the members of the family ask of God every morning the grace not to offend him during the day. For this purpose they may say three "Hail Marys" to the Mother of God. The best thing would be to have half an hour's meditation in common for all the members of the house, and to make one of them read aloud the points for consideration, as is done in many families.

2. A parent should make his children receive the sacraments at the proper time; that is, the sacrament of confession at the age of seven, and that of Communion at the age of ten, as St. Charles Borromeo ordered; he should also make them receive the sacrament of confirmation at the latter age. Let him make them go afterwards to confession and Communion at least every fifteen days; but he must not force nor oblige them to go to a fixed confessor, lest they might be guilty of sacrilege. To make children fulfil strict duties, it will be very useful to accustom them to do things that are not obligatory; such as to fast on Saturdays, to say the Rosary and Litany of the Blessed Virgin every day, to make an examination of conscience at night; to make

acts of faith, hope, and charity; to visit the Most Holy Sacrament; to make a novena before the seven festivals* of the Blessed Virgin. For the same reason he should send his children to sermons, to the Exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament, and to other devotions that are performed in the church. *Bow down their neck from their childhood,*¹ says the Holy Ghost. St. Louis, King of France, whenever he was beginning anything, used to sign himself with the sign of the cross, and say: "Thus my mother taught me when I was a child." Oh, that all parents would endeavor to bring up their children in such habits! But the misfortune is, that they are more careful to provide for the temporal than for the spiritual welfare of their children, who thus lose both.

3. A parent should often try to instil Christian maxims into the minds of his children, and inculcate the necessity of avoiding bad company and dangerous occasions; of conforming to the will of God; and of patience under crosses and contradictions. Let him place before their eyes the unhappy state of those who live in sin; the importance of salvation; the vanity of the world; the hour of death, which puts an end to all earthly pains and pleasures; the necessity of recommending themselves to God in time of temptations; and the advantages and efficacy of devotion to the Virgin Mary. These maxims make a deep impression on the tender minds of children; they begin to practise them, and thus they persevere in virtue all their life.

¹ "Curva illos a pueritia illorum."—*Ecclus.* vii. 25.

* These festivals in the order of the calendar are: The Purification, Annunciation, Visitation, Assumption, Nativity, Presentation, and Immaculate Conception.

III.

The Obligation of Masters, Servants, and Married Persons.

I. HOW DO MASTERS SIN IN REGARD TO THEIR SERVANTS?

A master is guilty of sin—

1. If he hinders his servants from observing the holidays by obliging them to work, or by not allowing them time to hear Mass. On the other hand, he is obliged to see that his servants make the paschal Communion, and fulfil the other obligations of a Christian.

2. A master is guilty of sin if he does not correct his servants when they offend God by blasphemies, by obscene words, by scandalous acts, and the like.

3. He commits a sin if he refuses or defers the payment of the wages that he promised.

2. HOW DO SERVANTS SIN IN REGARD TO THEIR MASTERS?

A servant is guilty of sin—

1. If he fails in the performance of the work for which he was hired, or if he does not obey his master as he ought.

2. If he permits any injury to his master, when he can, without inconvenience, prevent it. Indeed when such injury is not done by his fellow-servants, but by a stranger, if he does not prevent it, he is bound to make restitution.

3. A servant is guilty of sin if he leaves his master before the expiration of the time for which he was engaged.

4. He is guilty of sin if he takes occult compensation for services which he judges to be deserving of more wages than his master agreed to give him; for the following proposition was condemned by Innocent XI. "Men and women servants can secretly abstract from their masters sufficient to remunerate them for services

which they judge to be worth more than the wages they receive."¹ This proposition is condemned as false.

5. A servant is guilty of sin if he co-operates in the sin of his master, even against his will. He can be excused only in some cases, when, by refusing to obey, he would suffer a great loss, and when his co-operation is not in itself intrinsically bad.

3. HOW DO HUSBANDS SIN IN REGARD TO THEIR WIVES?

With regard to married persons, the husband commits sin—

1. If through his fault he leaves his wife in want of food or clothes.

2. If he maltreats her by beating her, slapping her face, or calling her insulting names. The wife is a companion, not a slave. Before marriage, some husbands make great promises: "You shall be the mistress of the house, mistress of me." And after the lapse of a few months, they treat their wives as slaves. "What! can I not chastise my wife when she is guilty of misconduct?" Yes; if there is a just cause (particularly if your wife fails in chastity), and if, after being corrected several times, she does not amend, you can chastise her, but with moderation. But it is not lawful to beat your wife for trifling defects, such as for saying a word in anger, or for disobedience in a matter of little importance.

3. A husband is guilty of sin if he hinder his wife from fulfilling her obligations, as a Christian, hearing Mass, making her Easter Communion, and going to confession several times in the year; for a person in the world can scarcely preserve himself in the grace of God by going to confession only once in the year. "But, Father, she wants to go to confession and Communion

¹ "Famuli et famulae domesticæ possunt occulte heris suis surripere, ad compensandam operam suam, quam majorem judicant salario quod recipiunt."—*Prop.* 37.

every day." I answer, if, by frequenting the sacraments, she neglects the care of the family, you can then forbid her to go so often to confession and Communion; but it is not lawful for you to interfere, unless she fails in the good government of the house, or unless some other inconvenience arises from her frequenting the sacraments.

4. HOW DO MARRIED WOMEN SIN IN REGARD TO THEIR HUSBANDS?

A wife commits sin—

1. If she is not obedient to her husband in those things in which she is bound to obey him, and particularly in the matrimonial dues; and let wives remember that, as often as they disobey, they are guilty of a mortal sin.

2. A wife commits sin if, of the goods that are common, she spends, against her husband's will, more than her equals usually spend; for of these goods the husband, and not she, is the master. She can only spend what is necessary for the family, when the husband neglects to make provision.

3. She commits sin if she unjustly refuses to go with her husband to any place in which he wishes to live; for a wife is bound to accompany her husband wherever he goes, unless at their espousal an agreement was made to the contrary, or unless by accompanying him she would suffer serious damage, or be exposed to great danger.

4. She commits sin, when, by angry answers, she gives occasion to her husband to blaspheme. Certain wives complain that their husbands beat them continually; but when you see your husband in a passion, why do you provoke him still more?—why do you not remain silent? Do you know the fable of the oak and the bulrush? An oak and a bulrush were growing in the same place; a furious storm sprung up; the oak would not bend, and so was broken to pieces; the bulrush bent its

head, and let the storm pass over it, and so received no injury. Do you understand what I mean? Be silent when you see your husband in a fury; allow the storm of his indignation to go down by itself, and you will not be beaten. This is precisely what happened to a woman who was always complaining of being beaten by her husband. An honest man said to her: "I will give you some water: if you keep it in your mouth when your husband is in a passion, he will maltreat you no more." He gave her the water: she kept it in her mouth the first time she saw her husband in a rage, and he left her in peace. She afterwards asked the man who gave her the water where he had got it. He answered: "It is to be had in every well; be silent hereafter when your husband is angry, and you will receive no more maltreatment from him."

St. Augustine says that St. Monica, his mother, always lived in great peace with her husband, though he was hard to be pleased, and prone to anger. Her neighbors, who had frequent quarrels with their husbands, asked her one day how she managed to live in such peace with her husband. She said, in reply: "Sisters, the disputes that you have with your husbands do not arise from their imperfections so much as from yours. You answer and rejoin, and thus exasperate their minds; and so you are always in trouble. When I see my husband in a passion I do not speak; I bear with him, and pray to God for him; and thus I live in peace. Do you the same, and you too shall have peace."

CHAPTER V.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

“Thou shalt not kill.”¹

GOD forbids us to do any injury to a neighbor in his person, in his property, or in his reputation. Of the injuries done to property or character we shall speak in treating the seventh and eighth commandments. Here we will speak only of the injuries done to his person.

I. WHAT DOES THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT FORBID?

This commandment principally forbids us to kill any man, or to injure his person by wounding or striking him.

The vindictive man says: “I will have your life.” Life! Have you dominion over a neighbor’s life? God alone is the Lord of our life. *It is Thou, O Lord, that hast power of life and death.*² Oh, how hateful to God is the bloodthirsty man; even in this life God punishes them who shed blood. David says that they shall not live half the time that God would have given them had they not indulged in revenge. *Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.*³ The Scripture tells us that Cain, after having murdered his brother Abel, *dwelt as a fugitive on the earth.*⁴ Such is the chastisement of murderers. When the deed is done, there is no rest for

¹ “Non occides.”—*Exod.* xx. 13.

² “Tu es enim, Domine, qui vitæ et mortis habes potestatem.”—*Wis.* xvi. 13.

³ “Viri sanguinum et dolosi non dimidiabunt dies suos.”—*Psa.* liv. 24.

⁴ “Habitavit profugus in terra.”—*Gen.* iv. 16.

them; they run first here and then there, to conceal themselves from justice, or from the relatives of the murdered man, and nowadays more than formerly, for now there are no churches to fly to which have the privilege of sanctuary.

And though no one should pursue them, they will be unceasingly persecuted by their own conscience. In the "Geographical and Historical Atlas," vol. ii., we read, that Constans II., after having put to death his brother Theodosius, could never lie down in his bed without fancying that he saw his murdered brother by his side, holding in the hand a cup filled with blood, and saying, "Drink, brother, drink." To escape the torments of this vision Constans wandered through the world, but it never left his eyes, till at last he died miserably. There was also a robber who had murdered a child; after having committed the murder he imagined that he saw the child before him, and heard the child cry out: "Barbarous wretch, why did you murder me?" This apparition continued for nine years. At last the robber, being unable to bear its reproaches any longer, voluntarily confessed his crime before the judge, and was executed.

2. IS IT ALLOWED TO DESTROY ONE'S LIFE, TO DESIRE ONE'S DEATH, OR TO INJURE ONE'S HEALTH?

God alone, then, is the Lord of our life; even we ourselves have no right to destroy our own life. If any of the saints have ever caused their own death, as is related of St. Apollonia, who threw herself into the fire prepared for her by the tyrant, they did so from an inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and therefore they did not sin. But it was only folly and crime in the Donatist heretics to kill themselves and call themselves martyrs: martyrs they were, but of the devil, not of Christ; for in destroying their bodies they lost their souls.

It is also a sin wilfully to produce any serious illness, by eating to excess, or by eating food injurious to health; for we are bound to preserve our life, and to avoid all danger of death. It is likewise a sin to desire one's own death. It is, however, lawful* to desire death, as St. Paul did when he said: *I am straitened, . . . having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ,*¹ in order to go to heaven and be with Christ; or in order to be delivered from the danger of offending God, or from some great calamity, which might lead to despair, or any other sin; as Elias² desired to die, in order to be rescued from the persecution of Queen Jezabel. But it is not lawful to desire one's own death through rage or impatience.

It is a mortal sin to get drunk so as to lose your senses; that is, to make yourself a beast instead of a man. What a brutal vice it is, that people cannot leave the bottle till they cannot stand, but reel every step they take, and cannot see out of their eyes! I say again that this is a mortal sin, and that it includes several mortal sins; for to the drunkard is imputed the guilt of all the sins, all the blasphemies, immodest acts, and injuries to his neighbors, which he foresees, or ought to foresee, that he will commit during his drunkenness. If in drunkenness there were no other evil, you at least wilfully deprive yourself of your senses and of the use of reason; and this cannot be excused from mortal sin. You may say, "I go to sleep, and thus digest what I have drunk." But to commit sin it is enough to take a quantity which you know from experience will be sufficient to deprive

¹ "Desiderium habens dissolvi, et esse cum Christo."—*Phil.* i. 23.

² *3 Kings*, xix. 4.

* In nearly all his ascetical works, as we have indicated at the end of the Preface of Volume XIV., the holy Doctor teaches that one should even desire death in order to make sure of no more offending God and of possessing him for all eternity.—ED.

you of the use of the senses. On this vice of drunkenness you may read the learned work lately published by Father Aniello Cyril, of the Congregation of St. Peter in Cesarano: in that work he shows the great evils that flow from drunkenness.

3. WHICH ARE THE CAUSES THAT PERMIT THE KILLING OF ANY ONE?

What has been already said regards ourselves; with regard to others, I say that there are only three causes that render it lawful to take away the life of man: *Public authority, self-defence, and a just war.*

1. It is lawful to put a man to death by *public authority*: it is even a duty of princes and of judges to condemn to death criminals who deserve it; and it is the duty of the officers of justice to execute the sentence; God himself wishes malefactors to be punished.

2. It is lawful in *self-defence* to kill an unjust aggressor, when there is no other means at hand for saving your own life. This is the common opinion of all theologians: it is taught by St. Thomas,¹ by the Roman Catechism,² and in the canon law,³ in which it is said that *all laws permit us to repel force by force.* It is also commonly held by theologians, by St. Antonine⁴ and by St. Thomas,⁵ that it is lawful to kill a robber who, after being admonished to desist, obstinately perseveres in the robbery; and they ground their doctrine on the following passage in Exodus: *If a thief be found breaking open a house or undermining it, and be wounded so as to die, he that slew him shall not be guilty of blood.*⁶ But this deci-

¹ 2. 2, q. 64, a. 7.

² *De 5 Præc.* q. 4.

³ *De Sent. excomm.* c. 3.

⁴ P. 3, t. 4, c. 3, § 2.

⁵ *Loco cit.*

⁶ "Si effringens fur domum, sive suffodiens, fuerit inventus, et accepto vulnere mortuus fuerit, percussor non erit reus sanguinis."—*Exod.* xxii. 2.

sion is to be admitted only when the theft is very considerable; and, as several theologians hold, only when the owner or his family would be reduced to great want and inconvenience if he permitted the robbery. Theologians also teach that it is lawful to kill a person who attempts to violate your chastity, if you have no other means of preserving it.

3. It is lawful to kill enemies in a *just war*; and even in a war when its justice is doubtful, if you are commanded by your own sovereign.¹ Duels and private challenges are unlawful, and are forbidden under pain of excommunication, which is incurred not only by the principals, but also by their seconds. He who dies in a duel is deprived of Christian burial. They who advise persons to fight duels incur the same excommunication.

Except in these three cases, it is always a sin to kill a man, or to wound or beat him.

4. HOW DOES ONE SIN BY CAUSING ABORTION AND BY EXPOSING THE LIFE OF AN INFANT?

It is also forbidden to cause an abortion, though the *fœtus* should be inanimate. But when it is animated, the sin is reserved, and an excommunication incurred by the person who causes the abortion, and by all who co-operate in it by act or counsel. Oh, what an enormous sin it is to cause an abortion! to make an infant die without baptism—that is, to cause a soul to be lost for all eternity! What a barbarous remedy, to endeavor to repair the evil of sin committed by a far greater sin!

And here allow me to remind you of the great danger to which mothers expose their infants by keeping them in their own bed. For it not unfrequently happens that in the morning infants are found dead, smothered in the arms of the mother.

¹ *Can. causa 23, q. 1, c. 4.*

5. IS IT ALSO A SIN TO WISH EVIL TO ONE'S NEIGHBOR?

As it is a sin to injure a neighbor, so it is a sin to desire evil to him: therefore, as often as you by imprecation call down a curse on another, and desire that the evil may happen to him, you sin mortally. It is not necessary that the evil desire should last for a long time. To sin mortally, it is enough that you for a single instant deliberately desire death, or any other grievous evil, to a neighbor.

Banish, then, forever from your mouth these accursed imprecations, and accustom yourself to say, "God make you a saint; God bless you." And when any person addresses you in a tone of anger, adopt the great remedy taught by the Holy Ghost: *A mild answer breaketh wrath.*¹ Answer with sweetness, "Have compassion on me; have patience with me; excuse me, I did not perceive the evil I was doing; I did not mean to offend;" and you will soon calm the anger of the person, and he will offer you no further offence. If a person say to you, "I wish I were dead," let your answer be: "And I wish to see you happy and in good health." Thus you will extinguish his fury. But when you feel angry, it is better to remain silent, and not to speak at all; for passion will make certain answers appear necessary; but when it has subsided, you will see that you have said what you ought not to have said, and that you have committed many sins, venial at least, if not mortal.

When you receive an injury or insult, recommend yourself immediately to God: and should a thought of resentment spring up within you, reflect on the offences that you have offered to God. He has borne with you: is it too much for you to submit to an offence from a neighbor for God's sake?

If you wish to know what sort of revenge is lawful

¹ "Responsio mollis frangit iram."—*Prov.* xv. 1.

and holy, I will tell you what a father inflicted on the murderer of his son. The history is told by Father Gifolfi, in his life of Cæsar de Consulibus, whose only son it was that was murdered. The murderer, not knowing whose it was, took shelter in the palace of Cæsar himself. But Cæsar knew that he was the murderer of his child, and what did he do? He received him kindly, and gave him money and a horse, that he might save his life. This is the manner in which true Christians take revenge.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”¹

OF this commandment we can say but little. St. Francis de Sales says that chastity is sullied by the bare mention of it. Hence, let each person in his doubts on this subject take advice from his confessor, and regulate his conduct according to the direction that he receives.

I. WHAT IS ONE OBLIGED TO CONFESS IN THE MATTER OF
IMPURITY?

I will only observe here, in general, that it is necessary to confess not only all the acts, but also improper touches, all unchaste looks, all obscene words, especially when spoken with pleasure, or with danger of scandal to others. It is, moreover, necessary to confess all immodest thoughts.

Some ignorant persons imagine that they are bound only to confess impure actions: they must also confess all the bad thoughts to which they have consented. Human laws forbid only external acts, because men only see what is manifested externally; but God, who sees the heart, condemns every evil thought: *Man sees those things that appear; but the Lord beholdeth the heart.*² This holds good for every species of bad thoughts to which the will consents. Indeed, whatever it is a sin to do, it is also in the sight of God a sin to desire.

¹ “Non mœchaberis.”—*Exod.* xx. 14.

² “Homo enim videt ea quæ parent; Dominus autem intuetur cor.”
—I *Kings*, xvi. 7.

2. WHAT DISTINCTION IS TO BE MADE IN REGARD TO BAD THOUGHTS?

I said, *thoughts to which the will consents*. Hence, it is necessary to know how to determine when a bad thought is a mortal sin, when it is venial, and when it is not sinful at all. In every sin of thought there are three things: the suggestion, the pleasure, and the consent.

1. The *suggestion* is the first thought of doing an evil action that is presented to the mind. This is no sin; on the contrary, when the will rejects it we merit a reward. "As often," says St. Antonine, "as you resist, so often you are crowned."¹ Even the saints have been tormented by bad thoughts. To conquer a temptation against chastity, St. Bernard threw himself among thorns, St. Peter of Alcantara cast himself into an icy pool. Even St. Paul writes that he was tempted against purity. *There was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me.*² He several times implored the Lord to deliver him from temptation. *For which thing thrice I besought the Lord that it might depart from me.*³ The Lord refused to free him from the temptation, but said to him: *My grace is sufficient for thee.*⁴ And why did God refuse to remove the temptation? That, by resisting it, the saint might gain greater merit. *For power is made perfect in infirmity.*⁵ St. Francis de Sales says that when a thief knocks at the door outside, it is a sure sign he has not yet got in; thus when the devil tempts us we have a strong proof that the soul is in the state of grace. St. Catharine of Siena was once assailed

¹ "Quoties resistis, toties coronaris."

² "Datus est mihi stimulus carnis meæ, angelus Satanæ, qui me colaphizet."—2 Cor. xii. 7.

³ "Propter quod, ter Dominum rogavi, ut discederet a me."—*Ibid.*

8.

⁴ "Sufficit tibi gratia mea."

⁵ "Nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur."—*Ibid.* 9.

by the devil for three days with impure temptations; after the third day our Lord appeared to her in order to console her. She said to him: "Ah, my Saviour, where hast Thou been these three days?" He replied: "I was in your heart to give you strength to resist the temptation by which you were attacked." He then showed her that her heart had become purer than it was before.

2. After the suggestion comes the *pleasure*. When a person is not careful to banish the temptation immediately, but stops to reason with it, the thought instantly begins to delight him, and give him pleasure, and thus draws the person on to give his consent to it. As long as the will withholds the consent, the sin is only venial, and not mortal. But if the soul does not then turn to God, and make an effort to resist the pleasure, it will easily go on to give its consent. "Unless," says St. Anselm, "a person repel the pleasure, it passes into consent, and kills the soul."¹ A woman who had the reputation of a saint was tempted to sin with one of her servants; she neglected to banish the thought instantly, and so in her heart consented, and fell into sin, but only in thought. She afterwards fell into a more grievous sin, for she concealed in confession the complacency she had taken in the bad thought, and died miserably. But because she was believed to be a saint, the bishop had her buried in his own chapel. On the morning after her burial she appeared to him, enveloped in flames, and confessed, but without profit, that she was damned on account of the bad thought to which she had consented.

3. The soul loses the grace of God and is condemned to hell the instant a person *consents* to the desire of committing sin, or delights in thinking of the immodest action as if he were then committing it. This is called

¹ "Nisi quis repulerit delectationem, delectatio in consensum transit, et animam occidit."—*De Similit.* c. 40.

morose delectation, which is different from the sin of desire.

My dear Christians, be careful to banish these bad thoughts, by instantly turning for help to Jesus and Mary. He who contracts the habit of consenting to bad thoughts exposes himself to great danger of dying in sin, for the reason that it is very easy to commit sins of thought. In a quarter of an hour a person may entertain a thousand wicked desires, and for every evil desire to which he consents he deserves hell. At the hour of death the dying cannot commit sins of action, because they are unable to move; but they can easily indulge sins of thought, and the devil suggests every kind of wicked thought and desire to them when they are in that state. St. Eleazar, as Surius¹ relates, was so violently and frequently tempted by bad thoughts at the hour of death, that he exclaimed: "Oh, how great is the power of the devils at the hour of death!" The saint, however, conquered his enemies, because he was in the habit of rejecting bad thoughts; but woe to those who have acquired a habit of consenting to them! Father Segneri² tells us of a man who during his life had often consented to bad thoughts. At the hour of death he confessed his sins with great compunction, so that every one regarded him as a saint; but after death he appeared and said that he was damned; he stated that he made a good confession, and that God had pardoned all his sins; but before death the devil represented to him that, should he recover, it would be ingratitude to forsake the woman who loved him so much. He banished the first temptation: a second came; he then delayed for a little, but in the end he rejected it: he was assailed by a third temptation, and consented to it. Thus, he said, he had died in sin, and was damned.

¹ *Vit. c. 33.*

² *Il Crist. istr. p. I, rag. 31.*

3. IS IMPURITY A GREAT EVIL?

4. My brother, do not say, as many do, that sins against chastity are light sins, and that God bears with them.

I. What! Do you say that is a light sin? But it is a mortal sin: and if it is a mortal sin, one act of it, though it be only the consent to a wicked thought, is sufficient to send you to hell. *No fornicator . . . hath inheritance in the kingdom of Jesus Christ and of God.*¹ Is it a light sin? Even the pagans held impurity to be the worst of vices on account of the miserable effects that it produces. Seneca says: "Immodesty is the greatest evil of the world;"² and Cicero writes: "There is no plague so fatal as bodily pleasure;"³ and (to come to the saints) St. Isidore says: "Run through all sins, you will find none equal to this crime."⁴

In the lives of the ancient Fathers it is related that a hermit, who once by God's grace was walking with an angel, met with a dead dog that stank horribly; but the angel gave no sign of disgust at the smell that it exhaled. They afterwards met a young man elegantly dressed and highly perfumed; the angel stopped his nostrils. When the hermit asked him why he did so, he answered that the young man, on account of the vice of impurity in which he indulged, sent forth a far more intolerable stench than the putrid dog that they had passed. Lyranus writes that impurity is an object of horror even to the devils: "Luxury is hateful to the devils themselves."⁵ So much so that a magician who

¹ *Omnis fornicator, aut immundus . . . non habet hereditatem in regno Christi.*—*Eph.* v. 5.

² "Maximum sæculi malum, impudicitia."—*Comp. ad Helv.* c. 16.

³ "Nullam capitaliorem pestem, quam corporis voluptatem."—*De Senect.* c. 12.

⁴ "Quodcumque peccatum dixeris, nihil huic sceleri æquale reperies."

⁵ "Est luxuria ipsis dæmoniis exosa."

had frequent communication with the devil, on one occasion invoked him after having once committed a sin of impurity. The devil appeared, but would not come near him, and kept his back turned to him. The magician asked him why he treated him in that manner. The devil answered that it was on account of his impurity: "Your lust does not permit me to approach you."¹

Nevertheless, as St. Thomas says, the devils delight in no sin so much as in those against chastity. The reason why the devil takes so much delight in this vice is that it is difficult for a person who indulges in it to be delivered from it.² And why? First, because this vice blinds the sinner, and does not allow him to see the insult that he offers to God, nor the miserable state of damnation in which he lives and slumbers. The prophet Osee says that sinners of this kind lose even the desire of returning to God. *They will not, he says, set their thoughts to return to their God.* And why? *For the spirit of fornication is in the midst of them.*³ Secondly, because this vice hardens the heart, and makes it obstinate. Thirdly, the devil takes peculiar delight in this vice, because it is the source of a hundred other sins—of thefts, hatred, murder, perjury, detraction, etc. Do not, then, my dear Christians, ever say again that impurity is but a light sin.

II. You say: *But God bears with it and winks at it.* Does he, indeed? I tell you that God has chastised no vice so severely in men as the vice of impurity. Read the Scriptures,⁴ and you will find that in punishment of

¹ "Tua libido non sinit me ad te accedere."

² "Diabolus dicitur maxime gaudere de peccato luxuriæ, quia difficile ab eo homo potest eripi."—I. 2, q. 73, a. 5.

³ "Non dabunt cogitationes suas ut revertantur ad Deum suum, quia spiritus fornicationum in medio eorum."—Os. v. 4.

⁴ *Gen.* xix.—*Wis.* x. 6.

this sin God sent fire from heaven and burnt five cities, along with all their inhabitants. In punishment of this vice he sent the universal deluge. *For all flesh has corrupted its way upon the earth.*¹ Men were polluted with this sin; and God caused the rain to fall forty days and forty nights: thus all were destroyed, except eight persons who were saved in the ark. *The deluge came and destroyed them all.*² We also read in the Scriptures that the Hebrews, having entered Setim, a city of the Moabites, fell into sin with the women of the place, and, by an order from God, Moses put twenty-four thousand of the Hebrews to the sword. *The people committed fornication with the daughters of Moab. . . . And there were slain twenty-four thousand men.*³ We may see any day that God chastises the sin of impurity even in this life. Enter into the hospital of incurables, and ask why so many miserable young persons of both sexes are obliged to submit to the most painful operations, to the knife and the branding-iron, and you will be told that it is on account of sins of impurity. *Because thou hast forgotten Me, said the Lord, and cast Me off behind thy back, bear thou also thy wickedness and thy fornication.*⁴ Because you have forgotten Me, and have banished Me from you, in order to gratify the flesh, suffer, even on this earth, the chastisement of your impurities.

Hitherto I have only spoken of the *temporal* punishment inflicted in this life on impure persons. But what shall become of them in the next? You say that God bears with this sin; but St. Remigius says that not many Christian adults are saved, and that the rest are damned

¹ "Omnis quippe caro corruperat viam suam."—*Gen.* vi. 12.

² "Venit diluvium, et perdidit omnes."—*Luke*, xvii. 27.

³ "Fornicatus est populus cum filiabus Moab, . . . et occisi sunt viginti quatuor millia hominum."—*Num.* xxv. 1, 9.

⁴ "Quia oblita es mei, et projecisti me post corpus tuum, tu quoque porta scelus tuum et fornicationes tuas."—*Ezech.* xxiii. 35.

for sins of impurity.¹ Father Segneri says² that three fourths of the reprobate are damned for this vice.

St. Gregory relates³ that a nobleman committed a sin against purity. In the beginning he felt great remorse of conscience; but, instead of going to confession immediately, he deferred it from day to day, until, disregarding his sin, and the voice of God, which called him to repentance, he was suddenly struck dead without giving any sign of conversion. After he was buried a flame was seen issuing from his grave for three successive days, which reduced to ashes not only the flesh and bones of the unhappy man, but also the entire sepulchre.

Listen to another horrible fact related by the celebrated Fortunatus, Bishop of Triers, in his life of Marcellus, Bishop of Paris. A lady of high rank defiled herself with this sin; she died, and was buried. After that a large serpent was seen every day entering her tomb to feed on her flesh. The inhabitants were filled with terror at the sight; so St. Marcellus went and struck the serpent with his pastoral staff, and commanded him to come no more to the place: whereupon the serpent disappeared never to return.

4. WHICH ARE THE REMEDIES AGAINST UNCHASTE TEMPTATIONS?

For those who are unable to abstain from impurity, or who are in great danger of falling into it, God has instituted a remedy in the marriage state—as St. Paul says, *But if they do not contain themselves, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to be burnt.*⁴ “But,” some may say, “Father, marriage is a great burden.” Who denies it? But have you heard the words of the Apostle?

¹ “Ex adultis, propter carnis vitium, pauci salvantur.”

² *Il Crist. istr.* p. 1, rag. 24.

³ *Dial.* l. 4, c. 32.

⁴ “Quod si non continent, nubant; melius est enim nubere, quam uri.”—1 *Cor.* vii. 9.

It is better to marry, and to bear this great burden, than to burn forever in hell.

But do not imagine that for those who are unwilling or unable to marry there is no other means but marriage by which they may preserve chastity, for those who recommend themselves to God may by his grace conquer all the temptations of hell. What, then, are these means? I will tell you.

I. The first remedy is to *humble ourselves* constantly before God. The Lord chastises the pride of some by permitting them to fall into a sin against chastity. It is necessary, then, to be humble, and to distrust altogether our own strength. David confessed that he had fallen into sin in consequence of not having been humble, and of having trusted too much in himself. *Before I was humbled, I offended.*¹ We must then be always afraid of ourselves, and must trust in God only, to preserve us from this sin.

II. The second remedy is *instantly to have recourse to God* for help, without stopping to reason with the temptation. When an impure image is presented to the mind we must immediately endeavor to turn our thoughts to God, or to something which is indifferent. But the best rule is immediately to invoke the names of Jesus and Mary, and continue to invoke them until the temptation ceases, or at least till the heat of it is over. When the temptation is violent, it is useful to renew our purpose of never consenting to any sin, saying: "My God, I would rather die than offend Thee." And then let us ask aid: "My Jesus, assist me; Mary, pray for me." The names of Jesus and Mary have special power to banish the temptation of the devil.

III. The third remedy is to frequent the *sacraments of Penance and Eucharist*. It is very useful to disclose unchaste temptations to your confessor. St. Philip Neri

¹ "Priusquam humiliarer, ego deliqui."—*Ps.* cxviii. 67.

says that *a temptation disclosed is half conquered*. And should a person have the misfortune to fall into sin against purity, let him go to confession immediately. It was so that St. Philip Neri delivered a young man from the chains of sin—he ordered him to go to confession immediately whenever he fell into it. The holy Communion has great efficacy in giving strength to conquer temptations against chastity. The most holy sacrament is called *Wine springing forth virgins*.¹ That is, the wine that is converted into the blood of Jesus Christ by the words of consecration. Earthly wine is injurious to chastity; but the celestial wine preserves it.

IV. The fourth remedy is devotion to Mary the Mother of God, who is called the *Virgin of virgins*.² How many young men have, by devotion to the Blessed Virgin, preserved themselves pure and chaste as angels! Father Segneri³ relates that a young man, so polluted with the vice of impurity that his confessor could not absolve him, went one day to confession to a Father of the Society of Jesus. The Father dismissed him, and told him to say every morning three “Hail Marys” in honor of the purity of the Blessed Virgin, in order to obtain through her intercession the grace to be delivered from the bad habit. After several years the young man returned to the same Father, but had scarcely a venial sin to confess; when he had finished his confession he said to the confessor: “Father, do you know me? I am the person whom you could not absolve some years ago, on account of my sins against purity; but by saying the three “Hail Marys” every morning I have, by the grace of God, got rid of the bad habit.” He gave leave to the confessor to state the fact in general terms from the pulpit. A soldier who was on terms of criminal in-

¹ “*Vinum germinans virgines.*”—*Zach.* ix. 17.

² “*Sancta Virgo virginum.*”

³ *Il Christ. istr.* p. 3. rag. 34.

timacy with a woman heard the story told in a sermon. He began to say the three "Hail Marys,"¹ and was freed from the habit of sin. One day the devil tempted him to go to the house of the woman in order to convert her. But what happened? When he was on the point of entering he was driven back by some invisible but powerful hand, and carried to a considerable distance. He thus became more and more convinced of the protection of the Blessed Virgin; for had he entered the house, he would probably have relapsed in consequence of being exposed to the proximate occasion of sin. Let each one practise this little devotion of saying every day three "Hail Marys," in honor of the Blessed Virgin, adding after each "Hail Mary," "Through thy pure and immaculate conception, O Mary, obtain for me purity and sanctity of body and soul."

V. The fifth remedy, which is the most necessary for avoiding sins against chastity, is to fly from dangerous occasions. Generally speaking, the first of all the means of preserving yourself always chaste is to avoid the occasions of sin. There are many means, such as to frequent the sacraments, to have recourse to God in temptations, to be devoted to the Blessed Virgin; but the first of all is to avoid the occasions of sin. The Scripture says, *Your strength shall be as the ashes of tow, . . . and there shall be none to quench it.*¹ Our strength is like the strength of tow thrown into the fire: it is instantly burned and consumed. Would it not be a miracle if tow cast into fire did not burn? It would also be a miracle if we exposed ourselves to the occasion, and did not fall. According to St. Bernardine of Siena,² it is a greater miracle not to fall in the occasion of sin, than to

¹ "Erit fortitudo vestra ut favilla stuppæ, . . . et non erit qui extinguat."—*Isa.* i. 31.

² "Majus miraculum est in occasione non peccare, quam mortuum resuscitare."

raise a dead man to life. St. Philip Neri used to say that in the warfare of the flesh, cowards—that is, they who fly from occasions—are always victorious. You say: *I hope that God will assist me.* But God says: *He that loveth the danger shall perish in it.*¹ God does not assist those who, without necessity, expose themselves voluntarily to the occasion of sin. It is necessary to know that he who puts himself in the proximate occasion * of sin is in the state of sin, though he should have no intention of committing the principal sin to which he exposes himself.

By proximate occasions even saints have fallen, and persons on the point of expiring have been lost. Father Segneri relates² that a woman who had lived in the habit of sin with a young man called for a confessor at the hour of death, and with tears confessed all the wickedness of her life. She afterwards sent for her friend, with the intention of bringing him to God by her example. But what happened? Listen to the consequences of the occasion of sin: when the young man arrived, she fixed her eyes upon him for some time, and at last, with a gush of carnal affection, said to him: "Dearest friend, I always loved you, and I love you now more than ever. I know that on your account I shall go to hell; but no matter: I am willing to be damned for love of you." With these words on her lips she expired.

We must, then, avoid the occasions of sin if we wish to be saved.

1. We must carefully abstain from looking at persons, the sight of whom may tempt us to bad thoughts. St.

¹ "Qui amat periculum, in illo peribit."—*Ecclus.* iii. 27.

² *Il Cris. istr.* p. 1, rag. 24.

* What is meant by *proximate* occasion may be seen in Part II. ch. v. § 3, n. 3.

Bernard says: "Through the eyes the arrows of impure love enter, and kill the soul."¹ And the Holy Ghost says: *Turn away thy face from a woman dressed up.*² Is it, then, a sin to look at a woman? Yes, it is at least a venial sin to look at young women; and when the looks are repeated, there is also danger of mortal sin. St. Francis de Sales says that to look at dangerous objects is bad, but to look a second time is still more injurious. One of the ancient philosophers blinded himself voluntarily in order to be freed from unchaste suggestions. It is not lawful for us Christians to destroy our sight physically, but we should destroy it morally by turning the eyes away from objects which may excite temptations. St. Aloysius Gonzaga never looked at women; even speaking to his mother he kept his eyes cast down upon the ground. It is equally dangerous for women to look at young men.

2. It is necessary to avoid all bad company, and all assemblies where light bantering and flirting go on between men and women. *With the holy thou wilt be holy . . . and with the perverse thou wilt be perverted.*³ If you keep company with the virtuous, you shall be virtuous; if you associate with the unchaste, you too will indulge in impurity. St. Thomas says that a man will be like the companions with whom he converses.⁴ And should you ever find yourself in dangerous society from which you cannot withdraw, follow the advice of the Holy Ghost. *Hedge in thy ears with thorns.*⁵ Place a hedge of thorns about your ears that you may not hear

¹ "Per oculos intrat in mentem sagitta impuri amoris."—*De Modo bene viv.* c. 23.

² "Averte faciem tuam a muliere compta."—*Ecclus.* ix. 8.

³ "Cum sancto sanctus eris; . . . cum perverso perverteris."—*Ps.* xvii. 26.

⁴ "Talis erit, qualis est conversatio qua utitur."

⁵ "Sepi aures tuas spinis; linguam nequam noli audire."—*Ecclus.* xxviii. 28.

the obscene words which others utter. When very young, St. Bernardine of Siena used to blush as often as he heard an immodest word; hence his companions were careful never to use improper language in his presence. Such was the horror which St. Stanislaus Kostka felt for obscene conversation that on hearing an immodest word he swooned away, and lost the use of his senses. Young girls, whenever you hear any one speak immodestly, turn your back and go away. It was thus St. Edmund acted, as we read in his life;¹ and one day, after having left his companions because their language was obscene, he met on his way a most beautiful boy who said to him: "God save you, my beloved." The saint asked who he was. The young boy answered: "Look at my forehead: there you may read my name." The saint raised his eyes, and read the words, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Jesus Christ immediately disappeared, but left the saint consolation and joy. Whenever you find yourself in the society of young persons who speak improperly, and cannot leave them, be careful at least not to listen to them: turn away your face, and show that such language is displeasing to you.

3. I will here mention the chastisement inflicted on two persons for obscene language. Turlot² relates that St. Valerius, returning on a winter's day to his monastery, and not being able to reach it before night, took shelter in a private house. On entering, he found the master engaged with another man in obscene conversation; he reproved them, but they persevered in their sin. St. Valerius, though the evening was very cold, fled from the house. As soon as he departed, the owner of the house was struck blind, and his companion was attacked with a loathsome disease. They ran after

¹ *Spec. Exempl.*

² *Treſor de la Doctr. chrét.* p. 3, ch. 7, l. 3.

the saint, and entreated him to return, but he refused. One remained blind, and the other died after being consumed by the disease. Oh! how great is the evil caused by immodest language! An obscene word may be the cause of the perdition of all who hear it. Some excuse themselves, saying that they only use such words in jest. Yet in uttering them you feel complacency! and then the scandal which you give to others! Miserable man, these jests shall make you weep for all eternity in hell.

4. But let us return to the necessity of avoiding the occasions of sin. It is necessary, also, to abstain from looking at immodest pictures. St. Charles Borromeo forbids all fathers of families to keep such pictures in their houses.

It is necessary, also, to abstain from reading bad books, and not only from those that are positively obscene, but also from those that treat of profane love, such as Ariosto's poems, the "Pastor Fido," and all such works. Fathers should not allow their children to read romances. These sometimes do more harm than even obscene books; they put fantastical notions and affections into young persons' heads, which destroy all devotion, and afterwards impel them to give themselves up to sin. "Vain reading," says St. Bonaventure, "begets vain thoughts and extinguishes devotion."¹ Make your children read spiritual books, ecclesiastical histories, and the lives of the saints. And here I repeat: Do not allow your daughters to be taught their lessons by a man, though he be a St. Paul or a St. Francis of Assisi. The saints are in heaven.

5. Be careful, also, not to permit your sons to act plays, nor even to be present at an immodest comedy. St. Cyprian says: "Who went chaste to the play, returned

¹ "Vana lectio vanas generat cogitationes, et exstinguit mentis devotionem."—*De Instit. Nov.* p. 1, c. 14.

unchaste."¹ A young man or woman goes to the play full of modesty and in the grace of God, and returns home without modesty and at enmity with God. Do not allow your children to go to those feasts of the devil where there is dancing, courting, immodest singing, and sinful amusements. "Where there is dancing," says St. Ephrem, "there a feast of the devil is celebrated."² But you will say: "What harm is there in a little relaxation and amusement?" St. Peter Chrysologus says: "They are not amusements, but grievous offences against God."³ A certain companion of the servant of God, Father John Baptist Vitelli, wished, against the will of the father, to go to a festivity of this kind which was celebrated at Norcia; the consequence was, first, he lost the grace of God, then he abandoned himself to a wicked life, and in the end was killed by the hand of his own brother.

6. Finally, some one may ask whether it is a mortal sin to make love. What can I say? Ordinarily speaking, I say that persons who give themselves up to love-making are scarcely free from the proximate occasion of sinning mortally. Experience shows that few of them are exempt from grievous sins. If they do not commit mortal sin in the beginning of their courtship, they will in the course of time very easily fall into it: for at first they speak together through a predilection for each other's conversation; this predilection afterwards grows into a passion; when the passion has taken root, it blinds the mind, and precipitates the soul into a thousand sins of bad thoughts, of immodest words, and, in the end of sinful acts. Cardinal Pico de la Mirandola, bishop of Albano, forbade the confessors of his diocese to absolve

¹ "Quæ pudica ad spectaculum processerat, revertitur impudica."—*De Gratia D. ad Donat.*

² "Ubi tripudia, ibi diaboli festum celebratur."—*De Ludicris Rebus.*

³ "Non sunt hæc ludicra; sunt crimina."—*Serm.* 155.

those lovers who, after being duly admonished, continued to hold long conversations together, particularly if they should be alone, or if the conversations should be of great length, or clandestine, or by night. "But, Father," some of them will say, "I have no bad intention. I have not even bad thoughts." Young men and young girls, avoid these amatory conversations with persons of a different sex. In the beginning the devil does not suggest bad thoughts, but when the affection has taken root it will not allow you to see the evil you do; and almost without knowing how, you will find that you have lost your soul, your God, and your honor. Oh! how many innocent young persons does the devil gain in this way!

CHAPTER VII.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not steal.”¹

I. On Theft.

I. WHAT IS THEFT?

It consists in *taking the property of another, without a just cause, and against his will.*

I have said *without a just cause*; for if a person were in extreme necessity, or had no other means of recovering a debt due to him, he can then take the property of another, even against his will. With regard to *necessity*, this can hold good when the necessity is *extreme*; that is, when a person would be in proximate danger of death, or of a most grievous evil, if he did not take what belonged to another; and then he can take only so much as is necessary to rescue him from the proximate danger to which he is exposed. But a person who is only in *great* and not *extreme* necessity cannot take the property of another without his consent, as appears from the condemnation of the 36th proposition by Innocent XI. And next, with regard to compensation, you may not take your neighbor's property to recover a debt due from him to you, unless the debt is certain, and you have no other means of obtaining satisfaction for it. Hence, as has been already said in the instruction on the fourth commandment,² a servant cannot make to himself occult

¹ “Non furtum facies.”—*Exod.* xx. 15.

² Chapter IV. § 3, page 455.

compensation for services which he judges to be deserving of more wages than he has received. To assert that he can make such compensation has been condemned by Innocent XI. I also said *against the will of the owner*; for it is not theft to take the property of another with his consent, or when his consent is presumed to be certain.

2. IS THEFT A GREAT SIN?

Theft, when committed in a matter of great moment with regard to the person whose property is taken away, is certainly a mortal sin, and the person who is guilty of it is condemned to hell. *Nor thieves, nor covetous, . . . nor extortioners, shall possess the kingdom of God.*¹ This is a sin which is punished by human justice even with death, for security of property is necessary for the peace of all states, and thefts destroy this security.

Every theft of anything of value, then, is a mortal sin, even though the whole amount should be taken away on several occasions in small quantities; so many small sums make up a large amount. If the theft be committed, not secretly, but by force, it is a double sin, because it is a double injustice. If the thing stolen belong to the church, or if the theft be committed in the church, it is a sacrilege.

3. WHO ARE THOSE THAT SIN AGAINST THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT?

1. Not only they who take away the property of another are guilty of theft, but also all who neglect (when they are able) to pay to servants their wages, or what is due to artisans, or other persons. These are called *honorable thefts*—*the thefts of nobles*, who have no great scruple about them; but how many go to hell for this sin! *The bread of the needy is the life of the poor; he*

¹ "Neque fures, neque avari, . . . neque rapaces regnum Dei possidebunt."—1 Cor. vi. 10.

that defraudeth them thereof is a man of blood.¹ They who defraud or neglect to pay the poor man, take away his life; for he lives by the labor of his hands. St. James says that the wages due to the laborer, and not paid, cry to God for vengeance against him who withholds them. *Behold the hire of the laborers . . . which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth; and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.*² The Holy Ghost exhorts us to pay before night (that is, as soon as we can) what we owe to the poor. *But thou shalt pay him the price of his labor on the same day, before the going down of the sun, because he is poor.*³ You say, I will pay him to morrow; and in the mean time he is dying of hunger. Joseramnus, the son of Lideric, Count of Flanders, in a time of scarcity, deferred to pay for a basket of fruit which he had purchased from a poor woman; in consequence of the delay three of her sons died of hunger. In punishment of this crime the count commanded the head of his son to be cut off. This fact is related by Verme.* We should be ashamed to defraud the poor, whom we are bound to relieve.

2. They also are condemned to hell who do not pay pious legacies left by their ancestors. The poor souls remain in the fire of purgatory, and cannot speak. The rectors or administrators of churches are afraid to say a word, and so the Masses remain unsaid and the aims are not given away. Oh! what calamities fall on many

¹ "Panis egentium vita pauperum est; qui defraudat illum, homo sanguinis est."—*Eccclus.* xxxiv. 25.

² "Ecce merces operariorum, . . . quæ fraudata est a vobis, clamat; et clamor eorum in aures Domini Sabaoth introivit."—*James*, v. 4.

³ "Eadem die reddes ei pretium laboris sui ante solis occasum, quia pauper est."—*Deut.* xxiv. 15.

* Father Engelgrave (*Lux. Evang.* p. 1, embl. 23, § 2) cites the same example as having occurred at Lille, according to Bruzelinus (*Annal. Fland.* an. 955).—ED.

families because they will not pay the money left by their ancestors for pious purposes!

3. They also are guilty of sin who do not pay dues to their pastors. The obligation of paying dues to pastors is imposed by a human and divine law: for they are given to the pastors for their maintenance. The pastor is bound to preach, to administer the sacraments, to assist the dying, and correct sinners, even at the risk of his life. The servant who assists you in your bodily wants has a right to support; and will you refuse to give him who serves your soul the means of living, that he may be able to assist you?

4. What shall we say of *lay administrators*? To them we may apply the text of David: *They eat the sacrifices of the dead . . . and destruction was multiplied among them.*¹ They eat the sacrifices of the dead; they spend in banquets and drunken feasts the revenues left by the dead for Masses, for the marriage portion of poor women, and for other pious works; and what are the consequences? "Destruction is multiplied among them." Destruction follows destruction; fathers, sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, entire families, are damned.

5. "But, Father, I have a family, a wife and children; I am in great want; what can I do?" And will you go to hell for your family and children? Listen to what happened to a father of a family, who had defiled his conscience by taking the property of others in order to assist his children. At death he called for a notary in order to make his will. As soon as the notary arrived, the dying man said: "Write the following bequests: I leave my soul to the devil." The family began to exclaim: "O Jesus, Jesus, the poor man is delirious!" He replied: "I am not delirious, I am not delirious; notary, write: I leave my soul to the devils, that they may carry

¹ "Comederunt sacrificia mortuorum, . . . et multiplicata est in eis ruina."—*Ps. cv. 28.*

it to hell, in punishment of the thefts I have committed. I also leave to the devils the soul of my wife, who encouraged me to steal, that she might indulge her vanity. I also leave to the devils my children, who have been the cause of my thefts." The confessor who heard his confession during life, and who was then assisting him, exhorted him not to despair, but to have confidence in God. But the dying man concluded his will, saying: "I also leave to the devils my confessor, because during life he always absolved me, and did not oblige me to make restitution."

6. *Usury* also is a theft. The man who lends money on the condition of (usurious) interest being paid to him annually, or even every month, commits a true theft. "But he pays the interest willingly." He pays willingly, but he *must* pay. What do you lose by lending that sum to your neighbor? If you do lose anything, if you could be sure of gaining something by using the money yourself, then you can make the borrower make up for your loss; this is fair interest; but then you must explain all this to him if you do exact interest. But if you lose nothing by it, what right have you to charge anything? This is a real theft. "Lend, hoping for nothing thereby," says the Gospel. Hoping for nothing thereby; that is, you ought to lend for kindness and charity, not for gain. I will say no more, for I cannot now discuss the many questions connected with usury; for I am giving an instruction, not a lecture on moral theology. I only admonish each of you, whenever doubts arise, not to resolve them by yourself,—for passion will make you see things with a jaundiced eye, but to consult a confessor or other learned man, and to act according to the advice received.* Let public usurers remember that by a de-

* At the present time money with us is not a mere medium of private exchange for the purposes of housekeeping; it is a medium of com-

creed of the Council of Lateran¹ they are excommunicated, forbidden to receive the body of Christ, and after death are to be deprived of Christian burial. Let it also be remembered that sometimes usury is not open, but is palliated by being taken under some other pretext; all gain received must be restored. Alas! how many poor souls go to hell on account of this accursed usury! If any one feel a scruple on this point, let him confess it immediately, and apply a remedy, now that he has time; otherwise he will go to hell, where he will be no longer able to repair the evil. A virtuous young man became a monk; while in the monastery he saw his father and brother damned for the usury which they had practised, and heard one of them cursing the other. The afflicted monk asked if he could give them any relief. They answered: "No; for in hell there is no redemption."

7. They also are guilty of sin who unjustly injure the property of another, and are as much bound to make restitution as if they had committed theft, as soon as they are aware of the injury they have done. He also is guilty of sin, and bound to restitution, who hinders another to obtain what is due to him in justice; or who, by fraudulent means, by force, or by calumnies, hinders a person from getting a present or legacy, which he would probably have obtained, though it could not be said to be due to him in justice.

8. They, too, are all guilty of sin, and obliged to res-

¹ *Clem.* l. 5, tit. 5.

mercial exchange. It represents not use value, but market value. Formerly Church and State together enacted a number of laws to restrain the taking of interest. At this day the State has repealed those laws, and the Church has officially signified that she no longer insists on them. Still she maintains dogmatically that there is such a sin as usury, and what it is, as defined in the Fifth Council of the Lateran. See *Moral Philosophy*, article *Usury*, page 255, by Rev. Joseph Rickaby, S. J.—Ed.

titution who co-operate in theft, or in an injury to a neighbor, by command, by counsel, or by not preventing the injury when they are able to do so. Thus a servant charged with the care of any part of his master's property is bound to make restitution, if when able he does not prevent it from being injured. Servants who do not prevent an injury being done to their master, not by one of their fellow-servants, but by a stranger, are also obliged to make restitution; but others who can, with a trifling inconvenience to themselves, prevent an injury to a neighbor, are not bound to restitution; because, though they sin grievously against charity, they do not violate justice.

9. They also are guilty of theft who accidentally find the property of another and neglect to return it to the owner, when they know him, or who, when they do not know the owner, neglect to make a diligent search in order to find him. Goods accidentally found should be preserved as long as there remains a hope of finding the owner; and I add, that when the thing found is of great value, such as a costly ornament, a valuable ring, a purse containing a large sum of money, there is always reason to hope that the owner will be found, if not immediately, at least in the course of time; for he will take care to publish the loss in every place through which he has passed; and thus in the course of time the owner of the article lost will be ascertained.

10. They who purchase stolen goods are also guilty of sin. It is useless to say: "If I had not purchased them, another would have bought them." It is related by Verme, that a soldier stole a calf from a poor woman. With tears in her eyes, she said to the soldier: "Why will you take this calf?" The soldier replied: "If I do not take it, another will steal it." So he carried off the calf. After a time the soldier was killed, and a person saw him tormented in hell, with a devil at his side who

was scourging him cruelly. The miserable man was crying out: "Why do you scourge me?" The devil answered: "If you are not scourged by me, you will be scourged by another." Do not, then, allow yourself to be deceived by the devil; do not say: "If I do not take this article, it will be taken by another." If another take it, he will be damned; if you take it, you will be damned. But you will say: "I have paid for it." But do you not know that it is stolen property? How, then, can you keep it? You have done wrong in buying it; you must now restore it.

11. They also are guilty of theft who commit fraud or injustice in buying or selling, or who do not stand to their bargains or contracts. (The catechist may here go through the different trades, and show what frauds are usually committed in each; but he should be careful not to talk of things that do not occur, or are not known in the place where he is giving instruction.) It is a theft when *tailors* cut more cloth than is wanted, or make people purchase an unnecessary quantity, and afterwards keep what is left, or who retain the remnants of cloth, or who charge more than they pay for the cloth that they purchase for others. Or when *shoemakers* glue together two pieces of leather for the sole, to make it look thicker, or make the undersoles of felt or brown paper; or use rotten old leather which they bring into shape with their pincers and hammer. *Carpenters* who varnish over an unsound place in the wood, or stop it up with putty, or make the person buy more nails than they use. *Shopkeepers*, who use light weights or scanty measures. *Neither shall there be in thy house, says the Lord, a greater bushel and a less; . . . for the Lord thy God abhorreth him that doth these things.*¹ They who use light weights and scanty measures are an abomination

¹ "Abominatur enim Dominus Deus tuus eum qui facit hæc."—*Deut.* xxv. 16.

to the Lord. Some one may inquire, if a shopkeeper who has for a long time given less than the just weight or measure to others is bound to make restitution, how is he to do so, after having defrauded so many different persons? The best way to make restitution, without injury to his reputation, is to give a little more than the just weight or measure to all who come from the quarter in which the persons whom he defrauded live. Let us proceed. *Cloth carders* are bound to adhere literally to their bargain. It is a theft for *publicans* to mix water with wine, and then demand the price of pure wine, or to make others pay for more wine or spirits than they get. Persons who mix water or earth with the coals which they sell, or who deceive the purchaser in weighing the coals. Persons who spin flax or silk, and damp it to make it weigh heavier, or mix soap or sand with it. Persons who sell goods for others, and keep a part of the price received; the entire price belongs to the owner of the goods; the sellers can retain only the wages of their labor. Then, are all these condemned to hell? Who doubts this? He who has received the property of another, and does not restore it, is damned. Oh! do you who are engaged in business or trade wish to make great profit? Always tell the truth. Cesarius¹ relates that two merchants who had always to accuse themselves in confession of having told lies in their dealings with others, were always in poverty. The confessor said to them: "Do not tell any more lies, and I promise you that you shall realize great profit." They obeyed; and his words were verified. Having the truth always in their mouth, they obtained the character of honest men; thus they gained more in one year by the truth than they had gained in ten years by lies. Let us now proceed to speak of restitution.

¹ *Mirac.* l. 3, c. 37.

II.

Restitution.

I. WHAT OBLIGATION IS THERE OF MAKING RESTITUTION?

Some, who have taken away the property of another, regard restitution, when imposed by a confessor, as a very severe penance. But it is not a penance: it is an obligation from which neither the confessor, nor the bishop, nor the Pope can dispense. *Render, therefore*, says St. Paul, *to all men their dues.*¹ The goods of others must be restored, or, if they be consumed, their value must be given to the owner; and if he is dead, the restitution must be made to his heirs. If the owner cannot be found, or if he have no heir, the value must be given to the poor, or must be employed in procuring Masses for the soul of the owner.

2. CAN ONE DEFER MAKING RESTITUTION?

It is also necessary to make restitution immediately. Some keep the property of others, and wish to make restitution, but say: "When I am dying, then I will restore it." So you would make restitution when you have no longer any use for the property—when you cannot take it with you! When a person is able to make restitution, and defers it for a notable time, he is guilty of mortal sin, though he should have the intention of making the restitution. He is excused from mortal sin if he defers the restitution for a short time—for ten or fifteen days, but not longer. And should his creditor suffer a loss on account of this short delay, he is bound to repair the loss; for it is certain that a thief is obliged to compensate the owner for all the damage done him by the theft. He who is able to make restitution, and will not make it immediately, cannot be absolved. For most persons find it very difficult to make restitution;

¹ "Reddite ergo omnibus debita."—*Rom.* xiii. 7.

and therefore he who, though able, does not make it immediately, is in danger of not making it at all.

A gentleman stole and kept a hundred pieces of gold. He went to confession, and was required by his confessor to make restitution, and perhaps under pain of being refused absolution. "Father," said he to the confessor, "I will make restitution as soon as I return home." But he did not fulfil his promise; he frequently made similar promises, but afterwards violated them. In the end the confessor said to him: "If you wish to receive absolution, go home and bring me the stolen property; otherwise I will not absolve you." He went home and brought back the money. The confessor said to him: "Give it to me." He replied: "Father, you must take it yourself; I will not give it you." Thus he made restitution. From this fact, brethren, you may learn how improbable it is that a person who has been absolved before he has made restitution will afterwards restore what belongs to others. It is certain that, unless he make restitution, he can never obtain pardon. "The sin," says St. Augustine, "is not remitted unless the property taken away is restored."¹ Hence, St. Antonine² has justly said that no sin is more dangerous to the soul than the sin of theft. The reason is that in other sins it is enough for the sinner to repent; but in theft the sinner cannot be pardoned without making restitution, if he is able to make it, although he should perform all possible penances.

Miserable the man who keeps in his hands the property of others! The following fact is vouched for by several authors: A usurer was obliged, in his last illness, to restore all that he was possessed of. The sick man con-

¹ "Non remittitur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum."—*Ad Maced. Edit. Ben. Ep.* 153, n. 20.

² "Nullum peccatum periculosius furto. In aliis, homo dolendo salvatur; de isto, oportet ut etiam satisfaciatur."

signed to four persons all the money and goods that he had unjustly acquired that they might restore them to the lawful owners. After having retired to his convent, the confessor, while at prayer, saw a devil weeping because he had lost the soul of the usurer, and afterwards heard another devil saying to the devil that was weeping: "What a fool you are to weep! Do you not see that though you have lost one soul you have gained four? Attend to these four; they will easily become yours."

I repeat, miserable the man who keeps the property of another! for he will scarcely make restitution, and will probably be damned. And will he ever, even in this life, have comfort in the enjoyment of the goods of others? No; he will be continually tortured by remorse of conscience. A robber stole an ox from St. Medard; the ox had a bell suspended from its neck. The robber brought the ox to his house; and, though the ox remained motionless, the bell never ceased to ring. The night came; fearing that he should be discovered, the robber stuffed the bell with hay; but it still continued to ring. What did he then do? He took the bell off the ox, and shut it up in a box; but the bell did not cease to ring; then he buried it, but all to no purpose. At last he was thoroughly frightened, and took the ox and restored it to St. Medard, and the ringing ceased. Let us now make the application to ourselves. He who keeps the goods of another has within himself a bell which rings unceasingly, and says to him: "Unless you make restitution, you shall be damned." How can you expect peace with your conscience continually troubling you?

3. WHAT MUST HE DO THAT HAS NOT THE MEANS TO MAKE RESTITUTION?

"But, Father, I cannot make restitution." He who is really unable to make any restitution because he has a

bare subsistence from day to day for himself and his family is excused from sin. For him it will be enough to have the intention of restoring the ill-gotten goods as soon as he shall be able, and of restoring as much as it shall be in his power to restore. If a person is unable to restore all that belongs to his neighbor, he is bound to restore at least as much as he is able, by saving, for example, a few pence every week. But you say: "I shall never be able to restore all I owe." No matter; it is enough for you to restore as much as you can.*

What shall we say of the man who is able to make restitution, and says: "If I make restitution, what will become of my children?" And if you go to hell, what will become of you? In the life of the Venerable Father Louis la Nuza, a celebrated missionary in Sicily, who died in 1656, we read that he once heard the confession of a gentleman laboring under a serious malady, who possessed the property of others to a large amount. He exhorted him to make restitution. But the rich man answered: "If I make restitution my son will not be able to live like his equals." Father Louis entreated and conjured him not to expose his soul to certain damnation; but the gentleman remained obstinate; so he went away. On the following morning, as he was walking on a solitary road, he met four negroes conducting a man bound on a beast of burden. He asked where they were carrying the miserable man. They answered: "To the fire." The Father looked at the man, and discovered that he was the person who obstinately refused

* Let us not forget that if material means are wanting to us, we can always, and should always, have recourse to God with confidence, by imploring his mercy and by offering him our good works, or at least our good will with the merits of Jesus Christ. God who is our Father, a Father infinitely rich and infinitely good, will deign without doubt to supply our indigence, either by procuring for us what is wanting, or by himself repairing all our wrongs done to our neighbors, living or dead. Let us remember the prodigal son.— ED.

to make restitution. He afterwards went into the city, and was informed that the unhappy gentleman was dead. This is the end of those who refuse to make restitution, in order to leave their children in affluence.

What an excess of folly, to go to hell for the sake of leaving your children comfortable! If you go to hell, will your children release you? Listen to a story related by Peter de Paludo. A certain father of a family, through fear of leaving his children in poverty, refused to make restitution. To bring him to a sense of his folly, his confessor had recourse to the following ingenious artifice. If, said he to the sick man, you wish to recover from your infirmity, call one of your children, and make him anoint your body with a little fat extracted from his own flesh by fire. The sick man had three sons; but none of them would submit to suffer such a torment for the recovery of his father. Then the father became sensible of his folly, and said: "So you will not bear a little fire, to save me from death; and must I go to hell, to burn for eternity, in order that you may live in greater comfort? I should be a madman if I did so." He then restored all that he owed.

4. CAN ONE MAKE RESTITUTION BY HAVING MASSES SAID?

"And if I have Masses said for the sum which I owe, will not that be sufficient?" No; to employ the sum which is due in procuring Masses, the obligation of restitution to the owner will forever remain. But you may say: "I have given the money for Masses." But the owner wants his property, which you have taken. The only case in which it is lawful to expend the money in procuring Masses, or in alms for the soul of the owner, is when he is unknown, and when it is impossible to find him.

But there are few who make restitution. This we see by experience. How many thefts are committed every

day, but how few restitutions! According to the common saying: "Dressed meat does not return to the market." Verme tells us that a hermit once had a vision of Lucifer on a throne, and a devil who had just come from the earth standing before him: "Where have you been all this time?" asked Satan. "I have been waiting to tempt a thief not to make restitution," answered the devil. "Oh," said Satan, "give this fool a flogging. Don't you know, fool, that the man who has taken another's property never makes restitution? And you have been losing all this time in tempting him not to make restitution! Quick, the flogging!" Lucifer was right: "Cooked meat does not come back to market."

5. CONCLUSION.

Let us conclude the instruction on this precept.

He who is aware of having in his possession the property of another, must examine whether he has got it in bad faith or in good faith. If he has received it in good faith,—that is, through inculpable ignorance that it was the property of another,—and has it still in his possession, he is certainly bound to restore it. If, during his good faith, he consumed it, he is obliged to restore as much as he is made richer by the consumption of it; that is, what has been spared and still remains of his own property, which would have been spent, had he not used what belonged to another.

If, during his good faith, or sincere belief that the goods of another in his possession were his own, he consumed them all, and is not made richer by the use of them, he is not bound to any restitution. But if he has, in bad faith, or culpably, got possession of the property of another, he is bound to restore what he has taken, and to indemnify the owner for all the losses caused, even accidentally, by his injustice. To this he is bound, if he wishes to be saved. If he is unwilling to make

restitution, and wishes to be damned, he has his choice; but let him remember that he will have to repent, not only in the next life in hell, but also in this life.

The prophet Zachary says, that a malediction falls on the house into which a neighbor's property enters. *This is the curse that goeth over the face of the earth, . . . it shall come to the house of the thief, . . . and shall consume it.*¹ Hence, St. Gregory Nazianzen says: He who possesses wealth unjustly, shall lose even his own riches.² The goods of others are a fire that consumes themselves and the goods of the possessor. Such are the effects of the divine malediction. Let us, then, says St. Gregory,³ possess the goods that the Lord sends us; but let us not allow ourselves to be possessed by the goods of this earth. Some become the slaves of earthly goods to such a degree that for them they voluntarily condemn themselves to hell. O misery! how many poor souls go to hell on account of other men's property!

How differently does the wise man act who loves his soul better than other people's goods! Henry, King of Castile, left his son the heir to his kingdom; but because the son was only a child, he entrusted the government to his brother. The brother governed the kingdom with so much rectitude, that the people wished him to assume the absolute dominion of the kingdom. What did he do? He one day appeared before the people with his infant nephew in his arms, and said that the kingdom belonged to the child, and that he would spend his blood and his life in order to secure it for him. What a noble act, to renounce a kingdom rather than offend God! But God amply rewarded his fidelity; for he brought him to the throne of Aragon, where he reigned

¹ "Hæc est maledictio quæ egreditur super faciem omnis terræ; . . . et veniet ad domum furis, . . . et consumet eam."—*Zach.* v. 3.

² "Qui opes inique possidet, etiam opes suas amittet."

³ "Terrena res possideatur, non possideat."

in peace, and his family was replenished with abundance of blessings.

St. Augustine relates an act of similar generosity. In the city of Milan a poor man found a purse containing two hundred pounds. He was told that since the owner was not known he might keep the money. But he feared God, and put up along the public road many notices, stating that he had found the purse. The owner appeared, and having accurately described the lost property, received the purse from the poor man. He offered the poor man twenty pounds as a reward, but he refused to accept them. The owner then entreated him to take ten or at least five pounds. But the poor man refused, saying that they all belonged to the owner. The owner, as if angry, threw the purse at the feet of the poor man, saying: "Since you will take nothing from me, I will take nothing from you." The poor man was thus forced to accept the offer; but he did not retain the money. He went instantly and distributed it among the other poor of the city.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness.”¹

I. WHAT DOES THIS COMMANDMENT FORBID IN THE FIRST PLACE?

THE chief thing forbidden in this commandment is to give false testimony in a court of justice. When you are interrogated by a legitimate judge, you are bound to tell the truth; and if you do not disclose it, and say that you know nothing about it, you are guilty of sin. But some one may say: “I have concealed the truth that my neighbor might not be injured.” This excuse is not sufficient, as I have already said,² in treating of the second commandment. When asked by lawful authority, you are bound to tell what you know, though it should be the cause of a loss to your neighbor. This is a just loss; for the public good requires that malefactors should be punished. But they cannot be punished if witnesses do not depose to what they know.

He, however, commits a more grievous sin who in a court of justice attests a falsehood detrimental to his neighbor. A lie is always sinful, though it should be told in jest, or even for a useful purpose; even though it be in order to escape death. The author of the “Parish Priest’s Companion” relates that the Emperor Maximian sent his officers to take St. Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedia, and put him in prison. The soldiers who

¹ “Non loqueris, contra proximum tuum, falsum testimonium.”—*Exod.* xx. 16.

² Page 415.

were in search of him went by chance to the saint's own house to get something to eat. St. Anthimus gave them what they required, and treated them kindly. Afterwards they asked him where they could find Anthimus the bishop. The saint answered: "I am the very person; I am Anthimus." The soldiers, through gratitude, said: "We will not take you to the emperor; we will say that we have not been able to find you." The saint replied: "No, my children, I do not wish you to be guilty of a lie; I would rather die than cause you to tell a lie." He then went with them to the emperor.

A lie, then, is always a sin. To tell a lie which is not injurious to a neighbor is only a venial sin; but when it does a grievous injury to another, it is a mortal sin. It is of such lies that we are to understand the text of Scripture, *The mouth that believeth, killeth the soul.*¹ A lie told before a judge is a double mortal sin; and when accompanied with an oath, as is always the case in courts of justice, it contains the additional guilt of sacrilege, on account of the false oath, which is a most grievous sin, and a reserved sin. Tenesius, the legislator, ordained that an executioner should stand at the right hand of the judge, with an axe in his hand, to put to death any one that perjured himself in judgment. *Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment, . . . and all the people shall say, Amen.*² Eusebius³ relates that three witnesses made false accusations before a judge against Narcissus the bishop. The first said: "If the charge is not true, I am willing to be burnt alive." The second said: "I am satisfied to die of the jaundice." The third said: "I am willing to be deprived of sight." In a little time the three imprecations were verified. One became

¹ "Os autem quod mentitur, occidit animam."—*Wis.* i. 11.

² "Maledictus, qui pervertit iudicium."—*Deut.* xxvii. 19.

³ "*Hist.* l. 6, c. 9.

blind, another died of jaundice, and the third was reduced to ashes by lightning.

2. WHAT DOES THIS COMMANDMENT FORBID IN THE SECOND PLACE?

This commandment forbids detraction. This, too, is a very common sin. You will, says St. Jerome, find few persons who do not willingly censure the conduct of others.¹ Find me a man, says St. James, who does not sin with the tongue, and I will admit that he is a saint. *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.*² When the tongue of a sick man is black, we may infer that he is in danger. The tongue is often a better index than the pulse of the malignity of disease: sometimes the pulse does not show symptoms of high fever; but when the tongue is black and foul, it is (as Hippocrates says) a sign of the approach of death. Many come to the church, frequently hear Mass, and say the Rosary; but their tongue, black with the sin of detraction, gives a token of eternal death. St. Bernard says that detraction is a three-edged sword, which, with a single stroke, inflicts three wounds: it wounds the detractor with sin, the person detracted by the loss of his character, and it wounds those who listen to it; for he who listens to detraction, and shows that it is pleasing to him, is also guilty of sin.

3. WHAT IS DETRACTION?

Let us now explain what this sin is. Detraction is twofold: *calumny* and *defamation*.

1. *Calumny* consists in telling a falsehood injurious to a neighbor, or in aggravating his guilt. When grievously injurious to another, it is a mortal sin, and the

¹ "Raro invenies, qui non libenter reprehendat vitam alienam."—*Epist. ad Celant.*

² "Si quis in verbo non offendit, hic perfectus est vir."—*James, iii. 2,*

author of it is bound to restore the character of his neighbor.

2. *Defamation* consists in telling a secret sin of another to those who are ignorant of it; this, too, when grievous, is a mortal sin, because the person defamed, as long as his sin is occult, retains his good name; you rob him of it by revealing his sin, and when he has lost his reputation, he can no longer show himself in the world.

4. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF SINNING BY DETRACTION?

There are various ways of taking away the reputation of another.

1. By open defamation—by saying: *Such a person has been guilty of such a sin, etc.*

2. By indirect defamation; by saying, for example: *Such a man goes frequently to confession; but I . . . had better not say.* It is sometimes less injurious to tell the sin openly, for the insinuation conveyed by that little *but* will make persons think that the evil is greater than it is in reality.

3. By censuring the motive of a person's actions. Some cannot find fault with their neighbor's conduct, because it is blameless. What, then, do they do? They censure his motive or intention. They say: *He has acted thus in order to deceive others.*

4. By signs. He who is guilty of this kind of detraction is called in Scripture *a man full of tongue.*¹ *A man full of tongue;* that is, a man who makes all his limbs into tongues, who detracts his neighbor not only with the tongue, but also with the hands, with the feet, and with the eyes. A young man of this character, who could not speak without calumniating his neighbor, was punished in a terrible way for his sin. He became mad, and bit off his tongue, the smell of his breath became intolerable, and so he died. Would to God that there

¹ "Vir linguosus."—Ps. cxxxix. 12.

were not many addicted to this vice! *The poison of asps is under their lips.*¹ Their mouth appears to be full of poison, so that they cannot speak without destroying the reputation, now of this man, now of that one.

5. Some are in the habit of listening and of afterwards relating what they have heard. They hear a person speak ill of another, and instantly go to the other and tell what they have heard. These are called *backbiters*, and are accursed by God, because they perform the office of the devil: they disturb the peace of families, of entire towns, and are the cause of so much hatred and of so many quarrels. Of this vice I have already spoken in the instruction on the precept of charity.²

Take heed, my dear Christians, how you speak; . . . be careful not to allow your tongue to send you to hell. In *The Mirror of Examples* it is related that one of the damned was seen, in a vision, biting and gnawing his ulcerated and scorched tongue, and saying: "This accursed tongue has sent me to hell."

When a person's sin is public, to tell it, without a just cause, to one who is ignorant of it, is not a mortal sin, but it is a venial sin against charity; but remember that it is a mortal sin to reveal a fact that was once notorious but is now occult; because the person who had lost his reputation has now regained it.

5. HOW ARE WE TO REPAIR THE EVIL CAUSED BY DETRACTION?

Let us now come to the remedies. He who has injured the character of another must not only confess the sin, but must also restore the good name that he has taken away. In this there is great difficulty: it is easy to take away, but most difficult to restore, a good name.

When the defamation is effected by falsehood, the

¹ "Venenum aspidum sub labiis eorum."—*Ps.* xiii. 3.

² Page 398.

author of it is obliged to retract his calumny in the presence of all those before whom it was uttered; but this is the difficulty. Menochius relates that a nobleman had defamed a married lady, and confessed his sin to a Dominican friar, who told him: "You must retract what you have said." The nobleman replied: "I cannot do that; for I cannot destroy my own reputation." The confessor replied, he could not give him absolution on any other condition; but the obstinate man again declared that he *could* not do so. The friar at last, seeing that he was only wasting his time, said to him: "Go away: you are damned," and turned his back upon him.

If the sin were true, but hidden, there is also, as I have already said,¹ an obligation of restoring the injured character; and in this there is still greater difficulty; for, if the person really committed the sin, it cannot be said that he was innocent of it, for that would be a lie, and it is never lawful to tell a lie. What, then, is to be done? The detractor must use some other and more convenient means, some equivocation, for instance, such as: "It was only a joke what I said of that man—it was all out of my own head." Sometimes it is better to speak well of the person whom you have calumniated without making any allusion to the sin you have told of him, particularly when you have reason to presume that this would be more pleasing to him than to revive the remembrance of his fault.

It is, however, necessary to know that it is not detraction, nor a sin, to tell a fault of another to his Superiors, parents, guardians, or masters, that they may prevent evil to the public, or to an innocent person, or to the delinquent himself. For example, if a girl is familiar with a young man, or if a young man goes to a house of bad character, and you make it known to the father that he may apply a remedy, you are not guilty of sin.

¹ Page 503.

On the contrary, you are obliged to do this when it can be done without danger of any great harm to yourself. Nor is this, as I have said, detraction. St. Thomas¹ says that to speak ill of another is sinful when it is done to blacken his character, but not when it is done to prevent his sin or injury.

6. IS IT ALSO A SIN TO LISTEN TO DETRACTION?

I said that detraction is sinful. But is it a sin to listen to detraction? A very great sin if you encourage the detraction, or if you take pleasure in it and show you are pleased with it. But if a person does not show himself pleased with the detraction, but through a certain fear neglects to reprove the detractor, he is not, according to St. Thomas,² guilty of a mortal sin, because he is not sure that his correction will have the effect of preventing the detraction. But this is to be understood only of those who are not Superiors; for the Superior of a person who is guilty of detraction is always obliged to correct him and to stop the detraction. When a person hears detraction going on, and perceives that the matter is important and secret, he should either correct the detraction, or endeavor to change the subject of conversation, or go away, or at least show by his countenance that he is displeased with the detraction.

7. WHAT DOES THIS COMMANDMENT FORBID IN THE THIRD PLACE?

This commandment forbids *contumely*. Contumely is an insult offered to a person in his presence. Detraction destroys the character of a neighbor; contumely takes away his honor. When contumely contains defamatory matter, it is a double sin, because it injures the honor as well as the good name of the neighbor.

Hence, as there is an obligation of restoring a neighbor's reputation, so there is also an obligation of repair-

¹ 2, 2, q. 73, a 2.

² *Ibid.* a. 4.

ing the injury done to his honor by asking pardon, or by some other act of humility towards him.

When contumely is offered (and it may be offered either by acts or by words) in the presence of others, the reparation must be made before the same persons.

To open another's letter is a species of contumely, and therefore it is always a sin, unless there is a presumption that the person who sends the letter or the person to whom it is sent is not unwilling that it be read.

It is also a sin to disclose, without a just cause, a secret which is entrusted to you or which you promise to keep. With regard to the just causes of revealing a secret, ask your confessor and follow his advice.

Is it a sin to entertain rash judgment? Yes; to judge rashly—a very great sin when the judgment is on an important matter, and really *rash*, that is, made without any reason, without certain grounds. But when there is any foundation for judging so, it is not a sin. To suspect evil of another without grounds is a venial sin; it scarcely amounts to a mortal sin unless when a person voluntarily and without any grounds suspects a neighbor of a most grievous sin. I have said *without any reason*; for when there is some foundation for the suspicion there is no sin. However, the virtuous always think well and the wicked think badly of their neighbors. *The fool . . . whereas he himself is a fool, esteemeth all men fools.*¹

We have treated of the eighth commandment; the ninth and the tenth which forbid Christians to covet the goods and the wife of another, remain to be explained. But in the sixth commandment we have spoken of the sin of impurity, and in the seventh of the sin of theft. By the ninth and the tenth are forbidden

¹ "Stultus ambulans, cum ipse insipiens sit, omnes stultos æstimat."
—*Eccles. x. 3.*

only the desires of these sins.* Hence it is sufficient to say that what it is a sin to do it is also a sin to desire.

I also omit the commandments of the Church, because, in treating the ten commandments, I have explained what is most necessary to be known regarding the commandments of the Church.

* *Non concupisces domum proximi tui, nec desiderabis uxorem ejus, . . . nec omnia quæ illius sunt*—"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house: neither shalt thou desire his wife . . . nor anything that he has."—*Exod. xx. 17.*

The six principal commandments of the Church are expressed in the following verses:

1. Sundays and holy days observe
As feasts of obligation;
Attend at holy Mass, and keep
From servile occupation.
2. Lent, Ember-days, and Vigils, fast,
With one meal and collation.
3. On Friday, meat thou must not eat,
For sake of Christ's dear Passion.
4. Once in the year at least confess
With due examination.
At Easter-time receive thy Lord
With thanks and adoration.
5. In Lent or Advent marry not
With pomp and ostentation;
Wed before witnesses, and seek
The Church's approbation.
6. The worship of the Church maintain
With generous contribution.

The first of these commandments, which ordains the hearing of Mass and abstaining from servile work on Sundays and feast days of obligation, is found explained in Chapter III., page 419. The second and the third concerning fasting and abstinence are also explained at the end of Chapter III., page 433. The fourth, about Confession and Communion, belongs to Part II., Chapters IV. and V.—ED.

PART II.

Instructions on the Holy Sacraments.

CHAPTER I.

THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL.

JESUS CHRIST himself instituted the sacraments, as means to make us partakers of his merits. The sacraments, therefore, are so many sacred channels, through which Jesus Christ communicates his graces, which are the fruits of his Passion.

It is necessary to know that every sacrament confers two kinds of grace, namely, *sanctifying* grace and *sacramental* grace. *Sanctifying* or *habitual* grace is that which sanctifies the soul that receives the sacrament, provided it be received with the requisite dispositions. *Sacramental* grace is that which gives the soul a special aid to obtain the end for which each sacrament was instituted. Thus, Baptism confers a special grace to wash the soul and cleanse it from sin. Confirmation gives strength to confess the faith of Jesus Christ. The Eucharist preserves and augments in us the divine grace, which is the spiritual life of the soul. Penance enables us to recover the grace that we have lost. Extreme Unction gives strength to resist at death the assaults of hell. Orders enable the ministers of the Church to fulfil their obligations. Finally, Matrimony confers on husband and wife

help to bear the burdens of the married state, and to bring up their children in virtue.

Three of these sacraments, namely, Baptism, Confirmation, and Orders, have the special effect of impressing on the soul a certain character or spiritual mark which can never be effaced. Hence these three sacraments can be received only once; but the others may be received several times.*

My principal object is to speak of the sacrament of penance that each one may be well acquainted with the manner of confessing his sins; however, I will say a few words on the other sacraments, that each person may know their essence, their effects, and the dispositions necessary for receiving them.

* Let us here add that the two sacraments, namely: Baptism and Penance, are commonly called the *sacraments of the dead*, because they were instituted to restore the life of grace to those that are deprived of it by sin. The five other sacraments are called the *sacraments of the living*, because they were instituted for those that possess the life of grace.—ED.

CHAPTER II.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

LET us briefly touch on four points regarding Baptism: its *necessity*, its *effects*, its *minister*, and *what is required for it*.

1. With regard to its *necessity*, it should be known that Baptism is not only the first but also the most necessary of all the sacraments. Without Baptism no one can enter heaven. *Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*¹ It is also the most necessary, inasmuch as no one is capable of receiving any other sacrament if he has not previously received Baptism. Hence, Baptism is called the gate of all the sacraments. Is it impossible for a person who does not actually receive Baptism to be saved? I answer: He can be saved, if he receives it in desire; that is, by desiring to be baptized, and by believing in Jesus Christ; as has happened to many who, when unable to receive Baptism actually, have received it in desire. Faith is requisite as a preparation for receiving the grace of Baptism—but not charity; for attrition is sufficient, without contrition.

2. The *effect* of Baptism is to wash the soul and to cleanse it from all sins, as well from original as from actual sins, and to deliver it from all the punishment due to these sins.

3. The *minister* of Baptism is the parish priest, by whom, or by another priest, with his permission, it should be ordinarily administered; however, in case of necessity, when an infant is in danger of death, any

¹ "Nisi quis renatus fuerit denuo, non potest videre regnum Dei."—*John*, iii. 3.

man or woman, even an infidel or heretic, can confer Baptism.

4. Let us now come to what is necessary for Baptism.

With regard to the person to be baptized, if he has attained the use of reason he should have the intention of receiving Baptism, and sorrow for his sins. Some require that this sorrow should amount to contrition; but others more commonly hold that attrition is sufficient; and this is the opinion of St. Thomas: "For a man to prepare himself to receive the graces of baptism, faith is required, but not charity; because attrition preceding it is sufficient; it need not be contrition."¹ We shall explain the nature of contrition and attrition in speaking of confession.² The intention, then, of receiving Baptism is necessary for adults; but the intention of the Church supplies for those who have not attained the use of reason. All infants who, like the Holy Innocents, are put to death from hatred to the faith, are saved through the merits of Jesus Christ.

For Baptism are also required the *matter* and *form*, and the *intention of the minister*. The *matter* is natural water. The *form* consists in the words pronounced by the minister during the triple infusion of water on the head of the person to be baptized; but if the water cannot be poured on the head of the infant, it is sufficient to pour it on the breast or shoulders, or any other part, when it is impossible to pour it on some principal part of the body. The words of the form are, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Persons, particularly midwives, must be very careful to remember not to leave out the conjunction *and*; hence it would not then be sufficient to

¹ "Ad hoc quod homo se præparet ad gratiam in Baptismo percipiendam, præexigitur fides, sed non charitas, quia sufficit attritio præcedens, etsi non sit contritio."—*In Sent.* 4, d. 6, q. 1, a. 3, sol. 1, ad 5.

² Chap. V., § 2.

say, "In the name of the Father, of the Son, of the Holy Ghost." You must say, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The minister must have the intention to confer Baptism, or at least to do what the Church does, as the Council of Trent has defined: "If any one says that it is not requisite for ministers while consecrating or administering the sacraments to have an intention at least of doing what the Church does, let him be anathema."¹

Sponsors, that is, a godfather and godmother, are required in Baptism. It is enough to have one; but there cannot be more than two—one male and one female. Sponsors are obliged to attend to the instruction of the child in what regards faith and morals, when there is no one to instruct him; but they are not bound by this obligation in Catholic countries, where parish priests are diligent in the discharge of their duty. It is also necessary to know that the sponsors contract a spiritual relationship with the person baptized, and with his father and mother, so that they cannot be married to any of them.

Baptism should be administered in the Church; to administer it in private houses, without urgent necessity, would be a great sin; such necessity is either the imminent death of the infant, or infamy and scandal that would attach to the mother if the child were taken to the public church. But the children of kings and princes have the privilege of being baptized at home.²

Remember that to defer the baptism of infants for more than ten or eleven days is, according to the more common opinion of theologians, a mortal sin, except there is some extraordinary reason for it.

¹ "Si quis dixerit in ministris, dum Sacramentum conficiunt et conferunt, non requiri intentionem saltem faciendi quod facit Ecclesia, anathema sit."—*Sess. VII. De Sac. in gen. can. II.*

² *Clement, de Baptismo.*

CHAPTER III.

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

CONFIRMATION is one of the seven sacraments, as has been declared by the Council of Trent,¹ and after it the Council of Florence.² It increases the grace received in Baptism.

The *matter* of the sacrament of confirmation is the sacred chrism composed of the oil of olives and balsam, consecrated by the bishop as the Roman Catechism³ teaches, and as Benedict XIV⁴ has declared. The *oil* signifies the abundance of the grace of the Holy Ghost which is poured on the person confirmed; and the *balsam* signifies the odor of virtues, which a Christian strengthened by so great a sacrament ought to send forth.

The *form* of confirmation consists in the words pronounced by the bishop when he anoints the forehead of the person with the sacred chrism, and with the sign of the cross. The words are: *N.* (naming the person to be confirmed) *I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*⁵ A person present answers, *Amen.* Afterwards the bishop strikes the person confirmed lightly on the cheek, to remind him that he should be prepared to suffer every pain and every injury for the sake of Jesus Christ. He then dismisses him, saying: *Pax tecum—Peace be with thee.* At the

¹ *Sess. V. de Confirm. can. 1.*

² *Decr. pro Armen.*

³ *De Confirm. q. 6.*

⁴ *Encycl. 54, § 52.*

⁵ "N., signo te signo Crucis, et confirmo te Chrismate salutis, in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti."

words, "I sign thee with the sign of the cross," the person confirmed is sealed or inscribed with the sign of the cross, as a soldier of Jesus Christ; and by the words, "I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation," he receives the grace of strength to resist the enemies of the faith and the assaults of hell.

He who receives this sacrament should know the mysteries of the holy faith, and should be in the state of grace; otherwise he is guilty of sacrilege. Hence the person who is to be confirmed would do well to go to confession and Communion before he receives confirmation. In ancient times confirmation was given to infants; but Benedict XIV. in his Constitution 129, *Eo quamvis*, of the year 1745, has declared that at present it should be given only to those that have attained the use of reason, at any rate not before the age of seven years, as the Roman Catechism¹ teaches. However, the same Pontiff² in another place admits, with other theologians, that it may be given infants when there is an urgent cause; as, for example, when the child is in danger of death, or when the bishop is about to be absent for a considerable time from the diocese.

There was once a question raised, whether all Christians were bound under grievous sin to receive the sacrament of confirmation, or whether the obligation extended only to those that were destined for holy Orders. But it is now decided that all are bound, as appears from the following words of Benedict XIV.: "The faithful are to be admonished by the Ordinaries of the different places, that they are guilty of grievous sin, if, when they have the opportunity, they refuse or neglect to come to be confirmed."³

¹ *De Confirm.* q. 14.

² *De Syn.* l. 7, c. 10, n. 5.

³ "Monendi sunt ab Ordinariis locorum, eos gravis peccati reatu teneri, si, cum possunt ad Confirmationem accedere, illam renuunt ac negligunt."—*Const. Etsi pastoralis*, § 3, n. 4.

In receiving this sacrament, it is commanded, under pain of grievous sin, that there be a sponsor;* but there can be only one, who must, under penalty of mortal sin, have received confirmation, and must be of the same sex as the person confirmed. While the sacrament is conferred, the sponsor should keep his right hand on the right shoulder of the person who receives the sacrament. This sponsor also contracts a spiritual relationship in the same manner as sponsors for Baptism. It should be known that monks and nuns are forbidden to act as sponsors.

To understand the great efficacy of this sacrament in imparting spiritual strength to the faithful, it is enough to relate one fact, vouched for by St. Gregory Nazianzen and Prudentius. Julian the Apostate wished one day to offer sacrifice to his false gods, and had everything prepared; but at the moment they wished to offer the sacrifice, the knives would not pierce the victims, the fire was instantly extinguished, and the ministers became immovable as a rock. The sacrificing priest said, "There must be some one present who has been baptized or confirmed." The emperor asked if there were any such person present in the assembly, and then a young man, who had received confirmation a little before, came forward and said boldly: "Yes, sir, I have been confirmed, and therefore I have besought my God to prevent the impiety of the sacrifice, and he has heard my prayer." Julian was struck with astonishment, and, covered with confusion by the prodigy, he gave up the sacrifice, and withdrew from the temple.

* This having been omitted in some dioceses, the second Plenary Council of Baltimore uses these words: "Episcopi nullum non movebunt lapidem, ut disciplina hujusmodi" (adhibendi scil. Patrinos in Confirmatfone). "Jam in nunnallis harum Provinciarum diocesisibus invecta, ubique introducatur."—A. 253, and p. cxxxix. n. II.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

IN this sacrament Jesus Christ gives us his body and blood under the species or appearances of bread and wine, that by the holy Communion his grace and holy love may be preserved and increased in our souls. We must then believe that in consequence of the words of consecration pronounced by the priest in the Mass, the bread and wine lose their proper substance, and are converted into the body and blood of Jesus Christ; and that nothing remains of the bread and wine but the species or appearances, the color, the taste, and figure; so that it is a dogma of the faith, that the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar contains Jesus Christ, really and entirely, his body, his soul, and divinity.

We must, consequently, believe that Jesus Christ, at the same time that he is in heaven, is also really and entirely in all places upon earth where the consecrated Host is reserved; and that when the most holy Host is divided Jesus Christ is not divided, but remains entire in every separate particle of the Host, as has been declared by the Council of Trent,¹ by the Council of Nice,² and by the Council of Lateran under Innocent III.³

The principal *effect* of this sacrament is to preserve and perfect in us the spiritual life of the soul. As earthly bread nourishes the body, so this heavenly bread nourishes the soul, and makes it advance in

¹ *Sess. XIII.*, can. III.

² *Bellarmin. De Euch.* l. 2, c. 10.

³ *Lat. VI.* iv., cap. 1.

divine love. It also serves, says the Council of Trent,¹ as an antidote to cleanse us from venial and to preserve us from mortal sins. Another effect of this sacrament is resurrection and glorification of our bodies, which we expect at the last judgment; for Jesus Christ says: *He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath life everlasting, and I will raise him up at the last day.*² But the most desirable of all the effects of the holy Communion is, that it unites and makes us one with Jesus Christ. *He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.*³ In order to receive these holy effects, it is necessary to be in the state of grace; he who receives the holy Communion with a conscience laden with mortal sin, receives Jesus Christ, but not his grace; on the contrary, he merits the malediction of Jesus Christ, and, according to the Apostle, he receives the sentence of his own condemnation; because he is guilty of a most enormous sacrilege. *He eateth and drinketh judgment to himself.*⁴

It is related that a person in the state of mortal sin went to Communion, but what was the consequence? The consecrated particle became like a sword and pierced his throat, and the person fell instantly dead at the foot of the altar.

There is a more terrible example related in the "Teresian Chronicles." A girl fell into a sin, which she was ashamed to confess, and afterwards made three sacrilegious Communions. After the third Communion she was suddenly struck dead before the altar. Her coun-

¹ "Antidotum, quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis, et a peccatis mortalibus præservemur."—*Sess. XIII. cap. 2.*

² "Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem, habet vitam æternam; et ego resuscitabo eum in novissimo die."—*John, vi. 55.*

³ "Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo."—*John, vi. 57.*

⁴ "Judicium sibi manducat et bibit."—*I Cor. xi. 29.*

tenance appeared, not black, but full of splendor. All cried out: "A saint! a saint!" and her body was carried in procession through the whole neighborhood. But mark what happened, and tremble at the thought of receiving Communion in mortal sin. An angel appeared to a Teresian Carmelite friar, who was in his cell, during the night on which the body of the unhappy girl lay unburied in the church. The angel conducted the Father to the church, and commanded him to open the mouth of the deceased. He opened her mouth, and found the three Hosts that she had received in the state of sin, and placed them in a ciborium. After the removal of the Hosts her countenance appeared no longer bright and resplendent, but black and horrible.

Let us return to our subject. For a person in the state of mortal sin, if he wishes to receive the body of Christ, it is not enough to make an act of contrition, though this is sufficient for the reception of other sacraments. It is necessary for such a person to go to confession, and to receive absolution, before he approaches the holy Communion. The only case in which a person can communicate after committing mortal sin, without confession and absolution, is, when he forgot the sin until he had come to the altar; in such a case, in order to avoid the scandal that should arise from rising up to go back to confession, it is enough to make an act of contrition; after making an act of contrition, he may receive the holy Communion.

This is the disposition necessary for Communion on the part of the soul. With regard to the disposition of the body, which is necessary for Communion, a person must be fasting from midnight; that is, he must not have taken into the stomach any digestible substance, whether liquid or solid. The sick, when in danger of death, are excepted; for they can receive the most holy viaticum after having broken their fast.

These are dispositions absolutely necessary for Communion. But to communicate with greater fruit, it is necessary to purify the soul from venial sins—at least, from venial sins which are fully deliberate. Hence, tepid souls that habitually commit venial sins have not the dispositions necessary for frequent Communion. At most, they can be permitted to go to Communion once a week, that from the sacrament they may receive strength to avoid mortal sin. But persons who do not commit deliberate venial sins, and have a desire of advancing in divine love, may communicate more frequently, according as their confessor may advise. St. Francis de Sales says that Jesus Christ gives himself to us only through love, and therefore we should receive him only through love. The best disposition, then, for holy Communion is, to receive the holy Eucharist in order to advance in the love of Jesus Christ.

All know that every Christian is bound, under pain of grievous sin, to communicate at least once a year, and so to fulfil his Easter duties: this ought to be done within the time prescribed for the fulfilment of the Paschal precept; and to this all are obliged, under the penalty of being interdicted from entering the Church, and of being deprived of Christian burial after death. Every Christian is also obliged to communicate, and to receive the holy viaticum, whenever he is in danger of death. I say, in *danger*, without waiting till there is no hope of recovery. By waiting so long, the sick man runs the risk of dying without receiving the viaticum, as has happened to many.

The Church, then, has declared that every Christian is bound, under pain of grievous sin, to communicate on two occasions, namely, at Easter, and in danger of death. But it is also necessary to know that a person will scarcely preserve himself in the grace of God, if, like some who are negligent about their eternal salva-

tion he communicates only once a year. This we know by experience; and reason teaches us, that when the soul is a long time without this divine food, it scarcely has strength to resist temptations, and therefore easily falls into sin. The Most Holy Sacrament is called celestial bread; because, as earthly bread supports the life of the body, so this heavenly bread preserves the life of the soul. Therefore, let every Christian communicate at least every eight days, as has been already said; but persons who lead a spiritual life, make mental prayer, and abstain from deliberate venial sins, ought, with the consent of their confessor, to communicate several times in the week. For the rest, who live without much devotion, that they may at least preserve themselves in God's grace, it is advisable to go to Communion every Sunday, or at least every fortnight.

Children, as St. Thomas¹ says, should be obliged to go to Communion as soon as they are capable of understanding the difference between this divine food and earthly bread. Some children are capable of understanding this difference sooner than others. But, ordinarily speaking, the obligation of going to Communion does not begin until after the ninth or tenth year; but their first Communion cannot be deferred beyond the age of twelve, or, at the most, beyond the age of fourteen years. We know that St. Charles Borromeo commanded his parish priests to endeavor to make the children go to Communion as soon as they had attained the age of ten years. And for children, in danger of death, theologians, along with Benedict XIV.² commonly teach that so great an age is not necessary; it is sufficient if they are capable of making their confession.

It is necessary to communicate; but, as has been said, it is necessary to communicate in a state of grace;

¹ P. 3, q. 80, a. 9, ad. 3.

² *De Syn.* l. 7, c. 12, n. 3.

otherwise the Communion will become a poison, or rather a halter to strangle the unworthy communicant. St. Cyprian¹ relates that a Christian woman who, in order to conceal herself, had through fear of the persecution done an action contrary to faith, came to the church, and went to Communion without confessing her sin. But what was the consequence? The sacred Host remained in her throat; the throat instantly swelled in such a manner that she began to tremble from head to foot, and so expired.

¹ *S. de Lapsis.*

CHAPTER V.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

PENANCE is a sacrament in which, by the absolution of a confessor, sins committed after Baptism are remitted. For priests have received from Jesus Christ the power of remitting sins, as appears from the words: *Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*¹ Therefore, the Council of Trent excommunicates all that say that this sacrament has not the power to remit sin. By this sacrament the sinner recovers not only the divine grace, but also the merits of the good works performed in the state of grace, which he had lost by sin. The soul also receives additional strength to resist temptations; for the same Council says that by justification we are renewed in the spirit of our mind.² All these graces we receive through the merits of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

To receive this sacrament, three things are particularly necessary on the part of the penitent: *First*, sorrow for sins committed, together with a purpose or resolution to commit them no more. *Secondly*, an entire confession of all the sins committed. *Thirdly*, the performance of the penance enjoined by the confessor. But, in order to be able to confess all his sins, and to conceive a true sorrow for them, the sinner must first make a diligent examination of his conscience.

¹ "Quorum remisieritis peccata, remittuntur eis; et quorum retinueritis, retenta sunt."—*John*, xx. 23.

² "Renovamur spiritu mentis nostræ."—*Sess.* vi. cap. vii.

I.

Examination of Conscience.

This examination consists in making a diligent search, in order to call to mind the sins committed since the last confession, which was made with the requisite conditions.

In this search many fail by too minute an examination, and many others by not examining enough. The former are the scrupulous; they are always examining their conscience, and are never satisfied; thus they fail in exciting a true sorrow for their sins and a firm purpose of amendment. Moreover, their scruples render the sacrament so odious, that going to confession appears to them like going to be martyred. This examination for confession need not be made with *extreme* diligence; it is enough for the penitent to apply himself with attention, in order to discover all the sins committed since his last confession. This diligence must be proportioned to the conscience of the penitent. If he has been a long time absent from confession, and has fallen into many mortal sins, greater diligence is necessary; less is required if he has been lately at confession, and has committed but few sins. If, after making a diligent search, a person forgets a certain sin, but has a general sorrow for all his sins, the one that he has forgotten in confession is pardoned, and he is only bound to confess it at his next confession. When a confessor tells a scrupulous penitent to make no further examination, and never again to confess what he has now told, the penitent should be silent, and obey the confessor. St. Philip Neri used to say: "Let all who desire to advance in the way of God obey their confessor, who is in the place of God; he who acts thus may be certain that he shall not have to render to God an ac-

count of the actions which he performed through obedience.”¹ And St. John of the Cross said, that “not to trust in what a confessor says, is pride and a want of faith.” The great reason of this is because our Lord said to his ministers: *He that heareth you heareth Me.*²

But would to God that all were scrupulous! Generally, such souls have a tender conscience: let them be obedient, and they are safe. The misfortune is, that the majority of Christians have not many scruples; they commit numberless mortal sins, which they forget; and afterwards they barely confess the sins that occur to them at the moment of confession. Thus it sometimes happens that they do not accuse themselves of half their sins. Confessions made in this manner are fruitless; it would be even better to omit them. A historian, *Nicius Erithræus* or Victor Rossi, relates that a young man, who had usually made his confession in this way, sent for a confessor at the hour of death; but before the confessor arrived, a devil came, and showed the young man a long list of sins omitted in his past confessions, through want of diligence in examining his conscience. The poor young man despaired of salvation, and died without making his confession.

Good Christians make an examination of conscience and an act of contrition every evening. There was a devout monk lying at the point of death; when his Superior came and told him to make his confession, he answered: “Blessed be God! I have for thirty years made an examination of conscience every evening, and have made my confession every day as if I were at the point of death.”

My children, when you are preparing for confession, go to a retired part of the church; first of all, thank God for having waited for you till that moment, and

¹ *Bacci*, l. 1, ch. 20.

² “Qui vos audit, me audit.”—*Luke*, x. 16.

then beg of him to make known to you the number and the grievousness of your sins. Then begin to pass over in your mind the places you have frequented, the persons with whom you have kept company, and the dangerous occasions in which you have been since your last confession. Examine in this manner all the sins committed during that time by thoughts, by words, and by deeds: above all, examine yourself on the sins of omission, particularly if you are the head of a family, a magistrate, or in any similar situation in which persons do not generally accuse themselves of sins of omission. But to make the examination in a more orderly manner, it is better for those who have committed different kinds of sin to examine themselves on the Ten Commandments, and see what commandment they have violated, and whether the violation has been grievous or venial.

He who has had the misfortune of having committed a mortal sin must go to confession immediately; for he may die any moment, and be damned. You may say: "I will go to confession at Easter or Christmas." And how do you know that you will not die suddenly in the mean time? "I hope in God that I shall not!" But should it happen, what must become of you? How many have kept saying, *Hereafter, hereafter*, and are now in hell: because death came upon them, and they were not able to make their confession.

St. Bonaventure¹ relates, in the life of St. Francis, that while the saint was going about and preaching, a gentleman gave him lodging in his house. Moved with gratitude, St. Francis recommended him to God; and the Lord revealed to the saint that the gentleman was in a state of sin, and that his death was at hand. The saint instantly called him, and made him go to confession to a priest, the companion of the saint. Soon afterwards the gentleman sat down to dinner, but before

¹ *Legenda S. Franc.*, c. II.

he could swallow the first mouthful, he was struck down with sudden death.

A similar misfortune befell a sinner who was damned on account of having deferred his confession. Venerable Bede¹ relates that this man, who had been fervent, fell into tepidity and mortal sin, and deferred confession from day to day. He was seized with a dangerous illness; and even then put off his confession saying that he would afterwards go to confession with better dispositions. But the hour of vengeance had arrived: he fell into a deadly swoon in which he thought that he saw hell open under his feet. After he had come to his senses again, the persons who stood round his bed begged him to make his confession, but he answered: "There is no more time; I am damned." They continued to encourage him. "You are losing time," said he; "I am damned, I see hell opened; I there see Judas, Caiphas, and the murderers of Jesus Christ; and near them I see my place, because, like them, I have despised the blood of Jesus Christ by deferring confession for so long a time." Thus the unhappy man died in despair without confession, and was buried like a dog outside the church without having a prayer offered for his soul.

With regard to *venial sins*, it is useful to confess them; because the absolution of a confessor remits them. But there is no obligation of confessing them; for, according to the Council of Trent, the pardon of them may be obtained by other means without confession—such as by acts of contrition and of charity, or by saying the "Our Father" with devotion.

Are venial sins also remitted by the use of *holy water*? Yes; not directly, but indirectly *by way of impetration*; for the Church, by the blessing of the water, obtains for the faithful who use it acts of repentance and love, by which sins are cancelled. Hence, after taking holy

¹ *Eccles. Hist. Angl.*, l. 5, c. 15.

water, it will be useful instantly to make an act of sorrow or of the love of God, that the Lord may, in consequence of those acts, remit all venial sins that remain in the soul. Holy water helps also to dispose us to devotion, and to banish the temptations of the devil, particularly at the hour of death. Surius tells us of a dying monk who asked his prior to send away a black-bird from the window. The prior sprinkled the window with holy water, and the bird, which was really the devil, flew away. It is also mentioned by Father Ferrerio that a monk of Cluni at the hour of death saw his chamber full of devils, but on sprinkling the cell with holy water they immediately disappeared.

Let us now proceed. We have spoken of the examination regarding mortal and venial sins. But were a person to do an action with a doubt whether it was a mortal or a venial sin, what kind of sin would he commit? He would be guilty of mortal sin, because he exposes himself to the danger of grievously offending God. Hence, before he acts he must lay aside the doubt; and if he has not hitherto done so, he must confess it, at least, as it is before God. But the scrupulous, who have doubts about everything, must follow another rule: they must obey their confessor. When he tells them to conquer their doubts, and to act against scruples, they should obey with exactness; otherwise they will render themselves unable and unfit to perform any spiritual exercise.

Before I proceed farther I exhort every one of you to make a general confession, if you have not as yet made one. And I now speak not only of those whose confessions have been sacrilegious on account of having concealed sins, or invalid for want of sufficient examination of conscience, or of sufficient sorrow; but I speak of all who wish to be permanently converted to God. A general confession is a great means of bringing about a true

change of life. After her conversion to God, St. Margaret of Cortona told all her sins to her confessor, and thereby made herself so pleasing and dear to God, that our Lord himself spoke to her and called her, "My sinful one; my poor little one." She one day said to Jesus Christ: "Lord, when wilt Thou call me Thy daughter?" Jesus Christ answered: "When thou hast made a general confession of thy whole life then I will call you my daughter." She made a general confession, and from that time Jesus Christ always called her his child.

II.

Sorrow.

Sorrow for sin is so necessary, in order to obtain forgiveness, that without it even God himself (at least in his ordinary Providence) cannot pardon sin. *Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish.*¹ A person who dies without making an examination of conscience, or a confession of his sins, may be saved by making an act of sincere contrition when he has not time to confess his sins, nor a priest to whom he can confess them; but without sorrow it is impossible to be saved.

And here is the mistake of those people who, in preparing for confession, endeavor only to call to mind their sins, but make no effort to excite a true sorrow for them. This sorrow we must earnestly ask of God; and before we go to the confessional let us say a "Hail Mary" in honor of the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, that she may obtain for us a true sorrow for our sins.

To obtain the remission of our sins in the sacrament of penance, our sorrow for them must have five conditions: It must be *sincere, supernatural, sovereign, universal,* and *accompanied with a hope of pardon.*

¹ "Nisi pœnitentiam habueritis, omnes similiter peribitis."—*Luke*, xiii. 3.

1. Our sorrow must be *sincere*; it must be not in the mouth only, but also in the heart. This is the kind of sorrow required by the Council of Trent: "A sorrow of the soul, and detestation of sin committed, with a purpose of sinning no more."¹ The soul, then, must conceive a true sorrow, a true displeasure, or regret, and true bitterness of heart, for the sins that have been committed; it must detest and abhor them, saying, with the penitent king Ezechias: *I will recount to thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul.*²

2. The sorrow must be *supernatural*; that is, it must arise not from a natural but from a supernatural motive. It would not be sufficient to repent of your sin because it has been injurious to your health, your property, or your reputation. This would be a natural motive, and sorrow proceeding from such a motive is of no use. The motive, then, of our sorrow must be supernatural; we must repent of sin either on account of its deformity and brutality, or because it has offended the infinite goodness of God, or because by it we have deserved hell, or lost heaven; and thus our sorrow will be either perfect, that is, contrition, or imperfect, that is, attrition, as shall be hereafter explained.

3. Our sorrow must be *sovereign*. Not that it need be accompanied with tears and positive sensibility; it is enough if it be a deliberate calculation of the will, that it would rather wish to have suffered any positive evil than to have offended God. Let timid souls who are always troubled at not feeling sensible sorrow for their sins attend to this; it is enough for them to repent with the will—that is, to be sorry for their sins, desiring to have lost all things rather than to have offended God.

¹ "Animi dolor ac detestatio est de peccato commisso, cum proposito non peccandi de cætero."—*Sess. XIV., cap. iv.*

² "Recogitabo tibi omnes annos meos, in amaritudine animæ meæ."
—*Is. xxxviii. 15.*

St. Teresa has given an excellent method for knowing whether a soul has true sorrow for her sins: if she has a sincere purpose to sin no more, and would be content to lose all things rather than the grace of God, let her have confidence; for then there is no doubt that she has true sorrow for her sins.

4. Our sorrow must be *universal*—extending to all grievous offences offered to God, so that there is no mortal sin that the soul does not detest above all other evils.

I have said, *mortal sin*; for to obtain the pardon of one venial sin it is not necessary to have sorrow for all our venial sins; one venial sin may be remitted without the remission of another; to obtain forgiveness of any venial sin it is enough to have sorrow for it.

But whether the sin is mortal or venial, God cannot pardon it unless the soul sincerely repents of it. Let those who confess only venial sins, for which they have not sorrow, remember that their confessions are null. So, when they wish to receive absolution, they must have sorrow for at least some of the venial faults that they confess, or must accuse themselves of some sin of their past life for which they are sincerely sorry.

But, with regard to mortal sins, it is necessary to have true sorrow for all, and a sincere purpose not to commit them again; otherwise none of them will be remitted; for no mortal sin is pardoned without the infusion of grace into the soul; but this grace cannot exist in the soul along with mortal sin. Therefore, no one can obtain the pardon of one mortal sin without receiving pardon of them all. It is related of St. Sebastian the Martyr, that he used to heal diseases by the sign of the cross. One day the saint went to see Cromatius, who was sick, and promised him health, provided he would burn his idols. Cromatius burned them, but reserved one of them, for which he had a special affection; he, there-

fore, did not recover his health, and began to complain to the saint; but the saint told him that it was useless to have burned the other idols as long as he retained one of them. Thus, it is not enough for the soul to detest some mortal sins; it must detest them all. For a person who has committed several mortal sins, it is not necessary to detest them one by one; it is enough to detest them all with a general sorrow, as grievous offences against God. If all be thus detested, though some sin may have been forgotten, it is forgiven.

5. Our sorrow must be accompanied with *the hope of pardon*, otherwise it will be like the sorrow of the damned, who are sorry for their sins, not because they are offences against God, but because they are the cause of their sufferings; but their sorrow is without hope of pardon. Even Judas repented of his treason. *I have*, said he, *sinned in betraying innocent blood.*¹ But because he did not hope for pardon, he hanged himself on a tree, and died in despair. Cain also acknowledged that he had sinned in killing his brother Abel; but he despaired of pardon, and said: *My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon;*² and therefore he died in a state of damnation. St. Francis de Sales says that the sorrow of true penitents is a sorrow full of peace and consolation; for the more a true penitent grieves for having offended God, the greater his confidence of obtaining pardon, and the greater his consolation. Hence St. Bernard used to say: "O Lord! if it is so sweet to weep for Thee, what will it be to rejoice in Thee?"³

In order, then, to dispose a soul for the divine pardon in the sacrament of penance, its sorrow must have these five conditions. It is necessary also to know that sor-

¹ "Peccavi, tradens sanguinem justum."—*Matt.* xxvii. 4.

² "Major est iniquitas mea quam ut veniam merear."—*Gen.* iv. 13.

³ "Si adeo dulce est flere pro te, quam dulce erit gaudere de te!"—*Scula Claustr.* c. 6.

row for sin is of two kinds: perfect and imperfect. The former is called *contrition*, the latter *attrition*.*

Contrition is a sorrow for sin, because it is an offence against the divine goodness. Theologians say that *contrition* is a formal act of perfect love of God; for he who has *contrition*, is moved by the love which he bears to the goodness of God to repent of having offended him. Hence, to make an act of the love of God, saying: "My God, because Thou art infinite goodness, I love Thee above all things; and because I love Thee I am sorry above all things for having offended Thee," will greatly assist the soul to make an act of *contrition*.

The sorrow of *attrition* is a sorrow for having offended God, which the soul conceives from a less perfect motive, such as from the consideration of the deformity of sin, of having deserved hell, or of having lost heaven, in punishment of its sin.

Thus *contrition* is a sorrow for sin on account of the injury offered to God; *attrition* is a sorrow for an offence offered to God on account of the injury it does to us.

By *contrition* the soul immediately obtains the grace of God, before the penitent receives sacramental absolution from a confessor, provided he has at least the implied intention of going to confession and receiving the sacrament of penance. This we know from the Council of Trent. "The Holy Synod teaches that, although it may sometimes happen that this *contrition* is perfected by charity, and reconciles man to God, before the actual reception of this sacrament,"¹ etc.

But by *attrition* the penitent obtains sanctifying grace only when he actually receives absolution, as we learn

¹ "Etsi *contritionem* hanc aliquando *charitate* perfectam esse contingat, hominemque Deo reconciliare priusquam hoc Sacramentum actu suscipiatur . . ."—*Sess. XIV.*, cap. iv.

* See again the motives given above at n. 2, page 531.

from the same Council. "Although (attrition) without the sacrament of penance cannot by itself bring the sinner to justification, still it disposes him to obtain the grace of God in the sacrament of penance."¹ The word *disposes* is understood by Gonet, and most commonly by other theologians, of the proximate disposition for receiving grace in the sacrament of penance; nor can it be understood of the remote disposition; for, even unconnected with the sacrament, attrition is a good act, and disposes to grace. But the Council speaks of attrition as a disposition in the sacrament, and therefore it is necessarily to be understood of the proximate disposition.

Here it may be asked whether, in order to obtain absolution from sins, it is necessary that attrition be united with *inchoate* charity—that is, with the first beginning, the first spark, of charity. There is no doubt that this inchoate love is necessary for justification; for the Council itself teaches that one of the dispositions that the sinner must have in order to be justified is that he begin to love God. "They begin to love God, as the fountain of all justice."² But a question may be raised as to what is meant by the beginning of love.

Some say that it means an act of predominant love, or that the sinner should love God above all things; but for this they have no just grounds; for he who loves God above all things, loves him with perfect love, and perfect love remits and destroys sin. Gregory XIII. condemned a proposition of Michael Baius, which asserted that "the love of God can exist in the soul along with sin; that charity, which is the fulfilment of the law, is not always

¹ "Quamvis (attritio), sine sacramento Pœnitentiæ, per se ad justificationem perducere peccatorem nequeat, tamen cum ad Dei gratiam in sacramento Pœnitentiæ impetrandam disponit."—*Loco cit.*

² "Illum tamquam omnis justitiæ fontem diligere incipiunt."—*Sess. VI., cap. vi.*

united with the remission of sins."¹ Baius spoke of charity which, according to St. Paul, is the fulfilment of the law.² Now what is the charity by which the law is fulfilled? It is precisely the predominant love by which God is loved above all things. St. Thomas teaches, that by loving God above all things we fulfil the precept of Jesus Christ: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*³ These are the words of the holy Doctor: "When we are commanded to love God with our whole heart we are given to understand that we ought to love God above all things."⁴ He, then, who loves God above all things, cannot be in the state of sin. St. Thomas confirms this doctrine in another place, where he says: "An act of mortal sin is destructive of charity, which consists in loving God above all things."⁵ Hence he teaches that "Charity cannot exist with mortal sin."⁶ Besides, we have several passages of Scripture, which assure us that they who love God are loved by him: *I love them that love Me.*⁷ *He that loveth Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him.*⁸ *He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him.*⁹ *Charity covereth a multitude of sins.*¹⁰

Hence it follows, that any act of contrition (which is

¹ "Charitas illa quæ est plenitudo legis, non est semper conjuncta cum remissione peccatorum."—*Prop.* 32.

² "Plenitudo ergo legis est dilectio."—*Rom.* xiii. 10.

³ "Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo."—*Matt.* xxii. 37.

⁴ "Cum mandatur quod Deum ex toto corde diligamus, datur intelligi quod Deum super omnia debemus diligere."—2. 2, q. 44, a. 8.

⁵ "Actus peccati mortalis contrariatur charitati, quæ consistit in hoc quod Deus diligatur super omnia."—2. 2, q. 24, a. 12.

⁶ "Charitas non potest esse cum peccato mortali."—2. 2, q. 45, a. 4.

⁷ "Ego diligentes me diligo."—*Prov.* viii. 17.

⁸ "Qui autem diligit me, diligetur a Patre meo, et ego diligam eum."—*John.* xiv. 21.

⁹ "Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo."—*I John.* iv. 16.

¹⁰ "Charitas operit multitudinem peccatorum."—*I Pet.* iv. 8.

also, as we have said, an act of charity), though not intense, provided it amounts to contrition, remits all mortal sins. Hence the angelic Doctor has written: "How small soever sorrow may be, provided it is sufficient for the nature of contrition, it cancels every sin."¹

Hence, by *inchoate* love, united with attrition, we cannot understand *predominant* love; for such love, though it be remiss and not intense, is perfect charity; and therefore sorrow united with such love would be, not attrition, but contrition. Hence, were such attrition necessary, every sinner would be already absolved before he went to confession; the sacrament of penance would be, not a sacrament of the *dead*, but of the living; and the absolution would be, not a true absolution, but, as Luther taught, rather a simple declaration of the absolution already granted. But this is contrary to the definition of the Council of Trent.²

Therefore, the beginning of charity, which must accompany attrition, need not be predominant love; it is sufficient if it be a simple beginning of love, such as is the fear of eternal chastisements. *The fear of God is the beginning of His love.*³ Thus the will to offend God no more is also the beginning of his love. So also the hope of pardon and of the eternal goods which God promises to penitents. St. Thomas says that from the moment that we expect to gain good things from a person, we begin to love him.⁴ Hence, in preparing for confession, it is useful to unite with the act of sorrow an act of hope of pardon through the merits of Jesus Christ. The Council of Trent says that by this hope the penitent

¹ "Quantumcumque parvus sit dolor, dummodo ad contritionis rationem sufficiat, omnem culpam delet."—*Suppl. ad p. 3, q. 5, a. 3.*

² *Sess. XIV., can. ix.*

³ "Timor Dei, initium dilectionis ejus."—*Eccclus. xxv. 16.*

⁴ "Ex hoc quod per aliquem speramus bona, incipimus ipsum amare."
—*I. 2, q. 40, a. 7.*

ought to prepare himself to receive from God the remission of his sins. *Trusting that God will pardon them for Christ's sake.*¹

Let it, however, be remembered, that

1. For attrition, the fear of the temporal punishments with which God chastises sinners in this life is not sufficient; for theologians say, that as the punishment of mortal sin is eternal, so the motive of sorrow for it ought to be the chastisement of eternal torments.

2. Let it be also observed, that in the act of attrition it is not enough for the sinner to repent, merely because he has deserved hell; he must also repent of having offended God, by deserving hell.

3. Let it also be remembered that the Council of Trent requires that the act of attrition should be accompanied not only with the hope of pardon, but also with the will of sinning no more—with a hope of pardon,² to the exclusion of all will of sinning again. Hence, were a person sorry for his sins, because by them he had deserved hell, but so disposed that, if there were no hell he would not give up sin, his sorrow would not only be insufficient, but it would be sinful on account of the bad disposition of his will.

It follows, then, that an act of *attrition* should be made in this way: "My God, because by my sins I have lost heaven, and have merited hell for all eternity, I am sorry above all things for having offended Thee." An act of *contrition* may be made in this manner: "My God, because Thou art infinite goodness, I love Thee above all things, and because I love Thee, I am sorry above all things for all the offences I have offered to Thee, O Sovereign Good! My God, I purpose never more to

¹ "Fidentes Deum sibi, propter Christum, propitium fore."—*Sess.* VI., cap. vi.

² "Si voluntatem peccandi excludat, cum spe veniæ."—*Sess.* xiv. cap. iv.

offend Thee. I would rather die than ever offend Thee more."

And let me here remark that, though attrition alone is, as has been said, sufficient in order to obtain the grace of God in the sacrament of penance, still every person, in preparing for confession, should endeavor to add to the act of attrition an act of contrition, as well for greater security as for his own greater profit.

III.

Purpose of Sinning no More.

Sorrow and a purpose of amendment necessarily go together. "A sorrow of the soul and a detestation of sin," says the Council of Trent, "along with the purpose of sinning no more." The soul cannot have a true sorrow for sin without a sincere purpose never more to offend God. Now, in order to be a true purpose, it must have three conditions: it must be *firm*, *universal*, and *efficacious*.

1. It must be *firm*, so that the penitent resolutely purposes to suffer every evil rather than offend God.

Some say: "Father, I do not wish ever more to offend God; but the occasions of sin and my own weakness will make me relapse: I wish, but shall scarcely be able, to persevere." My son, you have not a true purpose, and therefore you say: I wish, I wish. Know that hell is full of such wishes. It is a mere empty *wish*, not a true resolute *will* or purpose; a true purpose is a firm and resolute will to suffer every evil rather than to relapse into sin. It is true that there are occasions of sin; that we are weak, particularly if we have contracted a habit of any sin; and that the devil is strong; but God is stronger than the devil, and with his aid we can conquer

¹ "Animi dolor ac detestatio est de peccato commisso, cum proposito non peccandi de cætero."—*Sess.* xiv. cap. iv.

all the temptations of hell. *I can do all things*, says St. Paul, *in Him who strengtheneth me.*¹ It is true that we ought to tremble at our weakness, and distrust our own strength; but we ought to have confidence in God that by his grace we shall overcome all the assaults of our tempters. *Praising, I will call upon the Lord*, said David, *and I shall be saved from my enemies.*² I will invoke the Lord, and he will save me from my enemies. He who recommends himself to God in temptations shall never fall.

“But, Father, I have recommended myself to God, and the temptation continues.” Do you, then, also continue to ask help from God as long as the temptation lasts, and you will never fall. God is faithful; he will not permit us to be tempted above our strength. *God*, says the Apostle, *is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able.*³ He has promised to give aid to all who pray for it. *For every one that asketh receiveth.*⁴ And this promise is made to all—to sinners, as well as to the just: “For every one that asketh receiveth.” So there is no excuse for those who consent to sin; for if they recommend themselves to God, he will stretch out his hand, and support them, and they will not fall. He, then, who falls into sin falls through his own fault, either because he will not ask aid from God, or because he will not avail himself of the aid which the Lord offers to him.

3. The purpose must be *universal*; that is, it must be a purpose of avoiding every mortal sin. Saul was commanded by God to put to death all the Amalecites, and all their cattle, and to burn all their goods. What did

¹ “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* iv. 13.

² “Invocabo Dominum, et ab inimicis meis salvus ero.”—*Ps.* xvii. 4.

³ “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis.”—*I Cor.* x. 13.

⁴ “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—*Matt.* vii. 8.

he do? He slew a great multitude of men and of cattle, and burnt a large quantity of their goods; but he saved the life of the king, and preserved what was most valuable of the property; and on account of this contempt of God's commandment he merited his malediction. Many penitents imitate Saul; they purpose to avoid some sins, but they cannot give up some dangerous familiarity, or some goods that they have a scruple about retaining, or some cherished feelings of anger and ill-will against a neighbor, or some hankering after revenge. Such persons wish to divide their heart, giving one half to God, and the other to the devil. The devil is content with his portion, but God is not satisfied with a part of their heart. Every one knows the history of Solomon—how two women came to him, each claiming to be the mother of the child who was still left alive. He ordered the infant to be divided, and one half to be given to each of them. *Divide the living child in two.*¹ The woman who was not the mother of the child remained silent and was satisfied with the order of the king; but the true mother said: *I beseech thee, my lord, give her the child alive, and do not kill it.*² "No, my lord, if my child must die, I prefer that she should have it entire." Solomon concluded that she was the true mother of the child, and gave it to her. Thus, the devil because he is our enemy, and not our father, is content to have a part of our heart; but God, who is our true Father, is not satisfied unless he has the whole of it. *No man, says Jesus Christ, can serve two masters.*³ God does not accept for his servants those who wish to serve two masters; he wishes to be our only Lord, and he

¹ "Dividite infantem vivum in duas partes."—3 *Kings*, iii. 25.

² "Obsecro, domine, date illi infantem vivum, et nolite interficere eum."

³ "Nemo potest duobus dominis servire."—*Matt.* vi. 24.

justly refuses to be the companion of the devil in the possession of our hearts.

Our purpose, then, must be *universal*: it must be a purpose of avoiding all mortal sins. I say *mortal sins*; for, with regard to venial sins, a person may have a purpose of avoiding one and not another, and such a purpose is sufficient for a good confession. However, souls that fear God purpose to abstain from all fully deliberate venial sins; and with regard to indeliberate venial sins, or sins committed without a full consent of the will, they purpose to commit as few of them as possible; to avoid all such sins is impossible on account of the weakness of our nature. Most Holy Mary only (as we have said in the beginning of this work)¹ was free from all, even indeliberate venial sins, as the Council of Trent has declared, saying that it is impossible for a man "to avoid during his whole life all sins, venial as well as mortal, unless by a special privilege of God, as the Church holds with regard to the Blessed Virgin."² And this is one of the strongest proofs that the divine Mother was exempt from original sin; for, had she been stained with it, she could not, in the course of nature, have been free from all, even indeliberate venial sins. Let us proceed.

3. The purpose must be *efficacious*—that is, it must make us practise all the means necessary to avoid sin; and one of the most necessary of these means, is to avoid the occasions of relapsing into sin. This is a most important point; for were men careful to fly from evil occasions, from how many sins would they abstain, and thus how many souls would escape damnation! The devil does not gain much without an occasion.

¹ Pages 360 and 363.

² "Posse in tota vita peccata omnia, etiam venialia, vitare, nisi ex speciali Dei privilegio, quem admodum de Beata Virgine tenet Ecclesia."—*Sess. vi. cap. xxiii.*

But when a person voluntarily exposes himself to the occasion of sin, particularly of sins against chastity, it is morally impossible for him not to fall.

It is necessary to distinguish *proximate* from *remote* occasions. The *remote* occasion is that to which all are exposed, or in which men seldom fall into sin. The *proximate* occasion is that which by itself ordinarily induces to sin, such as unnecessary familiarity of young men with women of bad reputation. An occasion in which a person has frequently fallen is also called a proximate occasion. But occasions which are not proximate for others may be proximate for a particular person, who on account of his bad disposition or on account of a bad habit has frequently fallen into sin. They are in the proximate occasion of sin: 1. Who keep in their house a woman with whom they have committed sin. 2. They who go to taverns, or to any particular house in which they have frequently fallen into sin by quarrelling, or drunkenness, or immodest words or actions. 3. They who in gaming have been frequently guilty of fraud, or quarrels, or of blasphemies. Now, no one can receive absolution unless he purpose firmly to avoid the occasion of sin; because to expose himself to such occasions, though sometimes he should not fall into sin, is for him a grievous sin. And when the occasion is voluntary and is actually existing at the present time, the penitent cannot be absolved until he has actually removed the occasion of sin. For penitents find it very difficult to remove the occasion; and if they do not take it away before they receive absolution they will scarcely remove it after they have been absolved.

Much less is he fit for absolution who refuses to remove the occasions, and only promises that in them he will not commit sin for the future. Tell me, my brother, do you expect that tow thrown into the fire will not burn? And how can you expect that if you

expose yourself to the occasion of sin you will not fall? *And your strength, says the prophet, shall be as the ashes of tow, . . . and both shall burn together, and there shall be none to quench it.*¹ Our strength is like the strength of tow to resist fire. A devil was once compelled to tell what sermon was most annoying to him. He answered: "The sermon on the occasions of sin." As long as we do not remove the occasions of sin, the devil is satisfied: he cares not about our purposes, promises, or oaths; for as long as the occasion is not removed the sin will not cease. The occasion (particularly of sins against chastity) is like a veil placed before the eyes, and does not allow us to see God, or hell, or heaven. In a word, the occasion blinds the sinner; and how can the blind keep himself in the straight way to heaven? He will wander into the road to hell without knowing where he is going; and why? Because he does not see. For all, then, who are in the occasion of sin, it is necessary to do violence to themselves in order to remove the occasion; otherwise they will remain always in sin.

Here it is necessary to remark that for some who are more strongly inclined to evil, and who have contracted a habit of any vice, particularly the vice of impurity, certain occasions are proximate or nearly proximate which for others would be remote. Hence, if they do not avoid them they will be always relapsing into the same crimes like a dog returning to his vomit.

"But, Father," some one may say, "I cannot separate from such a person; I cannot leave such a house without sustaining great loss." Do you then mean that the occasion to which you are exposed is not voluntary, but necessary? If it be necessary, you must, if you cannot remove it, at least adopt the means of making it remote. What are these means? There are three means: the

¹ "Erit fortitudo vestra ut favilla stuppæ: . . . et succendetur. . . . et non erit qui extinguat."—*Isa.* i. 31.

frequentation of the sacraments, prayer, and avoiding familiarity with the person with whom you have sinned.

The frequentation of the sacraments of penance and Eucharist would be in one respect the best means; but it ought to be known that in necessary proximate occasions of incontinence it is a great remedy to withhold absolution in order to make the penitent more diligent in adopting the other two means, namely, to recommend himself frequently to God, and to avoid familiarity. When you rise in the morning, you must renew the resolution of not yielding to sin all that day; and you must pray for help, not only in the morning, but also several times during the day before the Most Holy Sacrament, or before the Crucifix; and must beg of the Most Holy Mary to obtain for you grace not to relapse. The other means to which it is absolutely necessary to attend is to avoid all familiarity with the accomplice by not remaining with her alone, by not looking at her face, not conversing with her, and by speaking to her (when strictly necessary) in such a manner as to show a dislike for her society. This is the most important means of making proximate occasions become remote, but he who has already received absolution will scarcely practise this means; and, therefore, in such cases, it is expedient to defer absolution until the proximate occasion becomes remote. But to render such occasions remote, eight or ten days are not sufficient; a long time is necessary.

But should the penitent after adopting all these means always relapse, what is the last remedy? It is that which the Gospel recommends: *If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee.*¹ Although it were your right eye, you must pull it out, and cast it to a distance from you. "It is better," says our

¹ "Si oculus tuus dexter scandalizat te, erue eum, et projice abs te."—*Matt. v. 29.*

Lord, "to lose thy eye than having it to be cast into hell." In such a case, then, you must remove the occasion, or you must certainly go to hell.

IV.

Confession.

Confession, in order to be good, must be entire, humble, and sincere.

I. THE CONFESSION MUST BE ENTIRE.

He who has offended God by mortal sin has no other remedy to prevent his damnation but the confession of his sin. "But, if I am sorry for sin from my heart? If I do penance for it during my whole life? If I go into the desert and live on wild herbs, and sleep on the ground?" You may do as much as you please; but if you do not confess every mortal sin that you remember, you cannot obtain pardon. I said, *a sin that you remember*; for should you have involuntarily forgotten a sin, it has been pardoned indirectly if you had a general sorrow for all your offences against God. It is sufficient for you to confess it whenever you remember it. But if you have concealed it voluntarily, you must then confess not only the sin that has been concealed, but also the others that have been confessed; for the confession was null and sacrilegious.

Accursed shame: how many poor souls does it send to hell! St. Teresa used to say over and over again to preachers: "Preach, O my priests, preach against bad confessions; for it is on account of bad confessions that the greater part of Christians are damned."

A disciple of Socrates went one day into the house of a woman of bad repute. As he was leaving the house

he perceived that his master was passing, and to avoid being seen by him he went back into the house. But Socrates, who had seen him at the door, put his head in at the door, and said to him: "It is a shame to enter, but it is no shame to depart from this house." In the same way I say to those who have committed sin, and are afterwards ashamed to confess it, "My child, it is a shame to commit sin, but it is no shame to free yourself from sin by telling it in confession." The Holy Ghost says, *There is a shame that bringeth sin, and there is a shame that bringeth glory and grace.*¹ We ought to avoid the shame that makes us the enemies of God, but not the shame that arises from the confession of sin, and that enables us to recover the grace of God and the glory of paradise.

What shame! What shame! Was it a shame in so many holy penitents—in St. Mary Magdalene, in St. Mary of Egypt, in St. Margaret of Cortona—to confess their sins? Their confessions have enabled them to attain paradise, where, as queens of that great kingdom, they enjoy God, and shall enjoy him for all eternity. St. Augustine, after his conversion to God, not only confessed the wickedness of his life, but also wrote a book, in which he published his sins, that the whole world might know them.

St. Antonine relates that a prelate once saw a devil beside a woman at confession. The prelate asked him what he was doing. The devil answered: "I am fulfilling the precept of restitution: when I tempted this woman to sin, I took away her shame; I am now restoring it, that she may not confess her sin." This, as St. John Chrysostom says, is one of the artifices of the devil. "God joined shame to sin, confidence to confession. The devil inverts the whole thing. He joins con-

¹ "Est enim confusio adducens peccatum, et est confusio adducens gloriam et gratiam."—*Ecclus.* iv. 25.

fidence to sin, shame to confession.”¹ The wolf seizes the sheep by the throat, that it may not be able to cry out; thus he carries it off and devours it. This the devil does with certain miserable souls; he catches them by the throat, that they may not confess their sins, and thus he drags them to hell.

In the life of Father John Ramirez, of the Society of Jesus, it is related that, while preaching in a certain city, he was called to hear the confession of a girl who was dying. She was of noble birth, and had apparently led a holy life; she went frequently to Communion, fasted, and performed other mortifications. At death she confessed her sins to Father Ramirez with many tears, so that he was greatly consoled. But, after returning to the college, his companion said that while the young lady was making her confession he saw a black hand squeezing her throat. The Father immediately returned to the house of the sick lady, but before entering he heard that she was dead. He then returned to his college, and while he was at prayer the deceased appeared to him in a horrible form, surrounded by flames, and bound in chains, and said that she was damned on account of a sin committed with a young man, which she voluntarily concealed in confession through shame, and that at death she wished to confess it, but the devil induced her, through the same shame, to conceal it. After these words she disappeared, amid the most frightful howling and terrific clanking of chains.

My daughter, have you committed sin? Why are you now unwilling to confess it? You may say, *I am ashamed*. “Unhappy soul,” says St. Augustine, “you think only of the shame, but do not reflect that unless you confess the sin you will be damned! You are

¹ “Pudorem dedit Deus peccato, confessioni fiduciam. Invertit rem diabolus: peccato fiduciam præbet, confessioni pudorem.”—*De Penit.* hom. 3.

ashamed, but," adds the saint, "you are not ashamed to inflict a wound on your soul, and are you now ashamed to apply a healing band?" "O madness," adds the saint, "you do not blush for the wound; all your blushes are for the bandage of the wound!"¹ The Council of Trent says, the physician cannot heal a wound unless he sees and understands it.²

Oh! what destruction falls on the soul that conceals a mortal sin in confession through shame! "The remedy," says St. Ambrose, "becomes a triumph to the devil."³ After a victory soldiers make a pompous display of the arms taken from the enemy. The devil makes the same triumphal display of the sacrilegious confessions, boasting of having taken from the souls the arms with which they might conquer him! Miserable the soul that thus converts a remedy into poison! That unhappy woman had but one sin on her conscience; but because she concealed it in confession, she committed sacrilege, and so the devil triumphed.

Tell me, my sister, if, in punishment of not confessing a certain sin, you were to be burnt alive in a caldron of boiling pitch, and if, after that, your sin were to be revealed to all your relatives and neighbors, would you conceal it? No, indeed, if you knew that by confessing it your sin would remain secret, and that you would escape being burnt alive. Now, it is more than certain that, unless you confess that sin, you will have to burn in hell for all eternity, and that on the day of judgment it will be made known to the whole human race. *We must all, says the Apostle, be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ.*⁴ *If, says the Lord, you do not confess*

¹ "O insania! de vulnere non crubescis, de ligatura vulneris crubescis!"—*In Ps.* l. n. 8.

² "Quod ignorat, medecina non curat."—*Sess.* xiv. cap. 5.

³ "Remedium fit ipsi diabolo triumphus."

⁴ "Omnes enim nos manifestari oportet ante tribunal Christi."—*2 Cor.* v. 10.

*the evil you have done, I will proclaim your ignominy to all nations; I will discover thy shame to thy face, and will show . . . thy shame to kingdoms.*¹

Have you committed sin? If you do not confess it you shall be damned. Therefore, if you wish to be saved, you must confess it some time or other. And if *at some time or other, why not now?* as St. Augustine says.² What do you wait for? Is it for death, after which you will not be able to make a confession? And know that the longer you conceal your sin and multiply sacrileges, the greater your shame and obstinacy in concealing it will become. "Obstinacy proceeds from the keeping back of sin," says St. Peter de Blois.³ How many miserable souls, who have formed a habit of concealing their sins, saying, "When death is near, then I will confess it," have not confessed it even at the hour of death!

I would have you also to know that, unless you confess the sin you have committed, you will never have peace during your whole life. O God! what a hell will that miserable woman have within herself who departs from the confessional without having confessed her sin. She always carries within her a viper that unceasingly rends her heart. The miserable being shall suffer a hell in this life and a hell in the next.

Come, then, my children, if any of you has unfortunately fallen into this abyss of misery, if there is any one among you who has concealed a sin through shame, come and confess it at once. It is enough for you to say to the confessor, "Father, I feel ashamed to tell a certain sin?" or to say, "Father, I have a scruple re-

¹ "Revelabo pudenda tua in facie tua, et ostendam gentibus nuditatem tuam, et regnis ignominiam tuam."—*Nah.* iii. 5.

² "Si aliquando, quare non modo?"—*Possidius. Vita Aug.* c. 27.

³ "Ex occultatione peccati nascitur cordis obstinatio."—*De Conf. sacramentali.*

garding my past life." This is sufficient; for the confessor will take care to pluck out the thorn that tortures you, and thus give peace to your conscience. And oh, what joy shall you feel after having expelled the viper from your heart!

To how many persons must you disclose the sin? You need only tell it once to one confessor; the evil is then repaired. And that the devil may not deceive you, know that we are bound to confess only mortal sins. Hence, if the sin that you are ashamed to confess were not mortal, or if, when you were committing it, you thought it was not mortal, you are not obliged to confess it. There are persons who committed some act of indecency in their childhood, but they then had no idea nor scruple that it was a mortal sin, and so are not bound to confess it.

But, Father, it may happen that my confessor will make known my sin to another. What do you say? Know that the confessor is bound to suffer himself to be burnt alive sooner than disclose a single venial sin confessed by a penitent. The confessor cannot speak of what he has heard in confession even to the penitent himself. [That is, without the permission of the penitent.]

But I am afraid that the confessor will speak harshly to me when he has heard the sins I have committed. What is it you say? Why should he speak harshly to you? All these are false suspicions that the devil puts into your head. Confessors sit in the confessionals not to hear ecstasies and revelations, but to hear the sins of those who come to confession; and they cannot experience greater consolation than when a penitent comes to make known to them his miseries. Were it in your power to rescue from death, without inconvenience to yourself, a queen wounded by her enemies, what consolation would you feel in saving her life! This the

confessor does in the confessional when penitents come to him to disclose the sins they have committed. By giving them absolution he delivers the souls of his penitents that had been wounded by sin, and he delivers them from the eternal death of hell.

St. Bonaventure¹ relates in the life of St. Francis that a certain lady, after she was seen to breathe her last and before she was buried, suddenly rose up in the bed, and trembling, and full of terror, said that her soul, having departed from her body, was on the point of being plunged into hell for having concealed a sin in confession, but that she was brought into this life again by the prayers of St. Francis. She then called for a confessor, made her confession with many tears, and afterwards told the bystanders to beware of concealing sins in confession, because God will not show to all the mercy with which he had treated her. After these words she again gave up the ghost.

Should the devil tempt you to conceal a sin in confession, give him the answer that he received from a woman called Adelaide. She had been in the habit of sin with a young man who, through despair, had put an end to his life with his own hands, and was damned. She then entered into a monastery to do penance; and as she was going one day to confession the devil said to her: "Adelaide, where are you going?" She answered: "I am going to confound myself and you by confessing my sins."² When the devil tempts you to conceal your sins in confession, let your answer be: "I am going to confound myself and you."

I have, at the end of this little book, written down some instances of persons who have been damned for concealing their sins in confession through a false shame.

¹ *Legenda S. Franc. mirac.* § 2.

² *Cesaire. Dial.* l. 3, c. 13.

2. THE CONFESSION MUST BE HUMBLE.

A penitent at confession should imagine himself to be a criminal condemned to death, bound by as many chains as he has sins to confess; he presents himself before the confessor, who holds the place of God and who alone can loose his bonds and deliver him from hell. Therefore he must speak to the confessor with great humility. The Emperor Ferdinand, wishing to go to confession in his chamber, handed a chair to the confessor. When those who were in the room appeared surprised at so great an act of humility, the emperor said: "Father, I am now a subject, and you are my Superior."

Some argue with the confessor, and speak to him with as much haughtiness as if they were his Superiors; what fruit can they derive from such confessions? It is necessary then, to treat your confessor with respect. Speak to him always with humility, and with humility obey all his commands. When he reproveth you, be silent, and receive his admonitions with humility; accept with humility the remedy that he prescribes for your amendment.

Do not get into a passion with him nor think him unjust and uncharitable. What would you say if you saw a sick man, who, while the surgeon opens the imposthume, treats him as a cruel and uncharitable man? Would you not say that he was mad? "But he tortures me." Yes; but it is by this torture that you are cured: without it you would die.

If the confessor tells you that he cannot absolve you until you have restored certain goods belonging to another, obey him, and do not be importunate for absolution: do you not know that he who has received absolution does not afterwards make restitution?

Does the confessor order you to return for absolution

in a week or a fortnight, and in the mean time to remove the occasion of sin, to pray to God, to be firm in resisting all temptations to relapse into sin, and to practise all the other means that he recommends to you? Obey, and you shall thus free yourself from sin; do you not see that hitherto, when you were absolved immediately, you have, after the lapse of a few days, fallen again into the same crimes? "But if in the mean time death comes upon me?" But God has not hitherto taken away your life, when you continued so long a time in sin, and never thought of returning to him; will he, now that you desire to amend your life, send you a sudden death? "But it may be that death will come upon me during the time for which absolution is deferred." And if this may happen during that time, make acts of contrition continually. I have already said¹ that he who has the intention of going to confession and makes an act of contrition instantly receives pardon from God.

Of what use is it to receive absolution as often as you go to confession when you do not renounce sin? All these absolutions shall add to the fire that will torment you in hell. Listen to this fact. A gentleman contracted a habit of sin; he found a confessor who always absolved him, though he always relapsed. He died, and was seen in hell carried on the shoulders of another person who was also damned. Being asked who it was that carried him, he answered: "He is my confessor, who, by absolving me as often as I went to confession, has brought me to hell. I am damned, and he who brought me to hell is also damned."

Do not then, O my brother, be angry when the confessor defers absolution, and wishes to see how you conduct yourself in the mean time. If you always relapse into the same sin, although you have confessed it, the

confessor cannot absolve you unless you give some extraordinary and manifest sign that you have the necessary dispositions. And, if he gives you absolution, you and he are condemned to hell. Be obedient, then; do what he bids you; for, when you return, after having done what he prescribed, he will certainly absolve you, and thus you shall be delivered from the sin that you have been in the habit of committing.

3. THE CONFESSION MUST BE SINCERE.

The confession must be sincere, that is, without lies or excuses.

1. Without *lies* : lies told in confession, when they are in matters of small moment, are not mortal sins; but they are more grievous than other lies. But when the matter is grievous, such lies are mortal sins. For example, it would be a mortal sin for a penitent to accuse himself of a mortal sin that he has not committed or to deny a mortal sin that he has committed and has never confessed, or to deny that he had a habit of a certain sin; for in all these he would be guilty of grievously deceiving the minister of God.

2. Without lies, and *without excuses*. In the tribunal of penance the criminal must be his own accuser; he must be an accuser, not an advocate to excuse his guilt. The more sincerely a man accuses himself, without extenuating his fault, the more readily shall he obtain absolution and mercy from God. It is related that the Duke of Ossuna, being one day in a galley, went about among the slaves, asking for what crime they had been condemned. All answered that they were innocent; only one acknowledged that he deserved severer punishment. The viceroy said: "Then it is not right to have you here among so many innocents;" and therefore ordered him to be released. Now, how much more will

God pardon him who confesses his sins, without excuses, in the tribunal of penance.

How many are there who make their confession badly! Some tell their confessor the few good actions that they perform, but do not speak of their sins. "Father," they say, "I hear Mass every day; I say the beads; I do not blaspheme; I do not swear; I do not take my neighbor's property." Well, what then? Do you want to be praised by the confessor? Confess your sins; examine your conscience, and you will find a thousand things to be corrected: detractions, unclean expressions, lies, imprecations, unclean thoughts, hatred.

Others, instead of accusing themselves, begin to defend their sins, and to dispute with the confessor. "Father," they say, "I blaspheme because I have a master that cannot be borne; I have indulged myself in hatred to a neighbor, because she has spoken ill of me; I have committed sin with men, because I had nothing to eat." What benefit do you expect from such confessions? What is your object? Is it that the confessor may approve of your sins? Listen to what St. Gregory says: "If you excuse yourself, God will accuse you; if you accuse yourself, God will excuse you."¹ Our Lord complained bitterly to St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi of those who excuse their sins in confession, and throw the blame of their own faults upon others, saying: "Such a person has been the occasion of my sin: such another has tempted me." Thus they come to confession to commit new sins; for, in order to excuse their own sins, they injure a neighbor's reputation without necessity. Such persons should be treated as a confessor treated a woman who, in order to excuse her own sins, told all the bad actions of her husband. "For your own sins," said the confessor, "you will say the 'Hail Holy Queen!' once; and for the sins of your husband, you will fast

¹ "Si te excusas, Deus te accusabit; si te accusas, Deus te excusabit."

every day for an entire month." But must I do penance for the sins of my husband? Yes, if you confess all the sins of your husband in order to excuse your own sins. Thus, my sisters, confess henceforth your own sins, and not the sins of others, and say: "Father, it was not my companion, nor the occasion of sin, nor the devil, but my own malice, that made me voluntarily offend God."

It is, indeed true, that you must sometimes make known to the confessor the sin of another, either in order to explain the species of some sin, or to make the confessor understand the danger to which you were exposed, that he may be able to give you useful advice for the regulation of your conduct. But when you can go to another confessor, to whom the person is unknown, go to him. If, in changing your confessor, you should suffer a notable inconvenience; or if you think that your ordinary confessor, because he is better acquainted with the state of your conscience, can give you more useful counsel,—you are not obliged to go to another confessor. However, you should endeavor to conceal the accomplice as well as you can; for example, it is sufficient to tell the state of the person, if she is a young girl, if she is married, or if she has made a vow of chastity, without mentioning her name.

St. Francis de Sales warns penitents not to make useless accusations in confession, nor to mention circumstances through habit. "I have not loved God with all my strength; I have not received the sacraments as I ought; I have had but little sorrow for my sins." All these are useless words; they are a loss of time. "I accuse myself of the seven deadly sins, of the five senses of the body, and of the ten commandments of God." Give up these useless accusations; it is better to tell the confessor some defect into which you are for a long time accustomed to fall, without any amendment. Confess, then, the faults that you wish to correct. Of what use

is it to say: "I accuse myself of all the lies I have told, of all my detractions, of all the imprecations I have uttered? When you do not give up these vices, and when you say that you cannot avoid them, of what use is it to confess them? It is only a mockery of Jesus Christ, and of the confessor. When, then, my children, you accuse yourselves of such faults, even though they should be only venial sins, confess them with a purpose of not relapsing into them.

V.

The Penance Imposed by the Confessor.

Satisfaction, which we call the *penance*, is a necessary part of the sacrament of penance. It is not precisely essential, because without it the confession may be valid, as would be the case if a penitent were dying and unable to perform suitable penance. But it is an integral part; so that, should a person at confession not have the intention of performing the penance enjoined the confession is null; for the penitent is obliged, in confessing his sins, to have the intention of complying with the penance imposed by the confessor. But if he has the intention of performing the penance, and afterwards neglects to fulfil it, the confession is valid; but he is guilty of a mortal sin if the penance be great.

It is necessary to know that, when a person commits a sin, he contracts the guilt, and renders himself liable to the punishment due to the guilt of sin. By the absolution of the confessor the guilt and the eternal punishment are remitted, and when the penitent has intense contrition, all the temporal punishment is also remitted. But when the contrition is not so great the temporal penalties remain to be suffered either in this life or in purgatory, as the Council of Trent teaches¹ where it

¹ Sess. xiv. cap. viii.

says, that the sacramental penance is not only a payment of the penalty that we have deserved, but also a means of cure for the base affections left in us by sin—our passions, bad habits, and hardness of heart; and that, moreover, it strengthens us against a relapse into the same sin. Therefore, my children, go to confession every week, or at least every fortnight, but never allow a month to pass without approaching the tribunal of penance.

What sort of sin is it not to perform the penance imposed by a confessor? If the penance is light, the omission of it is a venial sin: if great, it is a mortal sin. If the fulfilment of the penance enjoined should become very difficult, it may be changed by the same or by another confessor.

How soon after confession must the penance be performed? It must be performed within the time fixed by the confessor; and should he not fix a time, it ought to be performed within a short time; for when the penance is great, and particularly when it is medicinal, to defer the performance of it for a long time would be a mortal sin.

Should a penitent have the misfortune of falling into mortal sin after confession, is he still bound to fulfil the penance? Yes; he is obliged to fulfil it. And does he satisfy his obligation by performing the penance in the state of sin? Yes: he also complies with his obligation.

But, alas! many go to confession, accept the penance enjoined, but afterwards do not comply with it. "But, Father, I am not able to do all that my confessor has imposed upon me." And why did you accept a penance that you knew you could not perform? I recommend you to speak plainly, and to say to the confessor: "Father, I am afraid that I shall not do all that you have imposed on me; give me a lighter penance." Of what use is it to say: Father, I will do it; Father, I will do it; and afterwards to do nothing?

But know that, if you omit your penance in this life, you will have to perform far greater penance in purgatory. Turlot¹ relates that a sick man, who was confined to bed, and afflicted with many pains for a year, prayed to God to release him from life. God sent an angel to tell him to choose either to go to purgatory for three days, or to submit to his pains for another year. The sick man chose the three days in purgatory, where after his death, he was visited by the angel. He complained that the angel had deceived him, and that he was suffering there, not for three days, but for several years. The angel said to him, "What! a day has scarcely passed; your body is not yet buried; and you say that you are suffering here for several years!" The deceased then besought the angel to bring him back again to life, that he might suffer his former infirmities for another year. His prayer was heard; and after having returned to life, he encouraged all that came to visit him, to suffer with cheerfulness all the pains of the present rather than wait for the pains of the next life.

Would to God the penitents performed all the penance due to their sins! Ordinarily speaking, almost all have to suffer some of the temporal punishment that awaits them. Of several persons who led a holy life, we read that they have been for some time in purgatory. Let us, then, endeavor, in addition to our sacramental penance, to perform other good works, alms, deeds, prayers, fasts, and mortifications. Let us also endeavor to gain as many indulgences as we can. Holy indulgences diminish the pains that we must suffer in purgatory. I will here mention some of the many indulgences which you can obtain.*

¹ *Trésor de la Doctr. Chrét.*, p. 4, ch. 5, lec. ii.

* Many of these indulgences have been modified since the time of our holy author. See *Raccolta*.—ED.

1. He who hears Mass gains an indulgence of 3800 years.

2. He who wears the scapular of Mount Carmel, observes chastity, according to his state, abstains from meat on Wednesdays, and recites every day the "Our Father," "Hail Mary!" and "Glory be to the Father," etc., seven times, will soon be delivered from purgatory, as we read in the Office of the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel. There are also many indulgences gained by wearing the scapulars of the Blessed Virgin in Sorrow, of the Conception, and of Mercy.

3. He who says the "*Angelus Domini*," when the bell rings for it, gains many indulgences.

4. They who say: "Blessed be the holy, immaculate and most pure Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary," gain an indulgence of a hundred years.

5. To those who say the "Hail Holy Queen!" is granted an indulgence of forty days.

6. For saying the "Litany of the Blessed Virgin" there is an indulgence of two hundred days.

7. For pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary, twenty-five days, and for bowing the head at these names, twenty days more.

8. They who say the "Our Father" and the "Hail Mary" five times in honor of the Passion of Jesus Christ and the Dolours of the Virgin Mary, gain an indulgence of ten thousand years.

9. An indulgence of seven years is granted to those who make the Christian Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, with the purpose of receiving the sacraments during life and at death; and they who make these Acts every day during a month gain a plenary indulgence.

10. An indulgence of many days is granted for every time that these Acts are made even when they are repeated on the same day.

11. An indulgence of many days is granted to those who make half an hour's meditation; and a plenary indulgence to those who make it every day for a month, provided they go to confession and Communion in the same month.

12. An indulgence of five years is granted to those who accompany the viaticum, and of six years to those who accompany it with light; and an indulgence of a hundred days to those who, when unable to accompany it, recite a Pater and Ave for the intention of the Pope.

13. An indulgence of a hundred days is granted to those who genuflect before the Most Holy Sacrament; to those who kiss the cross, an indulgence of a year and four days; to those who bow at the "Gloria Patri," thirty days; to those who kiss the religious habit, five years; to priests who recite before Mass, *Ego volo celebrare missam*, etc., fifty days.

I beseech you to apply to the souls in purgatory as many indulgences as you can. Fear not that, in consequence of applying them to these holy souls, you shall have to suffer the temporal pains due to your sins. Father Rossignoli¹ states that at the hour of death St. Gertrude was afflicted at having done nothing for her own soul; for she applied all the good that she had done to the souls in purgatory. Jesus Christ appeared to her, and said: "Gertrude, be comforted; for your charity to the souls in purgatory has been so pleasing to me, that at death you shall escape purgatory, and shall be accompanied to heaven by all my beloved spouses, whom your suffrages have delivered from purgatory."

¹ *Marav. di Dio.*, p. 1.

CHAPTER VI

EXTREME UNCTION, HOLY ORDERS, AND MATRIMONY.

I HAVE still to speak of these last three sacraments; but there is little to be said on them for the instruction of seculars.

I.

The Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

Extreme Unction is a sacrament in which the sick, in consequence of being anointed by the priest, receive grace to resist the temptations of the devil, to bear patiently the pains of sickness, and also to recover their health, if it should be conducive to the good of their souls.

*The prayer of faith, says St. James, shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him.*¹

1. "Shall save the sick man;" this sacrament principally saves and heals the soul; but it also, as the Council of Trent² teaches, sometimes heals the body, when the restoration of health is profitable to the soul. Hence we can infer how useful it may be to the health of the body to receive Extreme Unction as soon as possible; that is, as soon as the physician declares the dis-

¹ "Infirmatur quis in vobis; inducat presbyteros Ecclesiæ, et orent super eum, ungentes eum oleo in nomine Domini; et oratio fidei salvabit infirmum, et alleviabit eum Dominus; et si in peccatis sit, remittentur ei."—*James, v. 14.*

² "Sanitatem corporis interdum, ubi salutis animæ expedierit, (infirmus) consequitur."—*Sess. xiv. de Extr. Unct. cap. 2.*

ease to be grievous and dangerous to life, without waiting till there is no hope of recovery; because it is then impossible, in the natural course of things, for the sick man to recover, and for the restoration of his health it would be necessary that God should work a miracle. But when the sick man is in a state capable of being cured by natural means, the virtue of this sacrament will, as has been said, obtain for him bodily health, if his recovery be conducive to his spiritual welfare. Thus, in order to give this sacrament to the sick, it is sufficient that their infirmity be grievous, as Benedict XIV.¹ has declared; and the Roman Catechism tells us that "Parish priests commit a most grievous sin if they wait for the disease to become desperate, when life and sensation are beginning to fail, before they will administer the unction."²

2. But this sacrament principally regards the health of the soul. "And the Lord shall raise him up." The Council of Trent explains these words as follows: "It raises up the soul of the sick man, by exciting in him a trust in God's mercy, by which he is so lightened, that it enables him to bear more lightly the pains of his disease, and to resist more easily the temptation of the devil."³ I agree, therefore, with the theologians who say, that a person who refuses at death to receive Extreme Unction can scarcely be excused from grievous sin; because he voluntarily deprives himself of a great help to resist the great temptations by which the devil assails dying persons. After having recovered from a

¹ "Qui gravi morbo laborant."—*Bulla* 53, § 46.

² "Gravissime peccant, qui illud tempus ægroti ungenti observare solent, cum, jam omni salutis spe amissa, vita et sensibus carere incipiat."—*De Extr. Unct.* q. 9.

³ "Ægroti animam alleviat, magnam in eo divinæ misericordiæ fiduciam excitando, qua infirmus sublevatus, et morbi incommoda levius fert, et tentationibus dæmonis facilius resistit."—*Sess. xiv. de Extr. Unct. cap. ii.*

a deadly disease, St. Eleazar said, for the instruction of all, that "we cannot comprehend how terrible are the assaults that the devil makes upon us at death, in order to effect our perdition."

3. "And if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." This sacrament, as the Council declares, takes away sins, if any still remain to be expiated, and also the relics of sin.¹ That is, the Extreme Unction delivers us from the temporal punishments that remain due to our sins and it also frees us from the relics of sins already pardoned,—that is, from the darkness of the understanding, the hardness of heart, from affections to sensible things, from diffidences, and the like. All these are the relics and effects of past sins, and these the Extreme Unction takes away.

But to receive all the fruits of this sacrament it is necessary to be in the state of grace; the sick should, therefore, first of all confess their sins, and then receive the most holy viaticum, and afterwards Extreme Unction; for, as the Roman Catechism says,² this is the perpetual practice of the Church.

That you may be careful, when attacked by grievous illness, to receive this sacrament as soon as possible, in order to recover bodily health, if it be expedient for the soul (as has been already said), listen to an extraordinary fact, related by St. Bernard, in his life of St. Malachy, Archbishop of Armagh. The saint relates that St. Malachy having gone to visit a devout lady, who was near her end, found her somewhat better, and therefore deferred till the following day the administration of the sacrament of Extreme Unction. But scarcely had he left the house when he heard that the lady was dead. He was greatly afflicted because she had in consequence

¹ "Delicta si quæ sint adhuc expianda, ac peccati reliquias abstergit."
—*Sess. xiv. Ibid.*

² *De Extr. Unct.* q. 12.

of his deferring the sacrament died without Extreme Unction. What did he do? He began to pray with great fervor that God would restore the deceased to life and continued to pray till she returned to life. The holy prelate instantly gave her the sacrament, and by its efficacy she perfectly recovered her health, and lived many years after.

II.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders.

The sacrament of Order comes next. In this sacrament is given the power of consecrating the body of Jesus Christ, and of absolving from sin, and of performing other functions to the honor of God; he who receives this sacrament receives by it also grace to perform worthily these sacred duties.

On this point seculars should mind two things.

The first is, that to become a good ecclesiastic a divine vocation is necessary. There are three marks by which a person may know whether he has a divine vocation: 1. a virtuous life; 2. the intention of serving God in the ecclesiastical state; 3. the advice and approbation of his confessor. He who takes orders without these three necessary conditions is guilty of sin, and exposes his eternal salvation to great danger. And if he commits a sin, fathers and mothers are guilty of a far greater sin when they force their children to become priests in order to assist the family. God has instituted the office of priesthood, not for the advancement of families, but for the honor of his divine Majesty, and for the salvation of the souls which Jesus Christ has redeemed. Oh! how many fathers and mothers shall we see condemned on the day of judgment for having compelled their sons to become priests without a divine vocation!

2. The second thing that seculars should mind is the

respect that they ought to pay to priests, because they are the ministers of Jesus Christ, and because through them we must be saved; for men are not saved without the sacraments, and the sacraments are administered only by the hands of priests. Hence it is necessary to respect their person as well as their reputation. *Touch not My anointed.*¹ And in another place our Lord says to the priesthood: *He that heareth you heareth Me.*² Be afraid, then, to despise or calumniate the priest, for God chastises this sin with great rigor. Theodoret,³ Bishop of Cirus, relates that St. James, Bishop of Nisibis, before he was consecrated bishop, went into Persia to visit the Christians of that country. As he passed by a fountain, some girls who were washing clothes treated him with derision. The saint raised his eyes to heaven to recommend himself to God, and by a divine inspiration cursed the fountain, and it instantly became dry. He then cursed the insolence of the girls, and their hair immediately became white as if they were in the decrepitude of old age, and remained white during their whole life as a sign of the respect that is due to priests.

III.

The Sacrament of Matrimony.

Matrimony is a sacrament by which man and woman, giving their consent before the parish priest and two witnesses, to take each other for husband and wife, remain bound together for life, and receive the grace to bring up their children in virtue, and to bear the burdens of the married state. But in order to receive this grace they must be in the state of grace when they are

¹ "Nolite tangere christos meos."—*Ps.* civ. 15.

² "Qui vos audit, me audit; et qui vos spernit, me spernit."—*Luke*, x. 16.

³ *Theophil.*

married. Hence before marriage they must make a good confession, and they ought also to receive the holy Communion on the morning of their marriage.

They should also know well the articles of faith. For how can they teach them to their children if they themselves are ignorant of them? For this reason Benedict XIV. ordained that all who wish to be married should be first examined by the parish priest whether they know the points of their faith; and that if they be found ignorant of them, they should be required to learn them before they are married.

Matrimony is free; but let children remember that it rarely happens that they can be excused from mortal sin if they contract marriage against the will of their father and mother, particularly if they marry without the knowledge of their parents. From marriages contracted against the consent of parents arise a thousand evils—disputes, hatred, and quarrels. Fathers cannot without a just cause hinder their children from marrying. On the other hand, children should, when they wish to marry, always endeavor to procure the consent of their parents, except when it is certain that the parents will unjustly and unreasonably refuse their consent.

Of the obligations of husbands and wives I have already spoken in explaining the fourth commandment.¹

But before we conclude, let us observe in the example of the son of Tobias² the manner in which young persons should contract marriage. In the city of Rages, in Media, there was a holy girl called Sara, the daughter of Raguel, who was greatly afflicted, because seven young men on the night of their nuptials with her were, one after the other, strangled by the devil Asmodeus. The son of Tobias was afterwards destined to be the spouse of Sara. Having heard of the unhappy death

¹ Pages 444 and 456.

² *Tob. vi.*

of her former husbands, he was afraid to contract marriage with her. But to remove his fear, the angel Raphael, who accompanied him, said: "Know that the persons over whom the devil has power are those who engage in matrimony, not to please God, but for sensual gratification. Do not imitate such persons; take Sara for your wife, not to indulge your concupiscence, but rather to bring up children who shall serve and bless God, and thus you shall have nothing to fear from the devil." Thus the holy youth acted, and blessings were showered down on his marriage. Attend to the four admonitions which her parents gave to Sara when she took leave of them.¹ *First*, said they, show respect to your father-in-law and mother-in-law. *Secondly*, love your husband. *Thirdly*, attend to the government of the family. *Fourthly*, conduct yourself in such a manner that none of your actions may deserve censure. All women who engage in the married state should attend to these admonitions.

¹ *Job. x. 13.*



APPENDIX.

Melancholy Examples

OF PERSONS WHO HAVE MADE SACRILEGIOUS CONFESSIONS.*

I.

IN the chronicles of St. Benedict it is related that a solitary named Pelagius, who kept sheep for his poor parents, led a life so exemplary that all called him a saint. He lived in this manner many years. After the death of his parents he sold the little property that they had left him and retired into a hermitage. He, unfortunately, consented once to an unchaste thought. After this sin he fell into a state of great melancholy because he would not confess it, lest he should lose the good opinion of his confessor. While he was in this state of melancholy a pilgrim who passed by said to him: "Pelagius, confess your sin: God will pardon you, and your peace shall be restored." The pilgrim then disappeared. After this Pelagius resolved to do penance for his sin, but not to confess it, flattering himself that God would perhaps pardon him without confession. He entered into a monastery, in which he was immediately received on account of his reputation for sanctity, and there led an austere life, crucifying himself with fasts and penances. At last the hour of death came: he made his last confession; as he had always through shame concealed the sin during life, so he also concealed it at death; he received the viaticum, died,

* See page 552.

and was buried, with the reputation of a saint. On the following night the sacristan found the body of Pelagius out of its grave. He buried it again; but on the second and third nights he found the body out of the grave. He called the abbot, who, in the presence of the other monks, said: "Pelagius, you were always obedient during life; be obedient now also in death. Tell me, on the part of God, if it be the divine will that your body be kept in a particular place?" The deceased, howling, said: "Alas! I am damned for having concealed one sin in confession. O Abbot, look at my body!" And behold! his body appeared like red-hot iron sending forth sparks of fire. All fled away; but Pelagius called back the abbot, that he might remove the consecrated particle that still remained in his mouth. The abbot removed the sacred host. Pelagius then told them to take his body out of the church and to throw it on a dunghill like a dog. It was done as he desired.

II.

In the annals of the Capuchins we read of one who was esteemed a saint, but made bad confessions. Being seized with a grievous illness, he was told to go to confession. He sent for a certain Father, to whom he said, "My Father, you tell me to go to confession; but I will not make any confession." "And why?" said the Father. "Because," replied the sick man, "I am damned; for I have never confessed all my sins; and now God deprives me of the power of making a good confession." After this he began to howl, and to tear his tongue, saying, "Accursed tongue, that would not confess sins when you were able." And thus, gnawing his tongue to pieces, and howling, he breathed forth his soul into the hands of the devil. After death he be-

came black as a cinder, a terrible noise was heard, and the room filled with an intolerable stench.

III.

Father Seraphine Razzi relates that in a city in Italy there was a married lady of noble rank who was reputed a saint. On her deathbed she received all the sacraments, and died with a high reputation for sanctity. After death her daughter, who always recommended to God the soul of her mother, heard one day, while she was at prayer, a great noise at the door. She turned round, and saw a horrible figure all on fire, and exhaling a great stench. At this sight she was so much terrified, that she was on the point of throwing herself out of the window; but she heard a voice saying: "Stop, stop, my daughter: I am your unhappy mother, who was considered a saint; but for some sins committed with your father, which I was ashamed ever to confess, God has condemned me to hell. Do not pray to God for me any more; for you only increase my pains." She then began to howl, and disappeared.

IV.

The celebrated Doctor John Ragusino relates that a certain very spiritual woman practised meditation and frequented the sacraments, so that she was considered by her Bishop to be a saint. The unhappy woman looked one day at a servant, and consented to an unchaste thought; but because the sin was only one of thought, she flattered herself that she was not bound to confess it. However, she was always tortured with remorse of conscience, and particularly in her last illness. But even at death she concealed the sin through shame, and died without confessing it. The bishop who was her confessor, and believed her to be a saint, caused her

body to be carried in procession through the whole city, and through devotion got her buried in his own chapel. But on the following morning on entering the chapel he saw a body above the grave, laid on a great fire. He commanded it in the name of God to tell what it was. A voice answered that it was his penitent, and that she was damned for a bad thought. She then began to howl and to curse her shame, which had been the cause of her eternal ruin.

V.

Father Martin del Rio relates that in the province of Peru there was a young Indian called Catharine, who was a servant to a respectable lady. Her mistress induced her to receive baptism, and to frequent the sacraments. She often went to confession, but concealed some of her sins. Just before her death she made nine confessions; but they were all sacrilegious. After her confession she said to her fellow-servants that she concealed her sins. They told her mistress, who, on questioning her, found out that these sins were certain acts of impurity. She therefore told the confessor, who returned, and exhorted his penitent to confess all her sins. But Catharine obstinately refused, and got into such a state of desperation, that she turned and said to her confessor, "Father, leave me; take no more trouble: you are only losing your time;" and then she turned her face to him and began to sing some profane songs. When she was near her end her companions exhorted her to take the crucifix. She answered: "What crucifix? I know not Christ crucified, and I do not wish to know him." And thus she died. So great were the noise and stench during the night, that the mistress was obliged to leave the house. The deceased after-

wards appeared to one of her companions, and said that she was damned on account of her bad confessions.

VI.

Father Francis Rodriguez relates that in England, when the Catholic religion flourished in that country, King Augubert had a daughter, who, on account of her rare beauty, was sought by many princes. Being asked by her father whether she wished to marry, she answered that she had made a vow of perpetual chastity. The father obtained a dispensation from the Holy See, but she resolutely refused to accept it, saying that she wished for no other spouse than Jesus Christ. She only asked of her father permission to live a solitary life in his house. The father, because he loved her, complied with her request, and assigned to her a suitable maintenance. In her retirement she began to lead a saintly life in meditation, fasting, and works of penance, frequenting the sacraments, and frequently going to the hospitals to attend the sick. While she lived in this manner she fell sick in her youth and died. A certain lady who had been in her governess, while at prayer one night, heard a great noise, and saw a soul in the form of a woman in a strong fire, and bound in chains, in the midst of a multitude of devils. The soul said, "Know that I am the unhappy daughter of Augubert." "What!" replied the governess; "are you damned after a life so holy?" "Yes," replied the soul; "I am justly damned through my own fault. "And why?" "You must know that in my youth I took pleasure in listening to one of my pages, for whom I had an affection, reading a certain book. Once, after reading the book for me, the page kissed me; the devil began to tempt me, till in the end I committed sin with the page. I went to confession, and began to tell my sin; my indis-

creet confessor instantly reproved me, saying, "What! has a queen been guilty of such a sin?" I then, through shame, said it was a dream. I afterwards began to perform penitential works and give alms, that God might pardon me without confessing the sin. At death I said to the confessor that I was a great sinner; he told me to banish the thought as a temptation. After this I expired, and am now damned for all eternity." She then disappeared amid such noise, that the whole world appeared to be falling in pieces, and left in the chamber an intolerable stench, which lasted for many days.

VII.

Father John Baptist Manni, of the Society of Jesus relates that a certain lady had for several years concealed in confession a sin of impurity. Two religious of the Order of St. Dominic passed by the place. The lady, who was always waiting for a strange confessor, entreated one of them to hear her confession. When the Fathers departed, his companion said to the confessor of the lady that while she was confessing her sins he saw many serpents coming from her mouth, but that there was a large, horrible-looking serpent, whose head only came out, but afterwards went back entirely into the lady's mouth. He then saw all the serpents that came out return again. The confessor went back to the house of the lady, and on entering heard that she had died suddenly. Afterwards, when he was at prayer, the unhappy woman appeared and said to him, "I am the unfortunate person that made my confession to you; I committed one sin, which I voluntarily concealed from the confessors of the place. God sent you to me; but even then I could not conquer the shame of telling it. He therefore struck me suddenly dead when you en-

tered the house, and has justly condemned me to hell." After these words the earth opened, and she fell into the chasm and instantly disappeared.

VIII.

Saint Antony relates that there was a widow who began to lead a holy life, but afterwards, by familiarity with a young man, was led into sin with him. After her fall she performed penitential works, gave alms, and even entered into a monastery, but never confessed her sin. She became abbess. She died, and died with the reputation of a saint. But one night a nun who was in the choir heard a great noise, and saw a spectre encompassed with flames. She asked what it was. The spectre answered, "I am the soul of the abbess, and am in hell." "And why?" "Because in this world I committed a sin, and have never confessed it. Go, and tell this to the other nuns, and pray no more for me." She then disappeared amid great noise.

IX.

In the annals of the Capuchins it is related that a certain mother, on account of having made sacrilegious confessions, began at death to cry out that she was damned for her grievous sins and for her bad confessions. Among other things, she said that she was bound to make restitution to certain persons, and that she had always neglected to do so. Her daughter then said to her, "My mother, let what you owe be restored; I am satisfied to sell all, provided your soul be saved." The mother answered: "Ah, accursed child! I am damned also on your account; for I have scandalized you by my bad example." Thus she continued to howl

like one in despair. They sent for one of the Capuchin Fathers. When he arrived he exhorted her to trust in the mercy of God; but the unhappy woman said: "What mercy! I am damned: sentence is already passed upon me, and I have already begun to feel the pains of hell." While she spoke thus, her body was raised to the ceiling of the chamber, and dashed with violence against the floor, and she instantly expired.

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